

Balayya must be thankful to YSR: Jogi Ramesh

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Launching a counter-attack on TDP MLA Nandamuri Balakrishna, for his earlier criticism of YSRCP leaders, Minister for Housing Jogi Ramesh questioned the TDP leader whether he did not feel shame when Chandrababu Naidu had backstabbed his father.

Addressing a press conference on Saturday, Jogi Ramesh said that Balakrishna was supposed to train his gun on Chandrababu Naidu, who killed his father NTR.

Ramesh said that the university was a small issue when compared to the District and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy named a district after NT Ramara, who changed the NTR Health University to YSR Health University. The Minister also asked if Balakrishna could remember properly, it was YSR who gave second birth to him.

‘Jagan should tender apology to farmers’

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

For misleading the Assembly by providing wrong statistics on the amount spent for agriculture, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy should tender an unconditional apology to the farmers, demanded TDP leader Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy, on Saturday, in a press conference at the party office.

Somireddy said that Jagan wasted crores of public money in the shape of advertisements only to spread false propaganda among the people.

On the closing day of the last Assembly session, the Chief Minister told the House that his Government spent Rs 1,27,823 cr for farmers' welfare in the past 40 months. Also, he released full-page advertisements for the media on the same point in which he mentioned that Rs 2.39 lakh cr was spent for women which means that in



On the closing day of the last Assembly session, the Chief Minister told the House that his Government spent Rs 1,27,823 cr for farmers' welfare in the past 40 months.

totally for both women and farmers he spent Rs 3,66,836 cr. This was nothing but a false statement, Somireddy said.

The TDP leader asked how the food grain purchase could be shown as assistance for farmers, and this was for the first time in the country's history that food grain purchase was shown as an expenditure for farmers' welfare. Somireddy demanded the Government to make it

public whether quality power was supplied for nine hours a day in any part of the State.

He alleged the State Government did not spend even a single rupee though Rs 1,264 cr was allocated for irrigation in the 2021 budgetary proposals.

The Chief Minister was giving all wrong statistics and in fact, the agricultural sector has got spoiled during the YSRCP rule, he observed.

Tirumala: VIP darshan timings changed

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The TTD Trust Board has changed the timings of VIP darshan to 10 am instead of the existing early hours, to enable Srivari darshan to common pilgrims who will have to wait for several in compartments and queue lines.

At a meeting headed by Chairman YV Subba Reddy, the TTD decided to shift the accommodation allotment system to Tirupati. "If the accommodation allotment gets exhausted in Tirumala, we request the pilgrims to book accommodation in Tirupati instead of waiting for long hours in Tirumala," Subba Reddy said.

Concerning Slotted Sarva Darshanam (SSD) tokens, the Chairman said a limited number of SSD tokens will be re-introduced after 'Puratasi' month, while the Sarva Darshan (without tokens) will be operated simultaneously.

OTHER DECISIONS

A white paper on TTD properties will be placed on the website for the third consecutive year. The TTD has a total of 960 properties to the tune of 7,123 acres worth around Rs



85,705 crore. The District Collector has allotted 300 acres towards employees' house sites for which the TTD had already paid Rs 60 crore.

Apart from this, after the formation of the new Tirupati district, another 132 acres of land has also been provided to TTD for employees'-related development activities in the future to which the TTD shall have to pay Rs 25 crore.

Construction of PAC 5 in Tirumala for Rs 98 crores was approved in the area behind Govardhan Choultries which could facilitate accommoda-

tion to more common pilgrims. The Board gave its nod for the construction of a four-lane road at Rs 30 crore from Vakulamatha Temple to Pudipatla near Zoo Park. Additional load transformers in Tirumala are to be set up to meet the geyser and other electrical improvisations carried in the rest houses and Rs 7.2 crore was sanctioned for the purpose.

Besides, SGS Arts College would be developed at Rs 6.37 crore and a TTD Kalyana Mandapam would be built at Rs 3 crore.

The Board sanctioned Rs

2.45 crore for refurbishing furniture and other requirements at Nandakam Rest House.

ANNUAL BRAHMOTSAVAMS

As the annual festival is taking place after a gap of two years of the Covid pandemic, a heavy pilgrim rush is being anticipated. German sheds will be arranged at different places to accommodate the stranded devotees and also protect them from inclement weather conditions.

TTD EO Sri AV Dharma Reddy, other board members, and officials of TTD were also present.

VMC to appoint consultant to liaise with State, Central govts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Standing Committee meeting unanimously passed a proposal to appoint a consultant to liaise with the State and Central governments on the ongoing development activities in the city and its funds. At present, no officer is available to coordinate with the State government at the secretariat and the VMC is keen to appoint an expert to liaise and the standing committee opined that it's necessary to hire a consultant from any agency.

The VMC Standing Committee meeting was chaired by Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi at the command control room on the premises of the corporation on Saturday.

At the earlier meeting, a resolution was passed to appoint a software expert to monitor and give presenta-



tions in the command control room and for the preparation of presentations and development of software for VMC needed for one year. Also, the meeting decided to spend Rs 8.40 lakh on software experts, and it may meet from the VMC general funds.

Later, on the suggestion of VMC Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, the Standing Committee passed a resolution to appoint a consultant for liaisoning and cancel the earlier decision of appointing a software expert. The meeting also passed a

resolution to pay Rs 60,000 per month and Rs 7.20 lakh per annum which would be met from the VMC general funds.

The standing committee meeting approved collecting parking fees on the one side of the road between NTR and AMC complex for one year and enhanced the lease amount by 11 per cent.

The meeting approved M/s.Geostat Informatics India Private Limited, Noida for engaging the Solid Waste Management System works.

SAAP has betrayed APOA, alleges R K Purushottam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Olympic Association (APOA) general secretary R K Purushottam has said that though the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) has that though APOA has submitted all documents it asked for, there has been no response from recognition of the association.

In a letter addressed to APOA members on Saturday, Purushottam recalled that the SAAP had invited APOA for talks recently and that it did so only because the media highlighted its 'feebleness' in supporting the sportspersons from Andhra Pradesh to represent the 36th National Games. "We have approached very positively, submitted all the documents as asked by SAAP, and waited for their response until now. It seems that they only came forward to escape from the media coverage and have no intention to support the sportspersons," he alleged.

Purushottam said it shows

"Now, we have no option but to represent the teams under the APOA banner. APOA is taking all measures to reimburse the necessary TA and DA."

the 'obstinate mentality' of the SAAP and alleged that it is deliberately trying to ignore APOA though the judgment by arbitration was in its favour and after getting recognition from the Indian Olympic Association. "After considering all steps by SAAP, we understand that the authorities concerned do not have any knowledge of sports and sports associations. Now, we have no option but to represent the teams under the APOA banner. APOA is taking all measures to reimburse the necessary TA and DA," he said.

Purushottam said though APOA had welcomed the late response from SAAP, the authorities concerned betrayed it by not providing its due recognition.

PNS ■ PUNE

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the rupee has 'held back very well' when compared to other currencies against the US Dollar.

The Reserve Bank and the Finance Ministry are keeping a very close watch over the developments, the finance minister told reporters after the domestic currency sunk to a lifetime low against the greenback.

"If any one currency which has held its own and did not get into fluctuation or volatility as much as other currencies it is the Indian rupee. We have held back very well," she told reporters here on the final day of her three-day visit to Pune district which is a stronghold of NCP chief Sharad Pawar.

She also asked a reporter to do a study on how the other



currencies are behaving against the US dollar in the latest round of depreciation.

According to experts, the latest round of depreciation is triggered by adverse global developments starting with the geopolitical tensions triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine earlier this year.

The war pushed up commodity prices, leading to a record surge in inflation in the developed world, which have resulted in steep rate hikes by

the US Fed. This has resulted in a flight of capital back to the US, hence resulting in currency depreciation episodes.

The rupee slumped 30 paise to close at a fresh lifetime low of 81.09 against the US dollar on Friday, weighed down by the strong American currency overseas and risk-off sentiment among investors.

On Thursday, the rupee plunged by 83 paise -- its biggest single-day loss in nearly seven months -- to close at 80.79, its previous record low.

The RBI has been deploying the dollar reserves to defend the currency and has exhausted billions of dollars of currency assets in the fight.

There have also been policy moves to attract more deposits from the diaspora through further incentives and other such attempts to stem the fall.

Amaravati ryots' 'padayatra' reaches...

Continued from page 1

Farmers and opposition parties have been criticising Kodali Nani, former minister and ruling party sitting MLA of Gudivada, as he supported the three capitals and opposed Amaravati as a single capital. Keeping these developments in mind, the Police department has decided to deploy more personnel as the Amaravati farmers' Maha Padayatra 2.0 reached Gudivada.

On the other hand, amidst the tight security, the farmers, women, and opposition party leaders entered Gudivada with renewed energy. The participation of the people in the 'padayatra' also increased relatively, when compared to the other areas of the protest.

The 'padayatra', which started in Amaravati, will end at Arasavilli.

Target Telangana

○ Probe agencies actively pursuing Delhi liquor scam and National Herald cases

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

With political parties considering the Munugode Assembly by-election as the semi-finals before the Assembly elections, the BJP which is in power at the Centre is now focused on both TRS and Congress leaders.

Almost all Central investigation agencies are focused on Telangana nowadays. It appears that Central agencies have shifted their headquarters to Hyderabad from New Delhi. The investigation agencies are trying mainly to corner TRS and Congress leaders. Central agencies think that the roots of all scams are in Hyderabad.

The Delhi liquor scam happened in Delhi, but investigations about that is going on in Hyderabad and in Telangana.

In the liquor case, the BJP government is planning to corner TRS leaders, particularly the close associates and relatives of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

In the same way the Central Government is trying to corner Telangana Congress leaders in the National Herald



case. Political observers think that the BJP's plan is to corner TRS and Congress leaders and force some of them to join the BJP ahead of the Munugode by-election. The next Assembly elections will be held within a year as per schedule. The Munugode Assembly by-election is considered the semi-finals before the Assembly elections and so the by-poll is crucial for the TRS, the Congress and the BJP. The party which is going to win the Munugode by-election will have an advantage during the campaign as it can claim that they will come to power in the Assembly elections.

While the TRS is confident of retaining

power in the next Assembly elections the Congress and the BJP hope that they can come to power. The BJP is now focused on both TRS and Congress leaders and almost all Central investigation agencies have taken up probes in Telangana in one or the other case concentrating on TRS and Congress leaders. Central agencies have speeded up investigations into old cases. The Enforcement Directorate, the Income Tax Department, and the CBI are very active in Telangana. The Centre has changed the top officials of Central agencies functioning in Hyderabad.

The TRS and the Congress say that the Centre is focussing on their party leaders ahead of the Munugode by-election and Assembly elections only for political gains.

But BJP leaders say that the investigations are working as per law and there is no involvement of their party.

The BJP's local leaders are repeatedly declaring that KCR will be sent to jail and the activities of Central investigation agencies are creating doubts in political circles.

Youth is the strength of nation, says NV Ramana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The true strength of our nation lies in the youth of the country. One-fifth of the world's youth live in India. This huge human resource if properly trained can drive the economic progress of the country. With the West falling short of skilled human resources, it is India's chance to fill the gap globally, said former Chief Justice of India, NV Ramana, at the ISB Leadership Summit on Saturday.

"Education and social development are closely connected. I have a piece of advice for you. While generating wealth you must adopt measures which will ensure proportional distribution of wealth among all stakeholders. Poverty alleviation and equal income distribution are the need of the hour," Justice Ramana said.

Speaking about his journey as the CJI, he said, "The role of the Chief Justice of India calls for leadership and long-term vision. I assumed charge when the country was going through the lethal second wave of Covid-19.

Uncertainty looms large

○ ED raids hit money market operations in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The raids by the Enforcement Directorate and other Central agencies in Telangana have brought down money market operations.

Uncertainty looms large among infrastructure, NBFCs and other sectors which carry out large-scale transactions. Many of them have apparently put on hold all financial transactions as they are afraid of ED raids. Central agencies are deploying teams from Mumbai and other states in Hyderabad. Unaware of how many teams are searching for whom many have temporarily halted transactions or have postponed them, especially very large ones.

Sources indicate that what is being reported is only the tip of the iceberg. Frequent investigations disrupt normal business and damage the business environment in the State.

Sources said that this will also hamper investor confidence especially when it comes to new deals.

AP CS seeks TS govt's consent on interstate...

Continued from page 1

He observed, "For the first time, there is a clear picture before the governments of the magnitude of the problem as information is collected in both the States. The total number of employees, who want to go to Telangana from Andhra Pradesh, is only 1,808 and those who want to go to Andhra Pradesh from Telangana is only 1,369."

The Reorganisation of the State of Andhra Pradesh was an unexpected event that impacted their lives and

careers affecting their work-life balance. Many employees who wanted to be in a particular State for various reasons such as medical treatment, spouse employment, children's education, having their own house, and others, have been dislocated leaving them in a state of dissatisfaction and despondency, he observed. Addressing the concerns of these employees on humanitarian grounds, as a one-time measure, is a desirable remedial action as satisfied employees are likely to be more productive, AP CS maintained.

Non-BJP parties will meet in Delhi today: Yechury

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Communist Party of India – Marxist (CPI-M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury has disclosed that a crucial meeting will be held in New Delhi on September 25 for uniting all secular and democratic political parties to defeat Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP government.

Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) chief Nitish Kumar will chair the meeting in which Lalu Prasad Yadav's RJD, CPI, CPM, and all other non-BJP parties would participate.

Addressing a meeting here on Saturday, Yechury said it is time now to save the Indian Constitution and defeat BJP by forming an alternative front in the country, he added.

In response to a call given by the CPM central committee, the Andhra Pradesh unit conducted a public meeting 'Desha Rakshna Bheri' against the Central government's 'anti-people' policies at the Gymkhana Grounds in Vijayawada on Saturday.

Addressing the meeting, Sitaram Yechury said the aim of secular, democratic, and left parties was to form a government akin to the one that came to power in 1977. The Modi-led BJP should be defeated in the coming elections as Indira Gandhi-led Congress government was unseated in



The CPM general secretary wondered why AP govt failed to press for special tag despite having 29 MPs in RS & LS

the 1977 general elections, he called. Though BJP had no majority, it formed governments in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and several other states by threatening smaller party leaders, he alleged.

Corporates had robbed the country of Rs.13 lakh crore, including Rs.11 lakh crore loan waiver, and Rs.2 lakh crore tax exemption, he said and alleged that PM Modi had helped them loot the country.

The CPM general secretary said that before the BJP came to power, corporate giant Adani was in 330th place among the richest people in

India and now he is in second place and asked how he could amass such huge wealth. Modi's government tried to sell public sector companies, he added.

He said that the Modi government is using CBI, Enforcement Directorate, and other central agencies if anybody questioned the Central government and its policies. Attacks on Dalits, Muslim Minorities, and Women have been increasing in the country, he alleged. Referring to the YSRCP government in Andhra Pradesh, Sitaram Yechury wondered why the State government did not press for the Special Category Status despite having 29 MPs in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

He alleged that BJP is cheat-

ing the farmers by saying it would give protection to the Amaravati farmers' 'padayatra' but is supporting the ruling YSRCP. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy hiked electricity charges, and bus charges, and imposed garbage cess, it would be an additional burden for the people, he felt and asked CM YS Jagan whether the YSRCP is working for the people or BJP. The BJP government did not give Special Category Status to the S in the past eight years, he pointed.

CPM State secretary V Srinivasa Rao, Central Committee member and former MP P Madhu, party secretary members Ch Babu Rao, MA Gafoor, and others spoke.



Keep your areas clean, city residents urged

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation 53rd Division Corporator Mahadev Appaji Rao has said that everyone should take care of their areas and keep the surrounding clean.

Appaji Rao participated in the cleaning programme along with the SKPVV Hindh High School students and staff at the vacant place near Dr.CB Subbarao hospital at the Jenda Chettu center in the city on Saturday. As part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', he planted saplings on the premises and distributed plants to the students.

Speaking on the occasion, he said the State government is giving top priority to cleaning and creating a better environment. Students are aware of the seasonal diseases and prevent them in the primary stage, he suggested.

SKPVV Hindu High School secretary KLV Mohana Rao, headmaster K Srinivasa Rao, teachers Bharath Kumar, Anand Kumar, S Venkateswara Rao, Rajasekhara Krishna, NCC officer Brahmeswara Rao, and PET MVS Satya Prasad attended.

Don't show bias in issue of BC-E certificates: APSMC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP State Minorities Commission has advised revenue officials, particularly Tahsildars/MROs, not to deny BE-E caste certificates to Muslim minorities with 'Mohammad' and 'Abdul' surnames. APSMC Chairman Dr. K Iqbal Ahmed Khan said that the officials should conduct thorough verifications without rejecting the BC-E certificate on a surname basis and the letter was sent to all the District Collectors in the State.

Dr. Iqbal Ahmed Khan said that the Director of the BC Welfare Department clarified that there is no bar on issuing BC-E caste certificates to Muslims for possessing surnames of 'Mohammad' and 'Abdul' in G.O. Ms. No. 23. Backward Classes Welfare Department, dated 07-07-2007 which has provided reservations to the certain socially and educationally backward communities of Muslims under BC-E category.

Dr. Iqbal Ahmed Khan said that APSMC observed that, despite clear clarification from the BC Welfare Department certain Mandal Revenue Officer/Revenue authorities in the State are denying BC-E Caste Certificates to the Muslims possessing of surnames like 'Mohammad' and 'Abdul'. As a result, the eligible candidates are facing a lot of inconvenience and hardship.

He said that APSMC advised all the District Collectors in the State to issue necessary instructions to all the MROS/RDOS that no caste claim may be rejected straight away based on the name/surname/prefix or suffix of the name without taking up the mandatory field

Survey of Waqf lands in AP, TS demanded

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Founder of Tahera Trust (AP and Telangana) Zahara Begum has welcomed the survey of Waqf properties by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and sought similar a similar initiatives in other States. She said that after the completion of the survey, illegal structures will be bulldozed and vacated by the UP government, so minorities should support the move and work for the protection of Waqf lands in their respective States.

Emphasising the need for protecting Waqf lands and using them for minority communities, Zahara Begum urged Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh YS. Jagan Mohan Reddy and Telangana CM K Chandrababhan Naidu to call for such surveys in both the Telugu states to detail the Waqf properties simultaneously listing the Waqf properties which are already in the hands of land and political mafias. She further sought legal action to retain Waqf lands in two Telugu States from encroachers and land grabbers.

She alleged that objections raised by MP Asaduddin Owaisi would derail the



Muslim community. She said that Muslim Waqf properties had already been targeted for ages and they are now in the hands of the mafia. She termed the survey 'systematic'.

She further stated that India has over six lakh waqf properties, with Uttar Pradesh alone having around 1.5 lakh Sunni and over 12,000 Shia Waqf properties in which the majority were in the clutches of encroachers.

inquiry as prescribed in the Act and Government Order and to see that to issue caste certi-

icates to the all eligible Muslims possessing the surnames like Mohammad and Abdul.

YSRCP MLA faces wrath of partymen

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

YSRCP Payakaraopeta MLA Golla Babu Rao faced the heat of discontent from the YSRCP activists when he went to Gudivada village in S Rayavaram mandal of Anakapalli district to lay the foundation stone for development works including the construction of Anganwadi centre and Nadu-Nedu works.

As soon as the MLA entered the village, a group of YSRCP activists including MPTCs and Sarpanches blocked the convoy of the MLA at the village. They squatted in front of the MLA's car. Village sarpanches Srinu Babu and Appala Raju squatted in front of the MLA's car raising slogans like 'MLA go back' leading to a tense situation in the village for some time. The YSRCP activists and the police jostled for some time in which two activists suffered minor injuries. However, the police dispersed all the activists and the MLA participated in the

programme.

Significantly, MPTC Sharada Kumari resigned from her MPTC post on Thursday following squabbles with the MLA. The police removed the agitating activists and let the MLA's convoy go. The MPTCs and Sarpanches alleged that protocol was not followed during the MLA's programme.

They alleged that they were neither invited nor intimated about the programmes in which the MLA was participating, the Sarpanches and MPTCs told the media. They questioned the MLA why the protocol was not followed and due importance was not given to them. Talking to the media, MPTC Sharada Kumari alleged the MLA harassed her which forced her to resign from her MPTC post. "I have never faced in my 22 years of political life such an annoyance. I resigned from the MPTC post. However, I will continue in the YSRCP," she made clear.



Three AP men get NSS awards

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Three persons from Andhra Pradesh received National Service Scheme (NSS) Awards 2020-21 on Saturday. The awards were presented

to the awardees by the President of India Droupadi Murmu.

The three awardees are Dr K Jithendra Gowd, JNTUA College of Engineering, Ananthapuramu, Chukkala

Pardhasardhi, Krishna Chaitanya Degree College, Nellore and Sri Devanapalli, Srinivasa Ramanujan Institute of Technology, Rotarypuram Village, BK Samudram Mandal, Anantapuramu.

Rajini inaugurates Urban PHC in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Vidadala Rajini has said that the credit for transforming the medical and health sector goes to Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The newly-constructed Urban Primary Health Centre at Ayodhyanager in Vijayawada was inaugurated by the minister on Saturday. On the occasion, the minister said that the building was constructed with Rs 1.07 crores and later inspected all the rooms in the new building.

Minister Rajini said that the state government was giving top priority to the health sector in the state. Under the Nadu-Nedu programme PHCs and CHCs are being modernised across the state and for every 30,000 population in cities, a health centre will be available to provide medical services. In each health centre's



64 tests, 172 medicines are made available and the medical staff should take measures that ten deliveries should be performed in each centre, said the minister.

Minister Rajini further said that 17 medical colleges are coming up in the state with an estimated cost of Rs 8,000 crore. To revamp the hospitals on par with corporate hospitals

the state government was spending Rs 16,255 crore under the Nadu Nedu programme and every year Rs 13,000 crore is allocated in the state budget, she said and added that a total of 3,000 procedures are made available under YSR Aarogyasri health scheme.

The minister said that steps are being taken to set up 1,125

PHCs with a cost of Rs 670 crores, 1,692 Urban PHCs with a cost of Rs 399 crores, 10,032 Dr YSR Village Clinics in every village across the state with a cost of Rs 1,692 crores.

State Planning Board Vice Chairman Malladi Vishnu said that there are four Urban PHCs in Vijayawada central constituency. He said that the government hospitals are upgraded and that Heart surgeries are being done successfully. Malladi Vishnu asked Minister Rajini to upgrade the hospital in Rajivnagar to 50-bed hospital.

NRT District collector S Dilli Rao appealed to the people to make use of the services available in the health clinics.

City Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi, CVMC Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar, Deputy Mayor Sri Sailaja Reddy, DMHO Dr M Suhasini and others were present.

V&E, agri officials inspect RBKs across State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP Vigilance and Enforcement department officials with Agriculture department officials inspected 50 Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) on Saturday across the state located in 26 districts to ascertain whether farmers-related welfare schemes/programmes are being implemented properly or not.

The V&E officials stated that the government has set up Rythu Bharosa Kendras to provide Agriculture sector-related services to the farmers within 24to48 hours through KIOSKS, input delivery services, machinery, technical advice, agricultural extension services etc. They said that during inspections it was noticed that in certain RBKs, e-crop booking is not completed, for example, Ranasthalam RBK of Srikakulam district and Yedida RBK of Dr. BR Ambedkar Konseema district.

The officials said that in some of the RBKs, the process

of EKYC for farmers is yet to be complete like Undi RBK of West Godavari district and further the list of beneficiaries of various programmes is not displayed for example in Kothagudem RBK of Eluru district. The officials stated that in most of the places the toll-free number 14400 was not displayed. The services of village volunteers are not utilised properly in the process of procurement of paddy in the Vetapalem RBK of Kakinada district. The officials found KIOSK is not working properly e.g. Buddham RBK of Bapatla district.

They said that in Nellore RBK of Chittoor district physical stock of Urea is not matching with KIOSK data. In Yalamanda RBK of Palnadu district, YSR Yantra beneficiaries requested to supply drones for spray purposes and bores and motors. They added that RBKs are extending necessary assistance and services to the farmers in most places across the State.



Risk assessment tool for cotton now

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A climate risk assessment tool for cotton 'Agri Adapt' was launched in Guntur on Saturday by S Swaminathan, Trustee, National Agro Foundation and Dr Arivudai Nambi, Director, Climate Resilient Practice, World Resource Institute, a US-based think tank, and research organization. The programme was launched in the presence of agriculture scientists, representatives of cotton spinning mills, ginning mills, and other stakeholders of the cotton value chain of Andhra Pradesh.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Nambi said, Climate Change has impacted the agriculture sector very badly due to uncertainties in weather



patterns. Cotton being a commercial crop with a lot of investments at different levels of the value chain is even more vulnerable not only

impacting the economy domestically but also globally. Agri Adapt tool is a free online data-driven climate risk assessment tool that can provide

long-range weather forecasting and integrate climate data with the market information so that all the stakeholders including farmers, ginners, spinners, processors, funders, and policymakers can take informed decisions and avoid risks, he added.

Swaminathan said that this tool is only a beginning and upgraded versions would also be released in the future and also cover other critical crops. Stakeholders across Andhra Pradesh especially from Cuddapah, Kurnool, Nandyal and Guntur districts participated in the event. The 'Agri Adapt' tool has been developed by the World Resource Institute in collaboration with the National Agro Foundation.

2ND ANNUAL CONVOCATION

887 students graduate from VIT-AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 2nd Annual Convocation ceremony of VIT-AP University witnessed the graduation of 887 students of which 10 were gold medallists and 66 rank holders from Bachelor, Master, and Ph.D. Degrees in Engineering and Management that was held on Saturday.

The chief guest of the convocation ceremony was Dr. G Sateesh Reddy, Scientific Advisor to Raksha Mantri, Ministry of Defence, Government of India. While congratulating the graduating students, Dr. G Sateesh Reddy spoke about Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's thoughts on how youngsters should dream big. In this context, he said that the students need to think Big to achieve success in life. He spoke about the various steps that the Government of India is taking to promote a Startup ecosystem and that the students have a lot of opportunities to con-



tribute meaningfully and succeed as individuals and in turn, make India a progressive nation. He urged the students to work in futuristic technologies to make India technologically self-sufficient.

SumanRudra, VP-HR (Technology & Products, BYJU'S, Bengaluru) and Krishna Pakala (Associate Vice President – Executive Program Director, Hyderabad) as the Guests of Honour. Dr. G Viswanathan the Founder & Chancellor of the VIT group of institutions, and SankarViswanathan, Vice-President VIT group of institutions were also present. Krishna Pakala advised the graduates to aim for the stars while being

rooted and being kind to fellow human beings. SumanRudra, gave an insight into the dynamic world the students are about to enter and urged them to nurture their talent in a way that nature nurtures plants - with patience and care.

Dr G Viswanathan, in his presidential address, highlighted the need for prominence in education because, when we compare education with that of the developed countries, India spends much less on education. India spends only 3.5 per cent of its GDP on education, and changes have to be brought to this for quality education to reach every child.

All set for Dasara celebrations at Durga temple from tomorrow



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

All arrangements are in place for the 10-day Dasara festival at Durga temple atop the Indrakeeladri in the city. An estimated 14 lakh devotees are expected to take the darshan of Goddess Durga Devi, during the festivals.

Collector Dilli Rao, CP Kanti Rana, and EO Bhramaramba disclosed the arrangements to the media persons here on Saturday.

The collector said that on average 60,000 devotees would take the darshan of the deity Durga Devi every day, from September 26 to October 1, and a maximum of 3.50 lakh devotees may take darshan during these six days.

On the day of Moola Nakshtram, more than two lakh devotees would throng the shrine for darshan. After completing the festivals, those taking 'Bhavani Deeksha' would come to the temple on October 6 and 7 and their number is estimated to be 2.50 lakh, he added.

Meanwhile, he said Rs.100, and Rs 300 and Rs 500 tickets would be available online for the convenience of devotees. For VIPs, the counters were arranged at the State Guest House, Collectorate, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, Opposite Tourism Guest House, Toll Gate, and

Om turning, he said.

He said three queue lines were arranged from the Vinayaka temple to the uphill of the Durga temple and two more queue lines for free darshan. As many as 20 lakh ladus would be available at the 13 counters including Bus Stand, Railway Station, and State Guest House, he said.

More than 800 showers were arranged for taking bath at the River Krishna ghats, he said.

NTR CP Kanti Rana said that about 5,000 police personnel were deployed for the bandobust during the Dasara celebrations in Vijayawada. About 12 parking spaces were arranged for vehicle parking, he said. About 400 CC Cameras were erected to monitor the devotees' rush into the city, he said. Given the devotees' rush, traffic diversion would be regulated and a command control room was arranged at the Modal Guest house, he added.

Durga Temple EO Bhramaramba said that the temple and endowment authorities have to coordinate with other departments and make the celebrations successful.

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao, Police Commissioner Kanti Rana Tata, and Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam Executive Officer D. Bhramaramba were also present.

Traffic curbs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The city police has imposed traffic curbs for the convenience of the devotees visiting the Goddess Durga Temple festival celebrations starting from September 26 to October 5. The city police will divert the traffic and heavy vehicles will not be allowed in some parts of the city during the Dasara festival days.

Heavy vehicles passing on the national highways will not be allowed into the city. Vehicles travelling from Hyderabad to Vizag will be diverted near Ibrahimpatnam. The vehicles will pass via G Konduru - Mylavaram, Nuzvid-Hanuman Junction. Vehicles passing from Vizag to Hyderabad and will reroute Hanuman Junction-Nuzvid, Mylavaram-G Konduru.

Vehicles travelling from Vizag to Chennai will be diverted near the Hanuman junction bypass. The vehicles will pass via Gudivada-Pamaruru-Avanigadda-Repalle- Bapatla-Chirala-Throvagunta and Ongole.

Vehicles passing from Guntur towards Vizag will be diverted near Budampadu and will pass via Tenali-Vemuru- Kolluru- Vellaturu-Penumudi bridge-Avanigadda- Pamaruru-

Gudivada and Hanuman junction. Vehicles passing from Vizag to Guntur pass vice-versa.

Vehicles passing from Chennai to Hyderabad will be diverted via Medarametla-Addanki- Piduguralla-Nadikudi- Miryalaguda-Nalgonda- Narketpally and reach Hyderabad.

RTC buses travelling from Vijayawada to Hyderabad, Jaggaiahpet, and Tiruvuru will pass as usual over the Kanaka Durga flyover. Vehicles will not be allowed between Durga temple junction and Kummariapalem during the festivities.

Arrangements were made for parking two-wheelers and four-wheelers of the devotees visiting the temple, two wheel parking lots are set up at Padmavati Ghat parking, Irrigation parking, Gaddabomma parking, and Lotus apartment parking. For four-wheelers arrangements are done at a lane adjacent to Rajiv Gandhi park, KR Market cellar parking, Gandhiji Municipal high school, and TTD parking Kummariapalem. The bus parking was arranged at Bhavani ghat parking, Punnami Ghat parking, the open space of Subbarayudu, and the old Soma company, Sitara centre.



Siblings drown in tank, bodies fished out

PNS ■ ELURU

In a tragic incident, two siblings drowned in an irrigation tank at Sesali village in Kalla mandal on Saturday.

Police said that the deceased Chandu Kiran (6) and his sister Likita Gracy (4) went to the tank while playing. They entered the tank and drowned.

Chandu Kiran was studying first class at a private school and Likita was going to the Anganwadi centre. The parents of the children Subramanyam and Kumar were not at home when the incident took place.

A pall of gloom descended on the village with the death of siblings. The bodies were fished out and sent to the government hospital for postmortem.

HEAVY RAIN LIKELY IN AP TOMORROW

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Heavy rain is likely to occur in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday.

In a daily weather report here, Meteorological Centre on Saturday said thunderstorm accompanied by lightning is likely at isolated places over North Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam and South

AP links 1 cr health records to 'Ayushman Bharat'

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The Department of Health, Medical, and Family Welfare announced that one crore health records were linked to the scheme Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), on Saturday in a statement. AP emerged as the only State in the e country to achieve this milestone. This historic milestone paves the way for greater adoption of digital health platforms and services across the state of Andhra Pradesh.

The ABDM is one of the flagship schemes of government being implemented by the Department of Health, Medical and Family Welfare Andhra Pradesh in collaboration with the National Health Authority (NHA). Electronic Health Records generation and Integration to NHA under the ABDM is a comprehensive repository of health records of the state and country across modern and traditional systems of medicine.

It includes health records created in all types of health facilities registered under ABDM, from Urban Primary health centres to teaching Hospitals across the state.

The ABDM aims to create a

seamless online platform that will enable interoperability within the digital healthcare ecosystem. ABDM has developed building blocks and interoperable Application Programming interfaces (APIs) to offer a seamless digital healthcare experience for all stakeholders – health facilities, patients, and healthcare professionals.



One of the key building blocks is the Electronic Health Records systems. Elaborating on the significance of EHR, G. Naveen Kumar Special Secretary Health and Project Director APSACS said, "We aim to build a trusted platform where patients' Health Records are digitalised and saved for easy retrieval by the patient whenever needed with the

consent of the patient at any health facility using ABDM compliant EHR across the state and country. We have seen enthusiastic participation from all government health facilities from Urban and Rural Primary health centres to teaching hospitals which have all now become a part of this Electronic Health Records ecosystem. We have created 3.4 crore ABHA numbers for citizens of Andhra Pradesh with the help of field health workers like ANMs and ASHA workers".

He added, "This is also the highest among all the states in the country both in terms of number and percentage saturation of total population. We are also one of the best performers in terms of the Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR) for professionals like doctors, and nurses and the Health Facility Registry (HFR) of all public health facilities. The state or UT-wise performance is available on the ABDM public dashboard at <https://dashboard.abdm.gov.in/abdm/>. The charts show daily, monthly and cumulative trends in the progress of this national level registry."



Ensure punishment to culprits in SC/ST cases: Collector

PNS ■ GUNTUR

District Collector M Venugopal Reddy directed the officials concerned to take steps to ensure that the culprits in the SC/ST Atrocities (Prevention) Act cases and conduct investigation into the cases impartially.

Collector M Venugopal Reddy held here on Saturday a meeting with the District Vigilance Monitoring Committee and reviewed the implementation of the SC/ST Atrocities (Prevention) Act, Bonded Labour Abolition Act, Manual Scavenging Prohibition Act and Devadasis Prohibition Act.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the police and revenue authorities should take special measures to prevent the recurrence of attacks and atrocities against the SCs/STs in the district. The pending cases in this regard should be coordinated with the concerned departments, the investigation should be completed and the charge sheets should be registered at the earliest, the Collector told the officials. Actions should be taken to provide immediate compensation to the victims of the SC and ST atrocities as per government guidelines without pending.

During the discussion on the action taken report on the issues discussed in the last meeting, Collector Venugopal

Reddy said that Tahsildars and SHO's should hold civil rights day programmes in the mandal headquarters on the last working day of every month to educate people about the laws. Civil rights days should be given high priority in troubled villages in mandals, he directed the officials.

"Action will be taken if there is negligence in the conduct of Civil Rights Day. The district tribal welfare department should inquire into the complaints about the promotion of ineligible persons and submit a report within a week", the Collector told the officials.

Collector Venugopal Reddy directed the city authorities to take steps to sanction health allowances, weekly allowances, and PF loans to sanitation workers in the city.

The Collector asked the lead bank manager to take steps to ensure that loans are properly sanctioned by the banks to the SC and ST aspiring entrepreneurs through various government schemes. He assured to take steps to provide proper wages to the 'Clap Mitras' working in the villages.

Additional SP Supraja, DRO K Chandrasekhara Rao, DD Social Welfare Madhusudhana Rao, SC Corporation ED Prema Kumari, DRDA PD Hariharanath, and Deputy Commissioner of Labor Srinivasulu were among those who attended the meeting.

AP turned into ganja hub: BJP

PNS ■ PADERU

Andhra Pradesh BJP Affairs co-incharge Sunil Deodhar alleged that Andhra Pradesh had become a hub for ganja and the AP government is using the Central funds for other purposes including implementing populist schemes.

The BJP organised the 'Praja Poru' programme here on Saturday. Addressing a press conference here on the occasion, Sunil Deodhar ridiculed that people raised slogans before elections that 'Ravali Jagan- Kavali Jagan' but now the Ganja mafia and red sander mafias had come to the state.

"Wherever the ganja is seized in the country, the origin for the ganja will be AP. AP has become a hub for ganja production and illegal transportation. The government's failure in taking stringent steps to curb ganja cultivation and illegal transport has made AP centre for ganja mafias", he lambasted.

AP government is using the funds of the famous spiritual centre Sri Satya Sai trust but not

providing facilities to the Sri Satya Sai district, he criticised. "Puttaparthi has earned international reputation for its divine and spiritual activities. But now 'Jindabad and Murdabad' slogans are echoing the place instead of spirituality", he deplored.

Sunil Deodhar flayed that the AP government had adopted an anti-Hindu stand. The Central government is giving huge funds to AP government for various development works. But the AP government is diverting the funds for various other purposes including the implementation of populist schemes, he charged.

"Though the roads in the state are in very bad shape, the government has not taken steps to repair them. No major industry has been established in AP during the three years YSRCP regime", he lashed out. The Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government has failed on all fronts, he said, predicting that the BJP-Janasena alliance would come to power in the net elections.



SP asks bike riders to wear helmets

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Superintendent of Police Malika Garg asked the two-wheeler riders to wear helmets to save lives.

The SP participated here on Saturday in the effective implementation of the 'No Accident Day' drive in the district. She spoke to two-wheeler raiders and explained to them the importance of wearing helmets.

As part of the 'No Accident Day' drive which is being implemented every Saturday to prevent road accidents in the district, the SP initiated an innovative awareness program on helmet-wearing.

The SP personally created awareness for the two-wheelers and the public through a sensitization demo on the importance of wearing a helmet and the dangers of riding without a helmet.

In this demo, the two-wheeler riders who are traveling without a helmet were put on a get-up with bandages and



demonstrated to the public how they suffer severe injuries to the head, hands, and other body parts in the event of a bike accident.

Speaking on this occasion, the SP said when road accidents occur while driving without helmets, the majority of individuals are killed from head injuries, many others suffer from brain damage and fall into a coma, paralysis, and dependent families suffer a lot.

The SP appealed to every two-wheeler

JAGANANNA COLONIES

Motivate beneficiaries to complete units

PNS ■ ELURU

Zilla Parishad Chairman Kavuru Srinivas asked the representatives of the people to lay focus on the construction of houses in the Jagananna colonies and motivate the beneficiaries to expedite the construction process.

Addressing the general body meeting of the Zilla Parishat here on Saturday, he said that all needed amenities would be provided to the Jagananna colonies. The beneficiaries who had been allocated houses in Jagananna colonies should be sensitized to take up the construction of houses with the



assistance provided by the government.

The ZP Chairman said that they should move forward with collective efforts by including everyone in the all-around development of West Godavari district. He said that the ZP's new governing had completed one year and public representatives and officials had contributed a lot to

the development of the district.

He said that crores of rupees had been provided to each of the mandal to carry out development works, and claimed that many development works had already been completed. He said that efforts would be made to bring more funds from the 15th Finance Commission in the coming period.

ZP chairman Srinivas made it clear that efforts would be made to lead the 48 mandals in the combined West Godavari district on the path of development. He said that in the coming 4 years the ZP would go ahead with a comprehensive

plan for further development with the help of the ministers, legislators, MPs, and other public representatives of the district.

Srinivas said that the ZP has passed a resolution to merge the roads which are more than 5 km in length under the jurisdiction of the ZP into the R&B. Even during the coronavirus pandemic the welfare schemes were fully implemented, he said.

The ZP chairman said that the state government is giving utmost priority to education and improving schools and providing facilities under the Nadu-Nedu programme.



All stadiums being developed to encourage sports: Appireddy

PNS ■ GUNTUR

MLC Lella Appireddy said that the government had taken steps to develop all sports stadiums and provide infrastructure to the schools under the Nadu-Ndu scheme to promote sports and encourage players.

The MLC here on Saturday inaugurated 50 the instestate carrom tournament for seniors. Speaking on the occasion, MLC Appireddy said that the state government is giving priority to the sports sector to the ideas and aspirations of Chief

Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Appireddy asserted that all the stadiums in the state were being developed by allocating the required funds, adding that as a part of the Nadu-Nadu scheme, the required equipment for sports is also being made available in all the schools.

The MLC explained that they were also making the NTR Stadium, which was built in the name of Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, a hub for all kinds of sports.

Stating that Guntur district

has earned distinction for sports and called upon players to excel in sports nationally and internationally and bring laurels to the district.

He said that four persons could play carrom by sitting comfortably irrespective of age. The play of carrom enhances concentration in the children.

National coach Abdul Jaleel said that the 50th inter-district carrom state-level tournament is being organised in his own district Guntur and he feels happy about that.

The coach said that the

National Carrom Jubilee Year Tournament would be held from November 7 to 11 in the national capital, Delhi, and the state team to play in the tournament consisting of six players would be announced on September 26.

GDCC bank chairman R a t a m s h e t t i Sitaramanjanyulu, YSRCP state youth wing general secretary Nune Urmaheshwara Reddy, student wing president Panuganti Chaitanya and district carrom association president MKV Prasad were among those present.

Poll reforms: Naqvi bats for 'one nation, one voter list'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Senior BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Saturday battled for the 'one nation, one voter list', saying that there is a need for paramount and path-breaking reforms in the electoral process of the country.

The former minority affairs minister was addressing a conference at an event organised here to celebrate the birth anniversary of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideologue Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay.

"Different voter lists for elections to Panchayat, Municipal Corporation, Municipality, Vidhan Sabha, Lok Sabha and other elections not only create confusion but also raise questions on the credibility of the voter lists. 'one nation, one voter list' and 'one nation, one voter card' can help to solve this problem," he said.

Naqvi said many significant electoral reforms took place in



the year 2000 during the tenure of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee including the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), ban on contesting from more than two places, limit on election expenditure and putting curb on criminalisation in the politics.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also initiated various crucial reforms in the electoral process. The Modi

Government has brought 'electoral bonds' to curb the use of black money by political parties, candidates in elections and to ensure financial transparency in the electoral process," he said.

"The other electoral reforms introduced by Modi also include easy and accessible procedures for voters, expansion of voter ID cards, legal restrictions on money and muscle power, formulating

guidelines for non-serious candidates and political parties and the appeal for 'one nation, one election'," the BJP leader added.

He called Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay an "institution of political purity and probity", terming his principle and ideology an essential and effective lesson for electoral reforms.

Cautioning the people about money and muscle power in electoral politics, the leader said Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Ji had said "vote for a person, not for his purse; vote for a party, not for a person; vote for ideology, not for a party".

Deendayal Ji had also cautioned against opportunism which has nowadays become a 'prevailing political practice', he said.

Naqvi said elections are a festival of democracy, adding that people's faith and enthusiasm towards elections strengthen democratic values in India, the largest democracy of the world.

Both kidneys of Bihar woman 'removed' by nursing home

PNS ■ PATNA/MUZAFFARPUR

The Bihar Police has formed three special teams to nab the owner of a private nursing home and a doctor for allegedly removing both the kidneys of a woman in Muzaffarpur district, an official said on Saturday.

The victim, Sunita Devi - a mother of three children, has been on dialysis at the ICU of Patna's Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS) since September 15.

Police said both of her kidneys were allegedly removed at Shubhkant Clinic, an unauthorised nursing home in Bariyarpur area of Muzaffarpur, where she underwent a uterus-removal surgery on September 3. However, doctors at state-run IGIMS said that more tests are needed to confirm whether both of her kidneys are missing. "Following the uterus-removal surgery, she continued to suffer from stomach pain. She finally went to the Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH) on September 7.

Three leaders of criminal syndicates arrested

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) said on Saturday that three leaders of criminal syndicates were arrested for hatching conspiracies to commit terrorist acts in Delhi and other parts of the country.

Neeraj Sehrawat alias 'Neeraj Bawana' of Delhi, Kaushal alias 'Nareesh Choudhary' of Gurugram, Haryana, and Bhupinder Singh alias 'Bhupi Rana' of Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar in Punjab were arrested on Friday, a spokesperson of the NIA said.

The official said the case relates to involvement of criminal gangs in different kinds of criminal activities, including killings, to terrorise the people to extort money for running and promoting their criminal syndicates and activities.

"These gangs were also raising funds to carry out such criminal activities through smuggling of drugs and weapons, the spokesperson said.

TERROR PLOT



"These gangs were also raising funds to carry out such criminal activities through smuggling of drugs and weapons," the spokesperson said.

The NIA said the case was initially registered by the Delhi Police Special Cell on August 7 against eight accused and other unidentified persons following inputs that members

of a criminal syndicate or gangs based in India and abroad had hatched a conspiracy to carry out terrorist acts in Delhi and other parts of the country.

Shah: Centre giving top priority to strengthen border infrastructure

PNS ■ KISHANGANJ (BIHAR)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that the Narendra Modi government gives top priority to strengthen the country's borders, a reason why expenditure on infrastructure development in these areas has gone up considerably under the current regime.

Addressing personnel of the Sasrastra Seema Bal at the Fatehpur outpost, falling in Bihar's Kishanganj district along the border with Nepal, Shah also underscored the Centre's sensitivity towards welfare needs of those manning the country's international boundaries.

"Between 2008 and 2014, annually around Rs 4,000 crore were spent on border infrastructure projects. This subsequently climbed to nearly Rs 6,000 crore per year, he said



after inaugurating buildings of Fatehpur, Raniganj, Aamgachhi, Pekatola and Beria outposts.

The total money spent on border infrastructure projects under the NDA rule at the Centre has been Rs 44,600 crore, he said.

This has led to a 3.5 times increase in the total length of border roads, Shah told the gathering.

"Our personnel on the borders also chip in with their expertise in times of national calamities and law and order

situations. The government realises this and has been working to provide them and their families with better facilities, Shah said.

To a casual observer it may appear that the SSB has an easy job, having to guard borders with friendly countries like Nepal and Bhutan, he said.

But we know challenges faced by you are no less daunting since patrolling an unfenced area is tricky. Your rapport and goodwill among the local population plays a very important role," observed the home minister.

He mentioned that SSB jawans took part in Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan with enthusiasm, and distributed 10 lakh tricolours among citizens.

Every household you visited with the national flag, ended up developing a rishta (bond) with the security forces, Shah added.

Indian-origin home Secy Suella Braverman wins first Queen award

PNS ■ LONDON

Britain's Indian-origin Home Secretary Suella Braverman has been named winner of the first-ever Queen Elizabeth II Woman of the Year award at a ceremony in London.

The 42-year-old barrister, who was appointed to the Cabinet earlier this month by British Prime Minister Liz Truss, said it was the honour of her life to take on the new role at the Asian Achievers Awards (AAA) 2022 ceremony, dedicated to the memory of the late monarch who passed away recently.

Braverman, the London-born daughter of Tamil mother Uma and Goan-origin father Christie Fernandes, sent a recorded message to the ceremony where her parents collected the award on her behalf.

The awards, now in their 20th year, recognise the



achievements of individuals from across Britain's South Asian community via public nominations.

Other Indian-origin winners across the different categories included broadcaster Naga Munchetty in the media category, chairman and CEO of celebrated visual effects firm DNEG Namit Malhotra in the Arts and Culture category, and Captain Harpreet Chandi in the Uniformed and

Civil Service category for her solo expedition across the Antarctic to the South Pole earlier this year.

Professor Sir Shankar Balasubramanian was named Professional of Year for his pioneering DNA sequencing discovery and Karenjeet Kaur Bains won Sports Personality of the Year as the first female Sikh powerlifter to represent Britain on the global stage.

The judging panel was made up of a diverse range of professionals, including Former Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Bas Javid, former president of the Royal College of General Practitioners Mayur Lakhani, Monzo Bank COO Sujata Bhatia, music producer Bally Sagoo, Welsh Assembly Member Natasha Asghar, and Artistic Director of Darbar Festival, Sandeep Virdee.

'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas' inspired by Gandhian thought

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi government's philosophy of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Prayas' is a Gandhian thought and it rises above "all politics", Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Saturday.

He also described as "a very dangerous trend" the belief among a section of the people that only the philosophy they believed in was right, adding Mahatma Gandhi listened to every point of view.

He was speaking at an event to mark the 90th foundation day of Harijan Sevak Sangh here.

Asserting that all are equal before the law, he said every person, irrespective of his power or history, is bound by the law of the land. Keeping in mind Gandhi's



principles, 90 crore people were provided with free food grain during two years of Covid. This was beyond any country's imagination, Dhankhar said.

"The Mahatma's soul will be satisfied" as the government ensured two doses of coronavirus vaccine to crores of people during the pandemic, he added.

Dhankhar said it was Gandhi's ideology that 18 crore families were given free cooking gas connections to help them get rid of conventional fuels to prepare food.

Further, he said people who were once scared of entering banks were connected to banking at their doorsteps.

Emphasising that Gandhian ideals permeate into the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of the Constitution, he said that Babu's teachings will remain eternally relevant for humanity.

Army capable of giving befitting reply to any power: Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday asserted that the Indian Army has the capability to give a befitting reply to any power looking at the country with evil intentions and when it engages with China now, it does so on an equal footing.

Singh made these remarks at an event to release a five-volume book on Deendayal Upadhyay in the presence of Vice President Jagdeep



Dhankhar.

When China conducted the first nuclear test in 1964, Deendayal Upadhyay was the first one who spoke in favour

of India conducting its nuclear test, Singh said.

When India carried out its first nuclear tests in 1998 in Rajasthan under the leadership of then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the idea was not to use the weapon against any country but to maintain a deterrent, he said.

"Because of that deterrence, the Indian Army today has full confidence of self-defence. Today in 2022, when India's army engages with China, it does so on an equal footing.

SPURT IN DENGUE CASES

Will take several steps soon, school students to be involved

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a spurt in dengue cases in the national capital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said a plan has been devised to combat the vector-borne disease.

In coming days, several steps will be taken and school students will be involved in a big way in the efforts made to check the spread of dengue, he



said. The chief minister said this

after holding a meeting with senior officials of the health department, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and other departments.

Delhi has registered a huge spurt in dengue cases in the last couple of weeks, raising the tally of the vector-borne disease to nearly 400 till September 17 this year.

Video nails 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogan being raised at PFI protest

PNS ■ PUNE

A video has surfaced on social media, which shows that a "Pakistan Zindabad" slogan was allegedly raised during a protest organised by the Popular Front of India (PFI) in Pune, drawing a sharp reaction from the Maharashtra government, which said action would be taken against the slogan shouters.

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said such slogans will not be tolerated in the state, while Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who is

also the Home Minister, said those who indulged in this sloganeering will not be spared.

The video shows that the slogan was raised a couple of times when the PFI activists were being bundled into a police vehicle as part of their detention during the protest held on Friday.

The PFI had organised the protest outside the district collector office to denounce the recent nationwide raids on the outfit and the arrest of its activists. During the protest, the police detained around 40 protesters.

The Pune police said they were investigating the matter.

"We have already registered a case against the PFI members for unlawful assembly and we are looking into the slogans matter," said Sagar Patil, Deputy Commissioner of Police.

An offence against more than 60 protesters has been registered at the Bundgarden police station for organising the agitation without permission, for unlawful assembly and for blocking the road, another official said.

In a tweet, CM Shinde condemned the pro-Pakistan slogan

raised by "anti-social elements".

"The police machinery will take appropriate action against them. Such slogans will not be tolerated in the land of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj," he said.

Speaking in Nagpur, Fadnavis said, "If anyone raises a 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogan in Maharashtra or in India, then that person will not be spared and action will be taken against them. We will find them out wherever they may be and will take action against them."



(in Maharashtra) had allocated land for the project but later refused under the pretext of changing the location, which derailed the project. "Following this, the state (Maharashtra) and the country faced huge economic losses in the last two-and-a-half years," Puri alleged. Puri was apparently referring to the Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemical project, proposed to be built at Nanar village in Ratnagiri district in coastal Konkan, but it was scrapped before the 2019 polls at the insistence of Shiv Sena, the then alliance partner of BJP.

Pay enhanced DA to retired staff of Transport dept: HC



The Madras High Court has directed the Tamil Nadu government and the Administrator of Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation Employees Pension Fund Trust to pay the enhanced dearness allowance to 86,000 retired employees of the State Transport Corporations prospectively

with effect from November this year onwards. When thousands of buses are being operated by the Transport Corporations throughout the State and time and again the government comes forward to give financial assistance of several crore of rupees to bail out their financial condition, yet their pathetic situation has not improved. "This past history and the present situation would clearly disclose that all is not well in the very administration and the functioning of the transport corporations", Justice J Sathya Narayana Prasad observed. The judge gave the direction while disposing of a sub-application arising out of a contempt petition from the State Transport and Transport Corporations Retired Employees Welfare Association, recently.

Woman's name excluded from NRC; SC issues notice



The Supreme Court has sought responses from the Centre and the Assam government on a plea filed by a woman, who was declared a foreigner and her name was excluded from the final National Register of Citizens (NRC), and directed that no

steps be taken for her deportation. A bench of justices D Y Chandrachud and Hima Kohli agreed to hear the plea filed by the woman who has challenged the June 2019 verdict of the Gauhati High Court. The high court had dismissed her petition, thereby affirming the June 2017 order of the Foreigners Tribunal, Bongaigaon, declaring her to be a foreigner who had illegally entered India from Bangladesh after March 25, 1971. Advocate Pijush Kanti Roy, appearing for the woman, told the apex court that all the other members of the petitioner's family were, however, included in the NRC.

‘India is on track to attract US\$ 100 bn FDI this fiscal’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is on track to attract USD 100 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) in the current fiscal on account of economic reforms and ease of doing business, the government said on Saturday.

In 2021-22, the country received the "highest ever" foreign inflows of USD 83.6 billion.

"This FDI has come from 101 countries, and invested across 31 union territories and states and 57 sectors in the country. On the back of economic reforms and Ease of Doing Business in recent years, India is on track to attract USD 100 billion FDI in the current FY (financial year)," the commerce and industry ministry said in a statement. It said that to attract foreign investments, the government has put in place a liberal and transparent policy



The reform measures include liberalization of guidelines and regulations, in order to reduce unnecessary compliance burden, bring down cost and enhance the ease of doing business in India, it added

wherein most sectors are open to FDI under the automatic route. The reform measures include liberalization of guidelines and regulations, in order to reduce unnecessary compliance burden, bring down cost and enhance the ease of doing business in

India, it added.

FDI equity inflows in India dipped by 6 per cent to USD 16.6 billion during April-June period of the current fiscal.

It also said that to address the import of low-quality and hazardous toys and to enhance domestic manufac-

turing of toys, several strategic interventions have been taken by the government.

The import of toys in 2021-22 have reduced by 70 per cent to USD 110 million (Rs 877.8 crore). On the other hand, exports rose by 61 per cent to USD 326 million.

Bank fraud: ED attaches assets of Rajkot company

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday said it has attached the factory plant, machinery, land and plots of a Rajkot-based company as part of a money laundering investigation against it for alleged bank loan fraud to the tune of Rs 44 crore.

The provisionally attached assets of the company called Mandeep Industries are worth Rs 16 crore, the agency said in a statement.

The attachment order has been issued under sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The money laundering case stems from a CBI FIR against the company and the complaint alleged it 'defaulted in repaying loans to the Union Bank of India causing an undue loss to the tune of Rs 44.64 crore to the bank.' The company was availing loan facilities from Union Bank of India and 'diverted' the funds to various fictitious entities, and also to the personal accounts of the partners of the firm, it said.

Solution to multilateralism is reformed multilateralism

PNS ■ NEW YORK

The solution to globalisation is decentralisation and the solution to multilateralism is reformed multilateralism, not a 1945-version of multilateralism, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said.

Speaking at an event titled 'The G20 Imperative: Green Growth and Development for All' organised by the Observer Research Foundation here on Friday, Jaishankar said the two worlds under attack currently are globalisation and multilateralism.

I don't think there's anything wrong with either of them. What is challengeable is how they have been implemented. Has multilateralism failed us? I will say this form of multilateralism in the hands of these people perhaps has not delivered," he said.

Jaishankar was in conversation with UK's Minister of State for Development, Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO),



Vicky Ford and World Economic Forum President Borge Brende in a discussion moderated by President of Observer Research Foundation Samir Saran.

Jaishankar added that the solution is really more multilateralism.

Why are we all here this week?, he said, pointing to the international community gathering in New York during the high-level UN General Assembly week.

"We're all here this week because at the end of the day,

people still believe in the UN, coming here, sitting together, working it out, finding a system, he said.

What is wrong is the narrowness in the thinking of the custodians of the system. And I would argue the same applies to globalisation. The real problem with globalisation is it was so centralised," he said.

"The solution to globalisation is decentralisation. Decentralised globalisation. I would argue the solution to multilateralism is reformed multilateralism, not a 1945 version of multilateralism which is 75-80 years old, he said in a reference to the UN established over seven decades ago.

I think between the conflicts, to COVID, climate change, my sense is we are reaching a kind of a crisis period where the world will have to take some very radical decisions. Whether they get taken in the G20 or outside the G20, in bits and pieces next year, all that we don't know.

BPCL signs pact with Brazil's Petrobras to diversify crude oil sourcing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) on Saturday said it has signed an agreement with Brazilian national oil company Petrobras for sourcing crude oil from the Latin American nation as part of plans to diversify its sourcing needs.

BPCL imports a large volume of crude oil which is turned into fuel such as petrol and diesel at its three oil refineries at Mumbai, Bina in Madhya Pradesh and Kochi in Kerala.

The firm, which gets majority of its supplies from west Asian nations such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia, is looking to diversify its sources of supply in an attempt to cut down reliance on any particular region. Company chairman and managing director Arun Kumar Singh and Petrobras CEO Caio Paes de Andrade signed a memorandum of



understanding (MoU) in Brazil, BPCL said in a statement.

"The signing of the MoU will strengthen future crude oil trade relations between the two companies and explore potential crude import opportunities by BPCL, on a long term basis, especially considering the current geopolitical situations," it said. Speaking on the development, Singh said the association with Petrobras will help in achieving the goal of energy security for the country.

The recent approval by the Union Cabinet to invest in Brazil will help diversify India's crude oil supply.

"Strengthening India's foothold in Brazil will further open business avenues in neighbouring Latin American countries," he said.

Bharat PetroResources Limited (BPRL), the upstream oil and gas exploration and production subsidiary of BPCL, plans to invest USD 1.6 billion to develop an oil block in Brazil.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goel meets Singapore's senior minister

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday met Singapore's Senior Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam and discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation across several areas of mutual interest.

Goel also had an interaction with CEOs & Investors at the Business Roundtable in Singapore and invited them to participate in India's growth story and benefit from the multitude of opportunities.

"Met @Tharman_S, Singapore Senior Minister & Coordinating Minister for Social Policies. Discussed strengthening bilateral cooperation across several areas of mutual interest," Goel tweeted.

"Held an engaging interaction with CEOs & Investors at the Business Roundtable in

Singapore. (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi Govt. has brought about a sea change in India's investment ecosystem. Invited them to participate in India's growth story and benefit from the multitude of opportunities.

Goel also met and addressed the Indian community in Singapore. He thanked them for holding India's flag high.

"Even if India was to grow at a normal pace... on its very own, India will grow to be 30 trillion dollar economy by 2047 when we celebrate 100 years of Independence," he told the Indian community.

He also said, "all of this is possible only because you and I want this to happen."

Nearly 120 Indian business leaders and diaspora attended the community event hosted for Goel by the Indian High Commission in Singapore on Saturday.

Apeejay group partners with Bengal govt agency to operate hotel

PNS ■ DIGHA

Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd has entered into an agreement with a West Bengal government agency to operate a hotel in the International Convention Centre in the state's popular sea resort Digha, officials said.

The agreement was signed between the hospitality major and the Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) in the presence of Digha Sankarpur Development Authority (DSDA) officials, they said.

A KMDA official told reporters here that the agreement was "signed a week back in Kolkata" in the presence of West Bengal Municipal Affairs Minister Firhad Hakim and senior officials of the development agencies.

REITs can raise short-term debt at lower cost: Industry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi's decision to allow Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) to issue commercial papers will help in raising short-term debt at a lower interest cost, according to real estate industry experts. REIT, a popular instrument globally, was introduced in India a few years ago to attract investment in the real estate sector by monetising rent-yielding assets. It helps unlock the massive value of real estate assets and enable retail participation. At present, there are three listed REITs -- Embassy Office Parks REIT, Mindspace Business Parks REIT and Brookfield India Real Estate Trust -- on Indian stock exchanges, but all these are of leased office assets.

On Thursday, Sebi allowed emerging investment vehicles, REIT, and Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT), to issue commercial papers, subject to certain conditions.

Byju's clears US\$ 230 million dues to Blackstone for Aakash acquisition

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Edtech firm Byju's has cleared USD 230 million payment that was due to private equity investment firm Blackstone for acquiring a majority stake in test preparatory firm Aakash Educational Services, according to sources privy to the development.

Byju's had acquired Aakash in April for around USD 950 million. "Byju's paid USD 230 million to Blackstone for acquiring a stake in Aakash," the source told PTI. While it cleared payments that were due to the founder of Aakash in July, the payment of Blackstone was deferred based on a mutual agreement.

Founders of Aakash and Blackstone continue to hold a minority stake in the firm.

Acquisition of Aakash has been positive for Byju's business. Payment to Blackstone and non-closure of USD 800 million funding round due to

non-payment of committed investment from Sumeru Ventures and Oxshott have been two main issues that raised questions on Byju's business performance.

Byju's co-founder and CEO Byju Raveendran at the time of announcing the result had said that the contractual commitment of the two investment firms is still there, but the fund has not come and these entities have not made any investment in the last six months.

Byju's booked a loss of Rs 4,588 crore for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2021, 19

times more than the preceding fiscal.

The losses in the 2020-21 fiscal widened from Rs 231.69 crore in 2019-20. Revenues during FY21 dropped to Rs 2,428 crore from Rs 2,511 crore in FY20. But in the following fiscal, ending March 31, 2022, the company said revenue soared four-fold to Rs 10,000 crore but it did not reveal profit or loss numbers for that year.

Byju's said the losses widened in FY21 mainly on account of deferment of some revenue and losses incurred from WhiteHat Jr.

'Kalin nagari' all set to host 4-day international carpet fair

PNS ■ BHADOHI

Carpet traders of Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district, popularly known as "kalin nagri" for its exquisite weaving skills, are gearing up for a four-day international carpet fair to be held from October 15-18.

Weavers, exporters and all other stakeholders, anxiously waiting for a revival of the industry after Covid pandemic, are expecting to book a handful of overseas shipment orders during the fair to be held in this town for the first time.

Organised by the Carpet Export Promotion Council under the Union textile ministry, the biannual fair was earlier held either at New Delhi or Varanasi.

The fair is scheduled to be held at Bhadohi, less than 50 kilometres from Varanasi, from October 15-18, officials said. Carpet Export Promotion Council chairman Umar Hameed told PTI that the council has sent invitations to 350 importers of 60 countries.

"Foreign importers will be able to reach the fair spot in 30 minutes after landing at Varanasi airport," Mahboob said.

Superintendent of Police Anil Kumar said preparations for the fair are in full swing and all aspects of the event are being looked into.

Talking about the hand-woven carpets made in Bhadohi, Ahmed said, "The technique of carpet making came to Bhadohi from Iran. The carpets made here cannot be copied and the cost is also less, which are the reasons behind its popularity."

Bhadohi carpet has received the GI (Geographical Indicator) tag and the state has also included it in the Centre's ambitious One District One Product scheme.

Bhadohi Assistant Commissioner (industries) Umesh Chandra Verma said that the state government is providing financial assistance under the ODP scheme to boost carpet manufacturing in the district.

MONEY MATTERS

Meesho records 80 % jump in sale with 88 lakh orders



Softbank-backed e-commerce firm Meesho on Saturday said it registered around 80 per cent jump in the business with close to 87.6 lakh orders on Friday, the first day of its five-day festive

season sale. Tier 2, 3 and 4 cities accounted for around 85 per cent of orders on day one, the company said in a statement. "Meesho clocked a record around 87.6 lakh orders on the first day of its flagship festive sale event the Meesho Mega Blockbuster Sale. This is the highest number of orders recorded by the company in a single day up about 80 per cent from day one of previous year's sale," the statement said. The company said that it has received orders from deep corners of the country such as Jamnagar, Alappuzha, Chhindwara, Davenegere, Hassan, Gopalganj, Guwahati, Siwan, Thanjavur and Ambikapur. "With a wide assortment of around 6.5 crore active product listings at lowest prices, the sale exemplifies Meesho's mission towards democratising e-commerce for everyone," it said. Fashion, beauty & personal care, home & kitchen, and electronic accessories were the top-selling categories on day one, while consumers bought everything from sarees to analog watches, jewellery sets, mobile cases and covers, bluetooth headphones, choppers and peelers in record volumes to fulfil their festive shopping aspirations, the company said.

Logiy Spaces, AA Holdings to invest US\$ 37 million in Karnataka



Industrial and logistic park developer Logiy Spaces has tied up with AA Holdings to build a new project at Narasapura, Karnataka with an investment of USD 37 million (around Rs 300 crore). In a statement, AA Holdings, which has

recently been formed by Abhijit Verma, said it has formed a joint venture with Logiy Spaces to invest USD 37 million for the development of 1 million square feet of industrial and logistics park. The project is scheduled for completion by September 2023. "In our endeavour to enable local landowners and aggregators to become successful micro entrepreneurs and fulfil the need for quality commercial spaces in the country, we floated AA Holdings to provide them the right guidance and mentorship," said Verma, the MD and CEO of AA Holdings. "We will be developing 1 million square feet of industrial and logistics park in the suburbs of Karnataka at an investment outlay of USD 37 million. This project will be executed in a joint venture with Logiy Spaces," he added. Narasapura is one of the biggest industrial regions in Karnataka, under the district jurisdiction of Kolar and is well connected to notable cities and highways of Kolar, Malur, Hoskote, Bangalore, Chennai, Chittoor and NH 4 among others.

Amazon India customer base jumps 2-fold



E-commerce firm Amazon India on Saturday said it has recorded a two-fold jump in its customer base from tier 2 and 3 cities during the first 36 hours of its festive season sale. Tier 2 and 3 cities accounted for 75 per cent of the total customer base of the e-commerce major during

its 'Great Indian Festival' sale, an Amazon India spokesperson told PTI. "75 per cent of the customers came from tier 2 and tier 3 cities. We saw 2 times more customers from Tier 2 and 3 cities compared to last year," the spokesperson said. The festive season sale of the company started from September 23 and will end before Diwali next month. The company gave 24 hours early access to Prime members.

Amazon claims to have recorded sale of 10 lakh unique products offered by small and medium business and startups from its platform during the first 36 hours of its festive season sale. The company said its Prime member sign ups grew 1.9 times than last year and 68 per cent of the total new sign ups were from tier 2 and 3 cities. Amazon charges a fee from Prime users for special services but sign-ups comprises both paid and non-paid users. "It is encouraging to witness small and medium businesses, startups, artisans, women entrepreneurs offer a wide selection of products to our customer across India," said Manish Tiwary, Vice President & Country Manager, India Consumer Business, Amazon. According to Amazon, customers showed preference for television brands like Samsung, OnePlus, MI, LG and Sony. The company's Amazon Business segment recorded 50 per cent growth in customers during the present sale. "Amazon Business saw around 50 per cent growth in customers, over 100 per cent jump in orders and more than 200 per cent jump in sales over last year along with a 2 times growth in customers placing bulk orders for their business or corporate gifting needs."

Business leaders must use qualities of heart

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Artificial intelligence may supplement the way people use their heads, but it will never take the place of essential leadership qualities of the heart such as empathy, passion, courage, values, intuition, and purpose, says a new book on leadership.

Leadership expert Bill George and tech entrepreneur Zach Clayton's book "True North: Leading Authentically in the 21st Century" (Emerging Leader Edition) explores the themes of human connection, leadership, values, and identity through an entrepreneurial lens.

The authors say the book, published by Wiley, has been designed with the purpose of

describing leadership principles they have learned during their careers.

"While artificial intelligence will supplement the way we use our heads, it will never take the place of essential leadership qualities of the heart such as empathy, passion, courage, values, intuition, and purpose. As leaders we must develop our hearts to grapple with complex challenges and dilemmas," they write.

The stories in the book come from 50 interviews with exceptional leaders and illustrate that most authentic leaders first discovered their 'True North' through their life stories and crucibles, developed self-awareness, and then found their

Leadership expert Bill George and tech entrepreneur Zach Clayton's book "True North: Leading Authentically in the 21st Century" (Emerging Leader Edition) explores the themes of human connection, leadership, values, and identity through an entrepreneurial lens.

'North Star' - the purpose of their leadership.

The authors say their book is not an analysis of the many crises in the first two decades of the 21st century or the leaders who caused them.

"Rather, this is a calling to you as emerging leaders of the next

generations - Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z - to step up and lead authentically by discovering your True North and following your North Star to make this world a better place," they write. The book features numerous stories of emerging leaders who are already making

a difference like Kabir Barday, Abby Falik, Tracy Britt Cool, and Rye Barcott, along with pioneers from the Baby Boomer generation, like Indra Nooyi, Ken Frazier, Mary Barra, Satya Nadella, Ursula Burns, John Donahoe, and Chip Bergh.

The authors say they wrote this book to enable people to realise their full potential as an authentic leader who has a positive impact on others through their life and work.

"This book will challenge you to reflect on your leadership, your humanity, your values, and your purpose in life," they say. So what are True North and North Star? "Your True North is the moral compass that guides your actions, derived from your

most deeply held beliefs, your values, and the principles you lead by. It is your internal compass, unique to you, that represents who you are at your deepest level. Just as a compass points toward a magnetic pole, your True North points toward your North Star. Your North Star is the purpose that you pursue to make this world better for everyone," the book says.

According to the authors, authentic leaders are characterised by truth-telling, transparency, and trust. "By developing these three qualities - telling the whole truth, being fully transparent, and building trust with all your stakeholders - you gain credibility as an authentic leader."

DECODE 'THOSE' GENES

In a healthy person, BRCA1 (BRest CAncer gene 1) and BRCA2 (BRest CAncer gene 2) are genes that produce proteins that help repair damaged cells. But when these genes carry mutations, they are responsible for higher risk of breast, ovarian and uterine cancers. At least, five to ten per cent of all cancer cases are estimated to be hereditary. Oncologists tell THE HEALTH PIONEER how the new tool, Genetic Testing, can be used in high-risk hereditary patients, to help them opt for risk reduction surgeries as a preventive measure, screening and, regular follow-up.

DR SVS DEO

Head of Surgical Oncology at AIIMS,
Delhi and National Cancer Institute, Jhajjar, Haryana



LACK OF AWARENESS ABOUT THESE CANCERS AMONG PUBLIC, LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF GENETIC COUNSELLING AND TESTING SERVICES, THESE SERVICES ARE MAJOR ROADBLOCKS

People having a family history of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, prostate cancer, colorectal cancer, and cervical cancer can undergo this test to know the risk factor. If the test shows 60-80 per cent risk factor for cancer, then preventive medical care could be started immediately. Available at AIIMS, these simple and affordable genetic tests can detect genetic defects in time. At AIIMS, Delhi we have already conducted 30 risk reduction surgeries in the last few years on patients who were found to be carrying a cancer-causing gene.

Under risk-reducing surgery, a cancer surgeon removes the breasts at risk of cancer and can simultaneously perform breast reconstructive surgery to create new breasts.

None of the patients developed breast cancer or ovarian cancer after risk reducing surgery. Similarly, women with genetic defects can undergo removal of both the ovaries along with Fallopian tubes after birth. This method is 95 % successful in prevention of cancer.

At present, Genetic testing in government settings is only being offered at AIIMS, New Delhi, and at Tata Memorial, Mumbai, at a cost of Rs 15,000 per test.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in India : a 40 % increase in breast cancer cases has been wit-

nessed over the last 20 years. As many as 1.5 lakh new breast cancer cases are diagnosed in India every year.

Lack of awareness about these cancers among doctors and the general public, limited availability of genetic counselling and testing services, and reluctance to avail these services are major roadblocks to preventive health care in cancer treatment.

DR SUSHMA BHATNAGAR

Chief IRCH and National Cancer Institute (NCI) AIIMS,
Jhajjar, Haryana



Women with hereditary gynecological cancers are more worried about the fate of their babies in future. If yes, what they should do. At our Jhajjar institute we already have a dedicated infrastructure and a dedicated team of experts and researchers to work in this area as pre-test counselling and post-test counselling are very important.

Within a year or two, we will be ready with a detailed educational draft guideline to help the family members, including sisters and daughters of the patient know about the genetic testing, their risk of developing breast or ovarian cancer and whether they should or not go for this test.

As this is a relatively new and fast emerging field in oncology, the draft guidelines will also have various modules focussing on increasing awareness among doctors, patients and the public.

FACT FILE

- The genetic factor can raise the breast cancer risk from 4 per cent to 80 per cent and ovarian cancer risk from 1 per cent to 40 per cent.
- On an average, 20% ovarian cancers, 4 to 5% breast cancers and 3 to 5% uterine cancers can be prevented through genetic testing.
- On an average, four in 100 women in a given population get breast cancer, while one in 100 gets ovarian and uterine cancers.

DR NEERJA BHATLA

Professor & Head, Obst & Gynaec & WHO CCR, AIIMS,
Delhi. Head, Gynaec Oncology NCI, Jhajjar, AIIMS



Genetic testing aids by revealing the risk of types of cancers for a woman carrying the mutation. If a breast cancer patient is found carrying a cancer-causing gene, she can be advised to have regular check-ups for timely detection of potential cancers. They have options of having risk-reduction surgeries in which we remove

the normal organ of the patient after the genetic tests reveal the organ is at high risk of malignancy. These tests may also help the patients learn how to manage their risks with personalized cancer screening, and identify preventive steps that they can take to reduce the cancer risk. For those expecting a baby, can look for oncofertility.

DR VAISHALI SHARMA

Senior Gynaecologist, Laparoscopic Surgeon and Infertility Specialist



Genetic Tests is usually helpful in cases of couples with recurrent miscarriages, family history of any genetic diseases, or when woman's age is more than 40 years. There are many types of genetic tests ranging from basic karyotype to detailed whole exom microarray. When only a number of chromosomes or any major genetic abnormalities are suspected, then we do karyotype. In cases where we are looking for any specific genetic disease localised to specific gene on any chromosome, we go ahead with detailed genetic tests like Microarray.

In cases where there is a known genetic disease in

the family, we do a PGD (Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis) test in the embryo before transferring it inside the woman's womb. In cases

GENETIC TESTS IS MOSTLY HELPFUL IN CASES OF COUPLES WITH RECURRENT MISCARRIAGES, FAMILY HISTORY OF GENETIC DISEASES, OR WOMAN IS ABOVE 40 YEARS.

where there is a higher risk of genetic diseases due to the woman's age or history of previous pregnancies with genetic disease like Down's Syndrome, we do PGS (Preimplantation Genetic Screening) test.

DR RANJIT MANCHANDA

Consultant Gynaecological Oncologist at Barts Health NHS Trust, and Clinical Senior Lecturer at Queen Mary University of London



Technology to undertake gene testing on a large scale is now available and needs to be used more for cancer prevention. Identification of women harboring genetic mutations that cause cancer, not only allows their optimum treatment with newly available drugs, but also helps identify unaffected at-risk relatives who can then access screening and preventive strategies.

Ovarian cancer (OC), breast cancer (BC), endometrial cancer (EC) and colorectal cancer (CRC) account for approximately 50% of cancers in women.

There are several effective preventive therapy options like risk-reducing surgery (mastectomy, risk-reducing salpingo-oophorectomy (RRSO) or hysterectomy), chemoprevention (e.g. aspirin or selective estrogen receptor modulators) and screening for women at high risk of breast cancer or CRC to reduce these CSG carrier-associated cancer risks.

In fact, changing the paradigm to population testing can address the limitations in the current clinical genetic testing model for CSGs across healthcare systems. It also provides a forward-looking strategy to maximise precision prevention.

Precision prevention encompasses a prevention strategy that incorporates individual variation in genetic, epigenetic and non-genetic (environmental, hormonal, reproductive and lifestyle) factors.

Genetic tests are available for cancers like:

Breast cancer/Ovarian cancer/Colon cancer/Thyroid cancer/Prostate cancer/ Pancreatic cancer/ Melanoma/ Sarcoma/ Kidney cancer/ Stomach cancer

PROS AND CONS OF GENETIC TESTING

PROS

- A sense of relief from uncertainty.
- In-depth knowledge about one's cancer risk.
- Awareness to help make informed medical and lifestyle decisions.
- Opportunity to help educate other family members about potential risk.

CONS

- Testing may increase anxiety and stress for some individuals.
- Testing does not evaluate a person's risk for sporadic cancers.
- Results in some cases may turn out to be inconclusive or uncertain.

DR RAJIV SARIN

Professor of Radiation Oncology & In-Charge Cancer Genetics Unit at Tata Memorial Hospital & Advanced Centre for Treatment Research & Education in Cancer (ACTREC), Mumbai Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai



hereditary cancer every year, and a third of these families have breast, ovarian or uterine cancers.

There are several good private labs in the country that provide high quality and reliable genetic testing, but the cost, ranging from ₹ 5,000 - ₹ 40,000 is unaffordable for many families. We at TMC have provided free testing under research funded by the Indian Council for Medical Research to a few thousand families so far. The country urgently needs many more counsellors, oncologists as well as geneticists with expertise in handling hereditary cancer in families.

The cost of genetic testing also must be reduced for it to become more accessible to people.

DR NEENA MALHOTRA

Head, IVF Unit AIIMS, Delhi



Genetic testing has significant importance of preserving childbearing function as these women are young and keen to have pregnancies. The cancer treatments lowers the child-bearing potential but with advancements in the field of IVF, it is now possible to share their gametes prior to treatment and freeze them to be used once treatment is over.

COVID-19 Pandemic: The Battles India Won

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India -- a country of 1.3 billion people -- stood in unison to handle the pandemic. The Prime Minister ensured that we not only tackled this pandemic, but also progressed firmly towards an inclusive, accessible and affordable healthcare system, becoming an example for other countries to follow, says Prof (Dr) BALRAM BHARGAVA

The COVID-19 virus continues to linger amidst us since the onset of the pandemic two and a half years back. During this period, India has worked proactively towards solving the complex problems we faced on daily basis.

Now that we can finally sit back and reflect on the learnings from the past challenges and losses imposed by the pandemic, as well as the collective gains made during this challenging time, we are reminded of the countless stories of immense courage, solidarity and enterprise in addressing such an unprecedented health emergency.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India — a country of 1.3 billion people sharing several cultures, geographies and socio-economic backgrounds—stood in unison to tackle the pandemic. The Prime Minister ensured that we not only tackled this pandemic, but also progressed firmly towards an inclusive, accessible and affordable healthcare system. This has now become an example for other countries to follow.

The progress started with the collective efforts by India's researchers' and scientists' communities in streamlining the country's response towards an evidence-based approach to successfully tackle the pandemic.

They worked round the clock to study the virus, establish treatment protocols, create tools and technologies for managing cases and administering of vaccines, and build public awareness around COVID-19 appropriate behaviour. From the beginning of the pandemic, India defied all the odds to become one among the five

nations that successfully isolated the SARS-CoV-2 strain.

This was the first validation of our scientific vigour. Its testing started during January 2022 with just 1 laboratory. Over months, this base has expanded to over 3,300 COVID-19 testing labs spread all across the country. In diagnostics, India swiftly became self-sufficient, as the brightest of India's scientific minds worked on indigenous solutions for devising affordable testing kits for antibody detection. This led to India's emergence as the world's cheapest provider of RT-PCR tests.

Our vaccination ecosystem has always been supported by a strong manufacturing and production capacity which made us one of the leading low-cost vaccine providers across the world.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we utilized the existing mechanisms to successfully develop effective indigenous vaccines. India's first indigenous vaccine 'Covaxin' was developed in a record period of 9 months. It was a testament to India's strategic focus on public-private partnerships which provided the best of products and benefits to people at home as well as abroad.

The next big challenge was vaccination of a large indigenous population, although this was tackled with relative ease; we have achieved the historic milestone of administering vaccines to over 90 per cent of Indian population.

To ensure that these vaccines were widely available, India developed a one-of-a-kind digital platform, Cowin, which ensured easy access to



At a time when other nations were galvanizing their local resources to address the COVID -19 healthcare emergency which was ballooning beyond their control, India came to their rescue by providing them with abundant and affordable life-saving vaccines, testing and treatment aids.

vaccines to people across the country. To make these life-saving vaccines accessible to remote and geographically challenging terrains in India, drones were used which made delivery of vaccines possible in a short time. Like this, there have been several other achievements that helped India ace the pandemic.

While we made progress in preventive healthcare by developing diagnostics and testing kit, we did not forget to share the fruits of our enterprise with other countries across the world.

At a time when other nations were galvanizing their local resources to address the precarious COVID-19 healthcare emergency which was ballooning beyond their control, India came to their rescue by providing them with abundant and affordable life-saving vaccines, testing and treatment aids, and even the safety masks. India also participated in global trials and provided evidence on multiple interventions utilized across the pandemic.

India's multifarious achievements towards addressing Covid-19 pandemic were acknowledged by global leaders who praised India for its 'Vaccine Maitry (Friendship)' initiative which provided over 2,544 lakh vaccine doses to over 100 countries around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic cemented our reputation as a country with compassion, commitment and capacity to provide effective solutions to the global challenges.

We must acknowledge the critical role played by the scientific and medical fraternities in India, as without their collective and dedicated

efforts, such a success would not have been possible. It is also important to appreciate the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who by his constant and holistic support to all the stakeholders in the pandemic situation, ensured things worked efficiently and round-the-clock, and that the morale stayed high even during the most challenging times.

Despite the vicarious nature of an unprecedented health emergency, the Indian Prime Minister took unprecedented measures to ensure people had access to preventive healthcare infrastructure as well as speedy and effective treatment facilities. Without his constant efforts, such a large number of people could not have been vaccinated in time, and many more lives would have been lost.

Every cloud has a silver lining. It is thus not surprising that something good came out of the Covid-19 global health emergency. During the pandemic, our nation — led by an able Prime Minister and guided by its ancient philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' — soared above the daunting challenges to serve people in India and across the world as one large family.

Thanks to our collective efforts to combat an unprecedented pandemic, we are now better prepared to overcome obstacles and function to the best of our capabilities under the guiding principles of hope, health and cooperation.

(The author is Chief, Cardiothoracic Centre, AIIMS, Immediate Past Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR))

NEWSBRIEF

Microrobots treat deadly pneumonia in mice

Nanoengineers at the University of California San Diego have developed microscopic robots, called microrobots, that can swim around in the lungs, deliver medication and be used to clear up life-threatening cases of bacterial pneumonia.

In mice, the microrobots—made of algae cells whose surfaces are speckled with antibiotic-filled

nanoparticles—safely eliminated pneumonia-causing bacteria in the lungs and resulted in 100% survival. By contrast, untreated mice all died within three days after infection.

The results are published in Nature Materials.

The work is a joint effort between the labs of nanoengineering professors Joseph Wang and Liangfang Zhang.

SUGAR-COATED POUCHES IN BODY FLUIDS TO DETECT CANCER

Detection of the cancer microenvironment may soon become much easier with the help of a new molecular biosensor recently developed by a team of India scientists. Cancer cells secrete small pouches, namely extracellular vesicles (EV) covered with sugar molecules. Hyaluronan (HA), which has a direct link to tumour malignancy and is considered a potential biomarker for early diagnosis of colon cancer.

These EVs are abundant in body fluids (blood, faeces, etc.), and all types of cells secrete these EVs into the extracellular matrix. Cancer cells secrete at least two times more EVs into the body fluids than normal cells). Therefore, these EVs could be isolated non-invasively from a patient's body for early cancer diagnosis.

Dr. Tatini Rakshit laboratory, supported by Inspire faculty grant of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), at Shiv Nadar Institute of

Eminence, Delhi, in collaboration with S. N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences (SNBNCBS), Kolkata, Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata and IIT Bhilai, Chhattisgarh has unravelled the contour lengths of HA-coated EVs in cancer helps them to withstand multiple external forces during extracellular transportation, uptake, excretion by cells, adhesion to cell surfaces, etc.

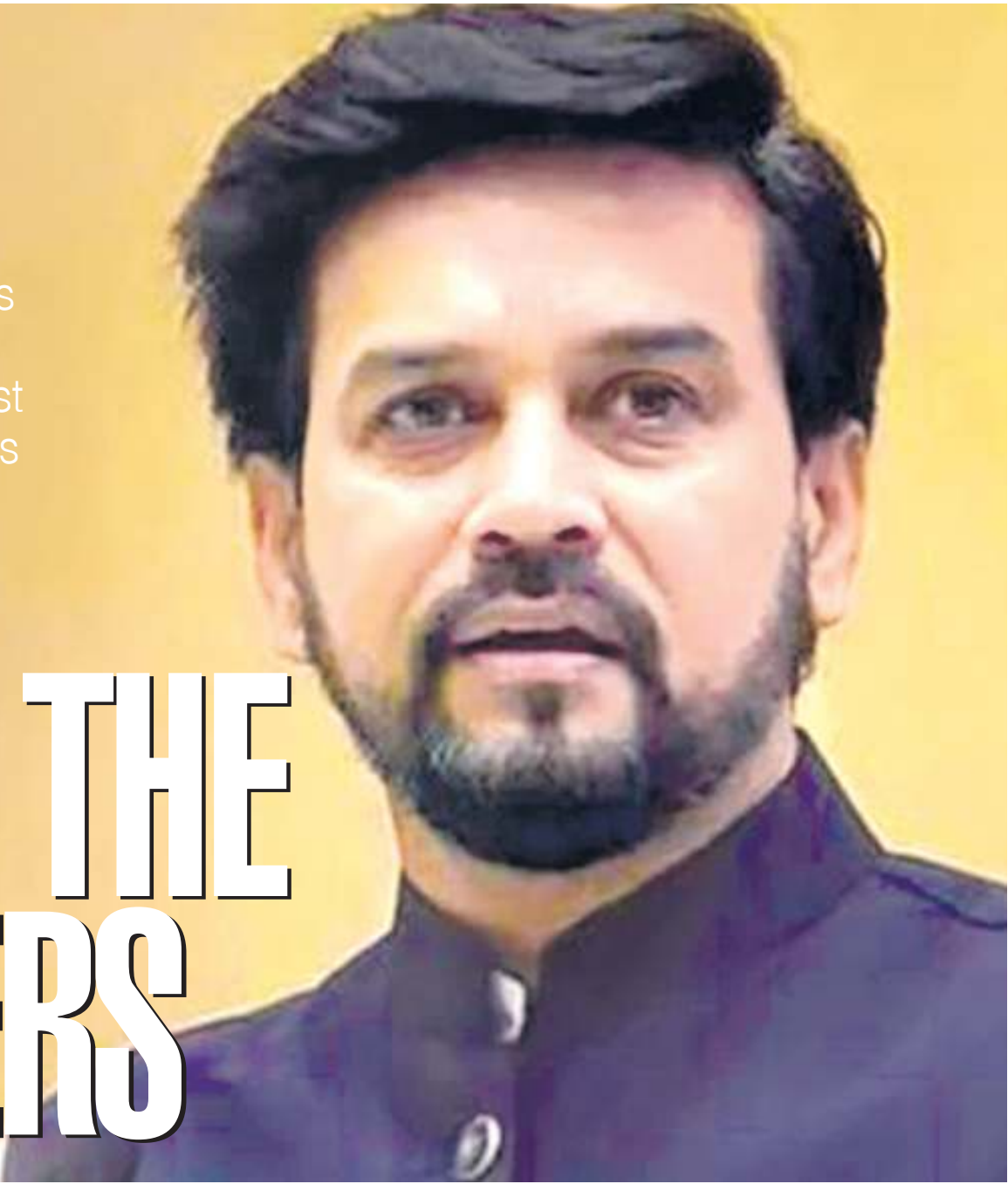
The study has been published in Physical Chemistry Letters.

“Life is tough; and if you have the ability to laugh at it, you have the ability to enjoy it.”
—Salma Hayek



Notwithstanding, the red flag raised by Minister Anurag Thakur and judges of the Supreme Court, TV debates continue to focus on polarizing topics. In many cases, the language and expression of the guests and anchors are both inflammatory and offensive. The media has played little heed to such counsel for sobriety in the past as well. In its blind pursuit of TRP sometimes it becomes a real source of threat to peace and harmony of the country, writes NAVIN UPADHYAY

TIME TO TAME THE RABBLE ROUSERS



The cat is out of the bag. Or it was always out in the open but everyone pretended to look the other way, till its low growl turned into a high-pitched roar and its threat menacing and imminent. No offenses to the canines, though; we are referring to the big cats of the TV screens.

Two back-to-back whistleblowing—first by Union Information and Broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur, and second by the Supreme Court of India—underline the threat posed by the TV anchors, to both the mainstream media itself and the peace and harmony of the country.

Notwithstanding, the red flag raised by the Thakur and judges of the Supreme Court, the TV debates continue to focus on polarizing topics. In many cases, the language and expression of the guests and anchors are both inflammatory and offensive. The media has played little heed to such counsel for sobriety in the past as well. In its blind pursuit of TRP sometimes it becomes a real source of threat to peace and harmony of the country.

Not for nothing, speaking at the 7th Annual Gathering and 20th Meeting of Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), Thakur focused his speech on the threat posed by such dangerous debates.

Speaking on the occasion Thakur has said that the biggest threat to mainstream media is not from new age digital platforms but from the mainstream media channel itself.

The minister said inviting guests who are polarizing, who spread false narratives and who shout at the top of their lungs damages the credibility of a channel. “Your decisions regarding the guest, the tone, and visuals - define your credibility in the eyes of the audience. The view may stop for a minute to watch your show, but will never trust your anchor, your channel or brand as a trusted and transparent source of news”, he added.

Turning to the audience, the Minister asked “Are you going to watch as the younger audience switches and sweeps through the shrill on TV news or are you going to bring back the Neutrality in NEWS and Discussion in DEBATES to stay ahead of the game?”

A day later, on September 21, the Supreme court expressed serious concern at the hate speeches in the media and hinted that it might put in some regulations/guidelines to check the menace.

Upset that the Government has done nothing to curb the propagation of hate speeches in the media, the Court asked the Government of India “why it is standing as a mute witness when all this is happening”.

A bench of Justices KM Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy was hearing a batch of writ petitions seeking the Court’s intervention to regulate hate speech.

“What are the provisions of law which relates to Hate Speech in India?”, Justice Joseph asked when the hearing started.

This is the crux of the matter. Hate speech is not defined under any law, though there are

specific provisions to check them.

In its report submitted to then I@B minister Ravishanker Prasad in March 2017, the Law Commission of India underlined the following legislation to deal with hate speech.

(i) *the Indian Penal Code, 1860* (hereinafter IPC)

- Section 124A IPC penalises seditious
- Section 153A IPC penalises ‘promotion of enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony’.
- Section 153B IPC penalises ‘imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration.
- Section 295A IPC penalises ‘deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs’.
- Section 298 IPC penalises ‘uttering, words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person.
- Section 505(1) and (2) IPC penalises publication or circulation of any statement, rumour or report causing public mischief and enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes.

(ii) *the Representation of The People Act, 1951*

- Section 8 disqualifies a person from contesting an election if he is convicted of indulging in acts amounting to the illegitimate use of freedom of speech and expression.
- Section 123(3A) and section 125 prohibit the promotion of enmity on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, or language in connection with an election as a corrupt electoral practice and prohibits it.

(iii) *the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955*

- Section 7 penalises incitement to, and encouragement of untouchability through words, either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise

(iv) *the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988*

- Section 3(g) prohibits religious institution or its manager to allow the use of any premises belonging to, or under the control of, the institution for promoting or attempting to promote disharmony, feelings of enmity, hatred, ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.

(v) *the Cable Television Network Regulation Act, 1995*

- Sections 5 and 6 of the Act prohibit transmission or re-transmission of a programme through cable network in contravention to the prescribed programme code or advertisement code. These codes have been defined in rules 6 and 7 respectively of the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994.

(vi) *the Cinematograph Act, 1952*



COMMENTING ON THE ROLE OF THE ANCHORS IN PROPAGATING HATE SPEECH, JUSTICE JOSEPH SAID - “THE ROLE OF THE ANCHOR IS VERY IMPORTANT. HATE SPEECH EITHER TAKES PLACE ON MAINSTREAM TELEVISION OR IT TAKES PLACE IN SOCIAL MEDIA. SOCIAL MEDIA IS LARGELY UNREGULATED....AS FAR AS MAINSTREAM TELEVISION CHANNEL IS CONCERNED, WE STILL HOLD SWAY, THERE THE ROLE OF THE ANCHOR IS VERY CRITICAL BECAUSE THE MOMENT YOU SEE SOMEBODY GOING INTO HATE SPEECH, IT’S THE DUTY OF THE ANCHOR TO IMMEDIATELY SEE THAT HE DOESN’T ALLOW THAT PERSON TO SAY ANYTHING FURTHER. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY TIMES SOMEBODY WANTS TO SAY SOMETHING HE IS MUTED, A PERSON IS NOT GIVEN PROPER TIME, HE IS NOT EVEN TREATED COURTEOUSLY”



- Sections 4, 5B, and 7 empower the Board of Film Certification to prohibit and regulate the screening of a film.

(vii) *the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973*

- Section 95 empowers the State Government, to forfeit publications that are punishable under sections 124A, 153A, 153B, 292, 293 or 295A IPC.
- Section 107 empowers the Executive Magistrate to prevent a person from committing a breach of the peace or disturbing the public tranquility or to do any wrongful act that may probably cause breach of the peace or disturb the public and tranquility.
- Section 144 empowers the District Magistrate, a Sub-divisional Magistrate or any other Executive Magistrate specially empowered by the State Government on this behalf to issue an order in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger. The above offences are cognizable and thus have serious repercussions on the liberties of citizens and empower a police officer to arrest without orders from a magistrate and a warrant as in section 155 CrPC.

The commission suggested amendment to the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 by adding new provisions on ‘Prohibiting incitement to hatred’ following section 153B IPC and ‘Causing fear, alarm, or provocation of violence in certain cases’ following section 505 IPC, and accordingly amending the First Schedule of the CrPC.

The commission in its report said that hate speech has always been a live debate in India and the issue has been raised time and again before the legislature, the court as well as the public. In *Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court dealt with a case where the petitioners prayed that the State should take peremptory action against makers of hate speech, the Commission said, and added, the Court did not go beyond the purview of existing laws to penalise hate speech as that would amount to ‘judicial overreach’.

“The Court observed that the implementation of existing laws would solve the problem of hate speech to a great extent. The matter was referred to the Law Commission to examine if it ‘deems proper to define hate speech and make recommendations to the Parliament to strengthen the Election Commission to curb the menace of “hate speeches” irrespective of, whenever made’, the commission said.

Justice Joseph suggested that the government should come forward to put in place an institution to check hate speech. The court also asked the Government to clarify whether it proposes to act on recommendations of the Law Commission of India regarding amendments to deal with hate crimes.

The Centre told the court that only 14 states have given their response to the Law commission’s recommendation. The Sc

directed the remaining states to immediately file their replies and asked Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde to collate the responses of the States.

Commenting on the role of the anchors in propagating hate speech, Justice Joseph said - “The role of the anchor is very important. Hate speech either takes place on mainstream television or it takes place in social media. Social Media is largely unregulated....As far as mainstream television channel is concerned, we still hold sway, there the role of the anchor is very critical because the moment you see somebody going into hate speech, it’s the duty of the anchor to immediately see that he doesn’t allow that person to say anything further. Unfortunately, many times somebody wants to say something he is muted, a person is not given proper time, he is not even treated courteously”.

Justice Joseph went on to add: Freedom of expression of the press, we don’t have it separately unlike the US....there should be free debate no doubt about it but, you should also know where to draw the line because there is a huge influence, particularly with the visual media....they produce a very serious effect on your brain. Freedom is for the listener. The freedom of speech is actually for the benefit of the listener. How would the listener ever make up his mind after listening to a debate where it is just a babble of voice, you cannot even make out what is happening.”

When Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde stated that, “the industry is unregulated and there are no sanctions” one of the petitioners Ashwini Upadhyay countered, “Until hate speech is defined this will go on.”

Asserting that hate speech poisons the very fabric, and can’t be permitted, Justice Joseph said, “Political parties will come and go but the nation will endure the institution including press it is the important part, without an independent press no country can go forward, it is important that we have true freedom, there”, Justice Joseph said.

“Stressing the need for a regulatory mechanism, Justice Joseph continued: “The problem is we don’t have a regulatory mechanism for TV. I believe that all channels were fined heavily in England. We don’t have that system here. Law means sanction, sanctions must be effected...the problem is that they are not being dealt with firmly. If sanctions are effected this will go... Any anchor will have his views, any anchor will not diverge from the view the channel is taking, they will all be intertwined, you can’t divulge from it, but what is wrong is when you have people of different views you are calling them and you are not allowing them to express those views....in doing that you are bringing hate and your TRP is going up and you are driven by that and nobody is going to look into it and take care of it then it is very sad”.

(The writer is Executive Editor, The Pioneer)

Copyright falls prey to mighty Internet

Globalisation and post-globalisation have brought us ever closer to each other. This intricate journey was only made possible by a vast network of information and communication technologies (ICTs). As a result, we all have experienced a slew of modernisation, standardisation and deterritorialisation drives all around the world. At the heart of this colossal process lies a “superior and never seen before” brand new upheaval called “information revolution”. As this information is gone in the great internet machine, it has witnessed another global movement called the digital revolution. The information revolution accompanied by the digital revolution has pushed knowledge beyond the control of the sovereign nation-states.

Before moving into the problems and prospects of safeguarding the copyright laws, let us see what copyright is all about. Copyright is regarded as “author’s right”. In legal terms, it is meant to describe the set of rights that the creators or the owners have over their literary and artistic works. The very word “works” refer to books, music, paintings, sculptures, films, computer programmes, databases, advertisements, maps and technical drawings as specified by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Regardless of the WIPO conventions and other relevant global covenants, the copyright law is territorial and national in scope. Therefore, wherever an author or a creator resides or his work is first published, the applicability of the copyright protection depends on the national laws of the country in which the particular author demands protection. The term of a copyright law depends on several factors such as whether the work has been published or if so, the date of its first publication. Once it is published, the copyright lasts for the life of the author and additional 70 years after his/her death. Under the US Copyright legislation, an anonymous work, a pseudonymous work or a work made for hire, the copyright is guaranteed for a period of 95 years from the year of its first publication or a period of 120 years

from the year of its creation, whichever expires first.

Precisely, there is nothing like international copyright law applicable to all the nations. Therefore, no single copyright law can protect an author’s work throughout the world with a single registration like the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) that allows patent filing in a multinational context. Nevertheless, nearly 180 nations have already ratified the historic Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works of 1886, administered by the WIPO. This convention sets a minimum standard for the protection of the rights of the creators of the copyrighted works across the nations. Besides, there have been serious efforts to bring copyright legislations under one single umbrella among the members of the European Union (EU). However, the biggest challenge to this harmonisation effort is emerging from a host of numerous national copyright laws currently existing in the EU nations. The Berne Convention, apart from calling for establishing minimum standards of protection, has two unique principles: “National Treatment” and “Automatic Protection”. The first principle of “National Treatment” underlines that works originating in one signatory nation are given the same protection in other signatory nations as each grant to works of its creators. The second principle of “Automatic Protection” refers to the idea that copyright inheres automatically in a qualifying work upon its fixation in a tangible medium and without any required prior formality.

Indeed, the origin of the global copyright governance system is very much linked to the invention of the printing machine by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany around 1440. By 1483, when printing machines reached England, various monarchs starting from King Richard III to King Henry in 1553 shaped a new regime of copyright that later defined the international copyright governance. Then, the era from 1661 to 1911 witnessed the evolution of a detailed copyright law in Britain.

Now in India, we have a



defined copyright regime, and its roots lie in the long British colonial regime. The copyright legislation was first introduced in India in 1874 during the time of East India Company. This act was replaced by the Copyright Act of 1914 which was just a replica of the then existing Copyright Act of 1911 in Britain. When India became independent, we got our first Copyright Act in the year 1957 which came into practice in 1958. The new Act immediately replaced the colonial

copyright laws thereafter. The same Copyright Act was subsequently amended in 1983, 1984, 1992, 1994 and 1999. Again, the Copyright Act was amended in 2012. It was done to bring the Copyright law into compliance with the WIPO treaties such as the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT). Further it must be highlighted that the obligation under Article 11 of Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property

Rights (TRIPS) which came into effect under the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, Article 7 of the WCT and Article 9 of the WPPT are to provide for commercial rental rights for computer programmes and cinematograph films. This right was introduced in India by using the word “hire” in Section 14 of the current Copyright Act. Thus, the Indian Copyright Law is now capable of addressing both national and global concerns under the new global gover-

nance regime brought by the WTO-TRIPS.

In spite of having a globally effective IPR regime, the information revolution and digital revolution have pushed knowledge maintenance to the brink of a serious danger. We receive information so very easily that we don’t even realise the worth of the creator or the owner. Information superhighway is widely perceived as a modern-day colonial tool both to subjugate and exploit the massive resources from the Global South by the rich and technologically advanced nations from the Global North.

With connectivity growing at an unimaginable speed, people are increasingly becoming restless. Once powerful nation-states seem to surrender to market forces. What Karl Marx, the legendary German socialist thinker, prophesied in the 19th century about the “withering away of the state” (capitalist) is now turning right at the very heart of the capitalist nations. Nonetheless the bitter truth is that today the mighty western liberal nation-state is facing challenges from several points, and they are all multinational forces. These counterforces are not only transnational corporations and the gigantic markets controlled by them but also from civil and human rights movements, global civil society and international non-governmental organisations and at times from international terrorist organisations consistently backed by very strong radical religious movements. It is all spearheaded by the availability of knowledge networks accompanied by advancements in communication and technology networks. Super knowledge owners like Google, Microsoft, Facebook and a host of other electronic platforms have made learning available to all. And it is both a boon and bane. The information superhighway is now dominated by a large network of MNCs mostly based in advanced nations like the US, Japan, the UK, Germany, France, Canada, etc. The global flow is in their hands. The poor and developing nations are at the mercy of these gigantic corporations controlled by the developed countries.

The world is now at a crossroads. Knowledge has exploded. The owners of knowledge are finding it too difficult to protect their creations. The intriguing part of the TRIPS and post-TRIPS global IP regime is that they all have failed to address the pitfalls of the huge information revolution. Today no single person or enterprise is the sole owner of knowledge or any other technical knowhow. It is fully diffused. It is there everywhere. Then how to safeguard it and how the creators will be benefitted from their long hard work? The solution to this problem is too complex.

The global and national copyright legislations are facing an uphill task today. Nowhere the knowledge is safe. And there is no place to hide. Of course, there are stringent punishments awarded to law breakers, but then there is no end to predators till date. Frankly, the wide network of the transnational forces has weakened the long hand of the copyright law that used to be there much before the advent of the mighty Internet. Today the global knowledge economy is beyond the reach of the nation-state. Therefore, the knowledge networks that are supposed to aid all and share the benefits of innovations do not accord equal power to all. It further leads to a great digital divide between the countries of the North and the South. And this is creating an uneven world of knowledge. There is a large gap between access to knowledge and exploiting the benefits of the same in both sides of the globe. Today the global knowledge economy has gone beyond the arms of the copyright laws. It has long been Microsoftified. Thus the owners of knowledge are solely in the hands of the big corporations of the advanced nations.

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international journal.)



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Tobacco ads: Celebrities shirk moral responsibility

Professional ethics entail a cluster of values and principles that guide the behaviour of the professionals concerning what is right and what is wrong based on loyalty, accountability, honesty, and respect for the law. Hence, the celebrities’ acts of promoting harmful practices like tobacco consumption certainly are incompatible with the professional moral principles that posit serving larger social interests



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The “smoking zone” has been shifted from industrialised developed countries to developing countries. While eighty per cent of the 1.3 billion tobacco users belong to the third-world countries, India sees more than a million deaths due to tobacco consumption accounting for 9.5 per cent of all deaths. Going by a World Health Organization report of 2014, a scary health concern induced by tobacco consumption puts a heavy burden on India’s economy as around 53 per cent of the tobacco-related deaths are attributed to non-communicable diseases and 80 per cent of them include chronic respiratory diseases, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes. Accordingly, it is no surprise that the Indian state has been struggling to reduce tobacco consumption by 30 per cent by 2025.

At this juncture, promoting tobacco consumption by cinema celebrities is indeed not only depressing but also immoral, unsocial if not completely illegal. In a country like India, the cinema celebrities are often followed and imitated by the people passionately. Such fan following is often capitalised on by the big business and corporate bodies to further their business interests. It is not uncommon to see the people imitating the dressing and other

styles of the cinema celebrities in their daily life. Such imitations reflect upon the tremendous effect the celebrities have on the fans. While these celebrities are well within their rights to endorse a brand, the promotion of tobacco consumption invites criticism on moral and social grounds, for society demands a minimum amount of moral and social responsibilities from the public figures.

Accordingly, the general actions of the cinema celebrities and their acts of promoting tobacco consumption warrant moral scrutiny. These actions of promoting something as bad as tobacco that has negative implications on human health and societal integrity can be evaluated on various moral parameters. First, the performance of the action in the realm of restricted individual liberty (harm principle) can be employed. According to utilitarian philosopher John Stuart Mill, two types of actions are performed by humans: Self-regarding action (SRA); and Other-regarding action (ORA). The SRA is the one that influences the agent himself or herself. Explaining further, Mill says, an action ceases to be an SRA when it directly impairs others. However, the ORA is the one that affects others and thus it entails moral criticism.



This distinction, fundamentally, serves as a base for the broader horizon of individual liberty as well as serves as a reason to delimit individual liberty by justifying the state/country’s interference in it. The state’s interference in individual liberty is conditioned by the “Harm Principle” which says, “The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant”. It entails

that the harmful ORA of an agent morally permits others, including the state, to intervene in individual liberty. Thus, the state has the right to interfere in an individual’s liberty when it is required for the well-being of others/society. However, drawing a sharp line between SRA and ORA is difficult which leads to the claim that they both overlap each other and the act of promoting tobacco consumption is a good example in this regard.

Although the cinema celebrities do have their liberties to select the

roles to enact, the platform and the message they want to deliver through the act cannot be left unevaluated. With a clear knowledge that tobacco causes irrecoverable diseases and immense suffering, the action of the cinema actors’ promotion of tobacco consumption certainly influences the common people in many ways, eventually harming their bodies. Thus, these other-regarding actions of the celebrities fail to satisfy the condition which prevents the state to interfere and it is immoral as well since it ceases to bring maximum good in maximum number. While the state is taking major steps in the form of enacting laws to prevent tobacco consumption, those laws should include taking stringent actions against those who foster harmful practices like tobacco consumption despite their social position.

The second moral issue concerning advertising tobacco centres on the action itself. It violates the moral universal humanity principle that says, “act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end.”

In other words, this principle entails that an agent should act in

such a way that action never uses humans as means for any end. On the contrary, the cinema celebrities are using, though indirectly, other humans for their vested interests of making fortune ignoring their moral responsibility and respect towards other fellow humans and the society. Accordingly, these celebrities fail to satisfy the humanity principle since they are using others in the form of exploiting the passionate emotions of the common humans and thereby these celebrities lap into the sphere of immorality.

Moreover, it is pertinent to reiterate that the noble professions tend to serve the well-being of fellow humans and society alike. Professional ethics entail a cluster of values and principles that guide the behaviour of the professionals concerning what is right and what is wrong based on loyalty, accountability, honesty, and respect for the law. Hence, the celebrities’ acts of promoting harmful practices like tobacco consumption certainly are incompatible with the professional moral principles since it entails responsibilities to serve larger social interests.

(The writer is ethical consultant, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru)

IF PUTIN CARRIES OUT THREATS...

Sanctions and isolation for Russia, more arms for Ukraine

How do American leaders and their allies intend to respond if President Vladimir Putin seeks to escalate his way out of a bad situation on Ukraine's battlefields, and makes good on renewed threats of annexing territory or even using nuclear weapons?

At least to start with, by trying to double down on the same tactics that have helped put Russia in a corner in Ukraine, US and European leaders have made clear: more financial penalties and international isolation for Russia, more arms and other backing for Ukraine.

That won't necessarily be easy. It's been tough enough staying the current course of persuading all of dozens of allies to stick with sanctions and isolation for Putin, and persuading more ambivalent countries to join in. Global financial and energy disruptions from Russia's war in Ukraine already promise to make the coming winter a tough one for countries that have depended on Russia for their energy needs.

And there's no sign of US or NATO officials matching Putin's renewed nuclear threats with the same nuclear bluster, which in itself might raise the risks of escalating the conflict to an unimaginable level. Even if Putin should act on his nuclear threat, President Joe Biden and others point, without details, to an ascending scale of carefully calibrated responses, based on how far Russia goes.

To start with, they'll become more of a pariah in the world than they ever



have been, Biden told CBS' 60 Minutes just ahead of Putin's new wartime measures and renewed nuclear threat.

What they do will determine what response would occur, Biden said on the nuclear side, adding that the US responses in that case would be consequential.

I do not believe the United States would take an escalatory step in the event of a one-off, limited nuclear detonation by Russia aimed at trying to scare Ukraine and its supporters off, said Rose Gottemoeller, former deputy NATO secretary-general and former US undersecretary of state for arms control. Certainly, it would not respond with nuclear weapons.

Putin this week pledged to use all available means to stave off any challenges as Russia moves to summarily claim more Ukrainian territory despite heavy losses on the battlefield to NATO-armed Ukrainian forces. In case NATO missed the point, another senior Russian political figure specified the next day that included nuclear weapons. Putin also mobilized Russian fighters to throw into the seven-month invasion of Ukraine, and announced

votes in parts of Ukraine that the West says are meant to provide political cover for illegally absorbing those regions into Russia.

US and European Union officials say new sanctions are in the works in response to Putin's latest moves. Russia, its political leadership, and all those involved in organising these referenda' as well as in other violations of international law and international humanitarian law in Ukraine will be held accountable," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell pledged this week, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

But political declarations are the easy part. It's unclear what type of measures can be agreed upon, as the financial punishments against Russia are also increasingly inflicting pain on other European economies weighed down by high electricity and natural gas prices and spiralling inflation. Hungary has led resistance to sanctions that might hit its supplies from Russia, but it isn't alone

in hesitating.

New sanctions may come only after much debate and hand-wringing among the 27 EU member countries in coming weeks, probably only after Russia has held its referendums.

The last round of sanctions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine was announced May 4, but only agreed on four weeks later, as concerns over oil divided member countries. Rather than a new set of sanctions, a maintenance and alignment package was sealed in July, mostly to close loopholes on measures already agreed upon. Pressed by reporters in



New York for details about what might be coming, Borrell said the sanctions would target new areas of the Russian economy, especially if I can be a little more concrete the technological ones.

Ursula von der Leyen, who heads the EU's executive branch the European Commission which has been responsible for drawing up most of the sanctions, also appeared resolute, but she was hardly more forthcoming. We stand ready to impose further economic costs on Russia and on individuals and entities inside and outside of Russia who support (the war), politically or economically. Plus we will propose additional export controls on civilian technology as Russia moves to a full war economy, she told CNN.

Beyond the economic sanctions, the EU since Russia's February invasion of Ukraine has slapped asset freezes and travel bans on more than 1,200

Russians, including Putin, Russia's foreign minister and other senior officials.

As unrest spreads, Iranian govt scrambles to contain it

The large-scale protests against the Iranian government over the custodial death of a 22-year-old Kurdish woman who was arrested by the country's notorious "morality" police for allegedly violating the strict law on headscarves has reportedly spread to about 80 cities and towns.

Hundreds of protesters, mostly women, took to the streets following the death of Mahsa Amini - a Kurd native, chanting anti-government slogans that target the core of the Islamic regime and its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The death toll in the violent clashes with security forces has reached as high as 26, Iranian state TV indicated on Friday. The unrest, said to be the worst in recent years, has also



spread to about 80 Iranian cities and towns.

At least five security personnel have also been killed and several others injured while trying to confront protesters in Mashhad, Quchan, Shiraz, Tabriz, and Karaj, it added.

Amini's tragic death has fuelled an outpouring of long-simmering anger over restrictions on personal freedoms in the Islamic nation.

In the past days, some protesting women have set their headscarves on fire on the

streets in what can be described as an unprecedented act of disobedience, while men burned banners of the Supreme Leader in several towns including religious cities of Qom and Isfahan.

Protesters also tore and burned posters of Qasem Soleimani - the Revolutionary Guard commander who was killed in a US drone strike in January 2020 - in his hometown Kerman. The late commander is celebrated as a symbol of the Iranian regime's strategic power projection in Syria and Iraq.

Iranian law requires all women to wear a head covering and loose-fitting clothing while in public places. The rule has been enforced since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and it is obligatory for every woman in the country.

National Cinema Day draws over 6.5 million

Over 6.5 million people went to the theatres on National Cinema Day, which was celebrated on Friday to commemorate the successful reopening of movie halls, the Multiplex Association of India (MAI) has announced.

More than 4000 screens from across the country, including cinema chains like PVR, INOX, Cinepolis, Carnival, Miraj, Citypride, Mukta A2, Movie Time, Wave, M2K and Delite, participated in the initiative.

As part of the one-day event, various cinema halls started shows at 6 am on Friday, offering "celebratory admission price" of Rs 75.

Audiences of all ages came together to celebrate this historic day at the cinemas. We are thankful to the 6.5 plus million moviegoers who attended their local cinema to purchase movie



tickets, making 23 September the highest attended day of the year for the Indian cinema industry," MAI president Kamal Gianchandani said in a statement. Theatres across the country have been struggling to record a decent footfall since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The National Cinema Day, which was celebrated weeks after the release of Ranbir Kapoor-Alia Bhatt's blockbuster hit "Brahmastra: Part One Shiva", led to a good turnout.

NASA delays moon rocket launch due to potential hurricane

NASA is skipping next week's launch attempt of its new moon rocket because of a tropical storm that's expected to become a major hurricane.

It's the third delay in the past month for the lunar-orbiting test flight featuring mannequins but no astronauts, a follow-up to NASA's Apollo moon-landing programme of a half-century ago. Hydrogen fuel leaks and other technical issues caused the previous scrubs.

Currently churning in the Caribbean, Tropical Storm Ian is expected to become a hurricane by Monday and slam into Florida's Gulf coast by Thursday.

The entire state, however, is in the cone showing the probable path of the storm's center including NASA's Kennedy Space Centre.

World Bank president says won't resign over climate remark

World Bank President David Malpass said Friday he won't resign after coming under criticism for his remarks earlier this week regarding climate change.

At an event sponsored by The New York Times on Tuesday, Malpass wouldn't answer directly when asked whether the burning of fossil fuels has contributed to global warming. Instead, he said, "I am not a scientist."

In an interview with Politico Friday, Malpass said he wouldn't resign, and that he hasn't been asked to do so by any of the bank's member governments. He acknowledged he should have done a better job responding to questions on Tuesday, including from former Vice President Al Gore, who asked if he was a "climate denier."

"When asked, are you a climate denier? I should have said no," he said. But he said he did not plan to resign.

Malpass also said the World Bank is taking a forceful leadership position on climate issues.

Malpass was nominated to the

position by former President Donald Trump in 2019, under the longstanding tradition that allows the US to choose the head of the World Bank and European governments to pick the head of the International Monetary Fund. His five-year term ends in April 2024.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Friday that the Biden administration disagrees with Malpass' comments suggesting climate change is not caused by human activity.

Jean-Pierre did not say whether the administration would seek to remove Malpass, as that would require the approval of

other World Bank members.

The Treasury Department will hold Malpass accountable, Jean-Pierre said, "and support the many staff working to fight climate change at the World Bank. But again, removal would require a majority of stakeholders."



Hindu woman, 2 girls abducted, converted



A woman and two teenage girls belonging to the Hindu community have been kidnapped with two of them forcibly converted to Islam and married to Muslim men in Pakistan's Sindh province, the latest in a string of such atrocities committed against members of the minority community.

Meena Meghwar, 14, was abducted from the Nasarpur area and another teenage Hindu girl was kidnapped while returning home from the market in Mirpurkhas town, police said.

In the third instance, a married Hindu woman with three children went missing from Mirpurkhas and later showed up after allegedly converting to Islam and

marrying a Muslim man.

In the last case, police have refused to register an FIR on the complaint of the woman's husband Ravi Kurmi who says she was forcibly abducted and converted to Islam by their neighbour Ahmed Chandio who used to harass her wife.

A local police officer in Mirpurkhas said all three cases are being investigated. The officer, however, said married woman Rakhi claims she converted and married the Muslim man of her own will.

The abduction and forcible conversion of young Hindu girls have become a major problem in the interior of Sindh province which has a large Hindu population in Thar, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Ghotki and Khairpur areas. Most of the Hindu community members are labourers.

We can use drones to learn more about active volcanoes

Volcanic eruptions cannot be predicted with 100 per cent certainty. However, details about an upcoming eruption can be estimated using the hot and smelly gases a volcano produces.

These gases provide clues about the timing, duration or severity of upcoming eruptions which can help local authorities decide if and when the surrounding communities need to be evacuated.

On average, there are up to 50 volcanoes actively erupting on the planet at any given time. Many of these volcanoes are more likely to be spewing hot gases like steam and carbon dioxide than lava. Collecting these gases is key to understanding the mysterious ways of volcanoes, but it can be dangerous.

Now, drones are making it safer and easier than ever before.

Gassy volcanoes

For the better part of the last decade, I have been visiting such gassy volcanoes regularly to catch them just before, during or after an eruption.

I have worked with other scientists and engineers to measure volcanic gases with a variety of devices attached to



drones.

Our latest research uses drones to capture volcanic carbon dioxide at Po's volcano in Costa Rica. We measured the isotopes of carbon in this carbon dioxide and discovered a pattern in the way these chemical fingerprints change during different stages of activity.

Unique carbon makeup

Carbon dioxide is everywhere: in the air we exhale, in vehicle exhaust and dissolved in magma. At volcanoes, it escapes from magma to the surface through cracks and hydrothermal systems (like the geysers in Yellowstone National Park), by seeping through the soil or by puffing

out in a plume of gas.

By obtaining a sample of this volcanic carbon, we can measure the stable carbon isotopic ratio, a unique chemical makeup which reflects the source and pathway the CO2 took to the surface.

Each volcano around the world produces a unique range of these carbon isotopes which change when the volcanic system changes. However, it took a long time to collect each sample when researchers needed to hike down into a crater, putting them at risk each second they remained in the danger zone. With the evolution of unoccupied aerial systems (UAS, also known as drones), researchers have started sending these machines into the danger areas.

Can we really deflect an asteroid by crashing into it?

Nasa's Double Asteroid Redirection Test (Dart) spacecraft is designed to be a one hit wonder. It will end its days by crashing into an asteroid at 24,000 kilometres per hour on September 26. Launched from Earth in November 2021, Dart is about the size of a bus and was created to test and prove our ability to defend the Earth from a dangerous asteroid.

Landing a direct hit on a target from 11 million kilometres away isn't easy. But while this sounds far, the asteroid was actually selected by Nasa because it is relatively close to Earth. This will give engineers the opportunity to test the spacecraft's ability to operate itself in the final stages before the impact, as it crashes autonomously.

The target asteroid is called Dimorphos, a body 163 metres in diameter that's orbiting a 780

metre-wide asteroid called Didymos. This binary asteroid system was chosen because Dimorphos is in orbit around Didymos, which makes it easier to measure the result of the impact due to the resulting change in its orbit. However, the Dimorphos system does not currently pose any risk to the Earth.

Regardless, Nasa is attempting nothing less than a full scale planetary defence experiment to change an asteroid's path. The technique being used is called kinetic impact, which alters the orbit of the asteroid by crashing into it. That's essentially what is known as a safety shot in snooker, but played on a planetary level between the spacecraft (as the cue ball) and the asteroid.

A tiny deflection could be sufficient to prove that this technique can actually change the path of an asteroid on a collision



path with the Earth.

But the Dart spacecraft is going to be completely blown apart by the collision because it will have an impact equivalent to about three tonnes of TNT. In comparison, the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was equal to 15,000 tonnes of TNT.

So, with this level destruction and the distance involved, how will we be able to see the crash? Luckily, the Dart spacecraft is not travelling alone on its quest,

it is carrying LICIACube, a shoebox-size mini spacecraft, known as a cubesat, developed by the Italian Space Agency and aerospace engineering company Argotec. This little companion has recently separated from the Dart spacecraft and is now travelling on its own to witness the impact at a safe distance of 55km.

Never before has a cubesat operated around asteroids so this provides new potential

ways of exploring space in the future. The impact will also be observed from Earth using telescopes. Combined, these methods will enable scientists to confirm whether the operation has been successful.

It might, however, take weeks for LICIACube to send all images back to Earth. This period will be utterly nerve wracking waiting for good news from a spacecraft is always an emotional time for an engineer.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

An investigation team will look at the aftermath of the crash. These scientists will aim to measure the changes in Dimorphos' motion around Didymos by observing its orbital period. This is the time during which Dimorphos passes in front and behind Didymos, which will happen every 12 hours.

Ground telescopes will aim to capture images of the Dimorphos' eclipse as this happens. To cause a significant enough deflection, Dart must create at least a 73-second orbital period change after impact visible as changes in the frequencies of the eclipses.

These measurements will ultimately determine how effective kinetic impact technology is in deflecting a potentially hazardous asteroid we simply don't know yet.

This is because we actually know very little of the asteroids' composition. The great uncertainty around how strong Dimorphosis is has made designing a bullet spacecraft a truly enormous engineering challenge. Based on ground observation, the Didymos system is suspected to be a rubble pile made up of lots of different rocks, but its internal structure is unknown.

Puerto Ricans seething over lack of power days after Fiona



Half of Puerto Rico is without power more than five days after Hurricane Fiona struck including an entire town where not a single work crew has arrived.

Many on the US territory are angry and incredulous, and calls are growing for the ouster of the island's private electricity transmission and distribution company.

Fuel disruptions are worsening the situation, forcing grocery stores, gas stations and other businesses to close and

leaving apartment buildings in the dark because there is no diesel for generators.

Many are questioning why it is taking so long to restore power since Fiona was a Category 1 storm that did not affect the entire island, and whose rain not wind inflicted the greatest damage.

It's not normal, said Marcel Castro-Sitriche, an electrical engineering professor at the University of Puerto Rico in Mayaguez. They have not given a convincing explanation of what the problem is.