



# sunday pioneer

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Happy that  
**work is**  
underway: PM

5

'Every partner  
**NEEDS TO**  
collaborate'

6

Effecting change at  
**DEEPER**  
levels

Dil se

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
the pioneer

There is a BJP wave in Telangana and the Modi government will come back to power at the Centre again. The Congress and the BRS are one and that is why the Congress is taking a step back on BRS corruption. Voting for the BRS is nothing but dumping it in the Musi River. The DNAs of the Congress and the BRS are the same as both are family parties

- G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister

P2

**DON'T MISS...****Two more guarantees will...**

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has categorically stated that the two more guarantees promised by the Congress will be implemented very soon. He was taking part in a series of development programmes in Nidhanapuram and Chilukuru villages of Bayyaram mandal in Khammam district on Saturday. Addressing meetings in villages, the Deputy Chief Minister made it clear that the Congress would give a befitting reply to the BRS leaders who are...

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**Film industry held responsible for...**

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan on Saturday said that the film industry is often held responsible for change in nation's morality, arguing instead that society has always served as an inspiration for cinema. During his address to the students at the Symbiosis Film Festival here, the 81-year-old screen icon spoke about the criticism the film industry receives as well as the advantages and disadvantages of technological advancement in cinema. He attended the inauguration ceremony of the festival, organised by Symbiosis...

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**Tax benefits, support to women...**

An increase in income tax exemption limits, support to women entrepreneurs, a long-term taxation policy and steps to boost consumption and savings are among the expectations of experts from the interim budget which will be presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1 ahead of Lok Sabha elections. They also demand for parity in taxation among companies, partnerships and limited liability partnerships. "This is going to be an interim budget but at least there may be some indications of..."

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**One in twenty people has no...**

During the pandemic, a lost sense of smell was quickly identified as one of the key symptoms of COVID. Nearly four years later, one in five people in the UK is living with a decreased or distorted sense of smell, and one in twenty have anosmia the total loss of the ability to perceive any odours at all. Smell training is one of the few treatment options for recovering a lost sense of smell but can we make it more effective? Smell training is a therapy that is recommended by experts for recovering a lost sense of smell. It is a simple process that involves sniffing a set of different odours usually essential oils, or herbs and spices every day. The olfactory system has a unique ability to regenerate sensory neurons (nerve cells). So, just like...

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**Expert panel to examine Kaleshwaram barrages**

CM prefers all-party meet on Krishna waters

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has decided to set up an expert committee to check the quality of the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla Barrages coming under the Kaleshwaram Project.

The CM ordered a thorough study on the strength of the barrages and the steps to be taken in case of pillars sagging.

The CM warned the Irrigation Department not to rush things and make mistakes. After taking into account all technical issues, a decision should be taken on repair measures, he said. He reminded that Telangana has already suffered huge losses due to the mistakes made by those in power earlier.

He said that if Rs 8,000 crore-Rs 10,000 crore are required for repairing this huge project which was executed at a cost of around Rs 1.5 lakh crore, then there is no

need to think about the cost or compromise to protect the interests of Telangana.

Chief Minister Revanth along with Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy conducted a review at the Irrigation Department in the Secretariat on Saturday.

The CM suggested that an expert committee should be set up with experts from the Central Water Corporation, the National Dam Safety Authority and state Irrigation Engineers.

He said that they should arrange a meeting with them again within two or three days and that the Irrigation Minister would also attend the meeting along with him.

Regarding Medigadda Barrage, he said that whether it is enough to repair the sagging pillars or to remove them and build new ones will be studied by this committee.

2

**Caste census soon in TS**

CM Revanth Reddy holds review on BC, SC and ST welfare

- Integrated Education Hub in every Assembly Constituency
- Suitable lands to be identified for permanent Gurukul buildings
- Payment of diet and cosmetic charges through Green Channel
- Add assistance for students studying in foreign universities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that a caste census will be conducted in the state soon. The Chief Minister said that the government is committed to fulfilling the promise to conduct a caste census made during the Assembly elections. Officials have been asked to do the things necessary to launch the caste census, he said. The CM conducted a review of the BC, Minority and Tribal Welfare Departments at the Secretariat on Saturday.

The CM ordered officials to provide complete details of Gurukul schools functioning in rented buildings in the state.

The Chief Minister asked officials to submit proposals to construct



permanent Gurukul buildings. The officials were directed to identify places for constructing buildings fast. Budget proposals will be prepared after estimating the cost to construct schools.

The Chief Minister said that the food charges, cosmetic charges and cooking bills of Gurukul schools should be cleared immediately. Payments will be made through the green channel.

The Chief Minister directed officials to implement the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Overseas Scholarship Scheme effectively. Officials have been asked to ensure that more students availed benefits of the scheme.

A framework has to be prepared to identify top foreign universities based on their rankings. Students who go to pursue higher education in top universities abroad should be given priority in availing benefits of the scheme, the CM said.

The CM said that SC, ST and BC Gurukul institutions should be established in an integrated education hub instead of being set up in different places.

The CM said that proposals should be prepared to build integrated education hubs in all Assembly constituencies. The hubs will help in efficiently managing the schools.

The CM said that students would develop a competitive spirit and improve their skills by studying on the same campus. Officials were told to identify places for constructing educational hubs in all constituencies immediately.

The CM asked officials to identify sites in towns or mandal headquarters in case lands are not available in the centre of the Assembly constituencies.

2

**TRANSCO & GENCO DIRECTORS****Govt flags irregularities in postings**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has decided to take up the appointment of the Directors in TS-GENCO and TS-TRANSCO afresh citing irregularities in the earlier appointments and the extended tenures of several Directors.

Around six directors of TRANSCO and GENCO have occu-

pied their posts for more than nine years. 11 Directors in both TRANSCO and GENCO are in their places violating the provisions regarding extension.

As per the rules to be followed for the appointment of Directors on the Boards of organisations under the Energy Department, the Directors should be appointed initially for a term of two years and their tenure

may be extended for one year at a time up to a maximum of two extensions.

Thus, the tenure of the Directors shall be a maximum of four years only. C. Srinivas Rao, the JMD of Transco, has been serving for two years and eight months violating rules.

Five directors of TRANSCO, that is, G. Narasing Rao, B. Narasinga

Rao, Jagat Reddy, J. Surya Prakash Reddy and C. Srinivas Rao are in service. Jagat Reddy and G. Narasing Rao have been serving for nine years and two months.

In TSGENCO, C. Venkatrajaram, Sai Chandanam and Ashok Kumar have been Directors for nine years and five months.

2

**Kodandaram, Amer Ali Khan call on CM**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The newly elected Governor Quota MLCs - Prof. M. Kodandaram and Amer Ali Khan - made a courtesy call on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at the Secretariat on Saturday. The official order regarding their election was also issued on Saturday.

It may be recalled that the Governor, Dr Tamilisai Sounderajan, accepted the names of Kodandaram and Amer Ali Khan immediately after it was proposed by the state government.

**Govt 'bulldozing' Muslims' self-respect: KTR**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao has accused the Congress Government headed by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of "bulldozing" the self-respect of minorities, especially Muslims, in Telangana.

Addressing a meeting with BRS minority leaders at the Telangana Bhavan on Saturday, KTR said that the Congress government has adopted the BJP's "bulldozer" policy



against minorities. While BJP governments are demolishing the properties of minorities in their States, in Telangana, the Revanth Reddy gov-

ernment is "bulldozing" the self-respect of Muslims, he said.

2

**Giant killer's exemplary act**

Katipally allows officials to demolish his house

K VENKATESHWARLU  
■ HYDERABAD

There are some MLAs who irrespective of political affiliations grab lands near their residences or elsewhere. Not only MLAs but all public representatives (from ward members to MPs) eye vacant lands and grab them.

However, the BJP MLA representing Kamareddy, Katipally Venkat Ramana Reddy, who is well known across the state for defeating Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao in one go in the Assembly elections, gained attention on Saturday by allowing officials to demolish his house in Kamareddy. The house was demolished not because it was built illegally, but for road widening.

Kamareddy officials decided to widen narrow roads and decided to demolish some houses that came in the way. They issued notices to the owners of houses located by the sides of the road from MLAs House to the Old Bus Stand. Telangana Government Advisor



Shabbir Ali's house is also here along with two cinema theatres.

However, giant killer Venkat Ramana Reddy allowed officials to demolish his house first. Officials demolished Venkat Ramana Reddy's residence on Saturday and he became a role model for others.

Shabbir said that his house is on the same road where MLA Venkat Ramana Reddy's house is located, but he did not respond when reporters asked him about Venkat Ramana Reddy's decision to allow officials to demolish his house. It may be recalled that Venkat Ramana Reddy had said that he would develop his constituency with his funds if necessary.

**'DONATE FOR NYAY'****Congress launches crowdfunding campaign**

Donors to get Rahul-signed merchandise



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday launched a 'Donate for Nyay' crowdfunding campaign for the ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra under which people will get a Rahul Gandhi-signed letter or merchandise in return for their donation. Launching the campaign at the AICC headquarters here along with Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh, Congress treasurer Ajay Maken said the idea behind this initia-

tive and the earlier wider crowdfunding campaign of the party, 'Donate for Desh', was not to get money but to motivate workers.

Under the party's 'Donate for Nyay' campaign, any person who donates Rs 670 or more will get a T-shirt signed by Rahul Gandhi as a gift, Maken said. "Those who donate Rs 67,000 or more will get a 'Nyay Kit' which will contain a T-shirt, bag, band, badge and sticker," he said.

2

**OBTUSE ANGLE**

**Wanted district reporters**

the pioneer

National English daily The Pioneer is recruiting district reporters in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Journalists with good writing skills and at least two years experience in a daily newspaper can apply. Candidates must reside in the district headquarters. Send your detailed bio-data along with a photograph to [ascendamedia@gmail.com](mailto:ascendamedia@gmail.com).

## Are scribes lesser beings than *praja*?

Reporters normally work in the interests of praja, though, unlike public representatives running for elective offices, they do not make promises that can influence various communities. Today media persons in Telangana win whenever they are reminded of the pre-poll Congress slogan 'Maarpu kavali, Congress ravali' (meaning, 'Change required; Cong must come'). For, there is no palpable change in how newshounds are treated even at what happens to be their beat. For reporters who regularly cover 'At Home' in Raj Bhavan, the get-together this Republic Day came bundled with a nasty surprise. Initially, they were asked to stay away. When indignant reporters decided en masse to either boycott the event or hold an impromptu protest, sensitive cops took up the matter with the authorities at the Raj Bhavan. Finally, they allowed the restive reporters inside. Matters are hardly different at the Secretariat, where, despite the much-publicized boast of 'dismantling walls between praja and the government', media persons are treated as suspects who are out to paint the government in a bad light. As a special category among praja, they need to take visitor passes and only then go inside. Besides, their official time can be wasted without any compunction. The other day a Minister's presser was scheduled at 5-00 pm, but postponed without prior notice to 6:00 pm. Invited reporters were made to wait near the gate, though the delay, and consequent rescheduling, was from the Minister's side.

### CONG LEADERS TRIGGER TRAFFIC CHAOS IN HYDERABAD

It is easy to announce hugely popular steps to ease traffic across the city, but difficult to walk the talk when it comes to movement of VVIPs in their official or customized convoys. Ever since the Congress came to power, Hyderabad has been witnessing traffic hold-ups and

snarls with chaotic movement of vehicles. Let alone Chief Minister Revanth Reddy (who has famously slashed the number of vehicles in his official convoy and specifically directed cops to not stop people for his movement); every day even Ministers are stopping traffic at their will and pleasure. The height of these hold-ups was seen during the recent booth-level agents' meeting; for which, even after 10:00 pm, the city traffic police could do little to restore normalcy in traffic. Denizens of Hyderabad have begun to feel the pinch of gross mismanagement of traffic, which, quite symbolically began from the day of swearing in of the Chief Minister, who happened to come

education'? Even BRS did that". As a parting shot, Vem replied: "There is no greatness; this is it".

### TIRED CM FIGURED OUT SOURCE OF INTELLIGENCE LEAK

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's security personnel were reshuffled following 'information leak'. Interestingly, the Chief Minister himself identified the source of information leak. Few people, barring his family members and the cream of the intelligence wing, know when the Chief Minister will come home. Upon his return from Davos, the Chief Minister reached home. Some people wanting to meet him had assembled at his residence by the time he reached home. The exasperated Chief Minister chose to give them audience, though he badly wanted rest to overcome his jet lag. It did not take long for the CM to realize how the information relating to his arrival had leaked.

### DO LEADERS GET BETTER IDEAS WHEN THEY ARE IN THE OPPOSITION?

MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha's new-found love for Mahatma Jyoti ba Phule is not going down well with people as well as in her own party. Kavitha wants Phule statue on Assembly premises, but her intra-party detractors want her to stay out of it to obviate negative publicity. For, the BRS government did not do it for 10 years. Besides, just one month into the new government, the issue has been raked up by Kavitha, who is seen as the primary reason for BRS' loss in the Assembly elections, particularly due to her name figuring in the liquor scam. She was an MP, but then lost in the elections and was politically rehabilitated as an MLC. Emboldened party leaders say it is OK if someone else from the party takes up this issue. In a similar vein, BRS MLC Deshapati Srinivas asked the new Congress government to remove the fencing around the Assembly. A wag commented: "Why couldn't the BRS government do this?"

## REPORTERS' DIARY

late for taking his oath-taking ceremony. Movements of VVIPs across the city have increased tremendously and cops are blind to aam admi's agonies.

### CONG DRAWS THE LINE, REGARDLESS OF BRS' WAYS

The fortunes of political parties may change when elections come. Yet, the fortunes of reporters on political beat cannot (and ought not to) change following a regime change. A seasoned journalist, who had kept tabs of the Congress party for 10 years, went gleefully to Chief Minister's advisor Vem Narender Reddy seeking his intervention in getting some work done. Vem thanked the reporter for his long association with the Congress as part of his beat, but politely told him to refrain from bringing such works or making indecent proposals. For good measure, the CM's advisor added: "We will help journalists with health- and education-related requests, and nothing beyond that. We will also work with providing concessions to your children in schools". Then he subtly told the reporter not to expect anything out of the way. The mortified reporter observed: "What's the big deal about the Congress in helping with 'health and

## ISRO to launch meteorological satellite

PNS ■ BENGALURU

ISRO on Saturday said its meteorological satellite INSAT-3DS has been flagged off to Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR at Sriharikota for the launch onboard GSLV F14.

The satellite had successfully completed satellite assembly, integration and testing activities at U R Rao Satellite Centre, Bengaluru.

The satellite is a user-funded project with the Ministry of Earth Science (MoES), configured around ISRO's I-2k bus platform with a lift-off mass of 2275 kg. Indian Industries have significantly contributed in the making of the satellite.

According to sources, the space agency is said to be aiming for a mid-February launch.

"INSAT-3DS, is an exclusive meteorological satellite realised by ISRO with the primary objective to provide continuity of services to the existing in-orbit INSAT-3D and 3DR satellites and significantly enhancing the capabilities of the INSAT system," ISRO said.

It was flagged off to SDSC-SHAR launch port in Andhra Pradesh on January 25, it said, adding that Pre-Shipment Review (PSR) was also held



with the participation of members from the user community.

According to ISRO, the satellite is designed for enhanced meteorological observations and monitoring of land and ocean surfaces for weather forecasting and disaster warning, with state-of-the-art payloads: 6 channel Imager & 19 channel Sounder meteorology payloads, communication payloads viz., The Data Relay Transponder (DRT) and Satellite aided Search and Rescue (SAS&R) transponder.

The DRT instrument receives meteorological, hydrological and oceanographic data from automatic Data Collection Platforms or Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) and augments the weather forecasting capabilities.

## Caste census...

Continued from page 1

The possibility of constructing new buildings on already existing school premises which have an area of around 20 acres and promoting them as educational hubs must be examined, the CM said. The CM said that the cooperation of corporate bodies and companies will be sought for constructing education hubs. CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds will be mobilised and the construction of buildings should be taken up by accepting donations from donors. Funds will also be collected through CSR for providing infrastructure and supplying blankets, notebooks, uniforms and books for students in government hostels.

The CM ordered officials to prepare budget estimations to provide scheme benefits including gold to the beneficiaries of Kalyana Mastu and Shaadi Mubarak. The Chief Minister said that establishing BC Study Circles in all Parliamentary constituencies in place of the existing study circles will be examined.

BC Welfare Minister Ponnampal Prabhakar, ST Welfare Minister Seethakka, Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari and other top officials attended the review meeting.

## Only regional parties can stop BJP: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the Congress-BJP bond is a Fevilcol bond, BRS Working President KTR said, "Rahul Gandhi is saying Bharat Jodo, but his alliance partners are saying 'Rahul Ko Chhodo' and are leaving him."

KTR was attending a meeting of BRS activists from the Jubilee Hills constituency. "In the coming parliament elections, the Congress will try to make BJP candidates win by fielding dummy candidates.

## Govt flags irregularities in...

Continued from page 1

B. Lakshamaiah, A. Ajay Rao and Dr TRK Rao have been directors for five years and four months.

The government after careful examination decided to take up the process of appointments of Directors for TSTRANSCO and TSGENCO afresh as per procedure.

As per the GO issued by SAM Rizvi, the Chairman and MDs of TSTRANSCO and TSGENCO must take action to initiate the process for the appointment of Directors as per the rules.

## ‘Cong, BRS DNAs are same’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress and the BRS are one and that is why the Congress is stepping back from probing BRS's corruption, Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy said.

He reiterated that voting for the BRS is nothing but dumping the vote in the Musi River. The Union Minister said that there is a BJP wave in Telangana and that the Modi government will certainly come back at the Centre once again.

Addressing the BJP's Chevella Parliament constituency preparatory meeting held on Saturday, Kishan said that the Congress is not trying to implement the assurances it had given to the people during the Assembly polls. He said that development is possible only through the BJP



and appealed to BJP cadres to take the matter to the people. He asked booth-level leaders to work hard to ensure the victory of the party. He also asked them to create awareness among farmers, farm labourers, youth and women.

Kishan said that nothing could be done by the BRS and the Congress and added that he was confident that the BJP would win LS elections in Telangana. He said that the DNA of the Congress and the BRS are the same as both are

family-run parties.

"When you see the Congress government stepping back from taking action against BRS corruption, it is clear that these two parties are the same. We have been saying that the Centre is ready to order a CBI inquiry on the Kaleshwaram project scam, but the Congress government does not want a CBI inquiry.

He said the Congress is trying to hide the corruption of the BRS and it is not doing anything to implement its promises.

Kishan said the Modi government gave lakhs of crores to Telangana in the last nine and a half years. The Modi government built National Highways, new railway lines, a tribal varsity, the Turmeric Board, Vande Bharat trains and modernised railway stations in Telangana.

## Will soon identify Rahul's 'body double': Himanta

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said that he will share the name and address of the 'body double' purportedly used by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in the state.

Sarma had brought up the allegation of the Congress MP using a 'body double' during the Yatra at a press conference on Thursday, during which he quoted a media report claiming that the person sitting and waving at people from the Yatra bus was 'probably not Rahul Gandhi at all'.

## JD(U) HINTS AT PARTING WAYS ‘No implosion’ in INDIA bloc: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Crisis gripped the INDIA bloc as JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar indicated a switch to the NDA and his party said on Saturday that the opposition alliance was collapsing, with the Congress alleging that the BJP is doing its best to cause a "mini implosion" in the coalition.

The Congress, however, also exuded confidence that both Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee, being co-architects of the INDIA bloc, would remain a part of the alliance and said efforts were

on by the Congress president to reach out to both of them.

Earlier, West Bengal Chief Minister Banerjee had announced that her party TMC will fight the Lok Sabha elections "alone" in the state, and if Kumar decides to return to the NDA fold, it will be another big blow to the oppo-

## Shah's TS tour cancelled due to Bihar developments?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's Telangana tour has been postponed. Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy announced this in a statement issued on Saturday.

It is learnt that Amit Shah's tour was cancelled due to the political developments in Bihar.

However, as per the schedule announced, Amit Shah has to participate in the three Parliament cluster meetings in Mahbubnagar, Karimnagar and Secunderabad.

BJP General Secretary Bandi Sanjay Kumar had announced that Amit will blow the poll bugle for the coming Lok Sabha elections on Sunday at Karimnagar.

sition front formed to take on the BJP.

"Personally, yes the optics could have been better. There is no implosion. But the BJP is working overtime to ensure there is a minimum implosion if not a maximum implosion," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said when asked about the developments.

He also claimed that no one is unhappy, but admitted that the seat-sharing talks are difficult as everyone wants more seats.

"We expect INDIA to move forward. The situation could be better. I won't say it is tense," he said.

## KTR can't become big leader by criticising Cong govt: Mallu Ravi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government's Special Representative in Delhi, Mallu Ravi, said whether KTR will become a big leader if he criticises the Congress government daily.

"We condemn the hostile comments made against the Chief Minister. The secretariat was like a prison under the BRS. Hundreds of people are coming to the secretariat every day now during the Congress Praja Palana," he said. Speaking to the media, Mallu Ravi said that the Fevilcol bond is between the BJP and the BRS but not between the Congress and the BJP. He said the BJP and BRS votes were transferred in the Assembly elections held recently.

He said Kavitha was not arrested because of the BJP-BRS bond. The MLAs purchase and Kavitha cases were neutralized as per their agreement. Of the promises given by the BRS in 2018, not even one was fulfilled.

KCR took away the freedom of people just like a tiger takes away the freedom of other animals in the jungle, he said.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Krishna Paksha

Tithi:

Tritiya:

Jan 28 03:37 AM to Jan 29 06:11 AM

Chaturthi:

Jan 29 06:11 AM to Jan 30 08:54 AM

Nakshatram:

Magha:

Jan 27 01:01 PM to Jan 28 03:52 PM

Purva Phalguni:

Jan 28 03:52 PM to Jan 29 06:57 PM

Rahukalam:

4:41 PM to 6:05 PM

Yamaganadam:

12:29 PM to 1:53 PM

Varjyam:

12:54 AM to 02:42 AM

Gulika:

3:17 PM to 4:41 PM

Amritakalam:

01:11 PM to 02:59 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham:

12:06 PM to 12:51 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 29°

Humidity: 56%

Sunrise: 6:49 AM

Sunset: 6:09 PM

Updated: January 27 2024 5:00 PM

## ‘TS will be the...

Continued from page 1

The Social Entrepreneurship Summit - Impulse 2024 - the annual flagship event of the Bala Vikasa Centre for Social and Responsible Business (CSR)B) organised in partnership with the Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC) had over 500 Social Entrepreneurship practitioners who come together to celebrate the spirit of Social Entrepreneurship and strengthen the sector making it a huge success at the Bala Vikasa Campus in Keesara, Hyderabad on Saturday.

The event was supported by innovation and incubation leaders like the T-Hub, Upaya Social

Ventures, AgHub, Caspian, Impact Hub Hyderabad Candidate, Action for India along with leading Institutions like the TISS, KG Reddy College of Engineering and CBIT. Smile Digital Health's CEO, Duncan Weatherston, based in Canada, and Roy Hussain from SRA Information Technology Company met D. Sridhar Babu on Saturday.

The company representatives expressed their interest in investing in the state for health data-driven initiatives and also to set up their unit in Hyderabad, creating 500 to 1200 jobs in the state. The minister assured them that the government will support their investments.

## Expert panel to examine ....

Continued from page 1

The CM ordered irrigation officials to prepare a comprehensive report on all meetings held since the formation of Telangana till date, that is, the KRMB agendas, details of discussions, minutes, decisions and agreements. The CM said that all these things will be discussed at the all-party meeting.

The CM gave instructions to officials to complete some projects through the Green Channel. He said that projects that can be completed in a short time at low cost should be identified. He said that the Kalvakurthy, Nettekoppa, Bima, Koil Sagar, and Narayanapet Kodangal lift irrigation projects in Mahbubnagar district should be prepared along with a list of projects planned to be completed at low cost.

Of the 811 TMCs of Krishna water share in the United AP state, it was agreed to give 512 TMCs to AP and 299 TMCs to Telangana. He clarified that the government will accept suggestions that are good for the people of Telangana. In this meeting, there was a discussion on allegations that the Nagarjuna Sagar and Srisailem projects were handed over to KRMB. The officials explained to the CM that no project was handed over and no agreements were signed.

"It has been 45 days since the Congress government came to power in the state. When were meetings held with the Krishna Board in these few days? Who attended? What decisions were made? Have any officials made decisions without our knowledge? What are you doing if the opposition is talking about

your department as they like?" Revanth said.

"What are they doing if they are levelling accusations against the government on a department basis? How much water is going to Rayalaseema? Don't they know how much share we have in the waters of Krishna?" he asked.

Revanth said that there is some confusion in the details of ayacut project-wise. It was ordered to prepare details of the projects by villages and mandals and details of pending projects were reported by the officials to the CM. He ordered to prepare plans to complete pending projects according to priorities.

The CM inquired about the current status of the Palamuru Ranga Reddy project. Officials were asked why land acquisition is not progressing for the Kalvakurthy project.

## Govt ‘bulldozing’...

Continued from page 1

"The Congress is taking revenge against Muslims for supporting the BRS in the Assembly elections," he said. For the first time after 1953 there are no minorities in the cabinet, KTR said.

He said that communal tension has resurfaced after the Congress returned to power citing the incidents in Sangareddy, Nalgonda and other places on January 22.

He criticised the Congress Government for failing to handle these incidents 'appropriately', highlighting a case in Daulatabad where a Muslim family, including a 5-year-old, was allegedly attacked.

He accused the Congress Government of wrongly booking cases against innocent youths and not taking action against troublemakers.

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# Two more guarantees will be implemented soon: Bhatti

PNS ■ MADHIRA

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has categorically stated that the two more guarantees promised by the Congress will be implemented very soon.

He was taking part in a series of development programmes in Nidhanapuram and Chilukuru villages of Bayyaram mandal in Khammam district on Saturday.

Addressing meetings in villages, the Deputy Chief Minister made it clear that the Congress would give a befitting reply to the BRS leaders who are critical of the Congress government.

The cleansing of the TSPSC has begun to ensure the transparent process of holding examinations and recruitment.



The Chairman of the Commission and its members had been appointed. The recruitment would take place transparently without giving room for question paper leaks.

As part of the Mahalakshmi scheme, announced by the Congress, within two days of it coming to power, free RTC travel for women has been provided. In fact, over 10 crore

women travelled by RTC buses free of cost. The upper limit of the Rajiv Aarogyasri scheme has been doubled to Rs 10 lakh for the poor.

Plans are underway to create wealth by the people's government, he said, adding that the government would prepare detailed plans for the comprehensive development of the state and place them before the people. The government will strive hard to develop agricultural, irrigation, information technology, and industrial sectors as part of the comprehensive development, he added.

The people's government gave priority to the INDI-RAMMA rule which gave importance to medical, health, employment and infrastructural amenities.

The BRS, which inherited a wealthy state for development,

pushed Telangana into debt, he alleged and maintained that the Cong government released a White Paper on the floor of the State Legislative Assembly to expose the financial havoc created in Telangana.

The BRS regime looted the states and pushed the state into lakhs of crores of debts, he said. However, the Congress government has been forging ahead boldly to wriggle the state from the financial crisis.

Everyone in the government organisation, official and system should be accountable to the people. Every citizen should feel convinced that all these facilities are for him or her alone, he said.

He assured the people that the Congress government will live up to the expectations of the people.

# State & Centre to squeeze KCR

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

BRS President K. Chandrasekhar Rao is likely to get cornered by both the State and Central Governments.

The Telangana High Court's direction to the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to file a case against KCR has come in handy for the Congress government headed by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy which is digging into the misdeeds of the BRS government.

This case is related to 11 acres of land in Kokapet which the KCR government allocated for constructing the BRS Excellence Centre.

At the same time, the CBI has come forward to investigate the alleged irregularities in the Kaleshwaram project and has indicated its willingness to probe the case to the Telangana High Court.

When the Congress government decided to order a judicial inquiry into the Kaleshwaram Project, state BJP leaders demanded that the government should ask the CBI to probe the matter.

But the state government said that a judicial inquiry by a sitting High Court judge is enough and that there is no need

for a CBI inquiry.

The state government has written to the High Court to allot a judge to probe the alleged irregularities in the Kaleshwaram Project.

There is a general impression that the CBI came forward to probe the Kaleshwaram scam as per the direction of the Centre.

It appears that TS government headed by the Congress and the Central Government headed by the BJP won't let go of any opportunity to take revenge against KCR.

It is interesting to note here the MLAs poaching case. When the BRS government asked the TS police to probe the case BJP leaders demanded a CBI probe. Finally, the Telangana High Court directed the CBI to probe the case.

BJP leaders hope that the court will allow the CBI to probe the Kaleshwaram case too. If that happens, the Central Government will come into the picture.

The TS Government and the Central Government will

squeeze KCR from both sides.

After the Assembly elections, the Centre reopened the case against BRS MLC Kavitha in the Delhi liquor scam case.

# Anaemia screening camp opens

PNS ■ KUMURAM BHEEM (ASIFABDA)

A programme to check haemoglobin level among the high school and junior college students has begun in the district. The district administration set a target of testing least 28,059 students as part of the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakramam (RBSK) to make Telangana free from anaemia. The screening of students for anaemia began on January 24 and will continue till January 27.

The Medical and Health officials identified 28,059 students of class 8 to Intermediate in 59 high schools and 11 junior colleges, two model schools and 15 KGBVs, social welfare hostels, tribal welfare hostels, BC, Minority residential educational institutions.

District in-charge immunisation officer Siddhardha appealed to the students to undergo blood tests without any hesitation.

The blood tests on students commenced from Wednesday.

If the students found anaemic they will be admitted to hospitals and take remedial

measures to check the health complications they might face during teenage.

The District Educational Officer, Ashok, said that the screening of students for anaemia has begun from students of classes 8 plus two levels. The tests help diagnose anaemia and other health complications among students. Therefore, parents should encourage students to undergo the blood tests.

Under the programmes of Rashtriya Bal Swasthya and Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya programmes, 10 teams have been constituted.

These teams would conduct blood screening tests in schools at least on 100 students. If the haemoglobin level is eight, it is regarded as normal.

If the haemoglobin level is found to be 6 or 7, the students will be given multivitamin tablets, iron and folic acid tablets. If the anaemia level is serious, the patients will be hospitalized and will have to undergo blood transfusion.

Tests for blood cancer, Thalassemia, sickle-cell anaemia will also be conducted on the patients.

# BRS will upset Congress' apple cart in LS polls

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Former Minister and Suryapet MLA G Jagadish Reddy on Saturday exuded confidence that his party would emerge victorious in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He expressed the hope that the Telangana society would be ready to correct the mistake committed in the recent elections. As per the party's decision to hold constituency-wise meetings from Saturday given the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, a meeting was organised in the Nalgonda Assembly constituency on Saturday.

He alleged that the ruling party leaders were threatening to attack farmers with slippers if they demanded that the government fulfil its promises. He demanded that the Congress government fulfil its promise of a farm loan waiver up to Rs 2 lakh without any delay.

He recalled that he had dared the government to order a judicial inquiry into the allegation related to the Damaracharla power plant.

"In a democracy, power is not permanent," he said. Before the formation of Telangana, the then Chief Ministers Y S



Former Minister G Jagadish Reddy speaking at Nalgonda constituency meeting in Nalgonda on Saturday

Rajasekhara Reddy and N Chandrababu Naidu were diverting Krishna waters illegally to Andhra Pradesh.

He accused Congress and the BJP of entering into an unholy alliance. He said the BJP's alliance with the Congress had started from Suryapet. The Congress and the BJP allied at the state and national levels. The BRS cannot be cowed down by Congress threats, Jagadish Reddy said.

Former MLA of Nalgonda Kancharla Bhupal Reddy, District Party President former N. Ravindra Kumar, Nallagonda, Bhonagiri ZP

# Farmers inclined to sell cotton to CCI at MSP

PNS ■ JAMMIKUNTA

Farmers have been selling cotton to the Cotton Corporation of India as the private traders are refusing to procure cotton from them at the MSP, which is Rs 6920 per quintal.

At the beginning of the procurement season, some private traders procured cotton at the MSP. However, during the past three months, no trader was procuring the cotton at the MSP in undivided Karimnagar district, forcing the farmers to sell their produce to the CCI.

Since November last year, the CCI has been procuring cotton at MSP from the market yards and some ginning mills with which it entered into an agreement.

The private traders procured 65,387 quintals of cotton from Jammikunta, Karimnagar and Choppadandi procurement centres, as against the procurement of 1,10,334 quintals of cotton by the CCI from these centres.

Jammikunta Agriculture Market Yard secretary G Reddy Naik made it clear that the CCI, for the past 20 days, procured more cotton when compared to the cotton procured by the market yard.

The fluctuations in price of cotton are directly proportional to the international market prices. In 2021-22, the Jammikunta market yard procured cotton at the record price of Rs 14,000 per quintal. However, the MSP dropped to Rs 9100 in 2022. In last November, the MSP offered was Rs 7600. However, it dropped to the current Rs 6920 a quintal. At the beginning, the CCI procured cotton at Rs 7020 a quintal.

# Projects built sans quality during BRS regime: Komatireddy

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Saturday said that the projects built by the KCR government are collapsing before they are completed. The BRS government has focused on commissions rather than the quality of projects, which is why not a single project is strong. He said that when YS Rajasekhara Reddy was the Chief Minister for the second time, he had sanctioned Rs 1,500 crore for water through the Srisailem under the tunnel route.

Drinking water through AMRP will be available for two days and the main canal lining work will be completed at a cost of Rs 510 crore. Tenders would be called for the work



Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy laying the foundation stone for the Skill Development Centre in Nalgonda on Saturday

and the work would begin in a month, he said.

Widening and strengthening of Nalgonda, Musampally, Dharmapuram, Kannekal and

Tipparthi roads at a cost of Rs 99.80 crore would be taken up.

He said that the leaders in the previous government had looted thousands of crores of

rupees in the name of Mission Bhagiratha. However, clean drinking water was not provided in schools.

The Minister laid the foundation stone for the Skill Development Centre in Nalgonda town. He said that this is not a building but a lamp that illuminates the lives of many unemployed youth and families.

He laid the foundation stone for a new children's home to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 1.35 crore at Panagal in Nalgonda town, an old age home to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 50 lakh and reconstruction of Mahabubnagar-Nalgonda road high-level bridge at Darveshi Puram village in Kanagal mandal of Nalgonda district at an estimated cost of Rs 12.40 crore.

# Man ends life minutes after wife's suicide in Adilabad

PNS ■ ADILABAD

In a tragic incident, a newly-wed woman, who attempted to die by suicide by consuming pesticide, died while undergoing treatment at RIMS in Adilabad on Saturday. Her husband also ended his life on the premises of RIMS after learning about the demise of his wife within a gap of few minutes.

A 20-year-old Shevade Pallavi attempted to kill herself by consuming pesticide on Friday. She breathed her last while undergoing treatment on Saturday morning. Her 28-year-old husband Vijay resorted to the drastic step by taking some pesticide on the premises the RIMS when he came to know about the death of his wife.

Police said that Pallavi from Gurja village was married to Vijay on May 23. The couple had no disputes and



was leading a happy married life. However, Pallavi was not interested in living in Kolhari. She came to the village on Friday. She took a bottle of pesticide and fell unconscious, police said.

# BRS can overcome thorny hurdles, says Harish

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Since the movement for separate Telangana, the Bharat Rashtira Samithi successfully crossed several thorny hurdles, said former Minister and MLA Harish Rao.

Addressing a meeting at Konda Malliah Gardens here on Saturday to convey gratitude to the people of Siddipet for having elected him as MLA, he said the BRS can counter threats and attacks successfully.

The BRS leaders did not buckle under pressure in the combined Andhra Pradesh though the party had



Former Minister T Harish Rao speaking at a meeting in Siddipet on Saturday

just 10 seats in the Assembly then, he recalled. The party leaders and activists continued to fight for the rights of the people in the Telangana region.

What stopped the Congress from implementing a Rs 2 lakh loan waiver to the farm-

ers, Rs 50,00 bonus for procurement of paddy, paying Rs 4,000 pension to senior citizens under the Aasara scheme and implementation of free power up to 200 units a month to households, he questioned.

The ruling party leaders should exhibit a lot of patience, he said, while accusing the Congress of trying to find ways to not implement six guarantees.

He categorically stated that the BRS alone can protect the interests of the people of Telangana, but not the BJP and the Congress.

GOVERNMENT OF TELENGANA OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR, MEDAK PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION FORM VI (See Sub-rule(1) of rule-19 and Section -11(1) of the Act-30/2013) District Collector, Medak File No. No. G1327/N2019 Date: 12-01-2024 RDO, Narsapur(LAO), Lr.No. B/682/2019 Date: 08-01-2024 Gazette No. 287 Date: 12-01-2024											
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana (District Collector that a total of about Ac. 4-16 Gts land is required for Public purpose, namely, "for construction of Konda Pochamma Sagar" Sangareddy Main Canal Reach II in the Limits of Linguguda village of Shivampet Mandal, the Notification issued U/s 11(1) of the L.A. Act 30/2013 Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.											
The Government exempted the project "for construction of Konda Pochamma Sagar" Sangareddy Main Canal Reach II in the Limits of Linguguda village of Shivampet Mandal" from the applications of provisions of Chapter-II and chapter-III of the RFCTLA & RR Act, 2013, in accordance with the provisions contained in section 10 A(e) in chapter-IIIA of the RFCTLA & RR (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act. No. 21 of 2017).											
Therefore, it is notified that for the above said project in Shivampet Mandal, Medak District a piece of land measuring more or less Ac. 4-16 Gts in Linguguda village of Shivampet Mandal, Medak District, Whose details are as follows are under acquisition;											
PATTNA LAND SCHEDULE											
District: Medak; Mandal: Shivampet; Village: Linguguda											
Sl. No.	Sp. No.	Area	Class	Physical Loc.	Ext. Loc.	Name & address of person interested	East	West	North	South	Type of encumbrance
1	39	AA	Dry	0.05	Maloth Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
2	39	E1	Dry	0.05	Maloth Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
3	39	E2	Dry	0.01	Maloth Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
4	39	E3	Dry	0.05	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
5	39	E4	Dry	0.05	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
6	39	E5	Dry	0.05	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
7	39	E6	Dry	0.05	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
8	39	E7	Dry	0.10	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
9	40	A1	Wet	0.04	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
10	40	EE	Wet	0.04	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
11	40	E2	Dry	0.10	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
12	40	EE	Dry	1.21	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
13	40	E2	Dry	0.01	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
14	40	E1	Dry	0.02	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
15	40	E1	Dry	0.25	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
16	40	E2	Dry	0.01	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
Total: 3.82											
GOVERNMENT LAND (ASSIGNED/UN-ASSIGNED)											
1	34	Lavali	Dry	0.01	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
2	34	Lavali	Dry	0.04	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
3	34	Lavali	Dry	0.01	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	Lambadi Kishan S/o Panthulu	---
Total: 0.06											
Govt. Land: 3.88											
Assignment Total: 4.19											
Patta Land Total: 4.19											
Complete Total: 4.19											
This notification is made under the provision of section-11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act No. 30/2013), as amended by the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2013 (Act No. 21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern.											
A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Medak and office of the Revenue Divisional Officer, Narsapur on any working day during the working hours. The District Collector, Medak-cum-Appropriate Government has authorized the Revenue Divisional Officer, Narsapur to discharge the functions of the Land Acquisition Officer and also authorize his staff to enter upon and survey land, take level of any land, dig or bore into the subsoil and do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section 12 of the said Act.											
Under section 11 (4) of the act, no person shall make any transaction or any transaction of land i.e., sale/purchase etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the District Collector.											
Objections to the acquisition if any, and claims from all persons interested affected by the acquisition of the land within (60) sixty days from the date of publication of this notification provided U/s 15 of the Act before the District Collector, Medak / the Land Acquisition Officer & Revenue Divisional Officer, Narsapur.											
Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Sd/- Tahsildar Officer, Narsapur. Collector, Medak. District Collector, Medak. Shivampet. DIPP No. 8571/AJPP/Agency/2023-24											

# YSRCP 'Siddham' for polls

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Saturday sounded the poll bugle for the YSR Congress party (YSRCP) for the upcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha polls saying it is a 'Kurukshetra war' comparing himself with the Pandavas while the opposition TDP with the Kauravas (from the epic Mahabharatha).

Addressing a rally of his party workers titled "Siddham" (Ready) at



Bhimili near here, Yagan said the YSRCP Government has fulfilled</

# Happy that work is underway: PM

‘One nation, one legislative platform’

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said he was happy that Parliament and state legislatures were working towards realisation of the goal of ‘one nation, one legislative platform’.

Addressing the 84th All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC) here virtually, he also rued that some political parties defend their members even if they violate the rules of the House, and warned that it did not augur well for Parliament and state legislatures.

"In 2021, during discussions with you, I spoke about ‘one nation, one legislative platform.’ I am happy that our Parliament and state legislatures are now working towards this goal through E-Vidhan and Digital Sansad platforms," the prime minister said.



Notably, the ‘one nation, one legislative platform’ project aims at making available the proceedings of all legislatures on a single digital platform.

The image of a legislature depends on the conduct of its members, the prime minister stressed.

"There was a time when, if any member in the House broke the rules and action was taken against that member, senior members of the House would talk to him so

that in future he did not repeat the mistake and break the rules of the House.

"But these days, some political parties stand in support of such members and defend their mistakes. The situation is not good for Parliament or state legislature," Modi said.

Reflecting on the changing norms in public life, he said in the past, allegations of corruption against a member of the House would lead to his or her ostracisation from public life.

"But now we witness public glorification of convicted corrupt individuals. This is an insult to the executive, the judiciary and the constitution," Modi said.

Referring to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (legislation on women's quota in legislatures), Modi said discussions on suggestions aimed at enhancing women's participation and representation should be encouraged in legislatures.

## ‘You are architect of developed India’

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday highlighted a host of measures taken by his government to assert that it has empowered the youth and women and that a developed India will fulfil their dreams. "You are the architect of a developed India," he told youngsters at the annual NCC-PM rally here. Women were earlier confined to cultural programmes but his government has opened up various sectors, including all three services, to them and they are making a mark everywhere, he said, noting that the Republic Day parade this year was dedicated to them. The number of women in central security forces has doubled in the last 10 years, Prime Minister Modi said and added that states are also being encouraged to follow

a similar path. A digital revolution has been taking place and it benefits the creativity of the youth the most, he said. People were struggling for 2G and 3G infrastructure a decade ago while 5G and optical fibre network is now reaching every village, Modi said. In a swipe at previous dispensations, he said they deliberately neglected the development of border villages and called them the last villages of the country. Prime Minister Modi said his government has taken up their development in a big way and they will emerge as big tourist centres, noting that these villages are now seen as the ‘first villages’ of the country. The government has launched a ‘vibrant village’ programme for their development, he said.

# Padma awardees are ‘jewels in rags’ says Dhankhar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday described the Padma awardees as "jewels in rags" whose talent has been recognised by the government.

He also said that meritocracy has replaced autocracy and nepotism in the country, adding the youngsters today have more opportunities to achieve their goals.

Interacting with distinguished artists who participated in the Republic Day here, he referred to the recently-announced Padma awards.

Dhankhar said the people, who have been selected for these awards had never expected to receive it.

"But they were discovered, their talent was recognised and everyone appreciated it," he said while referring to them as "Gudri ke Lal" (jewels in rags).



Former vice president M. Venkaiah Naidu, actors Vyjayantimala Bali and Chiranjeevi, Sulabh International founder -- the late Bindeshwar Pathak -- and Bharatanatyam dancer Padma Subrahmanyam were on Thursday conferred with the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian honour in India.

Earlier, interacting with the National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteers, the vice president said that equality before the law has now been truly established, unlike in the past where some people thought they were above it.

The ecosystem of corruption and middlemen has been dismantled and youngsters have immense opportunities to realise their potential, Dhankhar said.

"The autocracy of corruption has been replaced with meritocracy of democracy," he said.

The NSS volunteers were part of an all-women contingent that participated in the Republic Day parade on Friday.

Describing youngsters as the foot soldiers who will help India become a developed country by 2047, he urged them to be innovative and focus on research and entrepreneurship.

## Will make all efforts to keep INDIA bloc united, says Cong prez Kharge

PNS ■ KALABURAGI (K'TAKA)

Congress President M Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said his party expects that those who have the desire to protect the country's Constitution and democracy, will definitely not take any hasty steps, amid indications that JD(U) was planning to revert to the BJP-led NDA.

He said the Congress will make all efforts to keep the INDIA bloc united, while maintaining that he has no clarity as to what is in the JD(U) leadership's mind.

Responding to a question on the possibility of JD(U) going out of the INDIA alliance, Kharge said, "Are they (JD(U)) going out? I have not got any information about it so far. I have written a letter to them (JD(U) leadership) and have tried to talk to them. I don't know clearly what is in their minds."

There are strong indications that JD(U) chief and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was planning to quit the ruling 'Mahagathbandhan' in the state and revert to the BJP-led NDA.

Some JD(U) leaders like K C Tyagi have claimed that the INDIA bloc is on the verge of collapse. Speaking to reporters here, the Congress president said, "I'm going to Dehradun tomorrow and from there to Delhi. Once I go there, I will gather complete information about it and talk to you, otherwise it may lead to confusion.....Let's see what happens."

## Seeks safety of yatra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Apprehending trouble by Amiscreants during the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in West Bengal, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has written to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee seeking appropriate directions to ensure its smooth passage through the state and safety of the yatri, including Rahul Gandhi. In his letter, Kharge expressed fear that some miscreants may try to show the state administration in bad light or disrupt the yatra, as had happened in some neighboring states. He said the Congress has embarked on the 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' from Manipur to Maharashtra to spread the message of justice to heal and unite the nation. Kharge said Rahul Gandhi, who is leading this yatra had earlier walked from Kanyakumari to Kashmir in the Bharat Jodo Yatra and has always maintained that the yantras serve a larger purpose of uniting people who stand divided today by the BJP in the name of religion, caste and creed and to ensure that the weakest are assured of justice social, economic and political.

# Hand over Gyanvapi structure' to Hindus: VHP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The VHP on Saturday claimed the ASI survey report has "reconfirmed" that the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi was constructed after demolishing a "magnificent temple" at the site and demanded that the structure be declared 'a Hindu temple and handed over to the community.

It also demanded that Hindus be

permitted to offer "sewa puja" to the 'Shivlinga' found in the "so-called Wazukhana area" at the disputed site.

"The evidence collected and the conclusions provided by the ASI do prove that the religious character of this place of worship existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and as at present is of a Hindu Temple," VHP working president Alok Kumar said in a statement. "Thus, even as per Section 4 of the Places of Worship Act,

1991, the structure should be declared as a Hindu temple," he also demanded. The VHP also called upon the Intezamia Committee that manages the mosque to agree to "respectfully shift" the Gyanvapi mosque to another appropriate place and to hand over the original site of Kashi Vishvanatha to the Hindu society.

"The VHP believes that this righteous action shall be an important step towards creating amicable relations

between the two prominent communities of Bharat," Kumar said.

The VHP's demands came after the ASI survey report on the Gyanvapi mosque complex was made public two days ago, with the lawyer representing the Hindu litigants claiming that the mosque was built after demolishing a pre-existing temple.

"Hand over the Gyanvapi structure to Hindus," Kumar said. He claimed the evidence collected by ASI 'recon-

firms that the mosque had been constructed after demolishing a magnificent temple". A part of the temple structure, particularly the western wall, is the remaining part of the Hindu temple, he further claimed.

The ASI report also proves that parts of the pre-existing temple including pillars and pilasters were reused with modifications to extend the span of the mosque and in the construction of the 'sahan', he added.

# POEM-3 ISRO's unique and inexpensive space platform

Achieves all payload objectives

PNS ■ BENGALURU

ISRO said on Saturday its space platform, POEM-3, has successfully achieved all its payload objectives.

POEM-3 (the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3) uses the spent PS4 stage of the PSLV-C58 rocket that launched XPoSat on January 1 this year.

ISRO said POEM-3 flew with nine payloads from Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Physical Research Laboratory, academia, and space start-ups.

By the 25th day in orbit, POEM-3, which the space agency described as a unique and inexpensive platform, completed 400 orbits.

Over this period, each payload was put into operation, as planned and performance was demonstrated.



POEM-3 is a three-axis-attitude controlled platform with power generation and telecommand and telemetry capabilities, for supporting payloads, it was noted.

It is predicted that POEM-3 will continue orbiting for approximately 73 more days before re-entering the Earth's atmosphere.

"With the likely re-entry of POEM-3 in the next 75 days, the PSLV-C58 XPoSat mission will be leaving zero debris in

space", ISRO said.

The experiments of ARKA200 (Xenon Based Electric Propulsion) and RUDRA (HAN based Green Propellant Thruster) from Bellatrix, and LEAP-TD (Satellite Bus with VHF/UHF Downlink & UHF Uplink Tested using IIST ground station) from Dhruva Space were completed.

Payload data is collected regularly for WeSat (Solar irradiance and UV Index study) from LBS Institute of Technology for Women, BeliefSat0 (Amateur Radio satellite) from K J Somayia Institute of Technology, RSEM (Radiation Shielding experiment) from TakeMe2Space, and DEX (interplanetary Dust particle experiment) from PRL for every orbit.

## Gujarat govt razes houses, 150 huts to clear temple land

PNS ■ GIR SOMNATH

A mega anti-encroachment drive was undertaken to clear around 3 hectares of land behind Somnath temple in Gujarat's Gir Somnath district that belonged to the temple trust and state government, officials said on Saturday.

As many as 21 houses and 153 huts that had unauthorisedly come up were being demolished to clear the land belonging to Shree Somnath Trust, which manages the activities of the revered Somnath temple, and the state government, said Collector Harji Vadhvaniya.

The mega demolition drive began Saturday morning in the presence of five mamlatdars and around 100 revenue officials, Vadhvaniya said. Heavy police presence was also maintained to ensure that it went off peacefully, he said.

## INDIA CORNER

### Court acquits man accused of sexually harassing teenage girl



A court in Thane district of Maharashtra has acquitted a man accused of sexually harassing and threatening a 15-year-old girl in 2016 citing lack of evidence. Special court judge D S Deshmukh passed the order on Monday, but it was made available on Saturday.

Accused Swapnil Shrikant Kambale, 32, was booked under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354A (sexual harassment of the nature of unwelcome physical contact and advances, 354D (stalking), 506 (criminal intimidation), and under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) Act. According to the prosecution, the incident had occurred in 2016 and the first information report (FIR) was filed that year on October 14 at the Shreenagar police station in Thane. The victim, who was a school student at the time, accused Kambale of stalking her, making advances, and threatening her family. The charges were framed on May 4, 2018. In the judgment, the court said there was a lack of substantial evidence to prove the guilt of the accused and acquitted him from the case.

### Man kills wife, minor son; attempts suicide in Jharkhand



A 29-year-old man allegedly strangled his wife and three-year-old son to death before attempting to die by suicide in Jharkhand's East Singhbhum district, a police officer said on Saturday. The incident happened in Kokmara village, around 90 km from here, under the jurisdiction of Baharagora

police station of the district, late on Friday night. The accused, Subhendu Bera, who tried to hang himself from a tree after committing the crime, was taken into police custody and admitted to a hospital, the Officer-in-Charge of Baharagora police station, Santan Tiwary, said. Family sources said that Bera was not well mentally, and plans were on to take him to a Ranchi hospital for treatment. On Friday night, the accused strangled his wife, Parvati Bera (25) and son to death following an altercation over a petty domestic issue, the police officer said. Other family members woke up on hearing a hue and cry and spotted that he was trying to die by suicide.

### Indian Diaspora celebrates 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day in Texas with pride



Showcasing cultural diversity and pride, dressed in their best vibrant ethnic outfits, Indian Americans on Friday celebrated India's achievements and aspirations at the 75th Republic Day here at various events. Despite heavy rains, they flaunted

their heritage and commitment to building a stronger and more prosperous India with their enthusiasm and patriotic fervour. Consul General of India, D C Manjunath, at a Facebook live event Friday morning, unfurled the national flag and addressed the community to convey the speech of Indian President Droupadi Murmu. In another well-attended event at the India House early noon, he unfurled the Indian flag amongst a huge gathering of Indian Americans and interacted with them. In the evening, the Consul General organised a reception to commemorate the Republic Day, which saw the attendance of various dignitaries from Texas and adjoining states, including elected officials, business leaders and professionals from a range of areas, and members of the Indian expatriate community.

# Centre extends Z+ security to Kerala Guv after SFI black flag protest

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,KOLLAM

The Centre on Saturday extended Z+ security cover to Arif Mohammed Khan, on a day of dramatic events that saw the Kerala Governor face yet another protest from the Left-leaning SFI as he lashed out at Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for "promoting lawlessness."

A visibly irked Khan, on his way to Kottarakkara for an event, got out of his car at Nilamel, took on the agitating members of the Students Federation of India and sat on the roadside demanding police



action against the activists of the CPI-M-affiliated SFI for staging a blackflag protest against him.

While the BJP threw its weight behind Khan, State General Education Minister

political drama of the state government and the Governor.

Accusing Vijayan of "promoting lawlessness in the state", Khan said, "as head of the state, lawlessness shall not be tolerated".

The Governor also said that the 'attacks' against him were being organised 'to divert attention from the Left government's failures and provoke some drastic action (from him)'.

"I am not going to oblige them," he said.

Governor also termed the SFI activists as "goondas" and "daily wagers" of the Marxist veteran and the Left party.

V Sivankutty said that no Governor of any state in the country has behaved in this manner.

The Congress-led UDF on the other hand said that this was all part of the ongoing

# Film industry held responsible for ‘changing morals’

PNS ■ PUNE

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan on Saturday said that the film industry is often held responsible for change in nation's morality, arguing instead that society has always served as an inspiration for cinema.

During his address to the students at the Symbiosis Film Festival here, the 81-year-old screen icon spoke about the criticism the film industry receives as well as the advantages and disadvantages of technological advancement in cinema.

He attended the inauguration ceremony of the festival, organised by Symbiosis International, along with wife Jaya Bachchan.

"Many times the film industry comes under a lot of criticism and all kinds of accusations that you are responsible for changing the morals of the country and changing the attitude of the people.

"I'm sure that you know Jaya, who has studied formally at the Institute (FTII), would endorse the fact that stories and films are made from experiences that we noticed in nature, in the world, in everyday life,



and that is what becomes our inspiration," the actor said.

Bachchan recalled how his late father, noted poet and writer Harivansh Rai Bachchan,

would watch the repeat telecast of many Hindi movies. The actor said his father loved the poetic justice aspect of cinema.

"Cinema in itself has its own power. During the last years of my father's life, every evening he would watch a film on television on cassette. Many times the films that he saw were repeated.

"I asked him every evening, 'You have watched the film, don't you get bored? What do you find in Hindi cinema?' He said, 'I'd get to see poetic justice in three hours. You and I will not get to see poetic justice in

a lifetime.' And that is the learning that cinema gives to all." Bachchan also lauded Malayalam and Tamil films for their authenticity but said it is incorrect to say that South cinema is doing better than Hindi film industry.

"Regional cinema has been doing very well. But when we talk to them, they say they are making the same kind of films that we do in Hindi. They just change the dressing so that they look beautiful.

"A lot of the people I've met said, 'We are remaking your old films, there's Deewar', Shakti'

and Sholay' somewhere in all our stories'. Malayalam and some of the Tamil cinema is authentic and aesthetic. This whole idea of pointing fingers at a particular region and saying that unki aachi chal rahi hai humari nahi (they are better than us) is not right," he added.

On a query about the technological advancements in the industry, Bachchan recalled the times when actors were compelled to give their best in the first take as filmmakers could not afford to use film celluloid because of budget constraints.

# ‘Every partner needs to collaborate’

## FM on India becoming third-largest economy by FY28

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday that the initiatives of Customs department like Faceless Assessment and Single Window Clearance need to evolve with the overall objective of growth of trade as every partner needs to collaborate to help India's GDP surpass USD 5 trillion by 2027-28.

In a written message on the occasion of 'International Customs Day 2024', Sitharaman said with a common purpose of ease of doing business for nation building during India's 'Amrit Kaal', all the stakeholders need to come together and contribute for benefits to citizen of India.

She said this year's theme of International Customs Day



**She said this year's theme of International Customs Day which is "Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose" resonates with the Motto of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' given by PM Modi**

which is "Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose" resonates with the Motto of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Every partner needs to collaborate to put India on course to becoming the third-largest economy by 2027-28, with a GDP surpassing USD 5 trillion," Sitharaman said.

Many initiatives taken by Customs such as Faceless Assessment, Direct Port Delivery, Single Window Clearance, AEO Scheme need to evolve with overall objective of growth of trade and business, she added.

Special focus on MSMEs, new startups and inclusivity will align with the vision of the prime minister, Sitharaman added.

# Youth should job rice to be providers

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The youth should focus on becoming entrepreneurs and create employment opportunities as envisioned by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 instead of job seekers, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Saturday.

"The youth must not be satisfied by becoming job seekers, but strive to be job providers, as envisioned by the NEP 2020.

"This is an opportune time to focus on entrepreneurship and creating new unicorns," Union Minister for Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan said while addressing the first convocation of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM)

Mumbai.

The minister said the youth must not be satisfied by becoming job seekers, but strive to be job providers, as envisioned by the NEP 2020.

"This is an opportune time to focus on entrepreneurship and creating new unicorns," he added.

Pradhan urged everyone to work towards creating an ecosystem to facilitate ideas that will transform into unicorns of the future.

The 'GenZ' are the catalyst of socio-economic change and have the responsibility to be the solution providers on global and societal issues for the next 25 years, Pradhan said.

Further, the minister added that a record improvement has been witnessed in the participation of poor.

# Govt working on SEZ reforms: official



PNS ■ KOLKATA

The government is working on reforms in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) domain so that movement of goods between domestic tariff area (DTA) and SEZ space is carried out smoothly without affecting the competitiveness of goods in the export markets, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said on Saturday.

During the pandemic two years ago, many office spaces in the SEZ areas had been vacated due to 'work from home' practice initiated by the occupants.

Barthwal said this had led to the demarcation of SEZs into SEZ and DTA spaces.

"Scale economies have become very important nowadays. Reforms in the SEZ are in the offing so that movement of goods from SEZ to DTA and vice-versa are not affected rendering goods produced become less competitive", Barthwal said at a symposium organised by the Bharat Chamber of Commerce.

The official said that the foreign trade policy (FTP) of the government had been framed keeping in mind the global value chain.

"Our FTP has been designed for exporters to take advantage of the global value chain. The industry, which had always sought protection in the past, will now have to integrate with the global value chain and look at where the competitive advantage lay", he added.

Stating that the target of

**During the pandemic two years ago, many office spaces in the SEZ areas had been vacated due to 'work from home' practice initiated by the occupants**

achieving USD two trillion exports by 2030 is possible, Barthwal said that USD one trillion will be forthcoming from merchandise exports and another USD one trillion from services. "Services appear to be intangible, but there is a huge scope to grow. We should look at the impediments which are preventing the growth of the services sector", he added.

Barthwal said with external trade becoming an important part of the growth engine, both the industrial and foreign trade policies are now intertwined.

He said that there is an increasing demand by countries to ink free trade agreements (FTAs) with India. In bilateral and multilateral agreements, the most important aspect is to understand the policy of 'give and take'. If one has to take something, he also has to give something, he said.

Barthwal said both the UK and the US are raising the standards by bringing in sanitary and phytosanitary issues in imported goods.

"We will have to adhere to these standards which are becoming increasingly difficult", he said..

# APAC businesses to nearly triple spends on GenAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

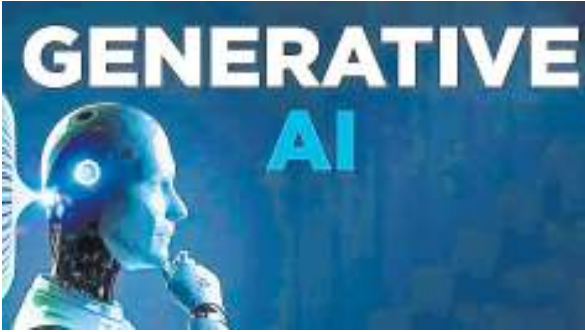
Asia Pacific businesses are sprucing up investments in generative AI (GenAI) and projected to nearly triple spends on this technology to USD 3.4 billion in 2024 across Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, India, and Singapore, according to Infosys Research.

While the spending trails North America, APAC's adoption, effectiveness, and growth are among the highest globally, it said.

"Companies across Asia-Pacific are quickly ramping up investments in generative AI and entering a higher stage of maturity," the IT major's research arm, Infosys Knowledge Institute (IKI), said in the research.

While APAC companies currently lag behind their North American counterparts in GenAI spending, the research forecasts a bigger increase than in any other region, that is 140 per cent.

"This translates to an estimated USD 3.4 billion to be invested across Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, India, and



Singapore," it said.

Infosys' Generative AI Radar APAC report includes insights from interviews with business leaders and AI practitioners and a survey of 1,000 respondents from Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, India, and Singapore.

Enterprises across APAC are investing heavily in GenAI. China leads the region, with investment expected to grow by more than 160 per cent to USD 2.1 billion, and Australia and New Zealand growth close behind.

"ANZ (Australia and New Zealand) investment is expected to grow by more than 150 per cent, from USD 60 million

to USD 151 million in 2024," the research findings showed.

The biggest obstacles to APAC adoption are caution around responsible AI, concerns about the impact on reputation, and employee readiness.

Responsible AI (data privacy, data usability, ethics and bias) is a concern for APAC countries, though ANZ is less concerned about data usability.

"APAC is more cautious about GenAI's business impact than North America and Europe; almost 10 per cent expect a negative impact on reputation versus less than 5 per cent for North America and Europe, it said.

# Macrotech Developers profit rises to Rs 505 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Jan 27 (PTI) Realty firm Macrotech Developers on Saturday reported a 25 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 505 crore in the December quarter and said it could raise up to Rs 5,000 crore, if needed, for expansion.

Mumbai-based Macrotech Developers is one of the leading real estate developers in the country. It has a major presence in Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Pune. The company markets its properties under Lodha brand.

Its net profit stood at Rs 405 crore in the year-



October-December period of 2023-24 financial year from Rs 1,902.4 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year, according to a regulatory filing.

The board also approved an enabling proposal to raise up to Rs 5,000 crore by issuing securities through public issues, private placement or any other mode in

one or two tranches.

"Strong underlying demand on the back of rising incomes, ample job creation, as well as enhanced consumer confidence, enabled us to achieve our best Q3 pre-sales performance of Rs 34.1 billion," Abhishek Lodha, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Macrotech Developers, said.

# Customs 2.0 in offing: secy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra on Saturday said the customs department is developing a fully automated trade interface system, Customs 2.0, which would also help in improving its score in the World Bank's ranking.

Speaking on the International Customs Day 2024 celebrations, organised by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Malhotra said technology is going to be the main driver in improving customs processes.

The World Bank's Logistics Performance Index 2023, which was released in April last year, had ranked Customs processes at 47th spot, down from 40th position in 2018.

"India is on course to become the third largest economy surpassing GDP of USD 5 trillion. Yet we are ranked 47th out of 139 countries in the World Bank report". There is a huge scope for improvement for us not only in terms of score but also in terms of ranking, Malhotra said.

He said the systems division in Customs is preparing for a Customs 2.0 to ensure that all processes in customs and with all stakeholders will be automated.

"All payments, all interfaces with trade need to be automated so that everything is available with the click of a button," Malhotra said.

# MONEY MATTERS

## Yes Bank posts Rs 231 cr profit for Oct-Dec qtr



Yes Bank reported a net profit of Rs 231 crore for the October-December quarter of 2023-24 on Saturday. The city-headquartered private sector lender had reported a post tax net profit of Rs 52 crore for the year-ago period, heavily impacted by money it had to set aside following the transfer of sour loans to an asset reconstruction

## Pakistan seeks US\$ 2 billion loan from China



Cash-strapped Pakistan has sought financial assistance of USD 2 billion from its close ally China for a year, according to a media report on Saturday. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, in a letter, has requested his Chinese Premier Li Qiang to roll over the debt as soon as the deposit time for the loan from China is completed on March 23. In his letter, Kakar expressed gratitude to China for its financial assistance to Pakistan during its economic crisis as the cash-strapped country has secured a safe deposit of a total of USD 4 billion in loans from China, reducing the country's mounting pressure on external debt payments and stabilising its foreign exchange reserves. The Express Tribune newspaper reported. Earlier this month, the UAE rolled over Pakistan's maturing loan of USD 2 billion. Apart from the UAE, Saudi Arabia has deposited USD 5 billion with the State Bank of Pakistan. Following the loan rollover by the UAE, the interim government requested the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to dispatch a new mission this month for talks for the last loan tranche of USD 1.2 billion. The IMF's next mission is critical for not only securing the last loan tranche but also for beginning negotiations for a new long-term programme. While speaking to a private TV news channel recently, former finance minister Ishaq Dar said in case his party the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) won the elections.

## Centre will give all help to Maha coop sector

Union minister BL Verma on Saturday said the Centre will provide all help for the development of the cooperative sector in Maharashtra. The Union minister of state for cooperation was speaking at the Maharashtra State Urban Cooperative Banks Conference (MSUCBC) 2023-24 being held here. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and guidance of Union Minister for Cooperation Amit Shah, many steps have been taken for development in the country through the medium of cooperation. The Union government will provide all help for development of the cooperative sector in Maharashtra," Verma said.

# Tax benefits, support to women entrepreneurs

PNS ■ KOLKATA

An increase in income tax exemption limits, support to women entrepreneurs, a long-term taxation policy and steps to boost consumption and savings are among the expectations of experts from the interim budget which will be presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1 ahead of Lok Sabha elections.

They also demand for parity in taxation among companies, partnerships and limited liability partnerships.

"This is going to be an interim budget but at least there may be some indications of full-budget benefits. There may be some concession to be offered to individual taxpayers under section 87A under which the overall tax exemption limit may be increased to Rs 8 lakh from now Rs 7 lakh, inclusive of rebates," All India Federation of Tax Practitioners national president Narayan Jain said.



**They also demand for parity in taxation among companies, partnerships and limited liability partnerships**

Bharat Chamber of Commerce president N G Khaitan said there is a need for a long-term taxation policy and parity in taxation among companies, partnerships and limited liability partnerships (LLPs) for a level playing field for small and medium firms.

MSMEs, which have a huge contribution to the country's GDP and employment generation, are subjected to higher taxation, he said.

Khaitan also expects some actions to mitigate the burden on salaried persons with a reduction in the personal tax-

ation front and boost consumption and savings.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce's fiscal affairs and taxation committee chairperson Vivek Jalan expected that a simplified 'single hybrid scheme' for personal income taxation incorporating certain deductions could be rolled out.

The government needs to prioritise its 'Vasudeva Kutumbakam' (the whole world is one family) roadmap and India's leadership role in green manufacturing, the expert said.

Jalan hoped that customs duty on capital goods and raw materials like lithium-ion cells for electric vehicles to propel green energy initiatives could be reduced.

A government-facilitated settlement mechanism for customs disputes and a dedicated tribunal for handling GST-related cases may see the light of day.

Radhika Dalmia, chairperson of FICCI Ladies

Organisation (Kolkata chapter), advocated tax relaxations for women entrepreneurs and more paid holidays for working mothers.

"Increasing the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana allowance and enhancing education benefits for girls are crucial steps. Strengthening financial inclusion and healthcare infrastructure along with prioritising education, particularly for girls, is vital for a more inclusive Bharat," she said.

Union services MD and CEO Vinaya Varma, in his expectations, said, "I think the role of export on e-marketplaces will become important with the government's focus on Made in India.

Therefore, a regulatory framework that acknowledges e-marketplaces as responsible players in facilitating cross-border payments, potentially granting them specific roles in the release or holding of funds based on pre-defined criteria and agreements, will be welcome."

## 30% dip in fund inflow in real estate from foreign investors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The inflow of funds in Indian real estate from foreign investors fell 30 per cent to USD 2.73 billion last year, but the influx jumped more than two times from domestic players to USD 1.51 billion, according to real estate consultant Vestian.

According to Vestian data, the total institutional investments in real estate declined 12 per cent to USD 4.3 billion in 2023, from USD 4.9 billion in the previous year.

The consultant highlighted that investments from foreign funds fell 30 per cent annually because of their cautious approach, but rose 120 per cent from domestic investors.

Domestic investors pumped in USD 1,511 million (USD 1.5 billion) last year, as against USD 687 million in the 2022 calendar year.

However, the inflow from foreign funds stood lower at USD 2,733 million last year, as against USD 3,926 million in 2022. Accordingly, the share of domestic investors increased to 35 per cent in 2023 from 14 per cent in 2022.

**FORM-6**  
(see sub-rule(1) of rule - 19 and Section - 11(1) of the Act 30(2013))  
**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**  
**REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT**  
**PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION**

No. G1/5497/2022 Date: 19.01.2024  
No. E114221/2019 Date: 27.10.2023

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana / Collector that a total of Ac. 2.22 gts of land is required in the Chityala Village of Adavi-devulapally Mandal in Nalgonda District for Public purpose, namely, acquisition of land under Submergence of Nagaraja Sagar Tailpond Dam.

The Government of Telangana Energy (Budget A1) Department have issued G.O.Ms. No. 25, Dated: 09.11.2022, exempting the Provision of chapter 1 and chapter (II) under section 10 A, Act No. 21 of 1950 (Act No. 21 of 1950) to this project.

There it is notified that for the above said project in the Chityala Village of Adavi-devulapally Mandal in Nalgonda District land measuring, more or less Ac. 2.22 gts of standard measurement, whose detail description is as following, is proposed for acquisition:

**SCHEDULE**

Village: Chityala; Mandal: Adavi-devulapally; Dist: Nalgonda							
Sl. No.	St. No.	Type of Use	Type of Land	Area under acquisition (Acgts)	Name of the person interested	Employer	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	15	Patta	Dry	2.22	Jaleela Thirapathashai S/o Narsaiah Kurukula Venkateswaraiah S/o Koteshwaraiah	Jaleela Thirapathashai S/o Narsaiah Kurukula Venkateswaraiah S/o Koteshwaraiah	—
Total				Ac. 2.22 gts			

This notification is made under the provisions of Section-11 (1) of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act No. 36 of 2013), as amended by the Right to Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act No. 21 of 2017) (hereinafter may concern).

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Nalgonda and Revenue Divisional Officer, Miryalguda on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana / Collector-cum-Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize officer and his staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section-12 of the said Act.

Under Section 11 (4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e., sale / purchase, etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector.

Objections to the acquisition if any, and claims from all the persons interested / affected for settlement by negotiation of the compensation, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 60 (sixty) days from the date of publication of this notification as provided under section 15 of Act before District Collector, Nalgonda / Revenue Divisional Officer, Miryalguda.

Sd/- Land Acquisition Officer & Sd/- Additional Sd/- Dist. Collector  
Revenue Divisional Officer, Collector, Nalgonda, Nalgonda  
Miryalguda  
DPR No.857/LAPP-Pub2023-24

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH & MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**  
**TENDER NOTICE**

NIT No. 27/SE/PH/WGLIAMRUT-2/6WS&SP/2023-24/1173 Dt: 26.01.2024

Name of the work: MA & LD - PHMED - Water Supply Projects in 39 ULBs and Sewerage Projects in 04 ULBs under AMRUT 2.0 under the Jurisdiction of Adilabad, Karimnagar, Khammam and Warangal PH Divisions in Package-1. Total Cost: Rs. 2396.02 Crore; Bid submission Start Date: 26.01.2024 @ 11.00 AM; Bid Submission Closing Date: 09.02.2024 @ 04.30 P.M. For details visit: <https://tender.telanganagov.in>, Contact No: 9704601964, 9642968526.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, P.H Circle, Warangal

"People take different roads seeking fulfilment and happiness. Just because they're not on your road doesn't mean they've gotten lost"  
— Dalai Lama



LET'S  
FIX OUR

Paradise is elusive in this world. Sometimes, even lost. But Lakshadweep is a paradise that not only exists but also retains its idyllic innocence. **CHANDAN MITRA** spent five heavenly days on the archipelago to discover its rare coral treasures. Photographs by **SHOBORI GANGULI**

(Timeline: October 2006. Given the time lapse since this was published many ground realities have changed)

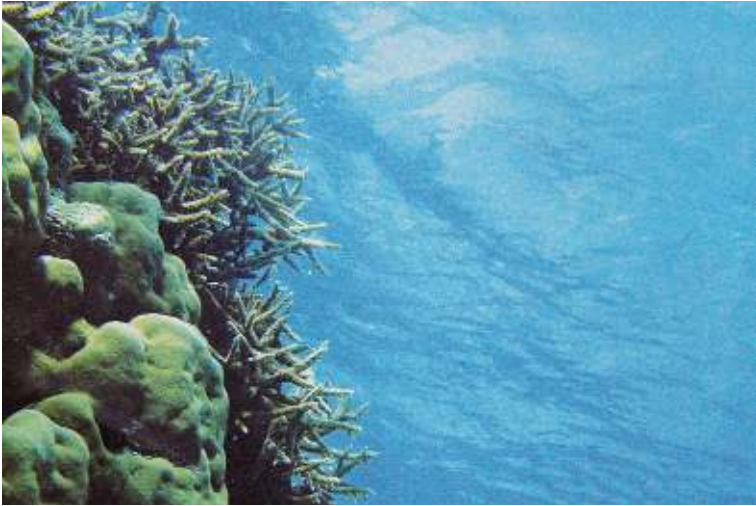
# LAKSHIYA

T

illa couple of years ago when asked where I planned to spend the New Year, I would promptly reply "Somewhere the mobile doesn't work". It has become increasingly difficult to locate such a place, although I did manage to herald 2006 at a resort near Ranaqpur in Rajasthan where the mobile, somewhat unexpectedly, did not catch the signal. I thought it would be the same when I planned a trip to Lakshadweep this year. As it transpired, connectivity is no longer an issue even in these far-flung islands that lie between 300 and 500 kms west of the Kerala coast. I had been told that BSNL provides a cellular service to Agatti, the island that has the archipelago's only airfield. What is instantly striking about Lakshadweep is its pristine serenity, untouched by civilisation. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, globally celebrated for creating the world's most famous fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, also wrote a gripping novel, The Lost World — an imagined account of a plateau in the wilds that survived the ravages of man and time to remain home to prehistoric species that were lost to the rest of the world. Purely fictional, it chronicles Sir Doyle's vivid imagination that can be traced to modern-day science fiction films like Steven Spielberg's Jurassic Park. A snorkeling or scuba diving expedition in the marine wilds of Lakshadweep would have definitely spurred the author's powers of imagination. If the phrase "out of this world" could truly be applied to a place very much a part of our Earth, it must be the bountiful marine life throbbing with vitality and variety all along the coral reefs of Lakshadweep's myriad islands. The sheer remoteness of this group of 62 islands, only 10 of which are inhabited, has allowed pristine marine life to prosper in splendid isolation. The sheer tranquility of the tiny islands encircled by emerald blue lagoons and peopled more by swaying coconut palms than humans, makes for a therapeutic holiday for metro rat-racers. A place of exquisite natural beauty, spellbinding tranquility, rich in an astonishing array of

marine life, Lakshadweep is now face-to-face with a crucial decision about its future. Which way should it go? Should it emulate the example of its southern cousin, Maldives, which has become one of the world's most sought after destinations with tourism emerging as the backbone of its economy? Or, should Lakshadweep resist the temptation of mindless prosperity, choosing instead to retain its millennial lifestyle quaint but comfortable? It's a tough call. Lakshadweep is not too easily reached. There is only a 15-seater Dornier turbo-prop aircraft of Indian Airlines that aerially connects the island to Kochi on the Kerala coast. The plane commutes between Kochi and Agatti six days a week and is the lifeline of the Union Territory Administration and its officials. There is also the option of taking the ferry, a daily service that connects different islands to the mainland, covering the 404-km distance between the UT's headquarters at Kavaratti and Kochi. Adventurous travellers sometimes hire private boats for inter-island travel: We were told on Kadmat island that some people left for Bangaram at 2 am, intending to make it to the tourist resort by 7 in the morning. Journeys by such motorised boats are exciting; we were ferried to Bangaram from Agatti this way, but it could prove a trifle dangerous if the seas are choppy. One should not forget that Lakshadweep lies directly on the route of the monsoon as it advances towards the Indian Peninsula from the centre of the Indian Ocean. Having spent four magnificent days in these quaint islands, my understanding of marine life and empathy for ecology has multiplied manifold. I cannot ever forget that momentary glimpse of a turtle, which I suddenly found staring at me questioningly as it bobbed up from below while I was swimming in the lagoon at Bangaram. It seemed to ask what right I had to invade its privacy without so much as by your leave! It was the same feeling I got diving deep in the lagoon off Kavaratti as thousands of enchantingly multi-hued fish swarmed around me. I put out my palm at some of them; innocently, they came towards me assuming I was offering food and darted

A PLACE OF EXQUISITE NATURAL BEAUTY, SPELLBINDING TRANQUILITY, RICH IN AN ASTONISHING ARRAY OF MARINE LIFE, LAKSHADWEEP IS NOW FACE-TO-FACE WITH A CRUCIAL DECISION ABOUT ITS FUTURE. WHICH WAY SHOULD IT GO? SHOULD IT EMULATE THE EXAMPLE OF ITS SOUTHERN COUSIN, MALDIVES, WHICH HAS BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST SOUGHT AFTER DESTINATIONS WITH TOURISM EMERGING AS THE BACKBONE OF ITS ECONOMY? OR, SHOULD LAKSHADWEEP RESIST THE TEMPTATION OF MINDLESS PROSPERITY, CHOOSING INSTEAD TO RETAIN ITS MILLENNIAL LIFESTYLE QUIANT BUT COMFORTABLE? IT'S A TOUGH CALL



away furiously upon realising there was no meal on offer. Being first-timers, we did not risk diving or snorkelling in the deep seas beyond the coral reef, although diving instructors everywhere assured us that even those (like my wife Shobori) who could not swim had nothing to worry once a life jacket was worn. Apparently, the walls of coral that constitute the reef offer fantastic glimpses of marine life. After a couple of days familiarising with the idiom of deep-sea diving, it's worth stepping into the open sea beyond the reef. At Bangaram, we snorkelled close to the reef on which a ship had run aground 70 years ago. The sights we saw were reminiscent of underwater documentaries you watch on Discovery or National Geographic. Apart from thousands of small, colourful fish, many giant-sized fish have also made the wrecked hull of the ship their home, elegantly sashaying in and out of the protection it offers. A visit to the shipwreck at Bangaram is highly recommended as the water is shallow and one can always stand up in case of any difficulty. It is indeed a lost world waiting to be discovered in the warm, tropical waters of Lakshadweep. Living corals are rarely seen anywhere in the world today, but the waters off these islands are brimming with them. Islanders, however, mournfully point out that the El Nino of 1997 that brought swirling currents of warm water caused widespread death and destruction of corals. "It's only now that the corals are regenerating once again. But it will take decades,

provided there is no other ecological disaster, for corals here to regain their earlier vitality," a diving instructor said at Kadmat. Interestingly, it could be dangerous at times to provoke live coral. Clamp-corals, for instance, close their apparently inert mouths tight if you happen to put your finger into them. Unless uprooted (which means killed), it isn't possible to make them let go. Moral of the story: Let sleeping corals lie. Similarly, the multifinned Lionfish can release sufficient poison if touched, to disable a human arm for around three hours. A good diving instructor is one who points to all these facts of underwater life even as he expertly guides you through the depths. We had to learn sign language to communicate underwater even for snorkelling. Making an 'O' by joining your thumb and forefinger is an exclamation of joy, putting your palm out and shaking it as if indicating 'so-so' actually conveys you are not okay, while the thumbs up sign means you aren't comfortable and wish to go up to the surface. Although scuba diving requires some detailed instructions to be carefully followed and carrying a lot of equipment like air cylinders on your back, it is actually quite simple once you get the hang of it. Personally, I found it easier than snorkelling, which entails pulling air from the surface through a nozzle into your lungs while floating close to the surface. While diving, on the other hand, once you are in water, buoyancy ensures you don't feel the



weight of the air cylinders; in fact, a belt studded with metal weights has to be worn so that you can reach the sea floor to get the best view of fish, corals, turtles and even octopuses. The Government-run Dolphin Dive Centre at Kavaratti boasts some of the best trainers, with Sikandar, Taha and Shaukat making us feel comfortable in no time. For the less adventurous, there is the option of travelling into the sea in glass-bottomed boats. I had done that in Maldives and Mauritius, but having experienced the real thing now, that seems rather amateurish. Our first halt in Lakshadweep was at Bangaram, reached by a 90 minute flight to Agatti from Kochi and thereafter another 90 minutes by boat. The day we arrived, the Pawan Hans chopper, the lifeline between the islands, got grounded due to a technical snag. Hence the boat-ride, which in fact, we quite enjoyed. Bangaram is Lakshadweep's most frequented destination, mainly because of a much publicised resort comprising 29 thatched cottages. Running for 17 years it now provides a model for similar development of other uninhabited islands. The Government facility, the Dak Bungalow with four independent cottages, shares the beach with this resort.

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## BUDGET EXPECTATIONS 2024-2025

Expectations from the healthcare sector in a budget are significant, particularly in the context of public health and well-being. Industry players share some common expectations:



DR ANIL GULATI  
Chairman and CEO, Pharmazz

The pharmaceutical industry in India has seen unprecedented growth in recent years and has to be prepared for increased growth in the coming years. It will be necessary to improve manufacturing quality while reducing costs. Innovation is essential to industry growth; therefore, the adoption of novel technologies to discover drugs from new chemical entities needs to be incentivized. In this upcoming budget, the government could advance policies that promote improved drug manufacturing quality and modernize regulations to aid new drug discoveries.



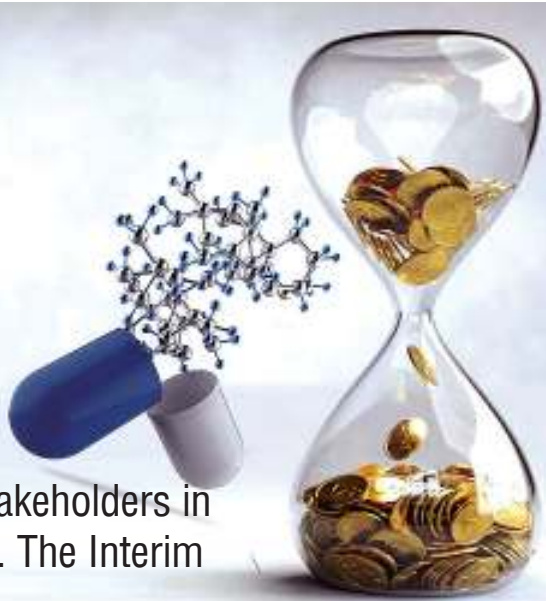
DR ANSHUL GUPTA  
Director, of Medical & Haemato-Oncology,  
Medanta Hospital, Lucknow

In 2023-24, the Union Health Ministry had allocated Rs 89,155 crore. This was an increase of 13% over revised estimates for 2022-23. So it is but natural that in the current fiscal, we expect the Government to further increase the health budget allocation so as to improve health care facility in the country. The proposed areas where this budget allocation should be done are:

- The health insurance coverage under Ayushman Bharat scheme should be revised / increased for cancer patients as the cancer care including cancer drugs and supportive care are expensive and the patients despite being the scheme's beneficiary could not afford the anti cancer care.
- For patients having their personal health insurance, additional benefits (over and above existing) under section 80 C should be given.
- Non-Governmental organizations including private hospitals and institutes should also be made eligible for Government funding for research projects.

# ULTIMATE GOAL HEALTH FOR ALL

Ahead of the budget, the HEALTH PIONEER catches up with the stakeholders in the Indian Pharma/Health sectors to get a glimpse of their wishlist. The Interim Budget will be presented on February 1, 2024.



## KEY DEMANDS

**NATHEALTH:** Healthcare Federation of India, an organisation that involves leading healthcare service providers, medical technology providers (devices & equipment), diagnostic service providers and other stakeholders is seeking:

**INCREASING HEALTH BUDGET ALLOCATION:** India's public healthcare spending remains low, at only around 1.6-1.8 % of GDP, insufficient to tackle the magnitude of healthcare challenges. NATHEALTH recommends increasing budget allocation to 2.5% of GDP to augment the social insurance schemes, boosting healthcare reforms and infrastructure and fast-tracking digital health services across India.

**RATIONALIZATION OF GST:** Although increased budget allocation has been a longstanding request from the sector, there remains another persistent issue concerning the healthcare credit chain through GST. Indirect tax-

ation and lack of input credit for providers poses a significant challenge for the healthcare industry. NATHEALTH strongly recommends outlining a reform agenda in the Finance Bill aimed at restructuring the healthcare GST framework.

**BOOSTING THE VALUE CHAIN:** The focus should remain on augmenting local capabilities to extend care to the most remote areas, while concurrently emphasizing the localization of the value chain. Additionally, harmonizing global best practices necessitates integrated budget allocations for effective execution as well safeguards for quality and patient safety.

**BOOSTING MEDICAL VALUE TRAVEL:** Medical value-added services and Travel is expected to be USD 10 billion. To further aid the growth of this segment the issue of MAT credit needs immediate government attention. It is

crucial for individuals to benefit from exports. This move will give them an opportunity to offset it. It will create a more significant value proposition to focus on MVTs and boost capacity.

**SEPARATE BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR SKILLING AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS:** While the government announced the establishment of 157 new nursing colleges in the previous budget, strengthening health workforce situation in India is one such area that needs continuous government and policy focus. India's doctor-to-patient ratio is lower than WHO recommended threshold. NATHEALTH recommends that the government should allocate funds for training and development programs for doctors, nurses, and allied healthcare workers, putting special emphasis on digital learning stack and smart certification standards.

streamlining bureaucratic procedures, and fostering industry-academia collaboration can stimulate domestic manufacturing. This approach should align with global standards and ensure a stable regulatory environment to attract investments.



RAJIV NATH  
Forum Coordinator, Association of Indian  
Medical Device Industry (AiMed)

As per GTRI report of August 2023, the Indian medical devices industry can expand from USD 12 billion to USD 50 billion by 2030, reducing import reliance to 35% and boosting exports to USD 18 billion. Supporting policies are needed so that Indian Medical Devices Industry can make quality healthcare accessible and affordable for the common masses, aim to place India among the top five medical devices manufacturing hubs worldwide and help end the 80-85 per cent import dependence forced upon us and an ever-increasing import bill of over 63,200 Crore.

We have the following Budget recommendations to cut down the ever-increasing import bill:

- Increase in Custom Duty to a nominal 10%-15% Duty and a predictable tariff policy
- Correction of Inverted Duty by levying Health Cess of 5% custom duty on balance Medical Devices (this was not earlier applied to all HS Codes). Cess is used for Ayushman Bharat.
- Trade Margin Capping by monitoring MRP of Imports (if over 10 - 20 times of CIF)
- Income Tax benefits for project investments in Medical Devices Manufacturing.



PAVAN CHOUDARY  
Chairman of the Medical Technology  
Association of India (MTAI)

In recent years, the Medical Device industry has benefited hugely due to noteworthy initiatives by the government, such as the National Medical Device Policy (NMDP), the Promotion of Research & Innovation in the Pharma-MedTech sector (PRIP) scheme, the establishment of medical device parks and elevation of branding and promotional strategies for the growth of the sector.

That said we must also be cognizant of the nuances of the medical device sector which comprises mechanical and engineering complexities. Unlike other sectors, most medical devices have a high value but are produced in low volumes.

It may therefore not be economically viable to manufacture all devices in a single geographical area. Even countries with highly developed medical manufacturing hubs like the USA, Japan, Germany, etc. also rely on imports to cater to the healthcare needs of their country.

India's current tariff duty structure on medical device imports is very high. This high customs duty regime adversely impacts the costs of medical devices which contradicts the government's efforts to provide low-cost healthcare available to the masses through schemes like the Ayushman Bharat program (PMJAY). Therefore, we request the government that for products where the ability to import substitutes is still some time away, the customs duty rate should be reduced

## DOCTORSPEAK

### TIPS TO KEEP YOUR NEWBORN SAFE DURING WINTER

Winter months can be harsh for everyone, especially for newborns. These delicate little beings require extra care and protection to ensure their safety and comfort during the cold weather. Here are some essential pointers to follow when it comes to your little ones.



DR RAGHURAM MALLAIAH  
Senior Director Neonatology,  
Fortis la Femme, New Delhi

In India, it is a common practice to over wrap or over clad babies during the winter months. However, it is important to remember the golden thumb rule - dress your baby in one layer of clothing more than what you are wearing, regardless of the season. This ensures that they are adequately warm without the risk of overheating.

**Room Temperature:** Maintaining the right room temperature is crucial for your baby's well-being. Resist the temptation to keep the room excessively warm as overheating can be more dangerous than the cold. Aim for an ambient room temperature of around 22-23 degrees Celsius, which most babies find comfortable. If you decide to use room heaters, do so sparingly.

Avoid keeping them on for extended periods and limit their usage to specific tasks such as bathing, changing clothes or diapers, or during exceptionally cold spells. Continuous use of heaters can lead to dry skin, irritation of breathing passages, and even discomfort in their eyes.

Winter air tends to be dry and arid, which can cause discomfort for your baby. Consider using a humidifier to add moisture to the air, making it easier for your little one to breathe and ensuring a comfortable environment.

Keeping your baby's vaccinations up to date is crucial, especially during the winter months. Vaccinations protect your baby from dangerous respiratory infections that are more prevalent during this time of the year. Consult your pediatrician to ensure your little one receives the necessary vaccinations.

Practicing good hygiene is essential to minimize the transmission of viruses during winter. Regularly wash your hands before handling your baby, and avoid taking them to crowded places where the risk of contracting infections is higher.

Breastfeeding provides your baby with both hydration and protection against infections. It is essential to continue breastfeeding during winter months to ensure your little one stays healthy and well-nourished.

Cold weather can cause dryness and discomfort for your baby's delicate skin. Use baby moisturizers to keep their skin hydrated and prevent dryness.

Contrary to some beliefs, it is perfectly safe to continue giving your baby oil massages and warm baths even during winters. Just remember to keep the bathroom warm and cozy, ensuring your little one enjoys a soothing experience. A warm bath and massage before bedtime can promote better sleep as well.

If your baby develops a fever or cough, which are more common in winters, it is important to consult a paediatrician immediately. Prompt medical attention will help identify and address any potential health concerns.

Winter may pose challenges for newborns, but by following these guidelines, you can provide them with the extra protection they need. Remember, your little bundle of joy deserves a safe and comfortable winter experience. Stay attentive, prioritize their well-being, and cherish the precious moments with your newborn during this beautiful season.

## BOOK REVIEW

# Fostering Collective Prosperity Through Cooperatives

This coffee table book is not just a collection of stories but a testament to the resilience, empowerment, economic growth, and social embeddedness achieved by cooperatives across India. It also serves as a guidepost for the future as India strives to become a global leader

BY ARCHANA JYOTI

The coffee table book 'Collective Prosperity: The Legacy of Indian Cooperatives', is all about recognizing and celebrating the achievements of Indian cooperative societies over the 75 years, taking readers on a tour of as many successful cooperatives from diverse sectors.

Recently unveiled by Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah in the national capital, the book is compiled by Pune-based Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (Vamnicom), a national institute under the aegis of the National Council for Cooperative Training (NCCT) and promoted by the Union Cooperation Ministry.

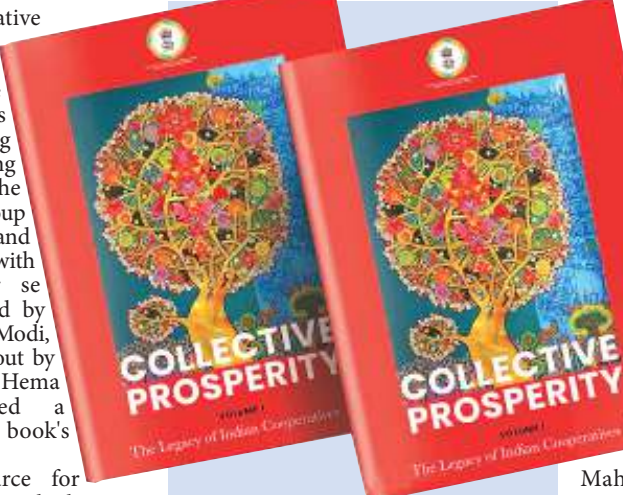
The volume is the maiden effort by the institute highlighting the best practices in the sector to help the other aspirants to take a cue.

One is therefore little surprised, as we delve into its pages, we embark on a journey treaded by historic cooperatives to the likes of India Coffee House, lesser known gems Looms of Ladakh to the Uralungal Labour Cooperative and iconic ones including Amul, IFFCO, Krishak Bharati Cooperativm and National

Consumer Cooperative Federation (NCCF) to name a few. Spread throughout the landscape of the country, these entities are silently working to bring prosperity while opening new opportunities for the individual and for the group to reach their individual and common goals, aligned with the vision of "Sahakar se Samridhhi" as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as also has been pointed out by Vamnicom's Director Hema Yadav who has played a significant role in the book's preparation.

It is a valuable resource for individuals and communities looking to actively participate in cooperative endeavors.

The remarks of Union Cooperative Secretary Gyaneshwar Singh in his Foreword rightly emphasize the significance of the Indian cooperative system which is one of the biggest in the world particularly in supporting agriculture and allied sectors with almost 30 crore members forming the backbone of the rural ecosystem serving mainly



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Author: Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of  
Cooperative Management team  
Pages: 217 | Price: ₹799

small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, handloom weavers, fishermen, rural and urban poor, SCs, STs and other backward classes.

It needs to be mentioned here that India is home to staggering 8.5 lakhs such

cooperatives- comprising one-fourth of the total number of such entities in the world. Cooperation has undoubtedly been a way of life for our forefathers who advocated 'vasudhaiva kutumbakam' from times immemorial. Some of the world's best known cooperatives in various sectors are in India which are continuously transforming the lives of our local communities. For instance, Asia's first cooperative sugar factory, Padmashri Dr Vithalrao Vikhe Patil Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Limited is at a small village Pravaranagar, Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. Similarly, India's first women's federation, the Gujarat State Women's SEWA Co-operative Federation Limited was formally established with an aim to support its members in capacity-building for management, marketing and policy and advocacy interventions with key stakeholders.

The Dhundi Solar Pump Irrigators' Cooperative Enterprise (SPICE) established in 2016 at Dhundi, in Anand district, Gujarat is the world's first-ever

enterprise to use solar power to run their irrigation pumps while SWaCH is country's first wholly-owned cooperative of self-employed waste collectors in Pune, Maharashtra. Kerala-based AYCOOPS is India's first cooperative media production house in the cooperative sector which, unlike the traditional cooperatives, operates like a start-up. New-age Eco-friendly Cooperatives. Commendably, these cooperatives belong to different parts of the country, which is an indicator of a fair distribution of development across the land even though a lot still remains to be done in this respect.

For instance, as the book extends its reach to highlight cooperative hospitals in India, it is revealed that most of them are located in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh. This calls for spreading in populated States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Odisha to fill the widening demand-supply gap in the sector.

In tough times like those during the Covid-19 crisis when the entire world was swept by economic slowdown painting a gloomy future, AMUL, MILKFEED, NAFED, MARFED, and other organizations provided necessary services

to the people and the farmers despite the supply chain being disrupted by the lockdown.

The narrative also touches upon the significance of cooperative banks, exemplified by the Saraswat Bank, and health cooperatives, providing a holistic view of the diverse roles cooperatives play in India's economic and social landscape. The impact of cooperatives on poverty alleviation, food and nutritional security, social integration, and employment generation is acknowledged, portraying them as social instruments of development, complimented by the recent initiatives of the Ministry to fortify the sector's growth.

For instance, by expanding the scope of cooperative activities and integrating them into various facets of the economy, the aim is to create a dynamic ambience that resonates with the aspirations of the younger generation while drawing their energy and ideas.

In essence, this compact collection not only shines a spotlight on the past achievements of Indian cooperatives but also serves as a guidepost for the future, as India strives to become a global leader.

No doubt, the cooperative sector can be a springboard propelling India towards 'Atmnirbharta' (self-reliant).



# Extreme heat can be risky during pregnancy

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR BABY



birth attributed to heat is greater in lower- and middle-income countries where women are often employed in agriculture or other manual labour positions, and their work continues

If dehydration occurs, hormonal changes can include the release of prostaglandin and oxytocin, potentially triggering labour prematurely. Heat exposure can also release heat-shock protein (a family of proteins produced by cells secondary to stressful conditions) which can damage placental cells and placental function. This can contribute to poor fetal nutrition, leading to low birth weight. However, actual thermo-physiological data from pregnant women during heat exposure is sparse. Our recent review showed no study has assessed thermoregulatory function in pregnant women at temperatures higher than 25 C. Our subsequent climate chamber study with pregnant women showed their bodies regulate temperature up to 32 C as well as non-pregnant women.

### 5 WAYS TO BEAT THE HEAT WHILE PREGNANT

- Evidence of the effectiveness of interventions that address acute heat exposure during pregnancy specifically are limited. Air-conditioning is exceptionally protective, however it is unaffordable for many in Australia and globally. More evidence of the effect of extreme heat on pregnancy outcomes at a population level in both low and high income countries will help us develop ways to protect pregnant people and the community. In the meantime, with the threat of more very hot summer days, simple strategies to beat the heat when pregnant include:
- 1) Drink enough water take a water bottle with you when out and about
  - 2) Plan your day avoid the hottest part of the day if you can. Take a hat or umbrella with you for shade
  - 3) Stay cool use fans or air-conditioning if possible, close blinds and curtains, visit a cooled public environment
  - 4) Dress down wear lightweight, long-sleeved, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes made from natural fibres, such as cotton or linen
  - 5) Go to sleep on your side at night and for daytime naps to allow the best blood flow to the baby.

until the end of their pregnancy. Within high-income countries the risk is greater in disadvantaged populations. Recent Australian research has also suggested a mother's exposure to extreme temperatures may influence a baby's birth weight. Pregnant people are thought to be at increased risk of heat stress due to changes in their body's capacity to regulate temperature. **THESE CHANGES INCLUDE:**

- increased body mass and body fat which reduces a pregnant woman's ability to dissipate heat to the environment.
- decreased ratio of surface area to body mass can make sweating less effective
- additional energy produced from the body increases the mother's core body temperature.

### THE EFFECTS ON THE BODY AND BABY

When the ambient environment is hotter than the pregnant woman's core body temperature (that is when the air temperature reaches around 38 degrees or above) blood flow is diverted to the skin to allow sweating. This can decrease blood flow to the placenta, meaning less nutrition and oxygen to the baby.

As we face the continued effects of climate change, the frequency and intensity of heatwaves is increasing. We've recently learnt 2023 was the hottest year on record. Extreme heat presents a major public health threat. It can be especially dangerous for people who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and people who have reduced physiological ability to adapt, such as older adults and those with certain medical conditions. Pregnant people are also more vulnerable, with evidence showing exposure to extreme heat is associated with increased risks for the baby.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Globally one stillbirth occurs every 16 seconds and 15 million babies are born preterm (before 37 complete weeks of pregnancy) every year. Complications of preterm birth are the leading cause of death and disability for children aged under five years old. A systematic review which included studies from 27 countries showed that for every 1 C increase in ambient (environmental) temperature, the risk for preterm birth and stillbirth increased by 5%. The risk of stillbirth and preterm

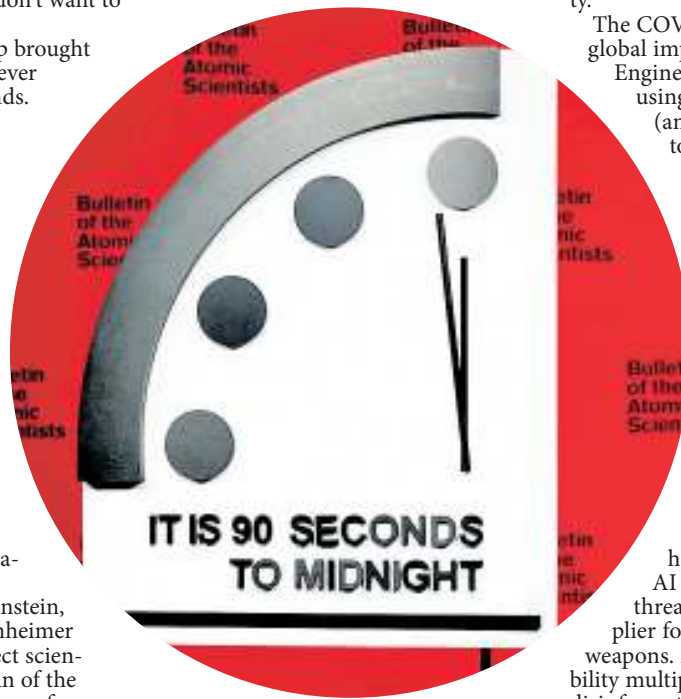
# The Doomsday Clock is still at 90 seconds to midnight BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Once every year, a select group of nuclear, climate, and technology experts assemble to determine where to place the hands of the Doomsday Clock. Presented by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the Doomsday Clock is a visual metaphor for humanity's proximity to catastrophe. It measures our collective peril in minutes and seconds to midnight, and we don't want to strike 12. In 2023, the expert group brought the clock the closest it has ever been to midnight: 90 seconds. On January 23, 2024, the Doomsday Clock was unveiled again, revealing that the hands remain in the same precarious position. No change might bring a sigh of relief. But it also points to the continued risk of catastrophe. The question is, how close are we to catastrophe? And if so, why?

### DESTROYER OF WORLDS

The invention of the atomic bomb in 1945 ushered in a new era: the first time humanity had the capability to kill itself. Later that year, Albert Einstein, along with J. Robert Oppenheimer and other Manhattan Project scientists, established the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, in the hope of communicating to the public about the new nuclear age and the threat it posed. Two years on, the Bulletin, as it came to be known, published its first magazine. And on the cover: a clock, with the minute hand suspended eerily only seven minutes from midnight. The artist Martyl Langsdorf sought to communicate the sense of urgency she had felt from scientists who had worked on the bomb, including her physicist husband, Alexander. The placement was, to her, an aesthetic choice: "It seemed the right time on the page it suited my eye." Thereafter, Bulletin editor Eugene Rabinowitch was the gears behind the clock's hands until his passing in 1973, when the board of experts took over. The clock has been moved 25 times since, particularly in response to the ebb and flow of military buildups, technological advancement and geopolitical dynamics during the Cold War. Nuclear risk did not abate after the collapse of the Soviet Union, even as the total number of nuclear weapons shrank. And new threats have emerged that pose catastrophic risk to humanity. The latest setting of the clock attempts to gauge this level of risk.

arsenal. The impacts of climate change are worsening, as the world suffers through its hottest years on record. Six of nine planetary boundaries are beyond their safe levels. And we are likely to fall short of the goal set by the Paris climate agreement keeping temperature increase to no more than 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels. Dramatic climatic disruptions are a real possibility.



### A PRECARIOUS WORLD

In the words of Bulletin president and chief executive Rachel Bronson: Make no mistake: resetting the Clock at 90 seconds to midnight is not an indication that the world is stable. Quite the opposite. The Bulletin cited four key sources of risk: nuclear weapons, climate change, biological threats, and advances in artificial intelligence (AI). Two ongoing conflicts Russia and Ukraine, and Israel and Palestine involve nuclear-weapon states. Longstanding bulwarks of nuclear stability, such as the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and Russia, are barely functional. North Korea and Iran retain their nuclear ambitions. And China is quickly growing and modernising its nuclear

The COVID pandemic revealed the global impacts of a biological threat. Engineered pandemics, created using synthetic bioengineering (and perhaps soon aided by AI tools), could be more viral and lethal than any natural disease. Add to the challenge the continued presence of biological weapons programs around the world, and the shifting disease risk due to the effects of climate change, and biothreats will be a regular battlefield for many countries. Finally, the Bulletin recognised the risk that comes with advances in AI. While some AI experts have raised the prospect of AI itself being an existential threat, AI is also a threat multiplier for nuclear or biological weapons. And AI could be a vulnerability multiplier. Through AI-enabled disinformation, democracies might struggle to function, especially when dealing with other catastrophic threats.

### SUBJECTIVE AND IMPRECISE, BUT DOES THAT MATTER?

The Doomsday Clock has its detractors. Critics argue that the setting of the clock is based on subjective judgments, not a quantitative or transparent methodology. What's more, it is not a precise measurement. What does "90 seconds to midnight" actually mean? With the clock now set at its highest-ever level, it naturally brings into question why we face greater risk than, say, during the Cuban Missile Crisis. What would it take to get closer than 90 seconds to midnight? Fundamentally, these criticisms are accurate. And there are plenty of ways the clock could be technically improved.

# AI-model developed to detect extremist users, ISIS-related content on X

Using tweets from 2009-2021, researchers have developed a predictive model that can detect extremist users and content related to the militant group 'Islamic State' (ISIS). Their work could help social media companies identify and eventually restrict such accounts in a timelier manner and abate their impact on online communities, they said.

The researchers from the Pennsylvania State University, US, identified potential propaganda messages and their characteristics and developed an image classifier to find the most frequent categories of images attached to tweets about ISIS. "The Islamic State group and its affiliates, sympathisers and followers continue to manipulate online communities to spread extremist propaganda," said Younes Karimi, a graduate student at the university pursuing a doctorate in informatics and the first author of the paper published in the journal Social Media Analysis and Mining. Apart from the ISIS-linked tweets they used for analysis, the researchers further collected a dataset of tweets from potential ISIS supporters to investigate their recent activities.

According to Karimi, the Islamic State group is increasingly relying on social media to spread propaganda, undermine its rivals and



recruit sympathisers, despite countermeasures by websites like X (formerly Twitter) to restrict its online activities. For the study, the researchers used artificial intelligence (AI) techniques - machine learning and natural language processing - to differentiate the users sharing ISIS-related content. While machine learning makes predictions based on the past data, natural language processing involves manipulating textual data. ISIS accounts identified before 2015 served as the

During the pandemic, a lost sense of smell was quickly identified as one of the key symptoms of COVID. Nearly four years later, one in five people in the UK is living with a decreased or distorted sense of smell, and one in twenty have anosmia the total loss of the ability to perceive any odours at all. Smell training is one of the few treatment options for recovering a lost sense of smell but can we make it more effective?

Smell training is a therapy that is recommended by experts for recovering a lost sense of smell. It is a simple process that involves sniffing a set of different odours usually essential oils, or herbs and spices every day. The olfactory system has a unique ability to regenerate sensory neurons (nerve cells). So, just like physiotherapy where exercise helps to restore movement

labelled data for the study's ISIS users, while for identifying potential ISIS supporters, the researchers built a user classifier using the old dataset. The users in the dataset included known members of the Islamic State group and those who retweeted, quoted or mentioned ISIS, said Karimi. "We believe that users repeated exposure to odours helps to recover the sense of smell following an infection, or other cause of smell loss (for example, traumatic head injury). Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of smell training under laboratory conditions. But recent findings have suggested that the real-world results might be disappointing. Make better decisions - find out what the experts think. One reason for this is that smell training is a long-term therapy. It can take months before patients detect anything, and some people may not get any benefit at all. In one study,

who retweet or quote Islamic State group content are more likely to be affiliates or sympathisers, while those who just mention the content are less likely to be supporters. However, tweets posted by mentioners are still very likely related to ISIS and contain topics similar to ISIS tweets, which make mentioners suitable to be considered as our non-ISIS users and non-trivial counterparts to ISIS users," said Karimi. The researchers then analysed the tweets to identify what they referred to as "candidate propaganda." They compared topics used by known Islamic State group accounts prior to 2015 in the old dataset to the content posted after 2015 by potential affiliates and supporters in their recent dataset.



training how smell training can be improved. One interesting idea is that information from our other senses, or "cross-modal associations", can be applied to smell training to promote odour perception and improve the results. Cross-modal associations are described as the tendency for sensory cues from different

# One in twenty people has no sense of smell

## HERE'S HOW PEOPLE MIGHT GET THEIR SENSE OF SMELL

researchers found that after three months of smell training, participation dropped to 88 per cent, and further declined to 56 per cent after six months. The reason given was that these people did not feel as though they noticed any improvement in their ability to smell.

### CROSS-MODAL ASSOCIATIONS

To remedy this, researchers are now inves-

ent sensory systems to be matched. For example, brightness tends to be associated with loudness. Pitch is related to size. Colours are linked to temperature, and softness is matched with round shapes, while spiky shapes feel more rough. In previous studies, these associations have been shown to have a considerable influence on how sensory information is processed. Especially when it comes to olfaction.

example, the colour red and strawberry) were linked to increased olfactory performance compared with odours and colours that were not associated (for example, the colour yellow and strawberry). While projects focusing on harnessing these cross-modal associations to improve treatments for smell loss are underway, research has already started to deliver some promising results.

# REMEMBERING THE HORRORS OF AUSCHWITZ German Chancellor warns of antisemitism, threats to democracy

Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Saturday called on all citizens to defend Germany's democracy and fight antisemitism as the country marked the 79th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau during World War II. Since 1996, Germany has also marked January 27 as a day to remember the horrors of the Holocaust. "Never again" is every day," Scholz said in his weekly video podcast. "January 27 calls out to us: Stay visible! Stay audible! Against antisemitism, against racism, against misanthropy and for our democracy." On that day in 1945, Soviet Red Army



troops liberated some 7,000 prisoners at Auschwitz in German-occupied Poland. The Nazis murdered more than a million people in Auschwitz, most of them Jews. In the days before the liberation, the Germans had evacuated tens of thousands of other inmates on foot in what is now

called the Death March, because many inmates died of exhaustion and cold in the sub-freezing temperatures. Altogether, they killed six million European Jews during the Holocaust. On Saturday, as people in Germany put down flowers and lit candles at memorials for the victims of the Nazi terror, the German chancellor said that his country would continue to carry the responsibility for this "crime against

In a recent study that aimed to investigate whether the effects of smell training could be improved with the addition of cross-modal associations, participants watched a guidance video containing sounds that matched the odours that they were training with. The results suggest that cross-modal interactions plus smell training improved olfactory function compared to smell training alone.

The results reported in recent studies have been promising and offer new insights into the field of olfactory science. It is hoped that this will soon lead to the development of more effective treatment options for smell recovery. In the meantime, smell training is one of the best things you can do for a lost sense of smell, so patients are encouraged to stick with it so that they give themselves the best chance at recovery.

humanity." He stressed that the fight against any kind of antisemitism and for democracy is not something that can be done by the government only, but needs the support of all Germans. "Never again" demands the vigilance of everyone," Scholz said. "Our democracy is not God-given. It is man-made." "It is strong when we support it," he added. "And it needs us when it is under attack."

Scholz referred specifically to the threat posed by the rise of far-right populists in Germany, elsewhere across Europe and worldwide "who are stirring up fears and sowing hatred." At the same time, the chancellor praised the millions of Germans who have joined pro-democracy protests in recent weeks. "Our country is on its feet right now. Millions of citizens are taking to the streets: For democracy, for respect and humanity," he said, adding that it was their solidarity "that makes our democracy strong. Showing it confidently in public as is happening now is a good thing." A report that right-wing extremists recently met to discuss the deportation of millions of immigrants, including some with German citizenship triggered massive demonstrations across the country.