



sunday pioneer

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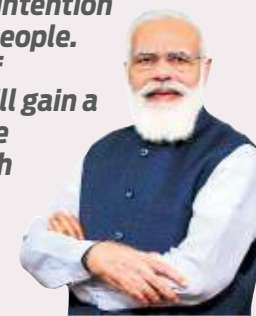
V-P hits out at PC for his remarks on women's quota law

Rs 6k cr scheme for pharma, MEDICAL devices sectors

Striking a chord with DIVERSE audience

QUOTE OF THE DAY The pioneer

The people of Telangana are tired of the lacklustre governance of the BRS. They are equally distrustful of the Congress. Both the BRS and the Congress are dynastic parties that have no intention to serve the people.



- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister P2

DON'T MISS...

TDP-JSP tie-up unethical; won't..

State Planning Board vice-chairman Malladi Vishnu has said that the alliance between Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP) is unethical and will not last long as the people of the State are aware of erstwhile TDP government's corrupt practices and the opportunistic attitude of the JSP.

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Collector oversees conduct of...

Stating that the 'Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha' (JAS) programme has come as a boon to the poor, district Collector P Prashanthi appealed to the people to utilize the services of JAS. The Collector on Saturday conducted a surprise inspection of the JAS programmes which were organized at the girl high school here.

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Focus on niche products to tap...

The first edition of Global Travel Market (GTM 2023) and expo drew to a close here on Saturday with leading players of travel and hospitality sector calling for stepping up promotional efforts focusing more on niche areas like experiential travel, wellness and heritage to tap the full potential of post-pandemic surge in tourism.

-PAGE: 6

A govt shutdown is nearing...

WHAT IS A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN? A shutdown happens when Congress fails to pass some type of funding legislation that is signed into law by the president. Lawmakers are supposed to pass 12 different spending bills to fund agencies across the government, but the process is time-consuming. They often resort to passing a temporary extension, called a continuing resolution or CR, to allow the government to keep operating.

-PAGE: 10

Aditya-L1 escapes sphere of Earth's influence

PNS ■ BENGALURU

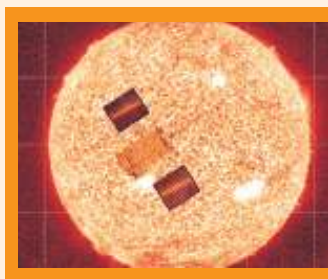
ISRO said on Saturday the Aditya-L1 spacecraft has travelled beyond a distance of 9.2 lakh km from Earth, successfully escaping the sphere of Earth's influence.

It is now navigating its path towards the Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 1 (L1), the Bengaluru-headquartered national space agency said in a statement on X, formerly Twitter.

"This is the second time in succession that ISRO could send a spacecraft outside the sphere of influence of the Earth, the first time being the Mars Orbiter Mission," it said.

The ISRO said earlier this month the Aditya-L1 solar mission spacecraft has commenced collecting data which will help scientists analyse the behaviour of particles surrounding Earth.

Data collected around L1 would provide insights into the origin, acceleration, and anisotropy of solar wind and space weather phenomena, it said.



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Aditya-L1 spacecraft carries a total seven different payloads to study the Sun, four of which will observe the light from the Sun and the remaining three will measure in-situ parameters of the plasma and magnetic fields.

Aditya-L1 will be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrangian Point 1 (L1), which is 1.5 million km from the Earth in the direction of the Sun. It will revolve around the Sun with the same relative position and hence can see the Sun continuously.

The launch of Aditya-L1 by PSLV-C57 rocket was successfully accomplished by ISRO on September 2.

AMARAVATI INNER RING ROAD SCAM CASE

CID serves notice to Lokesh

TDP headed for a leadership crisis?

The TDP's national general secretary to attend hearing on Oct 4

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh CID officials served a notice under 41A to Nara Lokesh, who is A 14 in the Amaravati Inner Ring road scam case on Saturday. As per the CID notice, Lokesh should attend the hearing on October 4 at 10 a.m.

The notice was issued to Lokesh at MP Galla Jayadev's residence in New Delhi. The AP High Court has ordered Lokesh to accept the notice and cooperate with the authorities in the investigation.

The CID registered a case on the complaint lodged by Mangalagiri MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy against the land grabbing carried out by the then TDP government under the guise of Amaravati Master Plan and Inner Ring Road Alignment designs.

Meanwhile, then CM Chandrababu Naidu, Minister P Narayana, Chandrababu Naidu's close associate Lingamaneni Ramesh, Lingamaneni Surya Rajasekhara, Anjini Kumar, director of Ramakrishna Housing Limited and others were named as accused in the case.

Chandrababu Naidu's son and then minister Nara Lokesh was also included in the scam as accused number 14.

The CIS Special Investigation Team (SIT) says that Lokesh, son of former CM Chandrababu Naidu, played a key role in the land grab-



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The CIS Special Investigation Team (SIT) says that Lokesh, son of former CM Chandrababu Naidu, played a key role in the land grabbing in the name of finalising Amaravati IRR alignment during the TDP government. It is stated in the memo submitted to the court that Lokesh has been included as A 14 in this case

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It is stated in the memo submitted to the court that Lokesh has been included as A 14 in this case. In the name of IRR Alignment, Chandrababu Naidu and Lokesh committed quid pro quo and thereby committed illegalities to increase the value of their family's Heritage

Foods and Lingamaneni's family lands.

Knowing in advance where the capital would be built, they acquired land in Tadepalli, Thullur, and Mangalagiri mandals in advance and Lingamaneni Ramesh committed quid pro quo and lands were acquired in Amaravati.

C PRADEEP KUMAR ■ VIJAYAWADA

After TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu got arrested in the Skill Development scam case, his party's general secretary, Nara Lokesh, moved to New Delhi to get support from national political leaders. Unfortunately, he didn't succeed. Some experts think Lokesh is in Delhi to avoid getting arrested in other scam investigations. On Saturday, CID officials sent Lokesh a notice regarding the Amaravati Inner Ring Road alignment scam. They asked him to appear at the CID office on October 4, and what happens next depends on the CID.

Investigative agencies keep filing cases for various scams that occurred during TDP's rule from 2014 to 2019. These include the Skill Development scam, Amaravati Inner Ring Road Scam, Amaravati



The TDP, which has been around for over 40 years, is in deep trouble because they don't have a leader if Lokesh gets arrested in any of these scams, according to political analyst.

Assigned lands scam, Fibernet scam, and more.

The TDP, which has been around for over 40 years, is in deep trouble because they don't have a leader if Lokesh gets arrested in any of these scams. That's what political analysts are saying.

The Yuvagalam Padayatra, which was led by TDP chief Naidu, has stopped since he got arrested and jailed in Rajahmundry. Initially, TDP supporters were enthusiastic about Lokesh, but now they're worried because both father and son are trying to get bail for multiple cases in various courts.

During the padayatra, Lokesh encouraged young TDP supporters to take on many cases, promising rewards when TDP wins elections.



Naidu's former PA suspended from job

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government on Saturday suspended Pendyala Srinivas, an assistant secretary rank officer, in connection with the alleged kick-backs on behalf of former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu from the construction companies engaged in Amaravati works.

Orders to this effect were issued by Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy on Saturday. The orders said Srinivas was being suspended for not responding to the show-cause

SC to hear Naidu's SLP on Oct 3

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



A division bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justice Anirudh Bose and Justice Bela Trivedi will hear the TDP chief's Special Leave Petition

The special leave petition filed by Naidu, challenging the High Court judgment against quashing the case filed by the Crime Investigation Department (CID) accusing him of masterminding the Skill Development scam, has been listed for hearing by the Supreme Court on October 3, it is reliably learnt.

A division bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justice Anirudh Bose and Justice Bela Trivedi will be hearing Naidu's SLP at Court No. 6 on October 3. Though it is unlikely that Naidu would get any immediate relief in the case, it is good news that a bench has been constituted to hear his petition.

Earlier, there were reports that the case might get postponed to October 6, as the petition was nowhere seen in the cause list of the Supreme Court on October 3, as there are several other important cases before the benches.

The Crime Investigation Department filed a caveat before the Supreme Court saying that it should hear the arguments of the CID first, before taking up Naidu's petition. So, it would take its own time to present its arguments.

On September 23, Naidu moved the Supreme Court challenging the state high court order dismissing his petition to quash the case filed by the state Crime Investigation Department (CID) in the alleged multi-crore skill development corporation scam. After frantic attempts made by his lawyer Siddharth Luthra, the case came up before a bench of Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice SVN Bhatti on Wednesday, but Justice Bhatti recused himself from the case, stating that it could be transferred to another bench.

Luthra approached Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud for an urgent hearing, but the latter deferred the case to October 3 for a hearing.

Tirumala bursting at the seams with holiday rush

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

With the second week of Saturday in the auspicious Puratasi month coinciding with a string of holidays extending until October 2, the roads leading to Tirumala from Tirupati have witnessed an extraordinary influx of devoted pilgrims.

The parking lots at Alipiri have been swamped with buses, notably from Tamil Nadu, stretching all the way to SV Vedic University along Alipiri Road. Since Friday, buses have been strategically lined up on both sides of Alipiri Road to accommodate the throngs of pilgrims.

Both compartments in VQC 1 and 2, as well as Narayanagiri Sheds, are fully occupied, and the queue lines have extended beyond Nandakam Rest House, covering a staggering distance of over five kilometers.

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has left no stone unturned in its preparations, ensuring that devotees in the winding queues since Thursday are provided with Annaprasadam, beverages, and drinking water. Senior officers from Tirupati have been dispatched to oversee the facilities in various areas at regular intervals.

A contingent of approximately



2500 Srivari Sevaks has been assigned to different shifts, managing Vaikuntham compartments,

NG Sheds, external lines, luggage counters, laddu counters, Annaprasadam distribution,

reception, 'kalyanakatta', queue line management within the temple, and chappal stands, among others. All officials and department heads are maintaining continuous vigilance over the pilgrimage situation and ensuring the comfort of waiting pilgrims.

As of 12 noon on Saturday, September 30, tokenless devotees are experiencing an approximate 48-hour wait for darshan of Sri Venkateswara Swamy. The Radio and Broadcasting wing of TTD has been issuing regular announcements, urging devotees to plan their pilgrimage accordingly, considering the extended waiting times for darshan.

OBTUSE ANGLE



TDP-JSP tie-up unethical; won't last long: Malladi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Planning Board vice-chairman Malladi Vishnu has said that the alliance between Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP) is unethical and will not last long as the people of the State are aware of erstwhile TDP government's corrupt practices and the opportunistic attitude of the JSP. He claimed that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is the only Chief Minister who has transformed the State into 'Welfare Andhra Pradesh' during the four years of assuming power.



Malladi Vishnu participated in the 'Gadapa Gadapaku Mana Prabhutvam' programme held on Saturday in the 61st Division of Vijayawada City. He went to every house and explained the welfare schemes of the Jagan Mohan Reddy government and distributed booklets.

Malladi Vishnu said that this government has provided all the minimum facilities required by every family through Navaratna. He said that the beneficiaries are being transparently selected through social inspections and the respective schemes are being provided.

Vishnu criticised that no single political party in the state has the ability to face CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy alone. He commented that the Telugu Desam-Jana Sena parties alliance is immoral as Pawan Kalyan turned an opportunist and saved Chandrababu Naidu through the alliance but it will not last a long time. He further said that people know the internal and secret pact between TD-JS and they will not trust Pawan as he is a shadow to Naidu. He commented that TD is trying to portray Chandrababu's arrest as a national problem and pointed out that Naidu was arrested in a corruption case. He asked

Further MLA Vishnu ordered completion of the house registration process in the Central constituency by October 15. He conducted a review with VMC and revenue officials on Saturday at Janahita Sadanam in Andhra Prabha Colony. Malladi Vishnu suggested that the registration process should be accelerated for the beneficiaries, about 10,000 houses allocated to the rehabilitation beneficiaries in New Rajarajeswaripet, Vambay Colony, including Ajit Singh Nagar, Burma Colony, Pakistan Colony, Radhanagar, Santoshi Mata Temple, etc., and instructed to complete the registrations.

No water supply in parts of Vja on October 4

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) officials have said that there will be no water supply to various areas of Vijayawada city on October 4 due to the cleaning of water sumps in the VMC head water works tanks which supply water to the city.

The VMC officials stated that water will be supplied on 4 October morning from 5 MGD old head water works but the supply will be stopped from 8 am to 8 pm for cleaning purposes. They said that the water supply for the evening time will be stopped on Wednesday. The areas of the city Ratham Centre, Srinivasa mahal, Fish market, Gandhi Baavi 1 and 2, Gandhiji High School, Ambedkar colony, Poolabaavi, Sivalayam, Kotteti Kotiah colony and Nizam gate will not get water supply.

The VMC asked people in these areas to make arrangements for the water as a precautionary measure for that time and to cooperate with the officials.

PROTECT DEMOCRATIC VALUES: EX-JUDGE

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Citizens for Democracy president and former judge Bhavani Prasad, former chief secretary L V Subramanyam, former election commissioner, Nimmagadda Ramesh and mayor Jandhyala Sankar at a press conference in Vijayawada on Saturday. Photo: Ch VIJAYA BHASKAR

Emphasising the importance of protecting democracy and democratic values in the State as well as in the country, Citizens for Democracy Forum president and former High Court Judge Justice G Bhavani Prasad has said that the newly-formed Citizens for Democracy Forum would strive to bring about awareness among the people.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday to explain the forum's aims and aspirations, he said, "Our democratic journey started with the ideals of the freedom movement and the first generation of public representatives. But even though the country has progressed in many fields, discriminations in society have not been eliminated. Despite the creation of wealth, the economic inequalities still exist. The ideals and aspirations of the first genera-

tion of leaders were not fulfilled due to the malfunctioning and inaction vevness of the governance systems, corruption and defects in the electoral system," he added.

He further said that democracy does not mean elections and it is important that all systems work in the spirit of the Constitution. He said that the Citizens for Democracy has been formed to raise the awareness levels of the people

and raise the voice of the civil society which is beyond caste, religion and political biases in the State.

Citizens for Democracy Forum general secretary of the organisation and former State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar, assistant secretary V Lakshmana Reddy, treasurer MV Falguna Kumar, members MV Krishna Rao, Jandhyala Sankar, MC Das, D Somasundar and others participated.

3 officials in ACB net

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Saturday arrested government servants while accepting bribes that included a sub-inspector, surveyor, and a village revenue officer.

SI Katta Venkataiah demanded a bribe of Rs 40,000 from the complainant who was accused of illegally occupying land in Guntur to escape the accused from being arrested. ACB officials arrested the accused officer red-handed while accepting the bribe amount at the complainant's house and registered a case. In another similar case, Allam Ranga Swamy, a surveyor of Kanigiri mandal in the Prakasam was caught red-handed while demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 30,000 to survey his land.

Bopparaju reelected APRSA chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Revenue Services Association (APRSA) president Bopparaju Venkateswarlu and general secretary Chebrolu Krishna Murthy were reelected as president and general secretary unanimously during the meeting that was held at the APRSA Bhavan in Vijayawada on Saturday. Bopparaju was elected as president for the fifth time while Chebrolu Krishna Murthy second time.



The newly elected committee swearing programme will be conducted at the Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on October 1. Also, the APRSA 17th state council meeting will

take place in the city. APRSA New Committee: President: Bopparaju Venkateswarlu, Associate President: P Trinadha Rao, General Secretary: Chebrolu Krishna Murthy, Treasurer: Ch Narasimha Rao, Vice Presidents: N Srinivas, Jeevan Chandrasekhar, G Srirama Murthy, P Venugopala Rao, R Venkata Rajesh, A Panchal Reddy, K Amarnath, P Jahnavi,

Sports and Cultural Secretaries: D Rajendra Varma, RVV Rohini Devi, Secretaries: D Divya Durga Devi, S Vijayasekhar, Ch Bangara Raju, B Anuradha, G Srinivas, G Somasekhar, M Ashok Reddy, O Prashanth Kumar, Organising Secretaries: M Venkata Raju, K Ravi Vikram, N Ramanjaneyulu, G Narayana Raju, S Jeevan Rani, K Kishore, Shaik Shalima.

Infra at Vizag Railway Station inspected

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Darshana Jardosh, the Minister of State for Railways, conducted an inspection of the Visakhapatnam railway station and assessed the progress of redevelopment and infrastructure initiatives at the station under the Waltair division of the East Coast of Railway.



She paid a visit to the One Station One Product stall showcasing Etikoppaka toys and engaged in a conversation with the vendor regarding sales and collaboration with the Railways. Additionally, she took an active role in supporting the Ban Plastic campaign and distributed health kits to sanitation workers, expressing

her gratitude for their dedication to maintaining cleanliness.

Jardosh also inspected the in-progress multi-level car parking site at the station. Later, she inaugurated the Coach Restaurant, a Non-Fare Revenue initiative by the Waltair Division, and praised

valuable insights into the Division's operations, projects, and accomplishments.

In her media statement, Jardosh highlighted Visakhapatnam Railway Station's status as a busy hub and its redevelopment initiated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. She commended the Waltair Division for achievements in loading, revenue, and railway development. She emphasized the 'One Station, One Product' (OSOP) initiative, enabling passengers to explore India's heritage and purchase local products. Shri GVL Narasimha Rao elaborated on the purpose of the Minister's visit to Visakhapatnam.

'Probe corruption charges in construction of Cluster varsity'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

All India Youth Federation (AIYF) State general secretary, N Lenin Babu, has urged the State government to look into alleged irregularities during the construction of Cluster University in Kurnool.

Speaking during a press conference at CR Bhavan in Kurnool, Lenin Babu urged the government to also investigate claims of corruption made by University Registrar D Srinivasulu against some public representatives.

Lenin Babu demanded the removal of Cluster University and a thorough investigation into the allegations raised by Prof. D Srinivasulu, the University Registrar. Srinivasulu had previously claimed financial irregularities of Rs. 55 crore during the construction of the university building at Silver Jubilee College premises. Lenin Babu



questioned why public representatives had not responded to these allegations and asked them to demonstrate their integrity.

Furthermore, Lenin Babu requested the state government to complete the Cluster University buildings to provide better education to students. He also suggested that the government could use the building to maintain Urdu University on the same premises.

Lenin Babu insisted on the removal of the current Registrar, Srinivasulu, who has

been serving as Cluster University Registrar on deputation for two years. He alleged that the university had collected fees from students in violation of government rules and regulations and accused the Registrar of not implementing government schemes like Jagananna Vidya Deevana and Vidya Vasathi. He called on the state government to take action against Registrar Srinivasulu. K Srinivasulu, AISF Kurnool district president, U Karumanchi, the secretary, and other members were present.

Return panchayat funds, sarpanches demand govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

President of the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Chamber, YVB Rajendra Prasad, a former Member of the Legislative Council (MLC), and president of the Andhra Pradesh Sarpanches Association, V Lakshmi Mutyala Rao, have jointly called for a protest scheduled for October 2 at Mahatma Gandhi statues. Their primary demand is the immediate restitution of Rs 8,660 crore in funds that were allegedly diverted unlawfully, with these funds to be credited back to the panchayat accounts.



In a press release issued on Saturday, they have fervently urged all sarpanches to participate in demonstrations at their respective district headquarters. This collective action is intended to exert pressure on the State government to promptly address the concerns and challenges faced by pan-

chayat. These concerns have been encapsulated in a set of 16 demands outlined in resolutions passed by the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Chamber and the Andhra Pradesh Sarpanches Association state committee.

OTHER KEY DEMANDS

- The government should bring the Gram Sachivalayam and Volunteer system under the control of sarpanches.
- Allocation of NREGA funds to panchayats should align with the guidelines of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).
- A resolute plea for the government to sustain its provision of free power to all panchayats, a practice established in earlier times.

Old woman suffering from cancer gets new lease of life

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A 68-year-old female patient presenting complaints of vaginal discharge was successfully treated and given a new lease of life at American Oncology Institute (AOI) Kanuru in Vijayawada. The patient was diagnosed with cervical carcinoma and underwent a comprehensive treatment regimen including chemotherapy, transcervical hydrometra drainage, and brachytherapy.

Dr Anila Patibandla, Consultant Clinical Oncology, expressed her insights on the case, "The successful treatment of this patient's cervical carcinoma reaffirms our commitment to providing comprehensive and innovative cancer care. Cervical carcinoma can be a challenging condition, but with a multidisciplinary approach and advanced treatment techniques, we were able to address the patient's unique needs and achieve a positive outcome. This case highlights the importance of early detection, personalized treatment planning, and the collaborative efforts of our medical experts."

Mahendra Reddy, Regional Chief Operating Officer, stated, "We are proud of the remarkable success achieved by our team at American Oncology Institute Kanuru. Our patient-centric approach, state-of-the-art facilities, and the dedication of our medical staff contribute to such successes. We remain committed to raising the bar in cancer care by consistently delivering the highest quality treatments and services to our patients."

'Chalo Vijayawada' organised by SFI; 99 activists arrested

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In response to the 'Chalo Vijayawada' call, the Student Federation of India (SFI) organised a protest and procession in Vijayawada on Saturday. The event aimed to address various issues within the education sector and advocate for an increase in hostel mess charges. The demonstration, however, encountered resistance from the police, leading to a brief confrontation.



A large number of students from across the State converged in Vijayawada to participate in the 'Chalo Vijayawada' agitation. The SFI orchestrated an expansive procession through the city, with the rally traversing Besant Road, Eluru Road, and Lenin Centre before culminating at Dharna Chowk. Subsequently, a sit-in protest was staged at Dharna Chowk, accompanied by vociferous slogans condemning the State government's perceived inaction in resolving education-related issues.

Amidst these events, the police intervened, forcibly dispersing the SFI demonstrators and apprehending approximately 99 leaders and activists. They were subsequently taken into custody at Ajith Singh Nagar and One Town police stations. Regrettably, the police intervention led to allegations of misconduct, as male officers were involved in removing female students, which drew strong objections from the affected students and SFI leaders. Several police officers issued warnings to SFI leaders and

activists, threatening to press charges if they did not vacate Dharna Chowk. However, the students remained resolute in their protest and continued without succumbing to police pressure. Simultaneously, law enforcement officials across the state detained students who failed to attend the 'Chalo Vijayawada' event. The SFI's demands encompassed various educational reforms, including a Rs 3,000 increase in hostel mess charges, the release of pending cosmetic charges, the implementation

of Mid-Day Meals in government junior colleges, the free distribution of textbooks to students, the abolishment of the Degree Honours system, and the reinstatement of the previous three-year degree course system.

Addressing the gathering, SFI State president K. Prasanna Kumar and general secretary Ashok criticised Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for not fulfilling his promises regarding education sector issues over the past four and a half years. They expressed disappointment that, even during the five days of Assembly sessions, the government had not made any announcements regarding these concerns.

The SFI leaders condemned the actions of the police and the government, accusing the state government of suppressing students' rights and their constitutional right to protest on matters affecting them. They asserted that any attempt at peaceful protest was met with police force.

KGH makes long strides in digital healthcare

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

King George Hospital (KGH) in Visakhapatnam has made rapid strides as a trailblazer in digital healthcare, excelling in both patient care and medical infrastructure. With a daily average of 2,681 patients, including over 600 beneficiaries under the YSR Arogyasri scheme, KGH stands out as a healthcare leader.



According to a NITI Aayog report, Andhra Pradesh ranks fourth in the country, boasting an impressive district hospital doctor-to-patient ratio of 1.39, surpassing the national average of 0.86. Outranking AP are only Delhi, Haryana, and Goa with ratios of 2.50, 1.42, and 1.40 respectively. Among the 14 district hospitals assessed in Andhra Pradesh, seven meet the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) criteria for doctor positions. KGH in Visakhapatnam takes the lead with an extraordinary doctor-to-patient ratio of 4.71, solidifying its status as one of the nation's top-performing district hospitals.

KGH has embarked on numerous modernization initiatives to elevate patient care, including the establishment of an air-conditioned outpatient counter and an Acute Medical Care Unit (AMCU) providing swift and effective care to critically ill patients. The hospital has become the first in Andhra Pradesh to house a comprehensive cancer unit, offering specialized care for pediatric oncology patients.

Recognizing the pivotal role of digitalisation in modern healthcare, KGH is taking significant strides in centralizing patients' clinical data. This includes implementing a Local Area Network (LAN) and a Picture Analysis Communication System (PACS) to streamline data management, enhance coordination among healthcare providers, and ultimately improve patient care efficiency.

In an exclusive conversation with The Pioneer, KGH Superintendent Dr. Ashok Kumar highlighted KGH's digitisation efforts, including the introduction of ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health

KGH has embarked on numerous modernization initiatives to elevate patient care, including the establishment of an air-conditioned outpatient counter and an Acute Medical Care Unit (AMCU) providing swift and effective care to critically ill patients. The hospital has become the first in Andhra Pradesh to house a comprehensive cancer unit, offering specialized care for pediatric oncology patients.

Account), a vital component of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY). ABHA offers insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh for patients, eliminating waiting times, securely digitizing patient health data, and proving invaluable in emergency situations. To ensure accessibility, especially for the less educated and economically disadvantaged, KGH has established two manual registration counters.

Housing project for the poor to be completed by March next

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has set a target to complete the housing project taken up under the 'Navaratnalu - Pedalanderiki Illu' scheme by March next year (2024), said Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation Limited Managing Director Lakshminsha.

The 33rd board meeting of the AP State Housing Corporation Limited (APSHCL) was held at the corporation office in Vijayawada on Saturday. The APSHCL Director AMD Imrityaz chaired the meeting virtually.

Speaking on the occasion, MD Lakshminsha said that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy would hand over 5 lakh houses which were already completed in the State. The government is planning to hand over the houses to the beneficiaries in a programme that would be conducted on a grand note, he said.

In addition to that, the APSHCL MD stated that the government is providing infrastructure facilities such as drinking water, electricity, roads, drainage, and others at the newly established Jagananna Colonies. He said the newly created villages would be developed as Nagara Panchayats.

AP Housing Department Special Chief Secretary MD Diwan Mydin, APSHCL Joint Managing Director M Siva Prasad, Board Directors K Bhaskara Naidu, Rama Devi, Chief Engineer GV Prasad, Special Officer Ramachandra Reddy and others attended.

Students donate blood

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A blood donation camp was organised at the Parvathaneni Brahmaiah Siddhartha Arts and Science College here by the National Service Scheme (NSS) unit on Saturday. As part of this, 53 units of blood were collected from the donors.

PB Siddhartha Arts and Science College Principal Dr M Ramesh and Director V Babu Rao inaugurated the blood donation camp on the premises of the college. The College NSS unit coordinator P Subhakar supervised the camp.

As many as 15 doctors and nurses participated in the camp and helped.

College Principal Ramesh, Director Babu Rao, Dean Rajesh Jampala, and others appreciated students who donated their blood.



MAKE USE OF HEALTHCARE FACILITIES, PEOPLE TOLD

PNS ■ ELURU

Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh and MLA Puppala Vasubabu participated in the Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha (JAS) programme organised at Surappagudem village in Bhimadoli mandal on Saturday. The Collector and MLA inaugurated a medical camp on the premises of MPP School.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that in the health screening programme organised in Surappagudem, apart from gynaecologists for women, two specialist doctors, a paediatrician, orthopedics, and ophthalmologist had provided medical services to the people, adding ECG and other diagnosis were conducted in a 104 ambulance at the camp. If an operation was needed for the patient, arrangements would be made to perform the operation free of cost and medicine would also be given.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy introduced an innovative programme of JAS in a bid to provide medical treatment to the poor in the rural areas, adding that the Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha programme



would be carried out in 5 phases for 45 days from today with the main focus on people's health.

He said that in every village ANMs, ASHA workers, and volunteers would conduct a house-to-house survey and identify their disease with 7 types of medical tests and download it in a special app and provide medical services with special doctors in the JAS programme, stating that through Nadu-Nedu in the district, all Primary Health Centers along with community health centers and area hospitals have been developed towards providing all health services to private hospitals.

The Collector said that all the vacant posts in the hospitals had been filled. Similarly, 104 vehicles would be allocated to each mandal, and quality medical services would also be provided by family physicians.

MLA Puppala Vasubabu said that the JAS program was organized for the first time in the Eluru district in the constituency. He said that the ANMs, ASHA workers, and Volunteers contacted 3,300 families and knew their health status. ZPTC T Bhavaniranga, MPP K Ramaiah, and village sarpanch Balaji Naidu were among those who were present.

Eluru district excels in 'Swacchta Hi Seva 2023'

PNS ■ ELURU

The Eluru district has achieved the top position in the implementation of 'Swacchta Hi Seva 2023' in the State. Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh told the media here on Saturday that Eluru district stood first in the State in the implementation of the 'Swachta Hi Seva 2023' programme.

He said that 11,328 programmes had been carried out under the Swachta Hi Seva program in the district in which 4,47,522 people worked 21,67,677 hours.

This feat ensured Eluru district stood at the top in the implementation of the programme efficiently in the state. As part of the Swacchta Hi Seva programme 9,602 images were uploaded to the portal, the Collector added.

Collector oversees conduct of 'Aarogya Suraksha' programme

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Stating that the 'Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha' (JAS) programme has come as a boon to the poor, district Collector P Prashanthi appealed to the people to utilize the services of JAS.

The Collector on Saturday conducted a surprise inspection of the JAS programmes which were organized at the girl high school here.

The District Collector visited the help desk, OP registration, spot registration, IT room, allotment of doctors, lab, YSR Aarogyasri Help Desk, doctors' rooms, medicine counter, nutrition stall and eye examination centers set up at the camp.

She interacted with the patients and knew their problems. She also asked them if the surveyors visited their houses. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that JAS camps would be organized in all secretariat limits.

The Collector asked everyone to take advantage of the fact that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, who has already brought medicine to the people through the family doctor system, has also brought specialist services to the villages through Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha. As part of the JAS



programme, a house-to-house survey has been conducted across the district to find out the health details of the people.

Collector Prashanthi said that seven types of tests were conducted at home, their details were recorded in the health profile and case sheets were prepared for those who needed it, adding that medical camps will be set up in every village and a fixed time will be allocated and medical treatment will be provided to them.

She said that along with two PHC doctors, two other specialist doctors would also come and provide treatment in these camps, stating that a total of 14 types of tests including ECG would also be conducted in the camps and 105 types of medicines would be provided free

of cost. Those who have been treated for diabetes and BP diseases for about 12 years are advised to be referred for special treatment. The Collector said that eye tests would also be conducted and spectacles would be provided free of cost to the needy.

Municipal Commissioner M Shyamala, District Medical and Health Officer Dr. D Maheswara Rao, District Panchayat Department Officer GVK Mallikarjuna Rao, Additional DMHO B Hanu Naik, District Aarogyashri Coordinator Dr. Keerthi Kiran, Tehsil Y Ravikumar and District Red Cross Association President Dr. Ramabhadrhi Raju were among those who were present.

JAS to provide medical facilities to poor: Minister

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Municipal Administration Audimulapu Suresh reiterated that the Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha programme is being implemented across the state in order to provide medical treatment to the poor.

Talking to the media at Y Palem village on Saturday, the minister said that the government is giving equal importance to carrying out the devel-

opment and implementation of welfare schemes.

"The medical treatment is being provided under the Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha programme to all the poor irrespective of political affiliations. The objective of implementing the JAS programme is to make AP as Aarogya Andhra Pradesh. The JAS programme will be implemented for 45 days across the state," he asserted.

The minister claimed that the government is aimed at provid-



ing corporate medical facilities to the poor in the rural areas, adding that specialist doctors would take part in the JAS pro-

gramme to provide free medical treatment to the poor. Minister Suresh said that the JAS programme is getting over-

whelming response as a large number of patients are thronging to the medical camps to get free medical treatments.

The minister said that the 15,000 secretariat staff would visit every household and inquire about their health condition. The government approved the proposal to construct a super speciality hospital at Dornala at a cost of Rs 45 crore. The Jagan Mohan Reddy-headed government is establishing 15 new medical

colleges in the state, he asserted.

Referring to the arrest of Chandrababu Naidu, he said that there is no response from the people against the arrest of Naidu. If a leader was arrested unjustly, people would come out protesting it but there is no such response in the case of Naidu as people approved the arrest of Naidu. Former AMC chairman Ongole Murthy Reddy Obul Reddy and other leaders were present.

21 kg ganja seized, 18 arrested

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

The police seized 21 kg of ganja and arrested 18 bootleggers.

SP KKN Anburaj told the media here on Saturday that on a tip-off the police conducted raids and arrested 18 bootleggers of two groups and seized 21 kg of ganja from them.

The gang members brought the ganja from Paderu and other agencies in the Visakhapatnam district and sold it here. The gang members were selling ganja at bus stations, railway stations, and other crowded areas. They purchased ganja at Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000 per kg in Visakhapatnam Agency areas and sold the same here at Rs 15,000 per kg. The gang members targeted the youth to sell the cannabis, the SP said.

The police seized 21 kg ganja, 18 mobile phones, two auto rickshaws, and two bikes. The SP said that 101 people purchased ganja from the gang members. Minors were among those who purchased ganja from them, he added. The SP warned of stringent action if anyone was involved in selling and consuming cannabis.



Medical camp held for sanitary workers

PNS ■ ONGOLE

District Collector inaugurated a medical camp for sanitary workers here on Saturday.

The Collector, along with Mayor Gangada Sujata, inaugurated the medical camp to conduct medical checkups, especially to the sanitary workers working in the municipal corporation.

The mayor distributed the PPE kits to the sanitary workers. Speaking on the occasion, Collector Dinesh Kumar asked the sanitary workers to protect their health. He lauded the sanitary workers that they were playing a key role in keeping the environment clean and tidy.

The Collector praised the services being provided by sanitation workers regardless of weather conditions to keep the environment clean, adding that the state government is strengthening the public health



sector to ensure that all people are healthy and providing medical services at the field level by implementing Jagananna health protection programmes.

The Collector appreciated the corporation officials for taking steps to provide free medicines for the sanitation workers by organizing a free medical camp with specialist doctors for lung, heart, cancer, gynecology, skin diseases, BP, sugar, and other diseases.

Collector Dinesh Kumar said that it is happy to note that along with the government doctors, the private hospital doctors also took part in the medical camp by providing services.

SIMBEX 23 CONCLUDES

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Indian Naval Ships Ranvijay (guided-missile Destroyer), Kavaratti (ASW Corvette), submarine Sindhukesari and a long-range Maritime Patrol Aircraft P8I participated in the 30th edition of Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) in Singapore.

First held in 1994, the three-decade-old annual exercise kicked off with an opening ceremony on 21 September 2023, which was attended by personnel from both the navies. The ceremony saw the unveiling of the SIMBEX 30th Edition Logo. The Harbour Phase witnessed a wide range of professional interactions, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges, the conduct of combined aviation and firefighting/ damage control exercises, and the signing of a Joint Standard Operating Procedure (JSOP) on Submarine Rescue between India and Singapore in the



presence of the High Commissioner of India to Singapore and the Singapore Navy Fleet Commander. The

Commanding Officers of the Indian Navy contingent also paid homage at the Kranji War Memorial in a solemn wreath-laying ceremony.

Other activities undertaken during the stay in harbour included sports exchanges, cross-deck visits, and onboard visits of school children and personnel from the Indian High Commission.

The Sea Phase of SIMBEX 23 was conducted from 25 to 28 September 2023, wherein units of the Indian Navy along with RSS Stalwart, Valour, Tenacious, a submarine, Maritime Patrol Aircraft Fokker F-50 and fighter aircraft engaged in complex maritime security exercises including advanced anti-submarine warfare, surface and air defence exercises, as well as tactical manoeuvres and weapon firings.

SIMBEX 23 ended on a high note reaffirming the close bonds of friendship and interoperability between the two maritime nations.

CPI mulling working with TDP: Ramakrishna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Communist Party of India (CPI) State secretary and former MLA K Ramakrishna has said that his party is mulling working with the opposition TDP in the next Assembly elections. Also, he made it clear that the CPI is aiming to defeat Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Centre and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in the State.

Addressing a press conference in Vijayawada on Saturday, along with party State secretariat members Akkineni Vanaja, G Eswaraiiah and Jalli Wilson, Ramakrishna responded to a question regarding the alliances in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Ramakrishna said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy are destroying the country and State respectively. People of the State are vexed with the rule of the YSRCP in the State, he commented. TDP is the main opposition party in the State, so CPI is planning to ally with it, he added.

"When compared to Telangana, Andhra Pradesh is far behind in development activities. YS Jagan ruled the state with Reverse. Which caused the stalling of development in all sectors such as industry, irrigation and IT. The state government is imposing the registration of illegal cases using the police force," he said.



Malladi inaugurates Underwater Fish Tunnel Exhibition

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada-Central legislator Malladi Vishnu formally inaugurated the Underwater Fish Tunnel Exhibition for the upcoming Dasara Festival at Satavahana College grounds here on Saturday.

On the occasion, Malladi

Vishnu said that till now the underwater tunnel fish exhibition which was limited to Dubai, Malaysia, and Singapore is now in the heart of Vijayawada city. He appreciated the organisers for making elaborate arrangements for the visitors and said that the denizens should pay a visit to the

exhibition with families and have fun. He said that this exhibition will entertain everyone, regardless of their age, children, youth, and elders, there are various types of fish in the underwater.

Organisers Nandiwada Guru Gopinad and Saif Khan said that the underwa-

ter tunnel fish exhibition will entertain everyone who visits the exhibition. They informed that 2,000 varieties of fish are placed in the tunnel which will be a special attraction of the exhibition. Apart from that, giant wheel, Columbus, Toratora, break dance and children's toys. Special in this exhibition.



Sniffer dogs to stamp down ganja menace: Ayyanar

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Aiming to curb the inflow of ganja and other illicit narcotics within Vizag city, Dr. A Ravi Shankar, the City Police Commissioner, has proposed the establishment of a dedicated task force.

Shortly after assuming office, the new CP observed that Visakhapatnam served as a crucial transit hub for ganja smugglers, and the issue of drug abuse was widespread. The city has now become one of the primary consumers of ganja in Andhra Pradesh, with instances of narcotic drug usage being frequently reported from upscale

neighborhoods, colleges, and university hostels.

Speaking to The Pioneer, the Police Commissioner said, "We are planning to deploy sniffer dogs at the city entry points. These dogs, originally trained to detect explosives, would also undergo additional training to detect ganja and drugs."

Despite the diligent efforts made by the police to combat the smuggling of Ganja in the ASR district and the bordering regions with Odisha, large quantities of ganja continue to be smuggled regularly, with a notable amount making its way into Vizag city. With heightened scrutiny on trains and road



routes, smugglers have resorted to utilising locally-made boats to traverse a 5km distance across the river, facilitating the transportation of marijuana from Odisha to the Andhra Border. Investigations have revealed that K Ramesh, a resident of Chintapalle Mandal in the ASR

district, conducted nighttime transportation of ganja via the river route from Odisha to the Andhra Pradesh border. The border region between Andhra Pradesh and Odisha holds prominence as a major hub for Ganja cultivation. These regions lack adequate road infra-

structure and are also influenced by Maoists. Combating the issue of ganja, including its cultivation, has become a formidable challenge for law enforcement agencies due to these factors. In view, smugglers hailing from diverse states, frequently receiving assistance from local criminal orga-

nizations, effectively procure cannabis from Odisha using the river route and disperse it to various parts of the country, with the ASR district serving as a primary point of origin.

In 2022, authorities confiscated and destroyed over 2.45 lakh units of ganja while arresting 25 members of inter-state smuggling networks in 2023. As part of the Parivartana program over the last two years, specialized police and excise teams eradicated cannabis from around 5,000 acres of land. The illegal cultivation covers 10,000 acres and generates an estimated annual revenue of about Rs 1000 crore.

UIDAI chief
Amit Agrawal
gets one-year
extension

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior bureaucrat Amit Agrawal has been given a one-year extension, till November 2 next year, as the Chief Executive Officer of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), an official order said. Agrawal is a 1993-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Chhattisgarh cadre. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved extension in Agrawal's tenure as the CEO, UIDAI for a period of one year beyond November 2, 2023 i.e. up to November 2, 2024, said the order issued by the Personnel Ministry.

Online gaming cos to net 28% on full bet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From October 1, online gaming companies will charge 28 per cent GST on full value of bets, while offshore platforms too would be required to have GST registration to operate in India.

The finance ministry late on Friday notified October 1 as the appointed date for the amended provisions in Central GST and Integrated GST laws to come into effect.

E-gaming companies, however, flagged that since many states are yet to pass amendments in their respective State GST (SGST) laws, this notification by the union government in CGST and IGST laws will create confusion.

According to the changes to the Central GST Act, online gaming, casinos and horse racing will henceforth be treat-



ed as "actionable claims" similar to lottery, betting and gambling and subject to 28 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on full face value of bets.

The amendments to Integrated GST (IGST) Act makes it mandatory for offshore online gaming platforms to take registration in India and pay 28 per cent tax in accordance with the domestic law.

The amendments will also

provide for blocking access to online gaming platforms located overseas in case of failure to comply with registration and tax payment provisions.

In its meetings in July and August, the GST Council, comprising finance ministers of Centre and states, had approved amendments to the law to include online gaming, casinos and horse racing as taxable actionable claims, and clarified that such supplies would attract 28 per cent tax

on full bet value.

Parliament last month passed amendments to the Central GST and Integrated GST laws to give effect to the Council's decision. Following that, rules for valuation by these companies were also notified on September 6.

The finance ministry has now notified that October 1 will be the appointed date for implementation of these provisions.

In a letter to Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra, All India Gaming Federation (AIGF) sought to know that with around 15 states yet to make changes to their respective State GST laws, what would be GST treatment that ought to be adopted by online gaming companies registered in those states in relation to deposits received from players of those states.

BoM appoints
Pradeep Kumar
Srivastava as Chief
Technology Officer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has appointed Pradeep Kumar Srivastava as Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of the bank.

His appointment is effective from September 28, 2023, the Pune-based lender said in a statement.

He brings with him a wealth of experience spanning over 28 years in the realm of the IT industry, it said.

Prior to joining BoM, Srivastava held the position of Vice President - Lead Enterprise Architect with Barclays Global Technology Centre in Pune.

MONEY MATTERS
Popular Vehicles and Services
files IPO papers with Sebi again



Popular Vehicles and Services Ltd, which is engaged in automotive dealerships, has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial share sale. This is the company's second attempt to go public. Earlier, the company filed draft papers with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in August 2021 for

floating an Initial Public Offering (IPO) but deferred the maiden public issue amid uncertain market conditions. According to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed on Thursday, the IPO comprises fresh issuance of equity shares worth Rs 250 crore and an Offer For Sale (OFS) of 1.42 crore equity shares by Banyantree Growth Capital II, LLC. Besides, the company is looking to raise Rs 50 crore in a pre-IPO placement round. If such placement is undertaken, the fresh issue size will be reduced. Proceeds of the fresh issue will be used for payment of debt and general corporate purposes.

Indus Towers inks pact
with IOC Phinergy for
clean energy systems

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indus Towers and IOC Phinergy (IOP) have inked a pact for the deployment of 300 zero-emission energy systems to optimise diesel consumption at Indus' telecom tower sites.

This move accelerates Indus Towers' progress towards its sustainability priorities, according to a release.

"Indus Towers Limited and IOC Phinergy Private Limited (IOP) have signed an agreement for deployment of 300 zero-emission energy systems based on aluminium-air technology, to optimise diesel consumption at Indus' telecom tower sites," the

release said. Indus Towers' CEO Prachur Sah said as part of the company's ESG vision, Indus Towers believes in nurturing environmental stewardship, being socially responsible and having robust governance.

"Indus Tower's agreement with IOP is a testimony of the company's commitment to build eco-friendly telecom tower sites by investing in solutions for resource optimisation," Sah added.

IOP is a joint venture company formed by IOCL and Phinergy Ltd, Israel to manufacture, sell and service aluminium-air systems using Phinergy's technology in India.

Rs 6k cr scheme for pharma, medical devices sectors

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

The Centre has approved investment of Rs 6000 crore to 74 industries in the pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturing sectors under the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Saturday.

Shah was addressing a gathering after dedicating the newly built campus of the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) at Gandhinagar.

"The Union government has taken a holistic approach and begun the process for the development of a cost-effective, sustainable and affordable process for 16 APIs (active pharmaceutical ingredient) and two KSMs (key starting material)," he said.

In the next ten decade, India will not just become self-reliant but also in a position to export them (APIs and KSMs), Shah added.

"The Narendra Modi government has given permission



"The Narendra Modi government has given permission for the investment of Rs 4000 crore to about 48 small and big industries in the sector of pharmaceutical manufacturing under the PLI scheme."

for the investment of Rs 4000 crore to about 48 small and big industries in the sector of pharmaceutical manufacturing under the PLI scheme," Shah said. The PLI scheme was also launched for medical device manufacturing, under which the Centre has given permission for investment of Rs 2000 crore to 26 investors, he said.

The government has built three bulk drug parks with a total cost outlay of Rs 3000 crores, he said.

For India to become self-reliant in the field of medical

Hyderabad, Kolkata and Raebareli is in progress, he said. "NIPER is today a big name in higher, technical education, with around 8000 students having so far proved their success after joining the industry. NIPER is also credited with more than 380 patent registration, and more than 7000 research papers," Shah informed. He said the Rs 2,200-crore budget granted for the state-of-art laboratory will help research, adding that more than 270 MoUs had been signed between NIPER and the industry.

Shah thanked the pharmaceutical industry and said the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janashadhi Pariyojana could not have been made possible without its help.

People have been able to save medicines worth Rs 30,000 crore in the last nine years because of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dedication to the poor and desire for their upliftment, the Union minister said.

Dhaka slowest city in the world on speed



Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh is the slowest city in the world while the fastest city on the speed index is Flint in the US state of Michigan, according to a US-based private nonprofit research organisation's findings. The study was done by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) which covered 1,200 cities in 152

countries. The fastest city in the world is Flint (of Michigan) United States, with a speed index of 0.48. The slowest is Dhaka, Bangladesh, with an index of -0.60," read the NBER report uploaded to their website. The NBER said all cities in Bangladesh were among the slowest 15 per cent of world cities while it listed the central-north Mymensingh and the southeastern port city of Chittogram as the ninth and 12th slowest cities across the globe. "Most strikingly, all cities with the fastest speed or uncongested speed are in rich countries, and all the slowest cities are in poor countries," commented the report by Cambridge, Massachusetts-based NBER.

A M Naik steps down as chairman of L&T Group



A M Naik stepped down as the chairman of L&T Group on Saturday. He handed over the reins of the USD 23 billion conglomerate to S N Subrahmanyam at an event in Mumbai. Naik, 81, will now be the chairman of the employees trust. He will focus on increasing many philanthropic initiatives that he has been undertaking for the past few years, according to a statement. India Post

unveiled a postage stamp on Naik on the occasion. Naik's attention going forward will be on his philanthropic initiatives, including the Naik Charitable Trust which focuses on education and skill-building of the underprivileged, and the Nirali Memorial Medical Trust dedicated to facilitating super specialty healthcare at subsidised cost. Naik joined the company in 1965 as a junior engineer and went on to become its Group Chairman. In the nearly three decades in leadership roles, Naik helped the company grow to its present size and stature, the statement said.

Bengaluru sees 39% fall in office demand



Bengaluru, the most prominent city for commercial real estate market, saw a 39 per cent decline in gross leasing of office space during July-September with corporates making delays

in taking decisions to expand business, according to Cushman & Wakefield. According to data released by real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield, the gross office leasing in Bengaluru fell to 22,13,654 square feet (sq ft) during July-September from 36,39,339 sq ft in the year ago period. Across eight major cities, the absorption of office space fell 13 per cent to 151,18,147 sq ft from 173,76,222 sq ft. Anshul Jain, Head of APAC Tenant Representation and Managing Director, India & South East Asia, said, "The office segment is seeing major shifts in terms of evolving occupier demands. India is currently in the spotlight as a preferred destination for business expansion, the top tier markets are destined to witness more innovation and traction in the real estate place."

GLOBAL TRAVEL MARKET
Focus on niche products to tap demand

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The first edition of Global Travel Market (GTM 2023) and expo drew to a close here on Saturday with leading players of travel and hospitality sector calling for stepping up promotional efforts focusing more on niche areas like experiential travel, wellness and heritage to tap the full potential of post-pandemic surge in tourism.

The four-day event, which saw a large number of business decisions being clinched during the B2B sessions by stakeholders from around the world, also stressed on firming up sectoral collaborations and government-industry relations to impart a further momentum to the highly promising sector.

GTM 2023 was organised by South

Kerala Hoteliers Forum (SKHF), Trivandrum Chamber of Commerce and Industries (TCCI), Tavaz Ventures, Metro Media and Citrine Hospitality Ventures, a statement said here on Saturday.

GTM CEO Siji Nair said the expo had participants from around 24 countries and more than 20 states, making the event a grand success.

Overall, more than 1,000 trade visitors, 600 plus domestic and 100 international tour operators and 100 plus corporate buyers attended the four-day summit began on September 27, it said.

The travel and trade exhibition of GTM 2023, held at Travancore International Convention Centre, Greenfield International Stadium at

nearby Karyavattom, had 200 plus stalls of major hoteliers and resorts, tourism boards and organisations, airlines, travel agents, tour operators and travel tech innovators.

Addressing the valedictory session of GTM at Kerala Arts and Crafts Craft Village at Kovalam last evening, A Vincent, MLA, said it is vitally important to showcase products like Ayurveda, handloom, traditional cuisine and handicrafts before visitors and make them spend more days in the state. "GTM is a great endeavour in this direction," the MLA noted.

A seminar was also held on 'The Role of Media in Promoting the Tourism Industry' at the expo venue on Saturday.

Odisha gov't clears 19 investment projects worth Rs 3,663 cr

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Saturday approved 19 investment projects worth Rs 3,663 crore.

These projects, approved during a meeting of the State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSW-CA) held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena, are expected to generate employment for over 13,500 people, an official statement said.

The EPIC Group, a Hong Kong-based apparel manufacturer renowned for serving some of the world's leading brands, is poised to bolster foreign direct investment (FDI) in Odisha, it said.

Trimetro Garments India Pvt Ltd, a subsidiary of the EPIC Group, is planning to invest Rs 376.85 crore for the establishment of its apparel manufacturing facility in Khurda district, it said.

The state government has approved proposals of several steel companies including Nezone Steel Utkal LLP, Advance Steel Tubes Limited, Nirmal Steels Private Limited, Rungta Mines Ltd, Ferro Tech India Pvt Ltd, and Super Sonic Logistics Pvt Ltd. Collectively, these companies have proposed to invest over Rs 2,000 crore in regions such as Kalinganagar, Dhenkanal and Sundergarh.

Airtel logs 50 million customers on its 5G network

Says services now span all districts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel on Saturday announced it has garnered over 50 million 5G customers on its network - a feat achieved within one year of the launch of Airtel 5G Plus.

The Sunil Mittal-led telecom company also said Airtel 5G Plus services are available across all districts in the country.

"Airtel continues its 5G growth streak with 50 million

unique customers on its network," the company said.

Making it one of the fastest rollouts in the country, Airtel 5G Plus is available across all the 28 states and 8 union territories. Randeep Sekhon, Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of Bharti Airtel said the telco is thrilled at the speed of adoption of 5G by millions of customers and added "we are reaching this milestone earlier than planned".

"This marks a big expansion of Airtel's 5G coverage going from 1 million in October of

2022 to 50 million in just 12 months of the launch. The expansion continues at full speed and I am sure, we will continue to rapidly multiply as we work towards nationwide coverage and enable all our customers to enter the 5G age," he said.

The services are now available across all districts in the country (with the exception of districts in Pakistan occupied Kashmir, naxal affected areas of Chhattisgarh and the islands of Lakshadweep, which are connected through VSAT).

Rs 100 cr for Aspirational Blocks Programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government in this financial year has allocated Rs 100 crore for Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP), which aims to improve governance at the block level, in order to enhance the quality of life of citizens, a top government official said on Saturday.

ABP is being implemented in 500 aspirational blocks across 329 districts in the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the nationwide programme on January 7.

"The government has allocated Rs 100 crore for the Aspirational Blocks Programme in 2023-24... We expect that all 500 backward



blocks will reach the state average in terms of development in three years," the

official said on the condition of anonymity. Out of 500 aspirations

blocks, 160 blocks are part of the 112 aspirational districts.

Uttar Pradesh has the maximum number of blocks (68) under this programme followed by Bihar (61). NITI Aayog would undertake ranking of aspirational blocks every quarter based on their performance, the official added.

Prime Minister Modi on Saturday said the aspirational districts programme changed the lives of more than 25 crore people in 112 districts of the country and its success will now form the basis of Aspirational Blocks Programme.

Modi made the remarks as he launched a unique week-long programme for aspirational blocks called 'Sankalp Saptah' at the Bharat Mandapam here.

Azad Engineering files Rs 740-cr IPO papers with Sebi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Azad Engineering Ltd has filed draft papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 740 crore through an initial public offering (IPO).

The company's IPO comprises a fresh issue of up to Rs 240 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 500 crore by a promoter and investors, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP).

The OFS consists of the sale of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 170 crore by promoter Rakesh Chopdar, equity shares worth up to Rs 280 crore by Piramal Structured Credit Opportunities Fund and equity shares to the tune of up to

Rs 50 crore by DMI Finance. Proceeds will be used for funding capital expenditure of the company, payment of debt, and general corporate purposes, as per the draft papers filed on Friday.

Azad Engineering is one of the key manufacturers of their qualified product lines supplying global original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in the aerospace and defence, energy, and oil and gas industries, manufacturing highly engineered, complex, and mission and life-critical components.

The company manufactures complex and highly engineered precision forged and machined components that are mission and life-critical.



SEVEN-DAY SELF-CARE FOR HEART HEALTH

Here is a seven-day self-care plan that is sure to get you on the road to improving your heart health:

● **Healthy Eating for Your Heart**
Everyone has heard that they need to eat healthier, but knowing what that actually means can be overwhelming and confusing. If your doctor has told you to lower your cholesterol to reduce your risk for heart disease, then ask the dietitians what type of food will work.

● **Get Your Blood Pressure Checked**

Did you know that you can feel fine and still be suffering from high blood pressure, also known as the "silent killer"? For that reason, it is recommended that you have your blood pressure checked at least once per year. If you also grapple with "white coat syndrome" (an increase in blood pressure due to the presence of a doctor or other medical professional), it is reasonable to use at-home cuffs or grocery store cuffs to get an idea of what your numbers are. Make sure that you remain quiet and calm for several minutes before taking the reading. Knowing your blood pressure and working with your medical team can be life-saving.

● **Engage in High-Quality Sleep**
Sleep disorders can have an impact on heart health; therefore, it is important to know the signs of a sleep disorder. Because you are unconscious when asleep, asking a family member or person with whom you live about your sleep behaviors is informative.

● **Weight Management and Maintenance**

Managing your weight is much easier said than done; however, obesity greatly increases your risk of heart health difficulties. If you have tried dieting and exercising with no success, there is still hope. If you feel that you have exhausted all options, speak with a physician to discuss next steps.

● **Moderate Your Sugar Intake**

Sugar intake is closely linked to inflammation and heart disease. If you have a sweet tooth, try to snag a fruit instead of a treat. Moderating your refined sugar intake will help keep your heart healthy, keep your weight down and get you feeling more energized throughout your day.

● **Quit Smoking and Avoid Smoke**

Smoking and regularly coming into contact with cigarette smoke is detrimental to your overall health and especially to your heart health. Did you know that when you quit smoking you begin to experience health benefits within just half an hour?

● **Be Active for 30 Minutes or More**

If lifting weights at a gym sounds intimidating, fear not. You can improve your heart health by focusing on increasing your physical activity by at least 30 minutes per day. Some ideas include dancing, swimming, walking and anything else that gets your body moving.

Courtesy: Washington University Physician

LOVE YOUR HEART

Ignorance may be bliss sometimes but never when it comes to the heart. Rapid urbanisation inducing stress and a stressful lifestyle, coupled with dietary issues, are alarmingly taking toll on the heart, spiking cardiovascular diseases year after year. These ailments have increasingly affected the younger age groups, imposing economic and social burdens on the society, doctors point out in a chat with THE HEALTH PIONEER

Dr Vivek Tandon, Additional Director, Interventional Cardiology, Fortis Hospital Greater Noida, said, "Cardiovascular diseases are one of the leading causes of mortality in India.

In the last few years, there has been a rise in heart attack cases which has also been recorded in various studies: 25% of Indians below 40 years of age are at a higher risk of suffering heart attacks or other serious heart-related ailments.

This risk increases to 50% for people between 40 and 50 years of age. Regular Health Screening, Weight Management and moderate exercising lowers the risk of heart attack, advises the medicos.

People with family history of cardio vascular diseases, smoking and high stress levels are at greater risk, they warn.

"Since heart health has been a serious concern in India, the need for introducing light to moderate exercise regime, maintaining body weight, healthy diet intake, reduce consumption of alcohol and tobacco are critical to avert any cardiac related ailments.

"Even if we are active, take a

balanced diet, give up smoking and alcohol, and introduce methods to keep stress levels under control, sudden cardiac arrests can be averted. One of the major reasons for increasing heart attack cases in the young population is the long working hours, reduced sleep, and relationship issues, which cause stress and lead to heart disease. People with risk factors like family history of cardiovascular disease and exposure to an unhealthy lifestyle must get themselves examined by doctors", added Dr Tandon.

Cardiologists at Amrita Hospital, Faridabad concurred even as they blamed stress, smoking and overeating-led visceral weight gain as the flagbearers of risk factors leading to cardiovascular challenges.

Dr. Vivek Chaturvedi, Head of Department (Adult Cardiology), Amrita Hospital, Faridabad said, "Stress management takes center stage in heart health so, it is crucial to avoid excessive stress and also smoking which is caused by it.

Additionally, maintaining control over eating habits is crucial; overeating should be avoided, and a healthy diet should be embraced. Abdominal obesity is a significant

concern for heart health which can be prevented through regular exercise and physical activity. Such activities hold great significance in preventing a range of diseases, including hypertension, diabetes, and obesity. Weight loss and blood pressure reduction can often be achieved through regular exercise without the need for medication."

The doctors emphasized upon inculcating healthy habits among students in the early stage itself. "School students should adapt to a healthy lifestyle early on in their lives which will help them sidestep adverse heart diseases in the long run," said Dr. Mohit Bhutani, Assistant Professor, Dept of Adult Cardiology, Amrita Hospital, Faridabad.

He added, "Students should focus on taking a balanced diet, with an adequate intake of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, and nuts while cautioning against excessive consumption of fatty foods. In the educational setting, schools play a pivotal role in promoting heart health among students. Schools to monitor students' anthropometry regularly, which includes measurements like height, weight, and body mass index, to identify and address

potential obesity concerns early on.

"Incorporating yoga and meditation into daily routines can enhance mental and emotional health of students. It is essential for students to avoid harmful habits such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and substance abuse. Teachers are urged to lead by example by proactively integrating heart-healthy practices into their lives, including regular exercise, tobacco and alcohol avoidance, and stress management through activities like yoga and meditation."

Pramit Mishra, Facility Director, Fortis Hospital, Greater Noida stressed on having complete sleep. "In these competitive times, our sleep takes a toll, which impacts the overall health, whereas people who complete their sleep cycles and have healthier sleep patterns are better at managing health factors like weight and blood pressure along with a healthy heart."

India's share of one-fifth in the 17.9 million global heart attack deaths, as per WHO, is a stark reminder that heart disease is now affecting people in their 30s and 40s. This shift highlights the urgent need for preventive measures and

early detection in younger adults to curb this alarming trend.

Dr Jyoti Kapoor, Founder-Director and Senior Psychiatrist from Manasthali felt that one way to keep heart healthy is by keeping one free from stress.

"Stress is the silent architect of heart disease, weaving a web of risk factors that can shatter the strongest of hearts. It's not just an emotional burden; it's a potent risk factor for heart disease. When stress takes center stage in our daily existence, it orchestrates a symphony of physiological changes that can, over time, harm our cardiovascular health. Like a relentless storm, chronic stress can erode the resilience of our hearts, leading to increased blood pressure, inflammation, and unhealthy lifestyle choices.

"To protect the heart's sanctity, we must become vigilant guardians of our well-being, mastering the art of stress management. As we unravel the knots of tension, we fortify the heart's defenses, nurturing a future where stress is but a fleeting gust in the gentle breeze of a healthy heart."

The WHO South-East Asia Region member states need to join the global call to raise awareness

about heart health and accelerate actions to prevent, detect and manage cardiovascular diseases. The region is home to a quarter of the world's population, said WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh on the occasion of World Heart Day observed on September 29.

The WHO South-East Asia Region is experiencing a very high burden of noncommunicable diseases. Cardiovascular diseases are responsible for 3.9 million or 30 per cent of all deaths annually.

"Alarmingly, almost half (48 per cent) of these cardiovascular disease-related deaths occurred prematurely, affecting individuals aged 30-70 years and imposing significant socioeconomic burdens on families, communities and countries," Singh said.

The main causes to the burden of cardiovascular diseases include modifiable lifestyle factors such as tobacco use, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets -- especially high salt intake -- and lack of physical activity. Raised blood pressure and glucose levels are the key drivers and these can be detected, diagnosed and managed adequately in primary care, she added.

Unique SOS QR Code to ensure timely aid within 'Golden Hour'

This groundbreaking service of detecting the accurate location of the patient in need and providing ambulance service underscores the Manipal hospital's bid to transforming Bengaluru into a Heart Smart City, reports THE HEALTH PIONEER

In a bid to save lives and provide first aid faster during medical emergencies, Manipal Hospitals has launched an advanced SOS QR code through which one can avail ambulance service at the earliest in times of distress.

Manipal Hospitals has strategically positioned the QR codes at key traffic intersections, apartments, and a few vehicles for easy access during emergencies.

Patients or their caregivers can in an instant scan these codes using their Android and iOS mobile phones. The QR code will seamlessly provide real-time, patient location information to the nearest Manipal Ambulance Response Service and 108 Ambulance team.

These ambulances have been strategically stationed at various key points throughout the city so that they can transport patients to the nearest hospital. Manipal Hospitals has also launched a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) education programme for Bengalureans and proposed to the state government to make CPR education mandatory in colleges and schools

Guj Govt takes lead in heart diseases treatment

The Gujarat Government has spent approximately Rs 1614 crore on the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease patients in last five years even as it included the heart transplant procedure under AB PMJAY-MA.

Thus, making Gujarat the first and only state in the country to do so

On World Heart Day on September 29, the Gujarat Government shared that more than 2 lakh 95 thousand heart disease patients have availed free treatment under AB PMJAY-MA (Ayushman Bharat-Prime Minister Jan Arogya Yojana-Chief Minister Amrutam) in the last five years.

When considering the number of claims submitted by these beneficiaries, the figure exceeds 2 lakh 99 thousand.

Under AB PMJAY-MA, a range of diag-



nostic and treatment procedures for heart diseases are available. These include diagnostic angiogram, Coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), Valve Procedures, Pacemaker Implantation, AICD - Automatic Implantable

Cardiac Defibrillator, Device Closure, femoral bypass and Ventricular pacing, etc.

It is well-known that the diagnosis and treatment of heart-related diseases are quite expensive. In such a situation, the Gujarat government has implemented the Prime Minister's Ayushman Bharat Yojana in the state in such an effective manner that the state's underprivileged families no longer need to wander extensively in search of heart-related check-ups and treatment.

In a significant move to provide an additional facility to serious heart disease patients from poor and middle-class families, the State Government has also decided to include the heart transplant procedure under AB PMJAY-MA, making it the first and only state in the country to take this step.

to make the community capable of providing critical assistance during medical emergencies.

Through these initiatives, the multi-specialty healthcare chain said, it aims to ensure that every crit-

ical patient receives timely assistance during the 'golden hour'. In medical circles, the 'golden hour' is referred to as the period of time immediately after an adverse health event such as a heart attack or stroke or tra-

umatic injury during which there is the highest likelihood that prompt medical and surgical treatment would prevent death.

As part of its health awareness programme, Manipal Hospitals has

also transformed traffic signals into heart-shaped symbols. These traffic signals display SOS QR codes for easy access to the ambulance service.

The heart-shaped signal at the traffic junction is meant to be a

reminder to everyone that every life counts and that one should not neglect one's own heart health.

This trend was set by introducing red heart signals last year at key traffic junctions, which was expanded to 37 traffic signals this year as well, with the support of Bengaluru Traffic Police and BBMP.

The event was inaugurated by Home Minister G Parameashwara and Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dinesh Gundu Rao along with Dr Sudarshan Ballal, Chairman of Manipal hospitals.

As per data from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, almost 47 per cent of cardiac arrest fatalities occur prior to a patient's arrival at the hospital. The key to saving lives during heart attacks lies in delivering prompt assistance such as CPR during the 'golden hour'.

Speaking about the newly launched initiatives, Dr Ballal said that at the time of an accident or a medical emergency, one just needs to scan the QR code and one of the ambulances of the hospital would get activated and rush to the spot as

early as possible.

"We have about 35 ambulances in our system in Bengaluru, which may not be enough. So, we have also sought the help of the '108' ambulance service so that there are enough ambulances to address the issue in case of emergency. We also want to educate as many number of people as possible about CPR so that we can save lives," he said.

Home Minister Parameashwara said he will make CPR training mandatory in police training academies in the state and also take efforts to include it in school and college curricula. "We have more than 12 police training academies in Karnataka and we will include CPR as part of our police training programme," he said.

Health Minister Gundu Rao said that in emergency situations, the quicker the patient is brought to the hospital, the better the chances of recovery increases. "We are also working to improve 108 ambulance service facilities and will push for giving CPR training to more and more people, as it can save more lives," he added.

"Reflecting on where I came from helps me to appreciate and balance what I have now"
— Meghan Markle



REMEMBERING JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

A POET OF DEPTH AND HUMANITY

Jayanta Mahapatra, revered Indian poet, delved into human psyche with poignant verses. His works, spanning social disparity and existential reflection, resonate beyond accolades. His legacy is one of profound introspection and empathetic insight, leaving an enduring impact

All the poetry there is in the world/appears to rise out of the ashes.

Jayanta Mahapatra in "All The Poetry There is"

Poetry and poetic experiences are strange phenomena. That was the precise reason Plato banned poets from entering his ideal Republic. Athenian society, at the zenith of rationality, offered poison to Socrates. Socrates's fault was his belief in the power of scrutiny, of judgement. He found "an unexamined life is not worth living." Genuine poets pierce through the layers "an unexamined life" is made of and then let gathered clouds in their minds get scattered by the sunlight of their musings.

Jayanta Mahapatra, such a poet, was one of the most revered doyens of English poetry in India who delved into deep, unexplored human psyche wherein he slipped into pseudo-realistic visions: more real than real. We lost him.

I knew him since 2005 when the then Sahitya Akademi's Secretary Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee introduced me to him. Since then we cherished a relationship words can hardly describe. Many handwritten letters, a few telephonic conversations and his FOREWORD to my book of poems SHADOWS OF THE REAL are the aftermath. I went to meet him once at Jaipur Airport but briefly, when he was returning from Ajmer after attending a literary programme. He was old but far from serious illnesses. The warmth of his embrace is still a treasure with me.

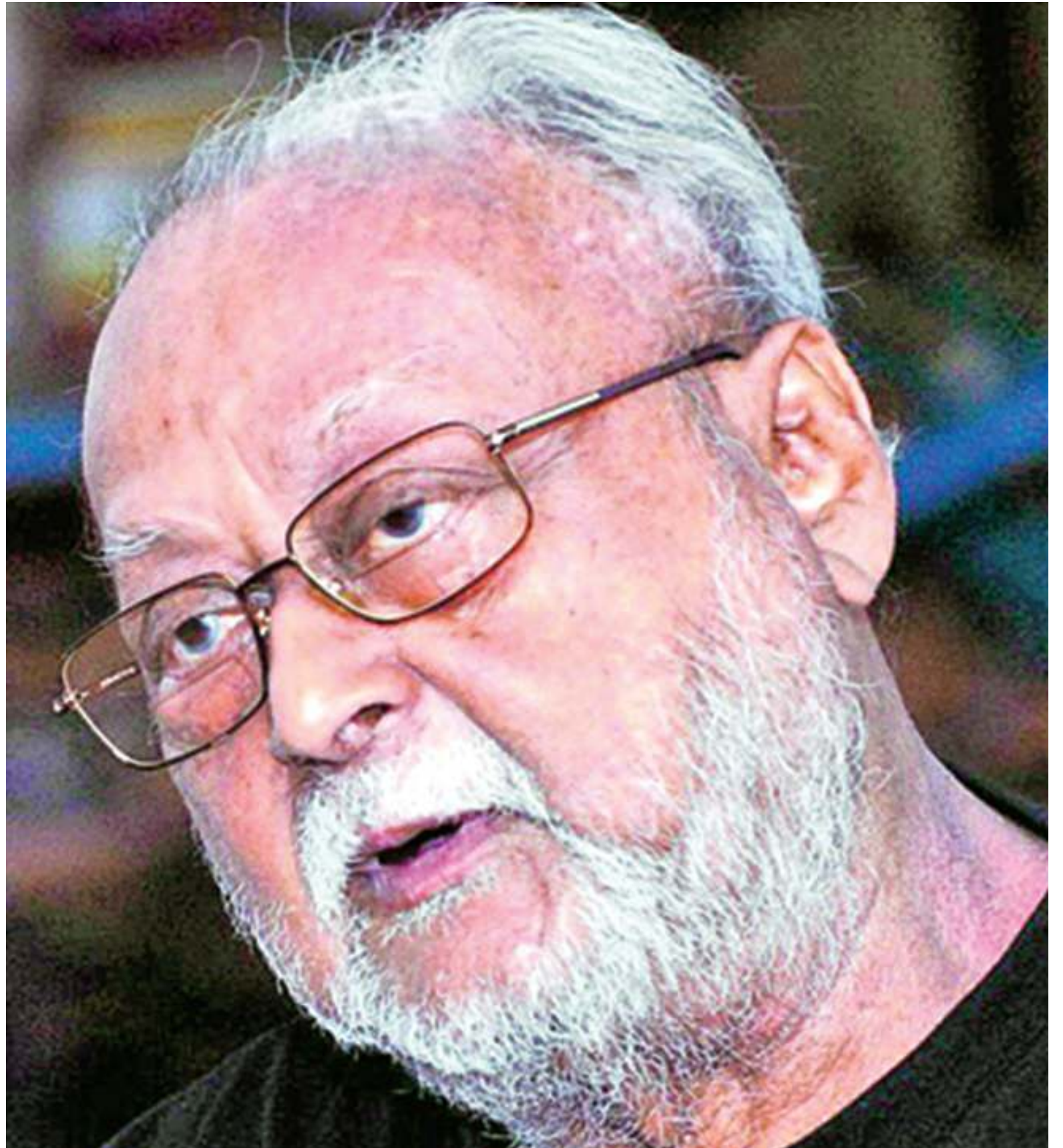
During the course of more than fifteen years of association, I chanced upon reading many of his poetry books including *Relationship* that fetched him Sahitya Akademi Award in 1981. He sent me a number of issues of the prestigious literary journal Chandrabhaga. He wanted me to read The Hudson Review from the USA that I subscribed to and was immensely pleased to read Mahapatra's long letter to its Editor (one of the features of the magazine was to feature each issue a long letter from world's top litterateurs across the world.)

If I were to summarise Mahapatra's poetry, I find it in one of the issues of Chandrabhaga, where he pens in "First Page", "It is a small life I live. Perhaps in the way I am, doing small things, like plucking a half-ripe guava from the tree in our yard, the green cozying up to my senses, the mesmerising aroma waking me up.....Perhaps one should not be one of those who suffer because the world is a wreck, it's hard to say. Does it matter?"



KK SRIVASTAVA

HIS POETRY IS ABOUT TRUTH, JUSTICE, DEPRIVATION, SELF-DELUSION, ANXIETY, SELF-PACIFICATION AND SOLACE. AT TIMES LUCIDLY, AT TIMES SURREPTITIOUSLY, HIS POETRY HARPS ON THE ESSENTIAL HARMONY IN THE DIVERSITY OF THINGS: LATENT OR APPARENT. HE OBSERVED EVERYTHING OF THE UNIVERSE AS A COMMON HERITAGE FOR ALL: POOR OR AFFLUENT. READERS OBSERVE IN THE DEPTH AND MAGNITUDE OF THE FEELINGS/SENTIMENTS MAKING HIS POEMS, THE RISING STORMS IN MAHAPATRA'S MIND. HE KEPT ON EXPLORING THE SOCIAL POWER OF THE PLEBEIANS THROUGH HIS POETRY



But look at concluding lines that amaze:
It's my job to love people again and again. To feel flowers blossoming in the sun, butterflies dipping into the pollen.

He was certainly not the poet of the great and prosperous. He evolved over a number of years through his penetrating observations and interactions. He developed a tender fellow feeling for the men, women and children on the margin.

"Hope lay perhaps in burning the home I lived in."

He writes in *HUNGER*. Readers can interpret the way they wish.

Always there was the question in his lips, the bewilderment in his eyes, the rebellion of his soul. He spent his last days in extreme loneliness tackling the tyranny of his memories and dreams. He writes in *SPRING*, "Somehow it seems the light/has spent its night in another's arms/But it's here with me now/with a story of a million words." He had faith in the power of words. He transferred his own fluid moment into the frozen store of memory and surveyed his dreams through a pragmatic eye.

His poetry is about truth, justice, deprivation, self-delusion, anxiety, self-pacification and solace. His poetry is indispensable irrespective of time and space. His poetry oscillates between the virility and verisimilitude. As in *Mask of Longing*—

A time when even oxygen seems to hiss cruelly

In those crumpled eyes of hers the light of death goes on gathering shadows. And I feel I'm late with my life. At times lucidly, at times

surreptitiously, his poetry harps on the essential harmony in the diversity of things: latent or apparent. He observed everything of the universe as a common heritage for all: poor or affluent. Readers observe in the depth and magnitude of the feelings/sentiments making his poems, the rising storms in Mahapatra's mind. He kept on exploring the social power of the plebeians through his poetry.

His poems endeavour to trace different facets of human life and existence: love, lust, revenge, sufferings, fears and deprivations. His voice is melancholic, sharp, intimate and scans the movement of time and human beings' silence. Many of Mahapatra's collections are kaleidoscopic collections of poems written with diverse thought processes underway. These engage readers with preoccupation of human beings with fleeting time and man's questionable existence in the universe. His poems weave a quagmire of wonton thought that invades poet's psyche very incisively. Nostalgia aches.

There was something I did not like: his returning Padma Shri in November 2015. I conveyed it to him. Though nothing was heard from him, I got Mahapatra's last letter to me on August 5, 2019. He wrote of the sad demise of his wife, son and son's family, and summarising his concluding days by quoting from my poem *DEPRESSION* from my book of poetry *Shadows of the Real*, "the same known fire burns me from inside" and then added, "a fire unknown and nameless still goes on burning through the nights." His greatness lay in making small, unknown writers like me happy and joyous through his words.

His concluding life reminded me of a line from his poem *A STILL WINTER MORNING*, "standing like a lost sheep/huddled away from death." Or as Brazilian poet, Izacly Guimarães Ferreira confronts us with what he thinks of life in his poem — *A WAR*

WITH NO NAME, "There is too much and there is too little/there is warmth and there's a chill." Life links; it delinks too.

In *Indian Summer*, Mahapatra in his characteristic way, bemoans loneliness of a woman:

The good wife lies in my bed throughout the long afternoon, dreaming still, unexhausted by the deep roar of funeral pyres.

In this poem there are all disconnected pictures, with none of them being in any way inter-related to the others. "funeral fires" convey the deepest amount of mental agony of "a good wife".

Truth is either the most simple or the trickiest of the phenomenon a man has to deal with. It brings awakened enlightenment thought amidst suffocating pains for those who keep truth on the highest pedestal. Look at following lines:

The worn-out face of India/ holds the weak eyes of dumb,/ solitary poets who die alone.

For truth seekers, there are no engrossing dilemmas; no consequences. He clarifies doubts; he clears doubts as far as yearning for truths is concerned.

WH Auden pointed out three attributes in a poet to deserve him a classification of being a great poet, "Firstly a gift of a very high order for memorable language, secondly a profound understanding of the age in which he lives, and thirdly a working knowledge of and sympathetic attitude towards the most progressive thought of his time."

Mahapatra met all these stringent conditions based on which we remember him as a great poet. His deathless poems enabled him to pave his way into the mists of eternity.

Imagist simplicity with dense connotations, oscillating rhythms of ebbs and flows are a few scintillating characteristics of his poetry.

Poets who believe, to use writer, critic and Centennial Professor of English at Vanderbilt University, Mark Jarman's words, in "poetry with an edge", poetry has lasting impact on the world, for every poet contributes his little bit to keep the edges of poetry sharp. The moot question is: how capably each and every poet contributes to that edge. Poets have to determine poetry's strength and future. They possess their own ultimate destiny, which Mahapatra summarises in his poem, *Twilight* —

Newly-lit lamps in the houses across the street make me look out at the wet August evening that holds up the vast unknown in such small delicate hands.

As for Mahapatra, he belonged to the intellectual aristocracy of the world though he lived a very down-to-earth life in Cuttack, never hankering after literary awards and recognition. Reclusiveness is a serious writer's sine qua non.

(KK Srivastava is a former Additional Deputy Comptroller & Auditor General, an acclaimed poet, writer and columnist for *The Pioneer*, *The Daily Guardian* and *Brazilian Literary magazine SIBILA*. Currently, he is a nominated member from the category of 'Literate person from the public and community' of Ethics Committee on Research of mental health establishment- IHBAS (Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences), of Government of NCT of Delhi where he is working with a group of psychiatrists/neurologists on research work on mental health. Views expressed are personal.)

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: No endgame

The conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region is now more than three decades old. This disputed territory lies in the mountainous South Caucasus region, situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Known as Artsakh to Armenians, this landlocked region falls within the sovereign borders of Azerbaijan, but it is predominantly populated by ethnic Armenians. While internationally recognised as a part of Azerbaijan, it is currently home to over 120,000 Armenians who resist being under Azerbaijani control. Both Azerbaijan and Armenia fought in the 1980s and 1990s to gain control of this hilly region, but were unsuccessful in their attempts.

As the conflict has resurfaced, it is worth examining the historical background of the issue. In 1923, Vladimir Lenin, the first leader of the USSR who ruled the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1924, established the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic. At that time, it was home to a 95 per cent ethnic Armenian population. The problem arose in 1988, just two years before the dissolution of the USSR, when the regional legislature of Nagorno-Karabakh passed a resolution indicating its desire to join Armenia, despite the region being an integral part of Azerbaijan. It is widely understood that ethno-nationalism has played a vital role in mobilising people for nationhood since the beginning of modern civilisation. This strongly influenced the Armenians living in this enclave, and they gradually prepared themselves to become a part of neighbouring Armenia. With the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, both Armenia and Azerbaijan became independent nations.

Meanwhile, the Nagorno-Karabakh oblast declared independence, leading to intense fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan. By 1993, the Armenian security forces had occupied the region and also gained control over 20 per cent of the neighbouring Azerbaijani territory. In 1994, Boris Yeltsin, the first leader of the Russian Federation, successfully negotiated a peace deal known as the Bishkek Protocol between the two former Soviet Republics.



A convoy of cars of ethnic Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh moves towards Kornidzor in the Syunik region in Armenia

AP

However, it did not resolve the territorial dispute and left the Nagorno-Karabakh region de facto independent. Peace between the two warring neighbours was maintained for some time with the influence of Moscow. However, once the USSR disintegrated, these peripheral republics became more conscious of their rights, priorities, and sovereign frontiers and they tried to re-establish their external relations with other nations around the globe.

From 1994 to 2015, there was peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 2016, heavy fighting erupted once again. Then, in late September 2020, fresh clashes broke out along the Azerbaijan-Nagorno-Karabakh border. Azerbaijan regained much of the territory from Armenia and left a small portion of Karabakh to Armenia. The war came to an end with a Russia-brokered peace deal in November 2020.

The most significant aspect of this agreement was the

establishment of the Lachin Corridor, which allowed Armenia to connect to the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave under strict monitoring by Russian peacekeepers. The main trouble started in December 2022 when activists from Azerbaijan blocked the Lachin Corridor, halting all supplies coming to Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia. This further led to the opening of a checkpoint by the Azerbaijani government on the corridor, alleging the supply of arms to Armenian separatists in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

To put an end to the hostilities between the two neighbours, the US, Russia, and the European Union hosted talks with representatives from Baku and Yerevan. Finally, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev made considerable progress towards peace after constant intervention by the major powers and pressure from the UN to maintain tranquility in the region. It

is positive for the international community that Pashinyan recognised the entire Nagorno-Karabakh enclave as the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan. He also emphasised that Baku must respect the internationally recognised boundary of Armenia and ensure the protection of ethnic Armenians living in the Nagorno-Karabakh region."

What has happened in Nagorno-Karabakh now? On September 19, in the days following the opening of the Lachin border, people from both sides of the frontier hoped that normalcy would be back to the disputed territory. This deal came as a result of an understanding between the Azerbaijan Government and the Armenian separatists of the Nagorno-Karabakh oblast. The agreement aimed to reopen two disputed transport routes, including a crucial link road known as the Lachin Corridor.

What has really worsened the ground situation is that for the last more than nine

months, Azerbaijan authorities are tightly restricting the movements of the Armenian Government with the Nagorno-Karabakh oblast through the Lachin Corridor.

Earlier Azerbaijan accused Armenia of smuggling arms and ammunition by using this route to the Nagorno-Karabakh. When the historic deal was sealed between two warring nations, the self-proclaimed Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh declared the election of a new President named Samvel Shahramanyan for it simultaneously. This move, which irked the Azerbaijani Government, was declared as illegal. Azerbaijan referred to the government as a "puppet separatist regime" at the heart of all troubles between the two nations.

While echoing concerns for a new flare-up, the Azerbaijani foreign ministry reiterated that "the only way to achieve peace and stability in the region is the unconditional

and complete withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and the disbandment of the puppet regime".

Meanwhile, both Ukraine and Turkey voiced support for Azerbaijan's claim over Karabakh and denounced the election held in the region. The European Union has taken a very cautious stand by saying that it did not recognise the election but wanted the people of the Nagorno-Karabakh to consolidate around its de facto leadership while dealing with Armenia.

Many in Armenia fear that the people in the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave may face genocide in 2023. The way Baku is asserting control over the disputed territory is alarming. We are all aware of the Armenian genocide of 1915, when people of Armenian origin were massacred in Anatolia, in what is now modern-day Turkey. It is ironic that the US remained silent about the Armenian genocide until 2021,

when President Biden finally publicly recognised it.

Currently, the ethnic Armenians in the Nagorno-Karabakh oblast need the support of global governance institutions like the UN, as well as intervention from major powers such as the US, the Russian Federation, and the European Union, to prevent a potential genocide in the enclave.

What is concerning are the messages coming from Baku and President Aliyev. In the past, Aliyev did not abide by the verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which instructed Baku to reopen the Lachin Corridor. He has consistently disregarded requests from the UN and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to comply with the ICJ's ruling. His government has assured the international community that reintegration will bring development and prosperity to Nagorno-Karabakh.

However, it is alarming that since 2010, Aliyev has reportedly stated that Armenia itself is "Western Azerbaijan", and last December, he declared that "present-day Armenia is our land". Furthermore, for years, Azerbaijan has maintained that Armenia is an illegitimate state. These are serious warning signals for the entire world, for Armenia, and for the conflict-ridden Nagorno-Karabakh oblast.

At present, Azerbaijani forces have fully occupied the Nagorno-Karabakh region whose separatist leaders have laid down their arms. However, thousands of ethnic Armenians are fleeing to Armenia, fearing for their lives and the sudden change in the status quo.

It is time for the international community to ensure the future safety of ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan. President Aliyev must work towards restoring peace and tranquility to the Nagorno-Karabakh region. He should refrain from seeking further escalation of the crisis. Otherwise, pressure on Pashinyan might lead Armenian forces to reclaim the oblast, potentially sparking a bloody war in the region.

The time has come for both Baku and Yerevan to bid farewell to arms.

(The writer is currently president of the Global Research Foundation)

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict spans over three decades, rooted in territorial disputes between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Despite internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, the region is predominantly Armenian-populated. Recent tensions, exacerbated by border restrictions, pose a risk of genocide. International intervention is crucial to ensure ethnic Armenians' safety and regional peace.



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Planet burns as superpowers desert multilateralism

The planet is on fire, but almost all the firefighters have deserted. At the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, which began on September 19 in New York, the leaders of four of the five permanent members of the Security Council — the UN's most powerful executive body — were absent.

The absence of the top representatives of France, the United Kingdom, Russia and China, replaced by ministers or diplomats, demonstrated the emptying of the main global multilateral forum and highlighted the speeches of the two presidents who opened the General Assembly: Brazil's Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the US' Joe Biden.

Both leaders, with decades of experience, referred bluntly to fires that are ravaging the planet — starting with the climate emergency and the war in Ukraine. And both, albeit in very different tones, pointed the finger at the central issue hanging over the meeting, which the absentees made clear: the crisis of the UN and the multilateral system that has been built around it in recent decades.

The UN was created in 1945, on the initiative of the United States and with the support of the allied countries that had defeated Nazism and

fascism (primarily the Soviet Union, Great Britain and France) with the aim of "preserving future generations from the scourge of war".

A year earlier, in 1944, the Bretton Woods Agreements had laid the foundations for the post-war global financial system, and created the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Over the years, dozens of agencies, funds and specialised programmes have been added, gradually building up what is known as the UN System.

Practically every country in the world is a member of the UN and the organisation deals with countless issues, ranging from protecting life in the oceans to coordinating satellite orbits, humanitarian aid operations, vaccination campaigns, agreements to limit climate change and, more recently, attempts to create regulations against disinformation on social networks and to combat tax avoidance by large international corporations.

An imperfect system, but one that worked

The system, as Biden pointed out in his speech, "is not always perfect and has not always been perfect", but with its ups and downs, it worked reasonably well for seven decades. During the Cold War,

the UN was a crucial channel of communication that contributed to avoiding nuclear conflict. After it, the UN's remit expanded further: for example, with the multiplication of peacekeeping operations.

Despite the genocide in Rwanda, the civil war in the former Yugoslavia and the invasion of Iraq in 2003, in those two decades the number of armed conflicts (between countries and within countries) steadily declined, as did the number of victims. The curve reversed in 2012, when the civil war in Syria worsened, and since then it has continued to rise year on year. According to the Conflict Data Programme at Uppsala University, 184 different conflicts were recorded in 2022, including the war in Ukraine, with more than 238,000 victims in total, compared to an average of 120 conflicts and 30,000 victims per year between 2001 and 2012.

The UN's inability to respond appropriately to the war in Ukraine is more an indicator than a trigger of the crisis of multilateralism. Russia has brought the war of aggression, of territorial annexation, back as a tool of foreign policy. But the same Western powers with permanent seats on the Security Council that are right-

ly criticising the Russian invasion today have resorted to the unilateral use of military force in recent decades, contrary to the UN Charter and international law.

What we usually call multilateralism is the way in which the international system adopts a grammar of principles and norms that, in theory, should be followed by all states. It is a process of institutionalising forms of coordination and cooperation in public policy that generates a certain stability and predictability in relations between states and societies.

In the way the UN works, there is an element of equality in the treatment of states (all 193 member countries have the right to vote and voice in the General Assembly), but there are also obvious asymmetries of power, such as the special status of the five permanent members of the Security Council. The so-called P5 have kept their veto power unchanged since 1945 and often ignore the rules they are supposed to enforce — a historical incongruity that Lula rightly attacked again in his speech in New York.

Global governance

Even so, this grammar organises a large part of global governance mechanisms,

which increase international dialogue and cooperation, and decrease the propensity to use force as the main instrument for settling disputes.

The UN system is based on the idea that power relations between states should not be the only element that determines the shape of international relations. In fact, as recently as 2015, the multilateral system reached a consensus to adopt two global agreements of great importance and impact: the Paris Agreement for the reduction of greenhouse gases, responsible for the climate emergency, and the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

From then on, the multilateral system was able to do little more than try to manage a growing number of humanitarian emergencies. In June 2023, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) estimated that there were 362 million people around the world in need of international aid to meet their basic survival needs.

Crisis of legitimacy and authority

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organisation, under heavy fire from the administration of then US President Donald Trump, was virtually ignored

by the richest countries in its attempt to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines. The conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Israel/Palestine drag on, with no solution in sight. Efforts to strengthen the UN's capacity for preventive diplomacy, promised by Secretary-General António Guterres, have backfired, and the organisation has been unable to do anything to prevent the invasion of Ukraine or to facilitate a ceasefire. The system has apparently ground to a halt.

It continues to shape a large part of international interaction, but today there are two key areas of resistance to it: the emergence of countries in the Global South willing to reinterpret the hegemony of the liberal order, and the growth of a transnationally articulated radical right.

In the international debate, there is much more attention paid to the first question than the second. However, as the experience of the Trump and Bolsonaro governments has shown, the radical right's sovereignist vision is at odds with the essence of multilateralism, which requires agreed transfers of national sovereignty in favour of common goals, such as the fight against climate change. It is no coincidence that the Spanish radical right party Vox has been running a

campaign against the 2030 Agenda for years, which has been expanding throughout Latin America. Even so, the entire UN bureaucracy, from Secretary-General Guterres onwards, is reluctant to engage in open conflict with the radical right.

A strategic problem

For Brazil, and Latin America in general, the crisis of the multilateral system is a strategic problem. The region has an old multilateralist tradition, in which conflicts between states have been resolved by diplomatic means and not by arms. A dozen countries from the region took part in the creation of the League of Nations in 1920, and 20 were among the 51 founding nations of the UN. To this day, the multilateral space represents the only international arena in which the region has any influence, since from an economic and military point of view Latin America's weight is extremely limited: the region is home to 8 per cent of the world's population, but in 2022 it accounted for only 5.26 per cent of global GDP.

At the same time, the collective influence of the so-called Global South is increasing. In the weeks leading up to the UN General Assembly, the leaders of developing nations

met at the BRICS summits in South Africa, the G20 in India and the G77+China in Cuba.

For Brazil and the other countries of the Global South, the challenge is to maintain political independence and action, seeking to defend the interests of their populations, without taking sides in the dispute over the new global hegemony between China and the US. It is the concept of active non-alignment.

Concluding his speech in New York, Lula recalled that "the UN needs to fulfil its role as a builder of a more just, supportive and fraternal world. But it will only do so if its members have the courage to proclaim their indignation at inequality and work tirelessly to overcome it".

Brazil and the Global South must endeavour to reform the multilateral system, such as the unsustainable composition of the Security Council, while respecting all its norms, especially with regard to the UN Charter and all human rights protection mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court. Only in this way will it be possible to reaffirm the legitimacy of multilateralism, reduce global power asymmetries and try to put out the fires that threaten our planet.

(The Conversation)

