

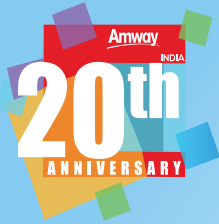
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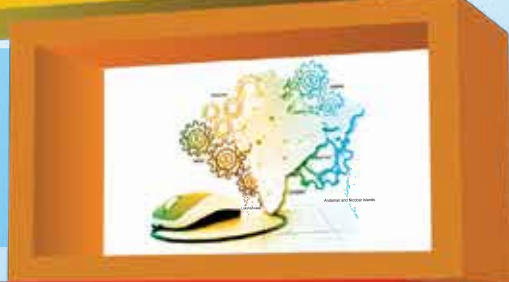
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India has **witnessed a golden dawn** & it is hoped that a bright day follows

Dear readers,

In the modern-day world, many countries are blessed to have democratically-elected governments and the citizens of these nations take considerable pride in calling themselves “intellectually mature and civilised” as compared to other places where the right of the populace to choose their rulers is not yet a glorious reality.

Rights are always in tandem with responsibilities, in fact the former standing by itself would be an invitation to upsetting the balance permanently. A trepidation that often haunts an electorate is a “hung” legislature where no single political party boasts a clear majority. Past experience has revealed that such a situation invariably translates into a wary dispensation that focuses more on its existence than on the work expected of it.

Now that India has just crossed the threshold into what clearly seems to be another half decade of governmental stability at the Centre, the time is ripe for all concerned to girdle up their loins and get down on the ground for some real toil. It is hoped that a powerful “central command” will lead to a boom time vis-a-vis development – which has been the foremost item on the agenda of numerous politicians down the decades. However, mere presence of the word development does not mean that we are well on our way to achieving it.

The need of the hour is synergy – between the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. Few will disagree that if these three colossal entities combine, they shall be a force to reckon with. India has welfare programmes aplenty – the requirement is smooth and rapid implementation. Political considerations apart, it is hoped and expected that the powers that be will

allow the administration to function smoothly and we pray that public servants shall realise the true meaning of the term that describes them.

A heartening fact is that numerous sterling instances are coming to light with regard to sensitiveness on part of the bureaucracy and it gladdens the soul when young officers treat work as worship.

The judiciary has been playing the role of an understanding family elder and must continue to step in where it feels the other two branches are not fulfilling their duties in letter and spirit.

Last, but certainly not the least, the common man. If he sits on the sidelines adopting a wait-and-watch policy, India shall go nowhere. The commoner is the catalyst – he must raise issues and awareness and make the regime realise when it is straying from its path.

It appears that India has witnessed a golden dawn and it is hoped that a bright day follows.

As members of the Fourth Estate, my colleagues in the magazine team maintain an eternal vigil and bring before you every happening that is noteworthy. Encourage us through your reactions to our output just as our advertisers never fail to spur us on by fuelling our endeavours.

Best wishes

Vishwas Tripathi
Chairman
UNI, Board of Directors

BREAKING NEWS :

BJP set to give fr...



India

World

Sports

Business & Economy

Science & Technology

Features

Entertainment

States

Autoworld

Startup World

Top News

For
aw
Kolk
pas
Kolk

The United News of India founded in the year 1961, has in a period of five decades, consolidated and expanded to emerge as one of the leading news agencies of Asia and the developing World. Following are the important milestones in the eventful journey of UNI which has been revered as "Temple of News Agency Journalism".

***THE HUMBLE BEGINNING:** UNI formally commenced operations on March 21, 1961 with just a five-man team. The company's activities were confined to the national capital and its news dispatches distributed by bicycles to a handful of subscribers.

***THE VISION:** UNI came into existence due to the magnificent vision and awe-inspiring foresight of our late beloved Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who favoured a twin-agency system in India for healthy competition and consequent high-quality news service news service besides avoiding single-agency monopoly that would prove near fatal for the Fourth Estate's sanctity.

***PRESENT STATUS:** Today UNI has emerged as one of the largest entities of its kind in the developing world with several hundred subscribers across the length and breadth of the nation and even beyond its borders receiving UNI services via a satellite-based network and internet spread over 90,000 km.

***THE CLIENTELE:** The agency's myriad subscribers include newspapers published in 14 languages. All India Radio and Doordarshan, the Prime Minister's Office and Union Ministers workplaces, central and state governments, corporate and commercial houses, major hotels, airports, foreign missions and correspondents besides electronic media.

***SUPPORT SYSTEMS:** To maintain its rapid, accurate and incisive news services, UNI boasts the following cutting-edge support systems: reporters in over 300 places in India; representatives in several foreign countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Singapore; branch offices in all Indian states; collaboration with Reuters and other international news agencies.

***1980:** UNI also made history and charted a new course when it utilised computers to process and analyse results of the 1980 general elections.

***MAY 1, 1982:** This date proved a golden milestone in the organisation's history when UNI opened a fresh chapter in vernacular (Hindi) journalism by launching the Indian language news service-UNIVARTA.

UNICER. It opened a vista by giving Hindi newspaper a comprehensive package of national, international, regional, sports and commercial news for the first time in their language of publication.

***MULTI-DIRECTIONAL GROWTH:** Growth in UNI has been multi-directional. Horizontal growth has been achieved through launching of several sister services, which, while being trendsetters, aided the agency in the endeavour of widening its subscriber base by catering to specialised or semi-specialised clientele.

***1987:** UNI Pioneered a national news photo service in India in 1987 when it set up its photo service. Newspapers and magazines in different parts of the country as well as their counterparts abroad avail of the UNI photo service that is set to enter the digital age. UNI has an arrangement with Reuters and European Press photo Agency that deliver their complete photo files to UNI in hi-tech fashion via satellite.

***MARCH 1991:** UNI introduced an Infographic service to effectively cater to a long-felt need of print media. Nearly 250 graphics in English and Hindi recording the ascents and descents on the economic front -as well as major news events are issued every month.

***THE URDU SERVICE:** UNI is also the first news agency in the world to supply news in Urdu. The Urdu service was switched on by the then Prime Minister late P.V. Narasimha Rao on June 5, 1992. The service caters to newspapers, radio and television stations and government offices. Its ever-expanding network covers Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir.

***THE KANNADA SERVICE:** UNI also launched country's first Kannada service in December 2018. Kannada language is not only spoken by the people in Karnataka but also neighbouring Southern states and there has been a long-felt need to have a wire service for Kannada newspapers and electronic media. The agency is stepping up its coverage from important regional centres and Karnataka being the IT knowledge hub of our country will receive our utmost attention in news coverage in its own Kannada language which has a rich history, literature and tradition.





Plantation drive must be **made part and parcel** of everyday existence

Dear Readers,

Taken for granted' is an all-too-familiar expression; something that we oft hear within our humble homes and in a variety of situations including even high-level discussions between experts.

Now, these words are generally restricted to individuals – for example an annoyed spouse telling his or her partner that he or she is being taken for granted or a furious politician giving a loud reply to a rival.

However, can this expression be applied to a non-living entity? Think, I am sure you won't have to rack your brains to arrive at the simple conclusion – and maybe a startling realisation for many – that we are taking Mother Nature for granted.

Friends, when we hear that the next wars shall be fought over water, many of us like to dismiss the warning as drama or sheer paranoia. After all, how can water become so scarce? Well, we're wrong. Environmentalists have been crying themselves hoarse for years that the life-sustaining fluid is rapidly transforming into a low-supply, high-demand thing and most of us are doing nothing – absolutely nothing – to stop the gauges inching towards the danger mark.

Let's be clear that desalination is an expensive option that very, very few nations can afford so don't sit back in chairs thinking that most of the planet is covered with water so what's the problem? That saline liquid is not going to help you survive even for an hour, that's the problem.

It aches deep within when we observe well-heeled city-dwellers beating the heat in swimming pools while media are replete with pictures of our rural sisters trudging for miles just to fetch a pot full of water. This calls for an attitudinal shift and each and every one of us has to be part of the campaign. Schools, colleges, universities and offices have to be simply bombarded with messages for conservation. When we can spend hours on social media why cannot we send even a few meaningful messages daily regarding such a crucial issue? Do not use showers, use buckets instead; do not shave with the water running, use mugs instead; do not use swimming pools, plant saplings instead, etc.

The plantation drive must be made part and parcel of everyday existence. Let us do so in memory of our forefathers, let us give saplings planted by us the names of our teachers, spouses and children and care for these like we do for our family.

Let us not ignore a problem until it assumes the frightening form of an emergency standing on our doorstep.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashok' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ashok Upadhyay
Editor

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SAVE EACH DROP...
WATER IS RUNNING OUT

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**SAVE EACH
DROP...
WATER
IS RUNNING OUT**



By Vinay Kumar

One of the biggest challenges being faced by India today is an acute water crisis. Water scarcity and the need to conserve this precious life and energy-giving natural resource was the focus of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first episode of his popular "Mann Ki Baat" radio programme after assuming office in his second term.

The Prime Minister drove home the message which centred on three crucial points -- people must help the State in its water conservation efforts, experts should share the knowledge of traditional methods of water conservation and there is no one-size fits-all method for conserving water.

According to a United Nations report, water use has been increasing worldwide by about 1% per year since the 1980s, driven by a combination of population growth, socio-economic development and changing consumption patterns.

STATE OF WATER

Waterlevel in reservoirs that cater to Chennai's water needs

Cholavaram Aeri
Full capacity
1,081 mcft
Status : Dry

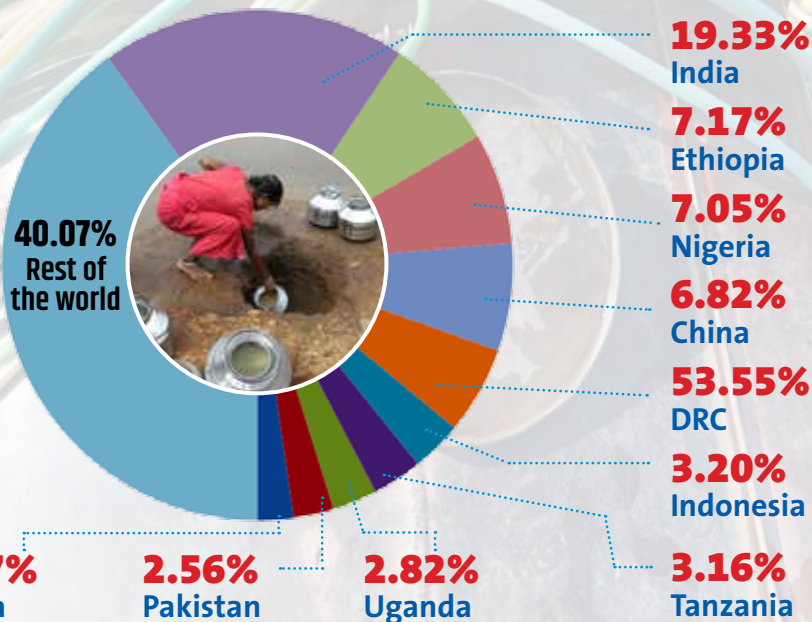
Poondi
Full capacity
3,231 mcft
Status : 24 mcft

Redhills
Full capacity
3,300 mcft
Status : Dry

Chembarambakkam Lake
Full capacity
3,645 mcft
Current Status : 1 mcft

WATERLESS COUNTRIES

Just 10 countries account for 60% of the world population without access to clean water



Global water demand is expected to continue increasing at a similar rate until 2050, accounting for an increase of 20 to 30% above the current level of water use, mainly due to rising demand in the industrial and domestic sectors. Over two

billion people live in countries experiencing high water stress, and about four billion people experience severe water scarcity during at least one month of the year. Stress levels will continue to increase as demand for water grows and the effects of climate

change intensify.

The United Nations World Water Development Report, "Leaving No One Behind", launched on March 19, 2019 during the 40th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), and in



‘Leaving no one behind’ is at the heart of the commitment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to allow all people in all countries to benefit from socio-economic development and to achieve the full realization of human rights.

conjunction to the World Water Day, shows how improvements in water resources management and access to water supply and sanitation services are essential to addressing various social and economic inequities, such that ‘no one is left behind’ when it comes to enjoying the multiple benefits and opportunities that water provides.

Safe drinking water and sanitation are recognized as basic human rights, as they are indispensable to sustaining healthy livelihoods and fundamental in maintaining the dignity of all human beings.

International human rights law obliges states to work towards achieving universal access to water and sanitation for all, without discrimination, while prioritizing those most in need.

Fulfilment of the human rights to water and sanitation requires that the services be available, physically accessible, equitably affordable, safe and culturally acceptable.

‘Leaving no one behind’ is at the heart of the commitment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to allow all people in all countries to benefit from socio-economic development and to achieve the full realization of human rights.

Seen in this context, the timing of the Prime Minister’s “Mann Ki Baat” was just perfect. India is indeed facing a serious water crisis and the situation may deteriorate, if the monsoon is inadequate. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the country had its driest June in five years because the

monsoon rains were delayed.

This crisis has been in the making for years. According to a NITI Aayog report, 600 million Indians face high to extreme water stress and about 200,000 people die every year because of inadequate access to safe water.

In an editorial on the issue of water scarcity, the Hindustan Times said while the Centre has announced the creation of Jal Shakti ministry to streamline water-related issues, it must act on two other projects without delay.

“One, expand the watershed programme and second, use the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to drought-proof the country,” the English daily noted.

According to an analysis by Scroll.in, the watershed scheme, which aims to restore ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded natural resources such as soil, vegetative cover and water, is starved of funds as central funds for watershed work

have shrunk by 35 per cent in 2018-19.

In his radio programme, the Prime Minister said that water scarcity affects many parts of the country every year.

"You will be surprised that only 8% of the water received from rains in the entire year is harvested in our country. Just and just 8%! Now the time has come to find a solution to this problem. I believe, like the other problems on hand, we can also solve this predicament by the participation of the people, Janbhagidari and their power, Janshakti we are bound to find a solution through the strength, cooperation and resolution of 130 crore citizens," Mr Modi said.

He said the new Jal Shakti ministry will allow faster decision-making on all subjects

related to water. "A few days ago I tried to do something different. I wrote a letter to the Sarpanchs and Gram Pradhans across the country. That in order to save water, to collect water, to save the very drops of the rainwater, they should convene a meeting of the Gram Sabha and sit and discuss the resolution to this problem with the villagers," the Prime Minister said. .

The new Jal Shakti ministry, as promised in the BJP's manifesto for 2019 general elections, will adopt a flexible approach for tackling the water issue and delivering on Prime Minister Modi's poll promise of "Nal se Jal" (tap water) using surface and ground water, depending on the region, and pushing for conservation and sustainability to balance supply.





Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary, Drinking Water and Sanitation, said: "Water conservation will go together with supply. Delivery will be managed by the community."

The BJP had promised in the manifesto that it would launch the 'Jal Jivan Mission', under which its government would ensure piped water for every household by 2024.

The government has already held a meeting with various state representatives to discuss issues around water availability and local challenges. Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said, "Water is a state subject but we will provide all the hand-holding required to ensure we improve our coverage of clean drinking water from 18 per cent currently to 100 per cent by 2024."

According to the Minister, the situation was particularly bad in some states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Odisha where the coverage of tap water is less than 5 per cent. "More than 400 million households have to be provided drinking piped water supply," Mr Shekhawat said.

He wanted the states to start a public movement for conservation and promotion of rational use of water.

Realizing the diversity and vastness of India, the Prime Minister also noted that there cannot be a single formula for

dealing with water crisis across the country. "For this, efforts are being made in different parts of the country, in diverse ways. But the goal remains the same, and that is to save water and adopt water conservation," Mr Modi said.

Harping upon the success of the cleanliness drive which had been given the shape of a mass movement by the countrymen, Prime Minister Modi called upon the people to also start a mass movement for water conservation.

"Let us start an awareness campaign to save even a single drop of water. In this campaign not only should we focus on water related problems but propagate ways to save water as well. I specifically urge the luminaries belonging to different walks of life to lead promotion of water conservation through innovative campaigns," Mr. Modi appealed.

The time has come to realize that water cannot be manufactured in any laboratory. About 97.5 per cent of Earth's water is in oceans which is unfit for drinking, out of the remaining 2.5 per cent only one per cent is available to humans for drinking purposes. It was this vastness of oceans which had prompted the famous English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge to write: "Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink."

If future generations have to survive, it is time to put politics and affiliations aside and come together to conserve water and save each drop as each drop counts.

(The writer is Consulting Editor, UNI)



Water Management **A COMPLEX ISSUE**

People are also afraid of fear mongering 'Day Zero'
when taps run dry across the world



India is among the world's most water-stressed countries. In 1950, India had 3,000-4,000 cubic meters of water per person. Today, this has fallen to around 1,000 cubic meters, largely due to population growth. China, by contrast, has twice the amount of water per person- about 2,000 cubic meters.

Growing competition over finite water resources, compounded by climate change, will have serious implications for India's food security, as well as for the livelihoods of its farmers and for the country's economic development.

India's water resources are not evenly distributed. Half of India's annual precipitation falls in just 15 rain-soaked days, making floods and droughts a fact of life in the country. India does not so much face a water crisis as a water management crisis, calling for a fundamental reassessment of the way the country manages water.

Several countries in the world are facing mounting challenges to manage its limited resources of water for its future generations. And it is equally important to provide safe and clean water. The world, last year, has witnessed the Day Zero in South Africa.

Take a closer look at six broad areas where the World Bank is supporting India's efforts to better manage its water resources.

Providing Drinking Water to Rural Areas

Historically, the government has been responsible for providing drinking water to 833 million rural people in some 640,000 villages across the country. Since 1991, however, it has sought to place communities in charge of their own water supply systems.

To help bring this about, four generations of World Bank projects have worked with India to test various reform options and pioneered new models of service delivery. Village level governments are now being empowered to choose, construct and operate their own water supply systems, with government water institutions playing the role of facilitator.

Since 2000, some \$3.4 billion in World Bank support has helped 36 million people in 40,000 villages gain better access to drinking



water. Strong community involvement has lowered the cost of infrastructure, curbed the leakage of funds, and led to huge savings for the state exchequer.

Groundwater

Over the past few decades, groundwater extraction has risen exponentially across India. India is now the largest user of groundwater worldwide, pumping out 25% of all the groundwater extracted in the world.

More than half of India's districts are threatened by groundwater depletion or contamination. If current trends persist, 60 percent of India's districts are likely to see groundwater tables fall

to critical levels within two decades, placing at least 25% of the country's agriculture at risk.

Unlike surface water bodies, which are managed by government institutions, groundwater management lies primarily in the hands of millions of water users across the country.

A new World Bank supported project will soon introduce water conservation practices and help equip communities 78 districts in seven Indian states to manage groundwater.

"Since 2000, some \$3.4 billion in World Bank support has helped 36 million people in 40,000 villages gain better access to drinking water. Strong community involvement has lowered the cost of infrastructure, curbed the leakage of funds, and led to huge savings for the state exchequer."

Improving access to water on dry rainfed lands

India has among the world's largest areas under non-irrigated (rainfed) agriculture, leaving farmers dependent on fickle



monsoon rains to cultivate a single crop. In many poor rainfed parts of the country, a series of World Bank supported watershed projects have used remote sensing images, soil profiles, and hydrological information to help communities build check dams, farm ponds and other water retention structures to make water available for many more months a year.

In the remote western region of West Bengal – one of the poorest parts of the state - another World Bank supported project is using the latest remote sensing technologies and mobilizing communities to build small, scientifically-placed irrigation structures. With water now available during the dry winter months too, farmers have been able to reap a second crop of vegetables and diversify into more profitable horticulture, giving a much-needed boost to family incomes.

Cleaning the Ganga

Only one-third of sewage from the hundreds of towns and cities along the Ganga is treated before it flows into the river, making India's most iconic river a highly polluted one.

The World Bank's National Ganga River Basin Project is helping build sewer networks and sewage treatment plants in several of the towns and cities along the river. The project's investments in Prayagraj (Allahabad) are now complete. Soon, no untreated wastewater will flow into the Ganga at this critical stretch of the river.

Managing Floods and Droughts

Knowing how much water India has, where it has it, and when it has it, is essential for the country to manage its water resources effectively. This is especially important for reservoir managers, as even small mistakes when dealing with large volumes of water can have devastating consequences for lives and livelihoods downstream.

Since 1995, a series of World Bank supported hydrology projects – Hydrology I (1995-2003); Hydrology II (2004-2014) - have introduced systems and technology that enable reservoir managers to take crucial decisions so that their reservoirs remain full, dams remain safe, and no damage is caused downstream.

Installed at a cost of cost of

Rs 30 crores, these reservoir management systems have helped avert flood damages of over Rs. 238 crores per year. They have also cushioned farmers and townsfolk from the harshest impacts of drought in the dry season.

Under the ongoing National Hydrology Project III (2017-2025) federal water agencies will now share critical water data with states in real time, making it transparent and accessible to all.

Enhancing Dam Safety in India

Given its highly seasonal pattern of rainfall, India's 5,000+ large dams provide essential water storage for the country. However, many dams are ageing (605 dams are more than 50 years old and another 3,000 + are over 25 years) risking the lives of ever increasing numbers of people downstream.

A World Bank supported project is helping rehabilitate and modernize over 220 large dams in Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Tamil Nadu. It is also helping reform institutions and strengthening regulations to make these dams both safe and financially sustainable.

(Courtesy : World Bank Report)



IT'S SPRINGTIME FOR INDUSTRIES IN KERALA

COME . DISCOVER . INVEST . PROSPER

25 years of Industrial Excellence | 24 Well-defined Industrial Parks | 20 Core Competency Areas

Since 1993, Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA) has been instrumental in attracting investments, inspiring entrepreneurs to set-up their industrial units and creating new job opportunities.

KINFRA provides excellent industrial infrastructure with single window clearance. This has resulted in the coming-up of well-defined industrial parks throughout Kerala. Navratna Companies like HAL, BEMIL, BEL and Indian Coast Guard Academy as well as units of private entrepreneurs also flourish at KINFRA Parks.

Functional & Emerging KINFRA Parks

► Mega Food Park, Palakkad ► Defence Park, Palakkad ► Electronics Manufacturing Cluster, Kochi ► Advanced Technology Park, Kozhikode & Thrissur ► International Exhibition & Convention Centre, Kochi ► Industrial Park, Kannur ► Global Ayurveda Village, Thiruvananthapuram



Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation

(A Statutory Body of Government of Kerala)

KINFRA HOUSE, TC 31/2312, Sasthamangalam, Thiruvananthapuram 695 010, Kerala, India
Tel: + 91 471 2726585 | Fax: + 91 471 2724773 | mail@kinfra.org | www.kinfra.org

THIS BUDGET WILL FULFILL ASPIRATIONS OF ALL: **POKHRIYAL**

By Divya Joshi Kumar

In order to give major push to education sector, the Narendra Modi-led government has increased the allocation from Rs. 85,010 crore in 2018-19 to Rs. 94,853.64 crore in 2019-20.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the budget on July 5.

Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' appreciated the Union Budget 2019-20 and expressed his gratitude to Ms Sitharaman for giving priority to education sector and overall development of the students.

He said that the aspirations of all stakeholders in education sector would be met by this Budget and expressed happiness over the increased allocation of Budget in Education sector.

The Minister lauded the creation of National Research Foundation, which would play key role in coordinating the research efforts of all Ministries in Government of India.

The total budget allocation in the BE 2019-20 for Higher Education is Rs. 38,317 Cr,



which is a 9.4 per cent increase compared to allocation of Rs.35, 010 Cr for this sector in BE 2018-19.

Apart from this, the Government has made available Rs.15,000 Cr through extra-budgetary resources using the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) mechanism.

The Government has provided an additional equity of Rs 2,100 Cr to HEFA to enable it to mobilise the required funds for building high quality infrastructure in higher educational institutions.

The overall fund availability for the Higher Education Sector for 2019-20 is therefore Rs. 53,317 Cr (Rs. 38,317 Cr + Rs. 15,000 Cr through HEFA) in

the year 2019-20. Therefore the fund availability for higher education for 2019-20 has increased substantially.

The IITs have been allocated Rs. 6409.95 Cr which is an increase of 12% over the last year.

There has been major increase in flagship programmes such as RUSA where budget allocation has been increased by 40 per cent from Rs.1500 Cr to Rs.2,100 Cr. Central Universities have been provided Rs. 6,864.40 Cr. UGC has been allocated another Rs.4950.66 Cr. Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, under which 10,000 villages have been adopted by Higher Educational Institutions, has got 32 pc increase in budget allocation, reiterating faith of Govt in linking educational institutions with Society.

For School Education & Literacy, there has been an overall increase of Rs 6422.88 crore (12.81%) in the Budget Allocation of Department of School Education and Literacy in the FY 2019-20 from FY 2018-19. The overall Budget Allocation





greater autonomy and focus on better academic outcomes.

Highlighting the recent achievements, Ms Sitharaman said that while there was not a single Indian institution in the top 200 in the world university rankings five years back, there are three institutions now – two IITs and IISc Bangalore – in the top 200 bracket. This has been achieved due to concerted efforts by the institutions to boost their standards and also project their credentials better.

Giving further details, the Finance Minister said that Massive online open courses through the SWAYAM initiative have helped bridge the digital divide for disadvantaged section of the student community. To upgrade the quality of teaching, the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) programme in higher education was started, aimed at tapping the global pool of scientists and researchers, she explained.

“The IMPRINT or Impacting Research Innovation and Technology scheme began as a pan-IIT and IISc joint initiative to develop a roadmap for research to solve major engineering and technology challenges in selected domains needed by the country. It is because of this that Higher Educational Institutions are now becoming the centres of innovation, the Minister said.

Khelo India Scheme will be expanded to provide all necessary financial support and a National Sports Education Board for Development of Sportspersons would be set up under Khelo India Scheme to popularise sports at all levels. ■

in FY 2019-20 is Rs 56536.63 Crore out of which Scheme allocation is Rs 48063.60 Crore and Non-Scheme Allocation is Rs 8473.03 cr.

It was also stated that increase in Scheme Allocation is by Rs 6603.47 Crore Budget Allocation in Flagship Schemes have increased i.e Samagra Shiksha (by Rs 5430.19 crore) and Mid Day Meal (by Rs 500 crore).

An amount of Rs. 400 crore has been provided for FY 2019-20 to create “World Class Institutions” in the field of education which is more than three times the revised estimates for the previous year.

The Finance Minister assured that the Government will also bring in a New National Education Policy to transform India’s higher education system to one of the global best education systems. The new Policy proposes major changes in both school and higher education among others, better Governance systems and brings greater focus on research and innovation.

To achieve the objectives of research and innovation, the Finance Minister also announced setting up of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund, coordinate and promote research in the country. NRF will ensure that the overall research eco-system in the country is strengthened with focus on identified thrust areas relevant to our national priorities and towards basic science without duplication of effort and expenditure, the Minister explained. The funds available with all Ministries will be integrated in NRF and would be adequately supplemented with additional funds.

Ms Sitharaman also said that ‘Study in India’ programme will focus on bringing foreign students to study in our higher educational institutions. The Finance Minister disclosed that draft legislation for setting up Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) would be presented in the year ahead. This will help to comprehensively reform the regulatory system of higher education to promote

LEADERS IN REAL ESTATE:

The Design Of Cities And Their Founders Of Tomorrow

To say that the real estate market in India is growing would be an understatement.

By Snehdeep Aggarwal

The industry that was pegged to have a market size of USD 120 billion in 2017 is expected to grow to USD 1000 billion by 2020. To put that in perspective, that is an 800% growth in three years' time. There is no better time than now for key players in the industry to exhibit leadership in terms of design, regulatory compliance and more significantly, sustainability.

We live in a world that is changing faster than we can possibly keep up with. The weather patterns from a decade are history now, and the ever-growing traffic in burgeoning cities makes time a valuable commodity. In every customer's innate need to return to the roots is an unspoken call for more open spaces, more time for the things they love, and less time spent navigating a confusing metropolis.



Real estate leaders have a real opportunity here- that of building micro-cities within cities. The time has come for us to move away from the concept of apartments built as communities, and move into a concept of communities that just happen to be centred around living spaces. After all, what is real estate if not a way to do the things we love in the spaces we love?

This is where the need for great design comes in. Micro-cities are meant to foster a specific kind of culture. They



need to become places where people stop by to greet each other, grab a cup of coffee next door, pursue hobbies together in, maybe plan a potluck. The one aspect that can facilitate a culture shift is one that most good website designers are already familiar with- a good User Experience, or UX for short.

The boom in the real estate industry was accompanied, until now, by a supply-and-demand pattern that often put good design at the very end and sometimes got rid of it entirely!

What, then, could a real estate leader do differently?

To start with, they could make user experience the beginning



of all real estate endeavours. We must begin looking at every nook and every cranny of a project as space that can be utilised. Negative spaces, or open areas in this context, are just as important as the built-up and super-built-up areas.

Today's discerning customer also comes with global exposure. The vibrant streets of cities like Paris and Copenhagen are fair game for them, as they should be. Moreover, when we stop to think of it, what makes people fall in love with these streets so much? It is, yet again, their usability value. Walking along the cafes or shopping from the boulangerie are not challenges to be navigated

Today's discerning customer also comes with global exposure. The vibrant streets of cities like Paris and Copenhagen are fair game for them, as they should be. Moreover, when we stop to think of it, what makes people fall in love with these streets so much? It is, yet again, their usability value.



everyday but pleasant, relaxing experiences. Cycling to and from work is not an exception but the most preferred method of travelling.

And that's just the streets! Homes, too, can be utilised in several different ways- a bachelor pad, a party venue, a family den. Up until now, we have looked at spaces in terms of the number of bedrooms, bathrooms, and so on. Can we instead start to look at them as living spaces that serve more than one purpose at different points in time?

If we had to present just three key takeaways for future leaders in real estate, they would be:



- ***Keen, granular focus on design and utility of the entire project***

- ***Awareness and translation of city spaces that serve as cultural epicentres***

- ***Adaptability of homes according to individual preferences***

With the implementation of RERA guidelines in India, we have taken the necessary right step towards better regulatory compliance. In the long run, this can enable serious players to build sustainable living solutions that become a valued investment for decades to come.

As we have come to witness, unplanned development is the fastest way to get to a catastrophe. Congestion, living

For a real estate leader, there is only one end goal in mind and that is to put a smile on the faces of every single person who calls their project home. This can be achieved only by closely collaborating with the end stakeholders- the end users of the project.

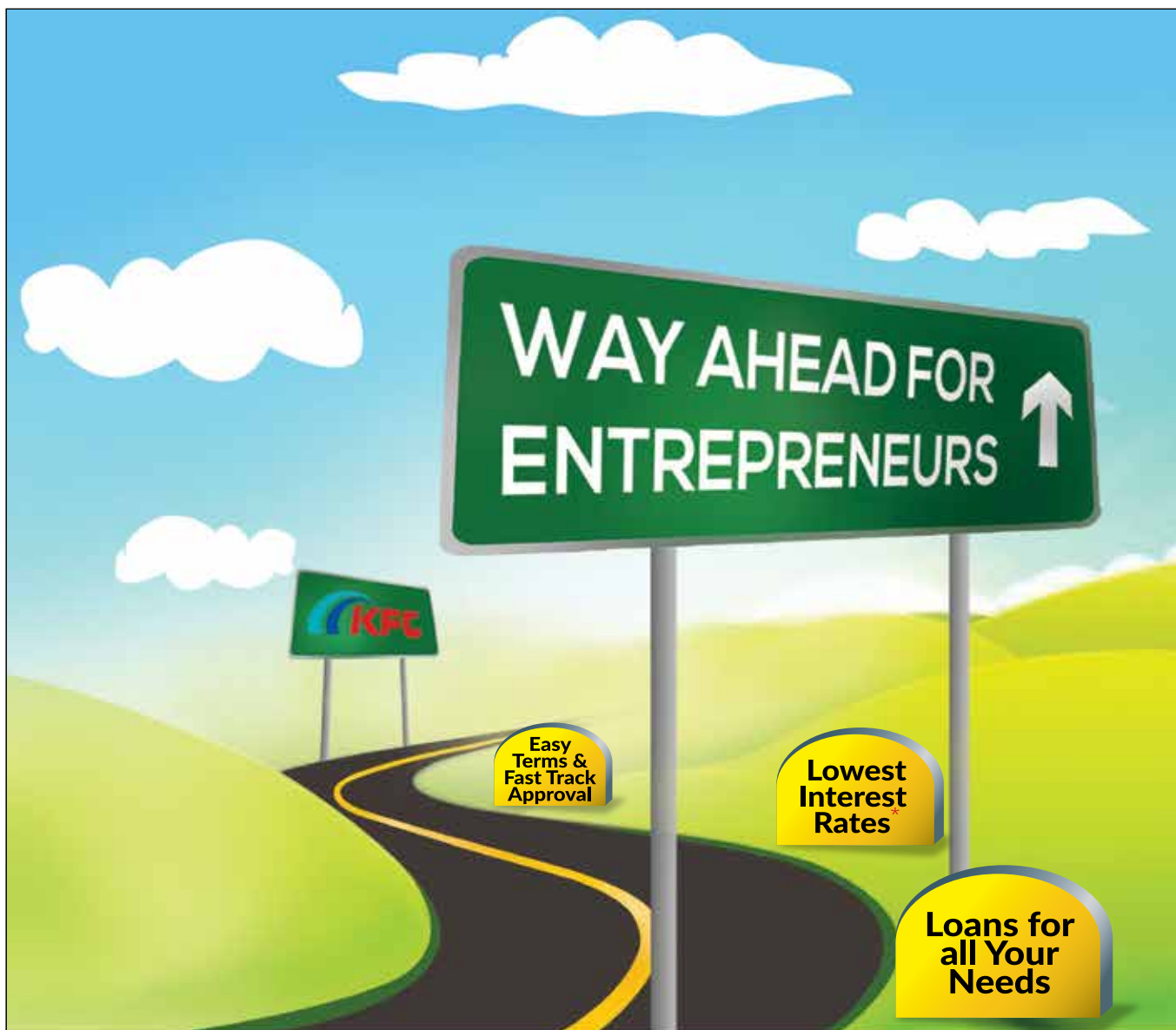


hazards and even seemingly minor issues such as noise pollution and overcrowding of spaces are a real problem today.

As we speak, more consumers are moving towards living choices that save them time, and also become spaces where they can live more fully.

For a real estate leader, there is only one end goal in mind and that is to put a smile on the faces of every single person who calls their project home. This can be achieved only by closely collaborating with the end stakeholders- the end users of the project. Such projects serve not just the people who will eventually live there, but they set a precedent for the kinds of homes that people can look forward to, and that more people in the industry can replicate in the future.

(The writer is founder and chairman Bhartiya City)



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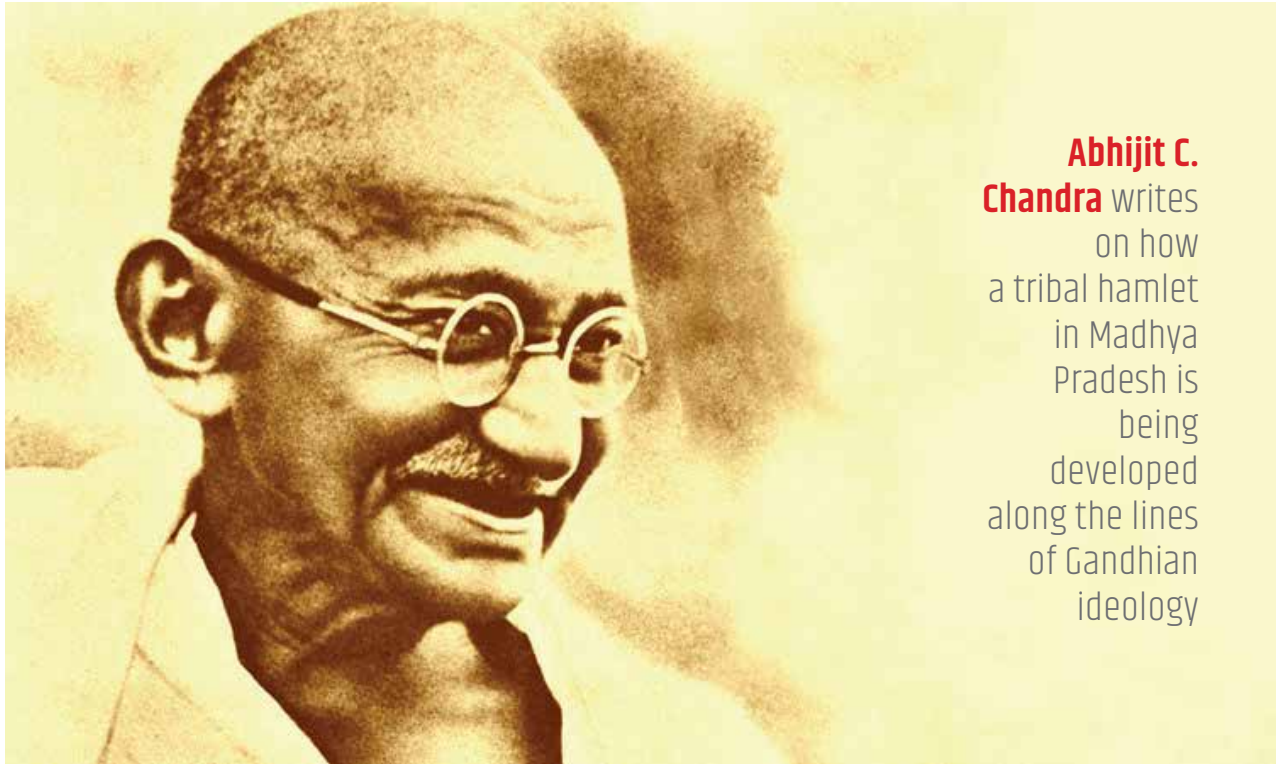


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Inspired by the **Mahatma**



Abhijit C. Chandra writes on how a tribal hamlet in Madhya Pradesh is being developed along the lines of Gandhian ideology

Bhopal : There's a beautiful saying in Marathi, which translated, reads: "You cannot tend sheep while seated on a camel's back; you have to stand on the ground to be a successful shepherd."

That noble sentiment appears to have inspired Indian Revenue Service officer Rakesh Kumar Paliwal – presently Principal Commissioner (Income Tax), Bhopal – who has transcended the files in an endeavour to be a direct participant in realising the development dream. He is an active volunteer in a dynamic project that commenced in 2016 at Chedka in Hoshangabad District's Sohagpur Block.

The hamlet, with a population of about 500, has residents

dwelling in clusters of hutments.

"Our activities at Chedka are based on the Gandhian concept of samagrata mein vikas. We are looking after every aspect. The team took up the gauntlet vis-à-vis health and hygiene, safe potable water, education of children, sports, most importantly alternative rural employment generation, water conservation and environment conservation," Mr Paliwal – who originally hails from Muzaffarnagar – told this correspondent.

With help from the state government, deepening of a community pond was achieved under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. As a direct

consequence, a spurt in agrarian vigour was witnessed and there was ample water for irrigation.

When asked whether the project was modelled on something similar achieved elsewhere, the bureaucrat averred: "Earlier, Gandhian organisations joined hands to develop Khoba village in Gujarat's Valsad District."

Numerous other people are also associated with the Chedka enterprise, which is being contributed to by the social service organisation Yogdan. The Bhopal-based Gram Seva Samiti is looking after day-to-day matters at the hamlet. Former I.R.S. officer A.K. Jain presides over the Samiti and its vice chief is Mr D. Namdev. ■



Buying behaviour of **customer has changed**

Technology has changed lives of millions of people drastically and the Travel & Tourism industry is also not left untouched. In an interview, online travel company EaseMyTrip CEO Nishant Pitti shares the concerns as well as the expectations of the customers and throws light on other important aspects of the industry which has witnessed tremendous change in past few years...

Excerpts:

How the idea of floating online travel company emerged?

The idea of founding a travel company clicked in our mind when we realized that our travel

agent is trying to con us on our personal travel. We became very keen to save on the journey of our family members and resulted into establishing a travel agency. After becoming

a travel agent, we identified the key concerns of customers and travel agents and this made us emerging stronger and providing them necessary services.

The company was

started in May 2008.

What difference you have observed in these many years in travel industry?

Since its establishment till date, not only EaseMyTrip but entire travel industry has gone through a transformation. Now we have to ensure that the company has the best tools and methods of the trade. Whether for business or for pleasure, travelers booking their trips want it to be extraordinary. Using various online travel tools, they are empowered to search for the best deals, measure layovers and book even the complicated itineraries from their comfort zone. Now we can't work on guesswork and have to communicate with customers through data based evidence. The buying behavior of the customer has changed. Today more number of travelers is ready to take breaks and go on holidays. So, despite the tough competition, we are getting our own share of customers.

Your company has launched many offers to woo customers. Tell us about some of them and how these deals benefits the company (long or short term—How it improves customer base). Also mention about UDAN promotion through EaseMyTrip platform?

Offers and discounts play an important role in every company's marketing strategy. However, if your products are good, your customers will not go anywhere else. We have introduced new offers to not just acquire new customers but to also manage the specific

requirements of our old customers. There are family and couple specific offers, region specific offers and offers for users of different banks. These offers don't let our users moving beyond our website and their positive words of mouth bring new customers onboard. As far as UDAN promotion is concerned, we were very impressed with this initiative of the government of India. This scheme allows the passengers from tier-2 and tier-3 cities of India flying at affordable rates to their hometowns. By giving additional discount to the passengers on UDAN routes, we are reducing their travel worries.

In such a stiff competition in the market, how you channelize your company's strategy/growth? What is your expectation in this financial year in terms of revenue growth?

The patience game of last 11 years has paid us well. Instead of burning-money and spending a huge amount to acquire every new-customer, we focused on our USP of charging zero convenience-fees & giving great services. Despite

positively growing cash every year, we didn't splash huge amount on marketing and gave priority to BTL and digital marketing. Our strategy is to retain customers and convert them into our potential clients who wholeheartedly refer our brand to their acquaintances. The company has registered a turnover of Rs.1956 Crore in FY 2017-18 and total ticket sales have exceeded more than 50% in FY 2018-19. We are expecting this growth to carry on positively in coming years.

Please mention few words on the company's working, agents, franchise etc...?

At present, EaseMyTrip is a leading name in travel industry of India with more than 8 million direct customers and 42,000 travel agents. We offer best franchise model to the people seeking to start their own business but have less knack for risk taking. By associating with us, they get complete travel solutions with advanced technology and assistance of experienced travel professionals. We also give the highest commission to our agents in the





to travel. Our government is taking praiseworthy initiative to eradicate that but every Indian needs to take a wakeup call on this issue that is growing and making our beautiful places dreadful.

All the things are being done online. In this scenario, do you have any plan to touch interior parts of the country?

I already said earlier that we are planning to expand out in tier 2 and tier 3 cities through local offices and holiday hubs. It is true that everything is done online but a local office has its own benefits.

Does your company have any complaint/grievance desk? And how does it work?

We don't have any complaint/grievance desk but our own customer support center where customers can call 24X7 in order to register their complaints or get their queries satisfied. Unlike others, they interact with EaseMyTrip employees directly that reduces the time to solve their grievances.

India is a favorite tourist destination. Any data you would like to share as how many tourists visited the country in 2018 and from which part of the world the most? And also travelers visited which region of India the most?

Indian government has not released any data related to the arrival of foreign tourists for 2018 and the January-March quarter of 2019. So, we can't make any speculations over it.

(As told to Divya Joshi Kumar)

industry.

Throw light on expansion plans... Any collaboration or tie up... You have recently opened office in London.

We are planning to expand our business in Tier – 2 and Tier – 3 cities of India by opening offices of EaseMyTrip and also have plans to open EMT Holiday Hubs in all major cities to increase revenues from Non-Air Products, including hotels, bus, holiday packages, cabs and railway booking. The opening of office in London is part of our expansion plan and we will make efforts for expanding at other overseas locations in order to serve the customers travelling to & from these destinations. We want to promote India majorly as an important tourist destination in overseas markets. In future, we would also love to get introduced with more verticals. Recently, we have joined hands with various service suppliers to make our services better and customer-oriented. We collaborated to China's VariFlight for real-time GPS tracking of flights. We also got associated to Liberty Insurance to provide the customers with

a unique proposition of Zero Cancellation Penalty on flight tickets.

In comparison with other nations, how India's travel and tourism industry fares? What else it needs to do? How you see country's travel and tourism industry 5-years down the line.

India has emerged to be a market with the cheapest domestic airfares in the last few years. It is due to the price sensitive middle class of India, whom airlines have for filling their planes. Indian local ticket prices is just a fraction of what is charged at destinations like Finland, Switzerland, Austria and Estonia, along with much-developed markets such as the US and UK. India is one among the list of the 43 countries offering the cheapest airfares. A huge part of Indian travel market is dominated by low cost carriers, so, the price remains low in our country. As a tourist destination, we need to focus on increasing security for the travelers and make sure that foreigners coming here should feel safe. There is littering issue at the most of places

Direct Selling: A huge potential for **self-employment & Socio-Economic transformation** of the country

By **Ramesh Sharma**

At a time when India is struggling with problems like unemployment, lack of jobs & entrepreneurship opportunities, with poverty and disparity in earnings and a not-so-encouraging growth trajectory, it is somehow difficult to find sustainable answers to effectively tackle these challenges. One possible answer however, lies in Direct Selling (DS) which is emerging as major component of mitigating such issues and becoming an important industry in bringing socio-economic transformation in society and as well in the country.

"The Direct Selling (DS) is steadily broadening its spectrum in the country, particularly over the last few years, generating huge self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. DS presently provides self-employment to over 55 lacs people as Direct Sellers in the country and these numbers are

increasing year on year as the industry grows. It has also provided a space for those people who are employed but want to have additional source of income and work according to their will and wish in flexible hours as direct sellers. Anyone can venture in to this business model as a full time or part time career regardless of age, gender, educational qualification experience, without any hassles and investment. There are instances when university students and small time workers have taken up a career as direct sellers," says Vivek Katoch, Chairman Indian Direct Selling Association (IDSA).

The business model has become even more conducive to housewives who have taken it up in large numbers in the country. This has not only led to economic independence but also for empowerment. Notably, women have continuously dominated and outclassed males as direct



Vivek Katoch



Rajat Banerji

sellers and their proportional representation stands at 53 % and 47% respectively in DS, adds Mr Katoch.

"There was a time when it was difficult to differentiate between Direct Selling, Multi Level Marketing (MLM) and Networking Marketing business models. To allay such confusions the Ministry of Food & Consumer Affairs, Government of India (GOI) has come forward and notified Direct Selling Guidelines clearly defining the Direct Selling Industry. The government's move has brought relief and clarity in regulatory environment for the industry as well as direct selling force and protecting consumer rights. The move has even provided safety shield for the industry, direct sellers and consumers from unethical MLM companies. So far thirteen state



of the global retail trade. United States has a share of around 20 %, closely followed by China having share of 19%. However, India does not find any place in the list of top 15 countries which clearly reflects growth potential in the country, having second largest population in world and a big market also.

DS has an immense contribution to the society by way of providing employment and as an additional source of income to lakhs of people, hail from different strata thus, raising their income levels, improving economic and living conditions in the country. The Industry at the same was also making sizable contribution to the government exchequer by way of taxes on the products they sell. DS companies contribute around Rs 1500 crore annually to government exchequer and figures have upward trend with passing of each year.

DS is working in sync with government's mission of Skill India, Make in India, Start-up India and Financial Inclusion. DSs, not only imparts training to its sales force and groom it as start-Ups but also manufacture and outsource 70% of the products from domestic market. Some of the major DSCs like Amway India, Herbalife International, Oriflame India, Avon, Modicare, Tupperware and many other IDSA members have their manufacturing facilities in the country. ■



governments have notified DS Guidelines to ensure lawful operations of Direct Selling Industry (DSI). The Himachal Pradesh government has recently approved the Guidelines in its cabinet meeting and notify them shortly to become the 13th state to have the Guidelines. The other states have also realised the significance of the Guidelines and following the suit," opined, Rajat Banerji, Secretary, IDSA.

The DSI in India is growing at a CAGR of 8.42 % and its member companies, represented by 'Indian Direct Selling Association(IDSA)', have attained retail trade size of Rs 10,324.20 crores till FY 2016-17. However, non-member companies have also over Rs 4,200 crores trade in the country. North region has the highest share of around 26% in the total gross sales of DSI

which includes the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu Kashmir and Chandigarh(U.T.), followed by western region with share of around 25% and includes Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Goa and Gujarat. The Southern, Eastern and North eastern regions have around 24%, 19% and 7% share respectively in gross sales. Of the states Maharashtra has the highest sales across the country with 13% share.

Of the global Direct Selling trade Asia Pacific region has around 46 % share. Wellness category product sales contributes to about 35 % of global trade followed by cosmetics and personal care products which contribute 30% to it. The top 15 Direct Selling countries account for about 87%

Self-made 'model' villages in remote Assam

By **Sushmita Goswami**

Set in a remote area of Assam, near the international border with Bhutan, two tribal villages are scripting their own stories of glories of self-sufficiency and cleanliness. Poor infrastructure, remote location, limited means of education and employment and low income have not marred the enthusiasm of the villagers to ensure hygiene and cleanliness, both of surroundings and personal habits. The initiatives of the local people of Borimakha and No 2 Kataligaon Rabha Chupa villages have turned these two villages into model ones. Both are adjoining villages in Baksa district, which falls under the administrative control of Bodoland Territorial Council. Borimakha village with 368 families is segmented into three 'chupa's (localities), with one 'chupa' housing around 200 Bodo tribal families. The nearby No. 2 Kataligaon Rabha Chupa is a village of 83 families of Rabha tribal community.

Both the villages have banned use of plastics and installed smart garbage disposal systems. Open defecation has been eliminated in both villages and various environment-friendly programs, such as production of

vermin compost, plastic disposal, plantation, etc taken up by these villages. Every house is marked with a house number which is displayed in the fencing in the front of every house. No cow dung can be seen on the roadside.

While consumption of traditionally brewed alcohol is common in most of the tribal villages of Assam, these two villages have totally banned brewing and consumption of



alcohol, Ganja or marijuana and other intoxicating materials.

Agriculture is the main livelihood of these two-self made model villages, with a few of the villagers also being

service holders. The farmers of Borimakha village adopted new farming initiatives while also diversifying into cash crops. Dipul Bodo, a young farmer of Borimakha tribal village, has





taken up commercial cultivation of strawberry in his four bighas of land. He has planted 5000 strawberry saplings and invested around Rs 38,000. He is expecting to get over Rs 1,50,000 after harvesting. Along with strawberry, many farmers have also taken up cultivation of high yield Indian jujube or 'bogori', which is another cash crop. The villagers of No 2 Kataligaon Rabha Chupa have formed a co-operative society, under the name of 'Milan Samabay Samity', and taken up community farming under the initiative of the society.

The No. 2 Kataligaon Rabha Chupa has installed bamboo-made garbage bins alongside the roads and a number of billboards are placed in both sides of the road to create awareness among

the villagers for maintaining cleanliness and not to indulge in any types of intoxication, etc.

The path to achieving such cleanliness and well-being for the villages is also strewn with many challenges. Although the general literacy rate is high in these villages, level of education is limited due to economic conditions, poor infrastructures and lack of motivation. The villages are facing problems in sanitation, sewages and drainages, irrigation, drinking water. The Public Health Engineering Department has detected arsenic in the ground water of these areas; though the government has not taken any initiative to make the drinking water arsenic free. Lack of street light in these two villages is a big

concern of the people.

Successive state governments have taken many schemes to upgrade several selected villages to model villages. The aim of this project is to prevent distress migration from rural to urban areas, to make the model village a "hub" that could attract resources for the development of other villages in its vicinity, to provide easier, faster and cheaper access to urban markets for agricultural produce or other marketable commodities produced in such villages, to contribute towards social empowerment by engaging all sections of the community in the task of village development and to create and sustain a culture of cooperative living for inclusive and rapid development. ■



Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council: An example of **successful 'self rule'**

By Abhijit Deb

The 68th foundation of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) held at Donkamoka in West Karbi Anglong district in Assam showcased in its entirety the rich vibrant tribal culture of the north eastern part of the county and the importance of self rule for the overall development of tribal population in the region.

Celebrated every year on June 23, the foundation day also signifies the importance of self rule under autonomous council in the region. The history of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council draws back from 1940, when a handful of energetic Karbi Youth formed an organization with name and style of Karbi Adurbar and initiated for preserving the political and traditional identity

of the tribe.

Mikir Hills district was formed in the year 1952 under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. Soon the district was christened as Karbi Anglong District Council in 1976 and after signing MoU in 1996, the council was renamed as Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council.

Since then the KAAC could be said that have emerged as one of the best autonomous council in



and Mizoram, according to the Centre.

The Finance Commission would be mandated to recommend devolution of financial resources to the councils, the government said in an official statement. Till now, the autonomous councils have depended on grants from Central Ministries and the State governments for specific projects.

“There were days where the Karbis, Bodos and Dimasas were demanding nothing but State within a State and I believe that their demands have almost been fulfilled one after the another because almost all departments have been transferred to them except Home Department,” said Assam Finance Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma while attending as the chief guest at Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council’s (KAAC) 68th foundation day.

Chief Executive Member of the council Tuliram Ronghang



the country treading the path of development.

“KAAC gives first priority to development of Karbi people. And to achieve that council works as a team. In last few years we have built two national level sports stadium invested heavily on roads and town infrastructure,” Ritesh Ingti, Deputy Chairman, KAAC told Developing India Mirror.

In fact, many autonomous council like Bodo Territorial Council, Khasi Hills Autonomous district council are in existence in North Eastern states.

In order to strengthen them further the government in beginning of the year he



Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a Constitutional amendment to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 autonomous councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the northeast. The amendment would impact a population of about 1 crore tribals living in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura

in his speech recalled the sacrifice done by Karbi leaders like Lt Semsonsing Engti and Lt Khorsing Terang in building Karbi Homeland. “Because of their selfless sacrifice for us we are here now and their dream to make Karbi Anglong as one of the best districts will not go in vain. ■

Uttar Pradesh to host **DEFENCE EXPO** in Feb next year

In a first, the 11th biennial edition of Def Expo India-2020 is scheduled to be held in Lucknow from February 5-8, with theme 'India: The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub' and it will focus on 'Digital Transformation of Defence'. The defence expo offers an excellent opportunity for the Indian Defence industry to showcase its capabilities and promote its export potential. The shows are conducted at an international level, which not only facilitates Business-to-Business (B2B) interaction with senior foreign delegations but also Government-to-Government (G2G) meetings and signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), the Defence ministry said.

The exhibition will also highlight emergence

of Uttar Pradesh as an attractive destination for investment in the defence sector and act as a platform for alliances and joint ventures in the industry.

"We in the Ministry of Defence welcome Defence Industry OEMs, Exhibitors and Ministerial level delegations from the foreign countries including visitors from all over the world, to display their latest innovations in #DefExpo2020," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said .

"They are also welcome to experience India's emergence as a major manufacturing centre providing attractive opportunities for co-development and co-production of defence items not only for our defence forces but also for export





to the world. .

The northern state has a strong defence industrial infrastructure. It has four units of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd at Lucknow, Kanpur, Korwa and Naini (Prayagraj), nine ordnance factory units, including Kanpur, Korwa, Shahjahanpur, Firozabad and one unit of Bharat Electronics Limited at Ghaziabad. One of the two Defence Industrial Corridors (DICs) of India is also planned in Uttar Pradesh.

The Corridor will encourage Defence Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), including our Indian defence industry and promote Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs). The other DIC is proposed in Tamil

Nadu.

The DefExpo will provide an opportunity to the major foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) to collaborate with the Indian defence industry and help promote 'Make in India' initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Ministerial level delegations from the foreign countries and visitors from all over the country as well as abroad are expected to visit DefExpo and witness India's emergence as a major manufacturing hub providing attractive opportunities for co-development and co-production of defence equipment and systems not only for our defence forces but also for export to the world. ■



A captain inspired by Kargil

Capt Ishank Sharma was blessed with a service-to-nation mentality since childhood and the year 1999 proved pivotal as the unalloyed courage.

Abhijit C. Chandra
profiles a young achiever

Bhopal: There is arguably no joy surpassing that experienced by a father when he first holds his newborn in his arms but there is decidedly nothing, absolutely nothing, which even comes close to the pride of seeing one's child eventually assume the mantle of defending the nation.

Capt Ishank Sharma was blessed with a service-to-nation mentality since childhood and the year 1999 proved pivotal as the unalloyed courage, dedication to duty and sense of sacrifice of the Indian Army's officers and men during Operation Vijay galvanised a small boy, an only child, towards

a life in olive green. The Sharma family has no other member in the Armed Forces.

"As a kid, my son helped the needy. At times, he requested me to bear impoverished children's educational expenses," the officer's sire Bansh Pati Sharma – a Madhya Pradesh Assembly official – told this correspondent. Ishank was born to Mrs Aarti Sharma in Satna. He was schooled in Bhopal, is a national-level badminton player besides sterling performances in hockey, football, basketball and boxing.

Commissioned on December 11, 2015; Capt Sharma, posted "somewhere" in Asom, successfully completed commando training at

Belagavi (formerly Belgaum) in Karnataka. The priming commenced on October 6, 2018 and concluded on November 10. More than 100 officers participated.

On a related note, India's first woman commando trainer Dr Seema Rao – a seventh-degree black belt – and her spouse Honorary Maj Deepak Rao – a Close Quarters Battle expert and Indian Army Brand Ambassador TA – trained 15,000 commandos over a



period of two decades helping modernisation of CQB.

The couple authored the 'Field Book of Explosive Recognition for Anti-Terror Ops', which is exclusively for Indian forces.

Similarly, Shaurya Bharadwaj – an expert in various combat techniques and creator of the Swadeshi Customised System of Situation Reaction Tactics – has instructed multiple divisions of the Armed Forces. He is one of the respected trainers in the country and gave free lessons to lakhs of rural women through his initiative Mission Prahar. ■



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Chhattisgarh tourism

A unique blend of **nature,**

By Aarti Dhar

Chhattisgarh is much more than just indigenous communities living in the thick forests of Bastar. It is

endowed with natural diversity, rich cultural heritage, quaint temples and a range of exquisite handicrafts.

It has ancient monuments, rare

wildlife, Buddhist sites, palaces, waterfalls, caves and plateaus as well. Some of these tourist sites are quite popular, there are many more waiting to be explored.



culture and religion

The 42-odd Scheduled Tribes in Bastar, Sarguja, Bilaspur and Raipur depend for their livelihood on agriculture, collection of forest product and

traditional craft industry such as bell-metal craft, wood craft, wrought iron craft and Kosa silk that have made a mark in the domestic and international

market.

"Many of the sites in Chhattisgarh are still untouched and unexplored and offer a unique and alternate experience

to tourists. Exploring these places can be an experience in itself compared to other traditional destinations which have become overcrowded with time,” says Tourism Secretary, Ms Niharika Barik Singh.

Keeping in mind the vast potential for tourism, Chhattisgarh’s Tourism Policy positions it as an attractive destination packaged for religious, cultural and wildlife tourism. The objectives of the policy are clear: to promote economically, culturally and ecologically sustainable tourism in the State.

Importantly, it seeks to preserve, enrich and showcase the rich and diverse cultural and ecological heritage of the State



Many of the sites in Chhattisgarh are still untouched and unexplored and offer a unique and alternate experience to tourists. Exploring these places can be an experience in itself compared to other traditional destinations which have become overcrowded with time,” says Tourism Secretary, Ms Niharika Barik Singh.



and, at the same time, increase the contribution of tourism to the economic development of inter-related sectors. While the role of the government will remain that of a facilitator, the policy encourages and promotes private sector initiatives in developing tourism related infrastructure.

"We are working to promote new concepts in tourism such as eco-tourism, village tourism and adventure tourism while respecting the intellectual integrity and rights of the local communities," Ms Singh explains.

Tribal Tourism Circuit

Realising the popularity of

tribal culture, the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board has launched a new initiative, 'Tribal Tourism Circuit'. The Circuit is part of the Central Government's 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme', which aims at assisting the growth of tourism across India. The scheme has been allocated a budget of Rs. 99.94 crore to showcase the traditional tribal culture and ethnicity to the tourists.

The foundation stone for the development of the Circuit was laid last year at Chitrakote, Bastar by the Chief Minister, Raman Singh.

This Circuit comprises tribal dominated area of Jashpur,



Kunkuri, Mainpat, Amkapur, Maheshpur, Ratanpur, Kurdhar, Sarodhadhar, Gangrel, Nathiya Navagaon, Kondagaon, Jagdalpur, Chithrakot and Thirathgarh.

In a bid to attract more tourists, Tribal Tourism Circuit focuses mainly on two projects, Ethnic Tourist Village and Eco Ethnic Tourist Destination development. The places chosen for developing Ethnic Tourist Villages include Jashpur, Ambikapur and Sarodhadhar in the northern part of Chhattisgarh and the places that fall under Eco-Ethnic Tourism project includes Mainpat, Kurdar, Gangrel, Kondagaon,

Jagdalpur, Chitrakot and Thirathgarh, mainly the southern Chhattisgarh. This circuit will provide a holistic experience to the tourists so that tourists can appreciate the tribal way of life and the vast cultural difference among the tribes.

The Central government has allocated Rs. 45 crore for the first phase of this project. The development has already been started at various places and the entire project will be completed in phases over a span of 2 years. The construction of Eco Log Huts and a wooden restaurant has already been completed at Gangrel.

The Eco Circuit is also a part of the Central Government's

Sanctuary – all rich in wildlife and flora and fauna. An artificially created forest is being developed within the new Capital – Naya Raipur (now named Atal Nagar) with facilities of a jungle safari.

Dongargarh

One of the Shaktipeeths of Chhattisgarh, Dongargarh will be developed as a destination for Religious Tourism and will be funded by the Central government under the 'Prasad Scheme'.

Sirpur

Sirpur is a world-famous Buddhist site in Mahasamund district, just 78 km away from



'Swadesh Darshan Scheme' under which various dam sites of Chhattisgarh are being developed for water sports, other adventure sports and tourist facilities.

Forests and Wildlife

The State boasts of Kanger Valley National Park, Achanakmar Tiger Reserve, and Barnawapara Wildlife

Raipur.

Maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India, the village hosts the Sirpur group of monuments consisting of Buddhist, Hindu and Jain temples and monasteries. These are dated from the 5th to 12th century. Some of these were visited in 1872 by Cunningham, who published his findings



exhibition portraying the cultural heritage of the State.

The exhibition has two distinct sections displaying the rich cultural heritage of the north and south Chhattisgarh. Aamcho Bastar combines features of Bastar's nature, religion, bio-diversity and culture. Bastar region has Bastar, Kanker, Kondagaon, Sukma, Narayanpur, and Dantewada districts within its jurisdiction.

The yet-to-be-completed second part of the exhibition which will depict the northern part of Chhattisgarh will promote traditions, culture and craft of Sarguja region comprising five districts of Sarguja, Korla, Balrampur, Surajpur and Jashpur. Comparatively unexplored, these districts are famous for their tribal culture, heritage, forest, tourist places,

about the Laxman temple and its interesting carvings. Recent excavations have unearthed 12 Buddhist Viharas, 1 Jain Vihara, monolithic statues of Buddha and Mahavira, 22 Shiva temples and 5 Vishnu temples, underground granary market and a sixth century 'snaan kund' (public bath).

"On the whole, we are promoting Chhattisgarh as an eco, ethno and adventure tourism destination. Bicycling events to promote Chhattisgarh as a pollution-free State, are being organizing on regular intervals. We are coming up with good trek routes in Sarodha Dadar," the Tourism Secretary says.

For those who cannot travel outside of the Capital, the flavour of tribal lifestyle is also available at an open air museum, Purkhauti Mukangan being



developed by the Department of Culture to depict the culture, traditions, ecology, environment and men-nature relationship. This endeavour began with the efforts of the artisans and artists who have given shape to this

high lands and various festivals. Coming up with a budget of Rs 10 crore, the project is fully being implemented by the tribal craftsmen of the Sarguja region.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

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Complexities Simplified

Kokkarebellur: **A village known for bird-human** relationship

Bengaluru : Kokkarebellur village, declared as the only community reserve in Karnataka, located approximately 80 km from Bangalore, is named after the unique relationship the people have with the painted storks and spot-billed pelicans that have been migrating to the area for centuries to breed.

The Kokkarebellur Community Reserve is the seventh important biodiversity hotspot as recognised by the Karnataka Government.

It is designated as an 'Important Bird' area. The wetlands were a perennial source of water for the people of the region and supported the varied biodiversity the region had to offer.

Due to various pressures on the water sources, this area has, however, become completely dry and in turn is affecting its biodiversity.

An Interpretation Centre has been launched in Karnataka by WWF-India in partnership with HSBC under the aegis of the HSBC Water Programme. It highlights the unique bond shared by the people of Kokkarebellur and the birds, and is a step towards developing a sustainable community-centric eco-tourism model.



Apart from the pelicans, the other birds found nestling and breeding in the village trees are the painted stork (*Ibis leucocephalus*), little cormorant (*Phalacrocorax niger*), black ibis (*Pseudibis papillosa*), grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and Indian pond heron (*Ardeola grayii*).

Birds are seen nesting in clusters of 15 to 20 pairs per tree and are thought to use the same tree each year. They arrive after monsoon rains end in September when the birds create their nests, lay eggs from October to November, thereafter fledge around for three months after laying of eggs, till March and tirelessly feed their hatchlings



through the summer season. As summer peaks in May, they re-migrate, year after year, except when they sense drought conditions in their colonial habitat.

The main species that nest in Kokkarebellur – the spot-billed pelican (*Pelecanus philipensis*) and painted stork (*Ibis leucocephalus*) are given the conservation status of “near threatened category” in the IUCN Red List of 2008.

The Interpretation Centre has been re-opened to build awareness on conservation and enhance the profile of this important bird area. The initiative aims to develop the project as an ecosystem model managed and owned by the community. Besides living alongside birds for several centuries, the people of this village have also come together and rejuvenated many smaller wetlands in and around the village resulting in an increase of foraging sites for birds.

This unique centre shows the journey through the lives of these birds and their amazing friends. The information related to them has been creatively packaged and disseminated through various panels, wall paintings, life size models of important birds of the area and interactive exhibits, making it interesting and

informative for visitors.

It will be jointly maintained by The Hejjare Belaga, Panchayat, Department of Tourism, Forest Department and WWF-India for three years while also working towards mitigation of threats to birds and their habitats, the partnership will further strengthen the knowledge base on the ecosystem in Kokkarebellur, highlighting the significance of and the threats to the biodiversity, and allied individual and collective actions that can contribute to conservation with an endeavor to motivate and sustain efforts towards the heronry's conservation.

The Karnataka Government will work towards enhancing the profile of this important community reserve and promote it as a unique ecotourism destination in Karnataka.” Kokkarebellur is one of the 21 breeding sites of the spot-billed pelicans, a near threatened species, in South India.

Head of Operations, Global Service Centres, HSBC, Subir Mehra said, “The success of HSBC Water Programme lies in the positive impact it has on the communities it touches. The credit for the change we see in Kunigal and Kokkarebellur goes to the unfailing commitment shown by HSBC colleagues — over the past three years

917 of them have volunteered almost nine thousand hours to make it happen. I take this opportunity to thank WWF-India for their partnership that provides opportunities for our employees to support community programmes.”

Secretary General and CEO, WWF-India Ravi Singh said, “The Interpretation Centre at Kokkarebellur is a wonderful opportunity for insight to the biodiversity of the region. Famous for its spot-billed pelicans and painted storks, Kokkarebellur is known for the co-existence of the birds with the local community. Working in partnership with the government, HSBC and other organisations, we hope that initiatives like these go a long way in building awareness of the importance of such areas and inspire people to play an integral role in conserving biodiversity across the country.”

President of Gram Panchayat, Kokkarebellur Lakshmi Swamy said, “The birds are a part of our lives; the Interpretation Centre is expected to open up new avenues for revenue generation for conservation. We are excited and are ready to become a hub for eco-tourism.”

She urged the people to visit the centre and carry on with the conservation efforts. ■



'Manovue' to **replace** **centuries** old 'Braille'

Real life experiences made me pursue the path of serving humanity through my skills of technology.

Meet 23-year-old Roopam Sharma best known for his work on 'Manovue,' the world's first

intelligent personal assisting system for the visually impaired that is likely to replace the centuries-old Braille system.

Hailing from Faridabad Sharma is an Indian scientist broke into Foreign Policy Magazine's 100 global thinkers list alongside Bill



a voice command to activate the device. The device has a camera on the index finger which starts scanning the surrounding. When it sees any printed material, the device extracts the text and speaks out aloud

from a socio-economic background like mine, youth like me aren't supposed to pursue research, development or entrepreneurship. If lucky enough, we go to college, get a degree and then be among 15



Gates, Barack Obama, Jeff Bezos and Stephen Hawking.

Roopam is one of the top 8 innovators under 35 by the MIT Technology Review for the year 2016 in India. Recently, he has been named in Forbes Asia's 30 under 30 list!

His innovation--Manovue — a device that has been defined as the 'world's first intelligent wearable visual assistant.' The operation of the device is simple as the user can wear this device on her/his hand. He or she gives

whatever is written over there.

In an interaction with Jaision Wilson, Sharma spoke candidly about his endeavours and future plans.

From a small town boy to a personality that stands among Steve Jobs and Elon Musk, how will you describe your journey?

Miraculous! I was never raised to be a scientist. Coming

lakh graduates who are on a lookout for a job. That was my plan, but due to the real life experiences that made me pursue the path of serving humanity through my skills of technology, I became an inventor. When I started working on Manovue, I never intended to stand among any named personality like the above mentioned but I simply wanted to solve the problem of illiteracy among the visually impaired. Working with the community has provided me a

“

The operation of the device is simple as the user can wear this device on her/his hand. He or she gives a voice command to activate the device. The device has a camera on the index finger which starts scanning the surrounding. When it sees any printed material, the device extracts the text and speaks out aloud whatever is written over there.

different perspective towards life and it has been a great learning and evolving experience for me personally.

What is your background and tell us about your family?

Over the last few years, I have been deeply involved in researching the bottom-of-the-pyramid market to understand their needs related to accessibility, healthcare and education. I generate social impact through disruptive technological inventions and solve perennial problems using exponential technologies such as Artificial intelligence, internet of things and robotics.



I'm a first generation entrepreneur and inventor holding bachelors of technology degree in computer science and engineering degree. Both my parents are middle class retired seniors. I am the youngest of three siblings.

Your innovation 'Manovue' is considered as a substitute of the centuries-old 'Braille', how do you rate its applicability in practice and how long it will take to replace the old system?

The initial test results show that Manovue provides endless possibilities for education, achievement and independence for the Visually Impaired Community eliminating the need for the current tactile system. We're consistently iterating the device to make it more user friendly and enhancing its

applicability in practice and as a long term solution that serves as an alternate to Braille.

What are you doing presently and what are your future plans/goals?

At present, I'm alongside my team at Eylumati, a tech company based in Washington DC is working on Manovue and making sure the technology is affordable in the least income settings. In the future, Manovue's technology can also benefit people who are illiterate or have dyslexia, second language learners, and tourists in need of translation, young children learning their first language or even people recovering from brain trauma. Manovue can also provide distraction free reading and learning experience to the patients of Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). ■



Okinawa bags Tirupati Smart City project, provides 105 i-Praise scooters to corporation

Okinawa Scooters, a 100 per cent Indian electric two-wheeler manufacturing company, bagged the tender to equip the holy city with e-scooters to facilitate internal city touring and crowd management for the Municipal Corporation Tirupati (MCT) staff.

Okinawa's headquarter is located in JMD Megapolis, Gurugram while the manufacturing facility was in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan.

It may be noted here that the company had launched i-Praise electric scooter at Rs 1.15 lakh in Lucknow in January this year.

Okinawa has provided 105 "i-Praise – The Intelligent Scooter" to the holy city, customized according to design specifications suggested by the Tirupati Municipal Corporation (TMC) Commissioner Vijay Rama Raju V, said.

These e-scooters for Tirupati is equipped with smart features

like – Remote Immobilize, Geo-Fencing, Trips, Tracking and Monitoring, Driver Score, Find my Scooter.

On the special request to address the public or pilgrimage these e-scooters have been installed with Speakers and Sirens for public addressing in the city.

The e-scooters offered by Okinawa are a part of this massive transition towards becoming a spiritual city equipped with the latest features that enrich a devotee's spiritual journey further by making it more secure and convenient.

The Tirupati Municipal Corporation is spread across an area of 27.44 Sq Km and includes 50 Wards, which demands a strong surveillance and municipal system to take care of the needs of the devotees.

Commenting on the association, Okinawa Scooter Managing Director Jeetender Sharma, said, the i-Praise fleet is equipped with the

latest detachable Li-ion battery technology that helps the batteries to be charged anywhere, resulting in uninterrupted e-mobility for the MCT staff.

Remarking on the vision behind the decision, the Municipal corporation Commissioner said, "We are glad to welcome 105 Okinawa i-Praise scooters to the city and are looking forward to the great operational efficiency we expect them to provide.

With these zero emission e-scooters it would not help our staff for the internal city surveillance but would also help in curbing the pollution level in city, he said that we are looking forward for making Tirupati, a smart and a pollution free city.

The i-Praise scooters have been further equipped with speakers and sirens to help make public announcements and let the people know about the presence of city guards, he added. ■



Tata Workers' Union celebrates centenary year

Tata Workers' Union (TWU), one of the earliest trade unions founded in India and which continues to be a role model for achieving industrial harmony through pioneering practices and frameworks, launched its centenary year celebrations at the Michael John Auditorium at Jamshedpur in Jharkhand.

Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Tata Steel Limited TV Narendran said that a 100-year old Union itself is a rarity.

"In the last hundred years, there have been only eleven presidents and this reflects

the strength and maturity of Tata Workers' Union. Along with celebration of the glorious past, we also need to think about the future and focus on people, process, culture and capabilities," he said.

Rajendra Prasad Singh, General Secretary INTUC, spoke about the unique strengths of TWU and said that TWU is the only one amongst our affiliated Unions which will be completing a hundred years and it is indeed a momentous occasion for us." I congratulate both TWU and Tata Steel Management on this stupendous achievement."

Suresh Dutt Tripathi VP HRM



Rajendra Prasad Singh, General Secretary INTUC, spoke about the unique strengths of TWU and said that TWU is the only one amongst our affiliated Unions which will be completing a hundred years and it is indeed a momentous occasion for us."

Tata Steel lauded the efforts of the Union and said that in every crisis, the union came together with the management to find and implement solutions.

Ravi Prasad, President, Tata Workers' Union said that these are historic moments for the union as it stands at the cusp of completing a hundred years. This has been possible solely due to the spirit of working together which is core ethos at Tata Workers Union. Founded on March 5, 1920 as Jamshedpur Labour Association the organisation received support and guidance from national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Motilal Nehru, Dr Rajendra Prasad and CF Andrews. ■

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Sports Science – key weapon in MP's arsenal

Chief of Bureau Prashant Kumar Jain in an exclusive with Director (Sports and Youth Welfare) **SL Thaosen, IPS**

Bhopal : Keeping in view the fact that 'Sports Science' plays a vital role in honing Madhya Pradesh's talents so that their performance witnesses further improvement, assistance is being sought from experts.

During an interaction in the state capital, Director (Sports and Youth Welfare) SL Thaosen – an Indian Police Service officer adorning the post for more than a year – averred, "The experiment is yielding positive results that shall be clearly visible to one and all in the near future. It is often observed that

players and coaches invest a tremendous quantum of effort but despite that the outcome is not outstanding. The principal reason is that trainers and sportspersons often neglect Sports Science aspects."

For instance, an athlete's performance and the use of machines by specialists to evaluate the same would determine whether the person possesses the capability to advance in that particular discipline. Is the result matching endeavours? Expert advice would help the sportsperson in giving his or her best on the field





so that more medals are won for the state and the country.

“Nourishment and behavioural science also make crucial contributions. If a player toils but his or her intake is unscientific then an adverse impact on results is a certainty. Numerous sportspersons perform well during exercise but disappoint in competition. In such situations, psychological counselling is imperative. Therefore, I have provided them the services of physiotherapists, psychologists and sports nutritionists as well. Sports scientists are now part of various academies in Madhya Pradesh. The attempt shall be to regularise their services. Sports that will serve as a medium for talents to shine at national and international levels are being encouraged. Women’s football is one. Weightlifting, equestrian, shooting, golf, etc also hold promise,” Mr Thaosen said.



Besides bringing modern technology into the picture, there is an attempt to ensure greater tandem activity on part of officials and coaches, he explained and expressed his desire to have officials mingle with players in order to boost and assess the latter.

In the context of development work undertaken at the local TT Nagar Stadium over the past 12 months, the officer said, “Besides bettering sports facilities, the Department is emphasising that players toil ceaselessly and seriously by shedding any casual attitude.” ■

Popular ASSAME SE MOBILE THEATRE staged in Bengaluru



By Sushmita Goswami

The famous mobile theatre of Assam (locally called 'Bhramyamaan' theatre) had long ago touched shores afar with its fame, and it has now crossed the geographical limits of the state to reach its connoisseurs beyond. With the glory of entertaining theatre-lovers in the state for several decades behind it, Awahan mobile theatre group has this year performed in far-away Bengaluru, drawing thousands to its performances.

The theatre group performed three of its popular plays at Bengaluru in April this year, on invitation from the diaspora Assamese community in the

Karnataka capital. This not-for-profit initiative was taken up in collaboration with the Awahan Theatre group and the greater Assamese community in Bengaluru, such as East Bangalore Bihu Committee, Assam Association Bangalore (AAB), Assam Society of Bangalore (ASOB), and Srimanta Shankardev Cultural Society Bangalore (SSCSB), that highlights the unique blend of trust, mutual understanding and respect, and a passion for theatre and arts that is striving to bring the best of mobile theatre to the doorsteps of Bengaluru without any commercial underpinnings.

Mobile theatre is a unique



concept prevalent only in Assam with a very large fan following for many decades now as it has been able to establish a strong connect with the audience in Assam via its numerous well received and popular

staged plays by combining the performance art of traditional play acting with modern cinematic techniques.

This was the first time that Awahan Theatre performed outside the state of Assam and once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the theatre enthusiasts of Bengaluru to experience the unique concept of 'Bhramyamaan Theatre', where the entire theatre troupe of more than 90 people comprising of actors, directors, technicians, stage hands, etc. along with two truckloads of equipment and stage materials traveled to Bengaluru to perform the three plays, just the way they would move from one location to another in Assam carrying along all the equipments and accessories.

The three plays staged were 'Mokorajal', 'Madhuri Mur Naam' and 'Moi Mar Suwali'. While the opening night on April 26 drew limited audience,



to get an experience of this unique Assamese theatre form. In audience were prominent personalities of the arts and theatre circuit of Bengaluru, including National School of Drama (South) director Basavalingiah Basu, Bhagirathi Bai Kadam, Sandeep Shikhar, Abhishek Majumdar, Chaanakya Vyas and MD

invited a mobile theatre group from back home, the Assamese community of over 60,000 people in the southern city has been strongly retaining their connect and love for their roots, while also assimilating themselves in the cultural ethos and professional ambiance of the city. There are various groups and associations within this larger Assamese community and depending on their varied interests, they have been organizing numerous socio-cultural events like Rongali Bihu and Magh Bihu (traditional festivals of Assam in April and January respectively), Durga Puja, fund raising Music concerts and festivals, etc. for the past several years.

In addition to these activities, a 'Naamghar' – a place for congregational worship or a prayer house dedicated to Lord Krishna and the Ekasarana Vaishnavite sect of Hinduism unique to Assam, has also been setup to further imbibe the Assamese culture of unity, harmony and spiritual devotion amongst the community. ■



the next two performances witnessed nearly 1200 spectators each night. While the Assamese community formed the majority of the audience, non-Assamese speakers also thronged with their friends

Pallavi. Assamese residing in nearby cities of Bengaluru also travelled to watch the performances and relive old memories for many.

While this was the first time that the diaspora in Bengaluru

1969 was a **Game Changing Year** for the Hindi Film Industry

By Jaskiran Chopra

Fifty years ago, in the year 1969, something happened in the world of Hindi cinema which brought about a sea change. This winter of this year turned out to be something unprecedented in the industry.

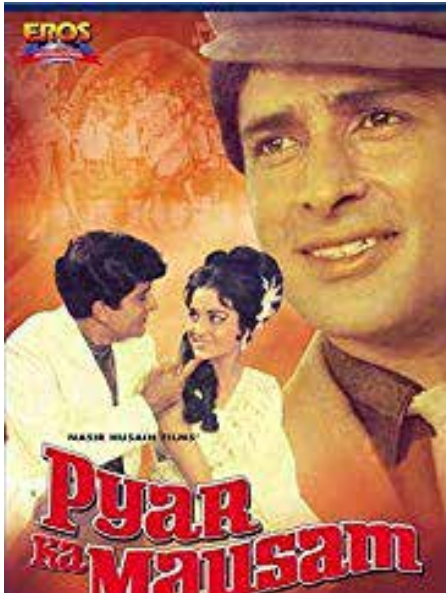
The entire year, upto the month of November, saw a flood of box office hits starring handsome and talented actors like Dev Anand, Dharmendra, Sunil Dutt, Feroz Khan, Shammi Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor, Rajendra Kumar and Jeetendra, and actresses like Asha Parekh, Sharmila Tagore, Saira Banu, Babita, Hema Malini and Vyjayanthimala. The films that made quite a buzz that year included *Jeenay ki Raah*, *Pyaar ka Mausam*, *Tumse Achcha Kaun Hai*, *Pyar hi Pyar*, *Anjaana*, *Mahal*, *Aaya Sawan*, *Jhoom ke*, *Chirag*, *Aadmi aur Insaan*, *Prince* and *Yakeen*. All of them had songs that captured the hearts of audiences and are still hummed. Some of the songs from these evergreen hits are “*Teri Aankhon ke Siwa Duniya mein rakha kya hai*”

(*Chirag*), “*Aaney se uske aaye bahaar, jaane se uske jaaye bahaar*” (*Jeenay ki Raah*), “*Ni Sultana Re, Pyaar ka mausam*



aaya” (*Pyaar ka Mausam*), “*Badan pe Sitaare lapete hue*” (*Prince*), “*Yakeen kar lo mujhe mohabbat hai tumse tumse*” (*Yakeen*), “*Badra Chhaaye ke jhhule pad gaye haaye*” (*Aya Saawan Jhoom ke*) and “*Main kahin Kavi na bann jaaun tere pyaar mein aye Kavita*” (*Pyar hi Pyar*). The list is endless. Melody was surely the queen in the 1960s, the golden era of Indian cinema. But 1969 was

to bring in the King of hearts who would, for a few years, rule, unopposed, the screen and audiences as no one before him had done. He was Rajesh Khanna, the first superstar of Indian cinema. He had appeared in a couple of films in 1966 and 1967. But it was only in 1969 that Aradhana took the nation by storm and Khanna was declared a superstar overnight! For the next four years, there



Aradhana. With this song, Khanna and Kishore Da became associated with each other, giving the audiences many marvellous songs in the next few years. *Do Raaste* which was released in December 1969 was a great hit which again had a beautiful song of Kishore da “*Khizaa’n ke phhool pe aati kabhi bahaar nahin*”. It was “Kaka” (as Rajesh Khanna was fondly called and Kishore Da all the way after the winter of 1969! Some of the other heroes did re-appear in the 1970s but their looks of the 1960s had

would be no one else who could be even close to him. All the handsome and beautiful stars began to fade away and only he shone on the silver screen. This is how he changed the industry. He delivered 17 consecutive blockbuster hits from 1969 and 1973. Never before and never after him had any star created such frenzy.

It is indeed interesting to observe that November 7, 1969, saw the release of *Aradhana* as well as *Saat Hindustani*. It was on the same day that two 27 year old actors began to be recognized –one in a manner that was unprecedented and the other was acknowledged in his quiet role of one of the seven men who fought for the liberation of Goa in this film of *Khwaja Ahmad Abbas*. He would go on to become the “*star of the millennium*” and a living legend just like Rajesh Khanna. He was Amitabh Bachchan. This shows us how important that year was. The next four years would see the meteoric rise of Khanna and the most



trying times for Bachchan for whom the lucky film came in 1973 (*Zanjeer*) which was the beginning of his success story. While the superstar began fading, the “*angry young man*” was well on the rise in 1973.

It was also in 1969 that the game changed for the extremely talented and powerful singer Kishore Kumar. He was now the voice of the Superstar and his fame knew no bounds. The song that brought in Kishore Da and made Mohammad Rafi sa’ab take a back seat for some years was “*Mere Sapno ki Raani Kab Aayegi tu*” from

changed greatly and they could never recapture the magic of the Golden 60s. Action films saw some of these romantic heroes in a different. Not so charming “*Avatar*”. The two actors who had appeared on screen towards the end of 1969 changed the way in which these other actors would be seen by audiences. After Khanna’s charmed years began the Bachchan era that also captured the imagination of the nation. The year 1969 was thus the last year that saw so many romantic, musical box office hits with a great variety of heroes and heroines. ■

Bhavna Bhav Tokekar (47) – a mother of two adolescents – has emphatically stated that she definitely isn't the average lady, and how? She bagged four golds during the Open Asian Power-lifting Championships at the west-central Russian city of Chelyabinsk in July.



Iron woman, iron will

By Abhijit C. Chandra

Bhopal: So, what's the daily routine of married women in their late forties? Oh, that's an easy one – office-goer / homemaker, kitchen, managing teen-aged kids, watching TV – the works. Well, right and wrong!

Bhavna Bhav Tokekar (47) – a mother of two adolescents – has emphatically stated that she definitely isn't the average lady, and how? She bagged four golds during the Open Asian Power-lifting Championships at the west-central Russian city of Chelyabinsk in July. And this was her first international tournament! About half-a-decade back, she was not in this arena at all though having run a couple of half marathons with her spouse Group Captain

Shreepad Tokekar – an Indian Air Force fighter pilot who is an Operation Safed Sagar (Kargil) hero and posted in the Madhya Pradesh capital. Bhavna's acquaintance with the gym took place when she began exercising to combat side-effects of medication. Her inspiration was the World Powerlifting Congress' Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh head Mohammed Azmat who eventually guided her.

"I do an hour of Zumba / aerobics every morning and a couple of hours of weight training each evening, round the year. It's not that I only do my powerlifting practice, my foremost priority is my family. I'm a proud wife and a proud mother first and then a sportsperson," Bhavna told this correspondent.

In Russia, she competed in the Under 67.5 Masters-2 Category. The Indian contingent comprised 14 sportspersons. Though confident, Bhavna was also edgy but had a word of praise for the genial Russians.

She is a Maharashtrian born in Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha and brought up in Gujarat. Bhavna represented Panchmahal District in table tennis while at school. Later in life, her hubby provided unalloyed support and their kids helped around the house. Corporal Aruvi A. is her guru and she trained under him for two-and-a-half years.

Even millennium megastar Amitabh Bachchan had a word of praise for Bhavna's success. She is seeking a sponsor for the world championship slated for this winter in Moscow. ■



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