

Central Chronicle

Founder : Late Shri Ramgopal Maheshwari
Inspiration: Late Shri Prafulla Kumar Maheshwari

EDITORIAL

Boost to development

In the infrastructure of holistic development, many times very difficult situations are created. A project of one department gets completed at the same place, but the second project being run by another department at the same place remains incomplete, as a result, the people living there are not able to get the full benefit of the previous project. We have also seen that after the completion of the road, the department wakes up that the work of laying the optical fiber cable here remains incomplete. The same situation is seen in the availability of means of transport, for example, after reaching the road or train, the officers wake up that there is no necessary last mile connectivity to connect them. But now such adversities and adversities will become a thing of the past. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched a new flagship project Mega Gati Shakti Master Plan to enhance multi-modal connectivity. It can be expected that this master plan will give a systematic and far-reaching nature to the new roads, railway schemes, air services and transport system. It can be said that this plan will not only improve multimodal connectivity, but will also create a conducive environment for industrial activities. How comprehensive is the nature of Mega Gati Shakti Masterplan, it can be estimated from the fact that about one and a half dozen ministries like petroleum, road transport, railways, civil aviation, shipping, energy, IT, textiles have been included in this plan. This plan was being worked on for a long time and the detailed information of all the projects constructed till now is included in the plan. We can confidently say that after the implementation of this plan, new economic activities will increase; new employment opportunities will be created. The Prime Minister has rightly expressed confidence that Gati Shakti will help in setting up quality infrastructure for sustainable development. Now it will be easy to find out where the road has been built and where a new road is needed. What shape will India take in the next twenty-five years, the Gati Shakti Yojana will be its cornerstone. There is no hesitation in saying that due to mutual tussle among the government departments, all important development projects get delayed or delayed, as a result the country has to remain deprived of the benefits that it should get. It is true that in the last seven decades, the country has written a record of progress, obstacles have arisen in between, but the country has not deviated from the path of development. But in the midst of the competition for development, we have to face all the practical problems, all the development projects are started but they are not completed on time, the public does not get the benefits at the right time and many times the cost also doubles. Many a times, the entire planning gets shelved right after the launch of the development project. After the passage of time, after a few years, Bhoomi Pujan of the same project is performed again. But now the details of each plan of development will be there in the master plan of Gati Shakti, so now the situation of laying the foundation stone for the same project many times will not be created. Governments keep coming and going, but the country remains on the path of development because all the planning and execution of development works remains in the hands of the bureaucracy.

What if TB, HIV medicines stop working? Experts unite against drug resistance

By Bobby Ramakant – CNS

One year and 10 months ago when first case of corona virus was reported in Wuhan, China, entire world was terrified because no one knew if we have any medicine that will work against it. Possibly our worst fears came true and we witnessed the horrendous impact of the pandemic. One silver lining in dark Covid cloud is the hard-taught lesson to value the medicines we have, which try to cure and heal us from range of illnesses. We cannot afford to lose these lifesaving medicines. One major threat because of which medicines stop working against bugs that make us ill is Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

AMR in tuberculosis (TB) and HIV has long been referred to as drug resistance. "TB and HIV drug resistance threatens the effective prevention and treatment. When drug resistance develops, the TB bacteria and AIDS virus change so that they no longer respond to medicines, making infections harder to treat, more expensive to treat, and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death" said Dr Ishwar Gilada, President of ASI (AIDS Society of India), who is credited to be among the first Indian doctors to begin medical management of HIV when first case got diagnosed in the country.

World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week

World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (WAAW) will be observed during 18-24 November 2021. A month before that, Dr Ishwar Gilada and Dr Sudarshan Mandal, head of Indian government's National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), co-chaired a high level ASI Advisory Board Meeting on managing TB and HIV drug resistance.

Combating drug resistance is a more compelling priority than ever before

Dr Gilada added: "We cannot afford to lose lifesaving medicines for TB and HIV at this critical juncture when all

countries in the world have committed to end AIDS and TB by 2030 (only 110 months left to meet the goal). India stands firm to end TB by 2025 (only 50 months are left). Combating drug resistance is a more compelling priority than ever before."

Covid pandemic forced an unprecedented global public health emergency, and measures taken to curb the corona virus jeopardised essential and critical public health services. TB and HIV services were no different as they too got impacted the most where they

government of India. Alarming levels of drug resistance has been puncturing both TB and HIV responses globally" emphasized Dr Ishwar Gilada, who is also the Secretary General of Organized Medicine Academic Guild (OMAG).

Important early step towards possible BPaL rollout in India

Dr Vikas S Oswal, Chest Consultant, National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) trainer and Chairperson of DPS Shatabdi Municipal Hospital in Mumbai, emphasized on the need of

Report, in India, almost half a million (4.45 lakhs) TB deaths occurred in 2019, which includes 9,500 deaths among people with HIV. 71,000 people living with HIV fell ill with TB in the country in 2019 out of which 44517 people were notified and were on life-saving antiretroviral treatment. In 2019, 124,000 in India were estimated to have drug-resistant TB out of which only 56,569 were put on possible treatment. Dr Ameet Dravid emphasized the importance of scientific evidence based recommendation of dose reduction of a potentially toxic drug, Linezolid, from 1200mg per day to 600 mg daily while treating MDR-TB.

Dr Ishwar Gilada who has led People's Health Organization for more than three decades and is among the longest serving HIV medical experts in India, is deeply pained to see that TB continues to be the commonest and deadliest of the opportunistic infections for people living with HIV even today - this is not acceptable as we know how to prevent infection spread, reduce risk of latent TB converting into active disease, and also know how to accurately diagnose and treat TB. Preventing TB especially among those at high risk is an imperative for public health.

Dr Gilada said that every case of active TB disease (as well as primary drug resistant TB) comes from latent TB pool in our population. But only 45% of newly diagnosed people living with HIV were put on preventive TB therapy in 2019 in India. We have to multiply our efforts to break the chain of TB transmission as well as reduce risk for those with latent TB to progress to active disease as far as possible if we are to end TB by 2025.

Globally, we had about 10 million new TB cases in 2019 as per the latest WHO Global TB Report and over 1.5 million new people were infected with HIV in 2020. About 1.4 million people died of TB in 2019 and 680,000 people died of AIDS related illnesses in 2020 worldwide.

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were needed most (in high burden nations and settings).

"Covid-19 pandemic has been grossly responsible for exacerbating neglect of several other diseases that were already impacting our populations in epidemic proportions, thus caused a terrible collateral damage. As the pandemic is receding, we are duty bound to focus on other pressing health challenges. TB and HIV care is among those health priorities that slipped off the radar since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. A recent study estimated additional 20% rise in TB deaths and 10% rise in HIV deaths in five years in the country due to Covid pandemic. It is high time to not lose the major advances India has made in fighting both: TB and HIV, and accelerate progress towards ending AIDS and TB both as committed by the

timely and rational use of latest more effective, less toxic and shorter duration treatment therapies for multidrug-resistant TB, which also works with comparable efficacy for people co-infected with HIV. Dr Oswal is also leading India's first site where rollout of latest treatment for drug-resistant TB has begun yesterday (under research study and restricted access mode), results of which will help guide India's policy, programme and further actions. This potentially game changing treatment is called BPaL (Bedaquiline, Pretomanid and Linezolid).

Reduce dose of potentially toxic drug, says Dr Ameet Dravid

Dr Ameet Dravid, a noted expert on HIV and infectious diseases from Ruby Hall Clinic and Poona Hospital said that as per latest WHO Global TB

Legal battles on puja-rights at Kalkaji Temple in Delhi - Needs to be developed and managed on lines of some most famous Hindu temples of the world

By Subhash Chandra Agrawal

It refers to on-going legal battle amongst legal heirs of a deceased baridaar-priest of famous Kalkaji Temple (New Delhi) leading to closure of the temple in auspicious days of holy navratra thus hurting religious sentiments of large number of devotees. The temple needs to be developed and managed on lines of world-renowned Hindu temples like at Pashupati Nath Temple (Kathmandu), Vaishnodevi shrine (Jammu) and Tirupati Temple (Tirumala). Premises at

Pashupatinath Temple is always very clean with official receipts given for different types of pujas with rates fixed and date of puja booked in advance. Priests are given handsome salary besides commission on money collected through offerings and puja-bookings. Cost of Prasad and puja-items is included in the official puja-cost.

South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) in the year 2018 had announced that it was working on a dream-project of developing Kalkaji Temple and its

surroundings with help of some company (private or public sector) under Corporate-Social-Responsibility (CSR) obligations at a cost of about rupees 10.5 crores with needs to be increased now. But there is still no indication on working of the project. Complete surrounding of Kalkaji Temple should be re-developed and beautified with all structures surrounding the main temple first demolished and then newly built.

Presently priests controlling the temple as per dynastic traditions run

Kalkaji-temple like business-shops selling VVIP-passes in Navratras at exorbitant high costs for Darshan just near the deity. People seated on high posts in legislature, bureaucracy, and police enjoy such privilege without any cost further flattered through special Prasad and other puja-items. Otherwise priests are very arrogant towards commoners who are made to stand in long queues for a hasty Darshan of the deity from a distance obstructed by VVIPs doing puja inside the deity-enclosure itself.

Satire



Dream of achche din shattered

Friend said: Indian pump prices are in uncharted territory as ever-increasing government levies coincide with crude's recovery from the depths of the Covid-19 pandemic.

I said: The record-high petrol and diesel prices are leaving some Indian car owners unable to afford the cost of using their vehicles and spurring the country's transport industry to agitate for change. Buying petrol in major Indian cities such as Mumbai costs almost twice as much as in New York, casting a shadow on the recovery across Asia's second-largest oil guzzler as virus-related movement restrictions are eased. The Centre kept upping taxes last year even as it put the country into a national lockdown and global crude prices collapsed.

Friend said: Mumbai petrol costs have risen by more than 25 percent over the past three years, while diesel prices have climbed by a third over the same period, according to data from Indian Oil Corp. The run-up in prices is adding to inflationary pressures to the Indian economy amid a broad commodity rally.

I said: In India's capital of New Delhi, petrol prices have jumped almost 20 percent year-to-date, alongside a similar surge in diesel costs. Federal taxes on petrol, which powers scooters and motorcycles, have more than tripled over the last seven years. Those on diesel, the country's most-used fuel, have swelled by seven times over the same period.

Friend said: Higher prices are hitting the country's burgeoning middle class, the engine that's driven India's economic and oil demand growth in recent times. The taxes are eroding disposable incomes and feeding inflationary pressures. Definitely, the high prices will have an impact on the growth and return to normalcy. Prices above a particular level do pinch and people travel less and try to save on the fuel cost. With fuel prices soaring, India's truckers have had enough. Drivers have limited ability to pass on the rising prices, which account for about 70 per cent of the cost of operating a truck, according to the All India Motor Transport Congress.

Science Fact

Study finds if Venus ever had oceans

The planet Venus can be seen as the Earth's evil twin. At first sight, it is of comparable mass and size as our home planet, similarly consists mostly of rocky material, holds some water, and has an atmosphere.

A team of astrophysicists led by the University of Geneva (UNIGE) and the National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) PlanetS, Switzerland, investigated whether our planet's twin did indeed have milder periods. The results, published in the journal Nature, suggest that this is not the case.

Yet, a closer look reveals striking differences between them: Venus' thick CO2 atmosphere, extreme surface temperature, and pressure, and sulphuric acid clouds are indeed a stark contrast to the conditions needed for life on Earth. This may, however, have not always been the case. Previous studies have suggested that Venus may have been a much more hospitable place in the past, with its own liquid water oceans. Venus has recently become an important research topic for astrophysicists. ESA and NASA have decided this year to send no less than three space exploration missions over the next decade to the second closest planet to the Sun. One of the key questions these missions aim to answer is whether or not Venus ever hosted early oceans. Astrophysicists led by Martin Turbet, a researcher at the Department of Astronomy of the Faculty of Science of the UNIGE and member of the NCCR PlanetS, have tried to answer this question with the tools available on Earth.



Spiritual

Does Being 'Spiritual But Not Religious' Really Mean Anything?

"Spiritual But Not Religious" is a phrase you hear more and more these days — and with good reason. In 2012, a Pew Foundation survey on religion found that almost 20 percent of Americans placed themselves in the category of "unaffiliated."

That 20 percent unaffiliated translates into a whole lot of people. It's a big enough number that, most likely, your next airport van ride will include someone without traditional religious attachments onboard. But to really appreciate the importance of this 20 percent in the landscape of American life, you have to consider one more number: 10 years.

That's how long it's been since philosopher Sam Harris published his book The End of Faith and kick-started the New Atheist movement. Along with writers like Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Daniel Dennett, Harris was unapologetic in his denunciation of literalist religious beliefs.

Looking back, New Atheism was at its best when it provided a clear defense of reason against the many fundamentalisms that only look backward. At its worst, however, it dismissed all experiences of "spirituality" as worthless, pudding-headed confusion. For persistent readers, however, Harris' now decade-old book held a surprise. In the last chapter, this fiery critic of religion argued that real spiritual experience was not only possible, it was a kind of birthright. I remember getting to that last chapter and thinking, "Whoa, what just happened? What happened was Harris, like many in the 20 percent, had always found meaning in experiences of personal spirituality. Those experiences now take center stage in Harris' latest book, Waking Up.



Speak



Kerala government going for land acquisition before taking centre's permission for K-Rail project.

Satheesan



Priyanka Gandhi shouldn't be projected as CM's face in UP, she is national leader.

Imran Masood



Cannot be expected to react to hallucinations.

DK Shivakumar

Tech

Apple exploring AirPods that take temperature, monitor posture

Apple is reportedly exploring new health-focused features for its AirPods. Features might include using the earbuds to take wearers' temperature, monitor their posture and improve their hearing.

According to The Verge, it's not clear if the latter function differs significantly from AirPods' existing "Conversation Boost" feature. As per reports, these functions "aren't expected by next year and might never be rolled out to consumers or the timing could change."

In other words, it sounds like the iPhone maker is just exploring these new health features, rather than actively working on integrating them with products due out in the next year or two.

Adding these sensors would make sense for Apple. The company has increasingly marketed its products on the strength of their health and fitness applications, though so far, most of this attention has been focused on the Apple Watch.

Reports last month suggested the company was looking into adding various sensors to the wearable, including monitoring blood pressure, temperature, sleep quality, blood oxygen, and blood sugar.

Integrating health features into commercial products is tricky work, though, mostly because of the difficulty in meeting the high bar of medical regulatory standards. This inevitably leads to delays.

