

**COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL HOLDS BILATERAL TALKS WITH BELGIAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER, INTERACTS WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS**

Chennai, 22 January 2025: The Commerce and Industry Minister of India, Shri Piyush Goyal, met with the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, and Foreign Trade, Mr. Bernard Quintin, in Brussels today to discuss strengthening bilateral trade and investment ties. The meeting reinforced the longstanding relationship between India and Belgium, built on shared values of democracy, rule of law and independent judiciary. The two leaders discussed ways to expand economic cooperation, and explored new avenues to advance this partnership. It may be noted that India-Belgium trade is estimated at over US\$ 15.07 billion in 2023-2024 while Foreign Direct Investments from Belgium into India was estimated at over US\$ 3.94 billion.



During the discussions, both leaders acknowledged Belgium's significant reliance on foreign trade and India's dynamic, growing economy as key factors for leveraging mutual opportunities. Recognizing the potential of trade as a cornerstone of their partnership, they emphasized the importance of diversifying trade relations and deepening economic diplomacy to achieve sustainable growth.

The leaders also discussed the progress of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations and emphasized the

tackle these challenges through continuous dialogue.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to establish stronger mechanisms for resolving trade issues. Both leaders affirmed their dedication to fostering a robust and mutually beneficial trade partnership

This high-level engagement marks a significant step in advancing India-Belgium trade relations, strengthening their shared vision for economic growth and sustainable development.

The Commerce and Industry Minister also interacted with European business leaders, representatives of diamond industry and investors in areas of maritime services, solar energy, clean technology, waste treatment and green hydrogen.

**TRUMP SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER WITHDRAWING US FROM WHO**

Chennai, 22 January 2025: US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order initiating the

process of withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO). This marks the second

time in less than five years that the US has moved to exit the global health body.

The order was one of numerous executive actions signed by Trump on Monday after being sworn in for his second term. These actions covered a wide range of issues, including immigration, foreign policy, and climate change. Trump's order for his signature.

dates back to 2020, when he faulted the organization for its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, which escalated into a global health crisis during the final year of his first term.

"That's a big one," Trump remarked to reporters in the Oval Office as an aide presented the executive order for his signature. criticism of the WHO



**INVESTING IN HER FUTURE SUKANYA SAMRIDDI YOJANA : A DECADE OF TRANSFORMING LIVES**

Chennai, 22 January 2025: The Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY) stands as a ray of hope and empowerment for millions of young girls across India, encapsulating the Government's unwavering commitment to nurturing their dreams and aspirations. Launched on 22nd January 2015[1] by Prime Minister



**Sukanya Samridhi Scheme**  
**A Small Savings Scheme**

Narendra Modi as part of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Campaign, this visionary scheme weaves together the threads of financial security and social empowerment. This year 22nd January 2025, marks the 10 years of Sukanya Samridhi Yojana encouraging families to invest in the bright futures of their daughters, fostering a culture of inclusion and progress.

As a testament to its impact, over 4.1 crore [2]Sukanya Samridhi accounts have been opened as of November 2024, symbolizing not just a number, but a movement towards building an equitable and promising tomorrow for every girl child in India. Through this initiative, the nation celebrates the immense potential of its daughters, reaffirming the belief that empowering one girl

strengthens the foundation of society.

How Sukanya Samridhi Yojana works? : Opening the account - The guardian can open the account immediately after the birth of the girl child till she attains the age of 10 years. Any girl child who is a resident Indian from the time of opening the account till the time of maturity/closure is eligible for the scheme. Only one account is allowed per child. Parents can open a maximum of two accounts for each of their children. However, there is an exception allowed for more accounts in case of twins or triplets. The account can be transferred to anywhere in India. The following documents are required for opening an account: Sukanya Samridhi Account Opening Form, Birth certificate of girl child, Identity proof (as per

the RBI KYC guidelines), Residence proof (as per RBI KYC guidelines).

Deposit required- This scheme allows parents to open a Sukanya Samridhi account for girls at any post office or designated commercial bank branch, starting with a minimum initial deposit of ₹250, and subsequent deposits can be made in multiples of ₹50, provided that at least ₹250 is deposited in a financial year. The total annual deposit limit is capped at ₹1,50,000; any excess amount will not earn interest and will be returned. Deposits of up to fifteen years from the account opening date.

Managing the account - The account is managed by the guardian until the girl child reaches the age of eighteen. This allows the guardian to oversee the savings and ensure that

the funds are utilized effectively for the child's education and future needs. Upon turning eighteen, the account holder can take control of the account herself by submitting the necessary documents.

Interest Calculation Interest is calculated monthly based on the lowest balance in the account between the close of the fifth day and the end of each financial year, this interest is credited to the account, with any fractional amounts rounded to the nearest rupee: amounts of fifty paise or more are rounded up, while lesser amounts are disregarded. Notably, the interest is credited at

**PM CONGRATULATES DONALD TRUMP ON TAKING CHARGE AS THE 47TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

Chennai, 22 January 2025: US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order initiating the process of withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO). This marks the second time in less than five years that the US has moved to exit the global health body.

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actions signed by Trump on Monday after being sworn in for his second term. These actions covered a wide range of issues, including immigration, foreign policy, and climate change. Trump's criticism of the WHO dates back to 2020, when he faulted the organization for its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, which escalated into a

global health crisis during the final year of his first term.

"That's a big one,"

Trump remarked to reporters in the Oval Office as an aide presented the executive order for his signature.



**AMRIT UDYAN TO OPEN FOR PUBLIC FROM FEBRUARY 2**

Chennai, 22 January 2025: The Amrit Udyan of Rashtrapati Bhavan will open for public viewing from February 2 to March 30, 2025. People can visit the Udyan six days a week between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., except on Mondays, which are maintenance days. The

Udyan will also remain closed on February 5 (due to polling for the Delhi Legislative Assembly), February 20 and 21 (due to the Visitors' Conference at Rashtrapati Bhavan), and March 14 (on account of Holi).

Entry and exit for all

visitors will be from Gate No. 35 of the President's Estate, close where North Avenue meets Rashtrapati Bhavan. For the convenience of visitors, shuttle bus service from Central Secretariat Metro Station to Gate No. 35 will be available every 30 minutes entry between 9.30 am and 6.00 pm.

The Amrit Udyan will be open for special categories on the following days: March 26 - for differently-abled persons. March 27 - for unique traditions of

paramilitary and police forces. March 28 - for women and tribal women's SHGs.

Booking and entry to the Garden is free of cost. Booking can be made at https://visit.rashtrapatibhavan.gov.in/. Walk-in entry is also available.

Rashtrapati Bhavan will also host Vividha Ka Amrit Mahotsav as part of Amrit Udyan This year's Mahotsav will showcase the rich cultural heritage and traditions of Southern India.



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## "CITY OF HOPE" EXHIBITION COMES TO CHENNAI: A TRIBUTE TO MAHATMA GANDHI, DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., AND THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

Chennai, 22 January 2025: Tamil Nadu School Education Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi launched "City of Hope: Gandhi, King, and the 1968 Poor People's Campaign" at the Anna Centenary Library in Chennai on January 20 (Monday), observed as Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The exhibition showcases Mahatma Gandhi's influence on civil rights in the United States and India's influence on Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision for economic justice and human rights worldwide.

The US Consulate General Chennai brought this Smithsonian exhibition to Chennai in association with the Meridian International Center and their in-country partner ReReeti Foundation. The exhibition is part of the 2025 Chennai Photo Biennale.

The exhibition will be open to the public from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm daily (except January 26 Republic Day) at Anna Centenary Library until January 30 Martyrs' Day, the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The expo will be held in different cities across India, including Chennai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, New Delhi,



and Kolkata.

Dr. Aaron Bryant, Museum Curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, was the guest of honor at the exhibition's inauguration in Chennai and Jeanne Briganti, Public Affairs Officer at the US Consulate General Chennai, two great figures never met, but Gandhi's teachings and philosophy, particularly the doctrines of non-violent resistance, service to the community and social justice, were a huge influence on King and CEO of NEELAM through him on the civil rights movement in America."

Inaugurating the exhibition, Tamil Nadu Minister Anbil Mahesh Poyyamozhi said, "Social, economic, and gender equality must be established and the basic human right of education should be provided for all the

people around the world."

Jeanne Briganti, Public Affairs Officer, US Consulate General Chennai, said, "One cannot truly talk about the American Civil Rights Movements and Martin Luther King, Jr. without including Mahatma Gandhi. These great figures never met, but Gandhi's teachings and philosophy, particularly the doctrines of non-violent resistance, service to the community and social justice, were a huge influence on King and CEO of NEELAM through him on the civil rights movement in America."

Aaron Bryant, Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, said, "In 1959, Martin Luther King Jr. spent a month traveling through India, and when he first arrived, he

commented, "For a long while, I have looked forward to visiting your great country. To other countries I may go as a tourist, but to India I come as a pilgrim." King recognized the influence that India and historical figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru had on his own ideas. India's history of social justice and Gandhi's methods for peaceful resistance informed the US Civil Rights Movement and King's philosophies on human rights throughout his life and career.

So, it is an honor to bring the City of Hope exhibition to India, a country that meant so much to King and social progress in the United States. The exhibition also celebrates artists and recognizes that art and artists have been central to driving conversations on social progress, justice, and change."

## SIMATS HOSTS INTL. MEET ON VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES; AWARDS HANDED OVER TO EXPERTS FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION

Chennai, 22 January 2025: Entomologists played a vital role in combating the menace of vector-borne diseases, yet the number of experts and their role was being often ignored, speakers at an international conference said on Tuesday.

Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences – SIMATS on Tuesday hosted an International Conference on Vector-Borne Diseases. The four-day event, organised along with the Indian Chapter of Society for Vector Ecology, Academy of Public Health Entomology, began at Saveetha Medical College on Tuesday, January 21.

In his Presidential address, Dr. Rajpal S. Yadav, President of the Academy of Public Health Entomology, said even a few decades back, the World Health Organisation had a full-fledge division with entomologists engaged in global collaboration and research to arrive at solution to combat

vector-borne diseases. Sadly, over the years, not only had the number of entomologists said, dwindled, but their role was being ignored. "This is the situation all across the world and India is no exception. Even in cities that have Corporations that handle hygiene, solid waste management, sewage, there needs a specialist who needs to coordinate all these, but it is not happening, Dr. Yadav said.

Lack of advocacy and communication was one of the problem for this situation, he added. He pointed out that even talented and qualified entomologists who had completed their education in premier institutions, were unable to get job openings relevant to their specialisation and ended up in administrative roles. "Stepping up the role of entomologists in public health is something we need to do and such conferences will help. Earlier, pest control industry and associations would be kept off from such deliberations and today,

they were being achieve this distinction represented and their only due to the hard work and dedication of adding that its faculty and students.

innovations had led to the finding of non-chemical alternatives for vector control. Dr. Yadav said work in this area was fragmented so long and he felt that institutions like SIMATS hosted such an event that will pave the way for global collaboration.

While offering his felicitations, Dr. N.M. Veeraiyan, Founder and Chancellor, SIMATS, said they were USA, committed to pursue excellence in academics and research and such events were a part of their vision. He said that Saveetha Dental College was ranked No.1 among dental colleges in India for the third consecutive year, and was confident that they would retain the top slot this year too. All their institutions were top ranked and they were among the few from India to be ranked in the top in Times Education together the finest and only 20 years old, SIMATS was able to

On the occasion, awards to experts and young researchers who had made outstanding contribution in the sphere of vector control were given to 16 people engaged in various institutions. Dr. Deepak Nallaswamy, Pro-Chancellor, SIMATS, D. Norbert Becker, Vice President of European Mosquito Control Association, Dr. Rui De Xue, Director, SOVE – SA, and President, American Mosquito Control Association, Dr. Sheeja Varghese, Registrar (Academics) Dr. J. Kumutha, Dean, Saveetha Medical College, and Mr. P. Muthuswamy, CEO, SIMATS, offered their felicitations. In his welcome address, Dr. Ashwani Kumar, Pro Vice Chancellor, SIMATS, Organising Secretary of the conference, said SOVE aimed at bringing the finest and brilliant minds in the areas of vector science, in a single platform.



## NIHARIKA ENTERTAINMENT AND THE SHOW PEOPLE PRODUCE, ARYA PRESENTS, SANTHANAM'S 'DD NEXT LEVEL' FIRST LOOK UNVEILED ON SANTHANAM'S BIRTHDAY TODAY

Chennai, 21 January 2025: The next instalment of hugely successful movie 'DD Returns' is here. Starring Santhanam as the protagonist once

again, this newest addition to the franchise, titled 'DD Next Level' is progressing on a brisk pace and shoot is in its final phase. The film will hit the screens in

May. Produced by Niharika Entertainment and The Show People on a huge budget, the film will be presented by actor Arya. The first look of 'DD Next Level' was unveiled today to mark Santhanam's birthday. It has been designed in such a way to impress fans immediately.

S. Prem Anand who directed 'DD Returns' is helming this new film as well. Popular stars are playing important roles.

Speaking about the film, director Prem Anand said, "DD Returns was a huge success with great response from audience from all walks of life. We worked on the script of its sequel for one year.

From children to adults, everyone will laugh and enjoy this flick too."

He added, "The story of this film starts on a cruise ship and takes place on an island. We erected sets with a huge budget.

It's great that Niharika Entertainment, actor Arya and Santhanam have teamed up to produce this film.

It will be more exciting and hilarious than 'DD Returns'. The film will be an enjoyable experience to fans of all age groups."

Dipak Kumar Padhy handles the cinematography of 'DD Next Level', and Ofro Bharath is in charge of editing and AR Mohan handles art direction.



## HDFC LIFE ANNOUNCES CORPORATE AGENCY TIE-UP WITH CARS24 FINANCIAL SERVICES PVT. LTD.

Chennai, 22 January 2025: HDFC Life, one of India's leading life insurers, has recently entered into a Corporate Agency tie-up with CARS24 Financial and Services Pvt. Ltd.

CARS24 Financial Services Private Limited ("CARS24 Financial Services") is a professionally managed Non-Banking Financial Company ("NBFC") registered with the Reserve Bank of India and with IRDAI as an Insurance Corporate Agent. The Company is a part of CARS24 group and offers a variety of vehicle financing solutions to customers. INSURE24, a major milestone for CARS24, is set to transform the digital insurance landscape for India's rapidly growing online consumer base.

This partnership will enable CARS24 Financial Services Pvt. Ltd. to distribute products of HDFC Life to existing and future customers of CARS24. The life insurance solutions of HDFC Life will be offered across the branches as well as the digital platforms of the partner. Both partners aim to work together with the objective of increasing the reach of life insurance across locations where CARS24 has a presence. This in turn would contribute towards the larger objective of 'Insurance for all by 2047'.

HDFC Life, with 70 products (including individual and group products) and a claim settlement ratio of 99.50% and CARS24

with a strong presence of over 280 branches across the country look forward to a long and fruitful partnership that will play a significant role in financially securing more Indians.

Speaking on the partnership, Vineet Arora Chief Business Officer, Distribution, Data & technology, HDFC Life, commented "We are pleased to partner with CARS24 Financial Services Pvt. Ltd. Their focus on innovation and are technology complement our wide range of offerings and together we can reach out to a wider audience thereby providing them with life insurance solutions. We believe life insurance is a must-have for every individual with our simple and accessible for all consumers.

foundation stone to building a strong future for oneself and one's family. This partnership with Cars24 Financial Services Pvt. Ltd. will further strengthen our efforts to reach out to individuals across the country and secure them, financially."

Vikram Singh Pathania, Vice President of Consumer Finance at CARS24 and Head of INSURE24, expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership, saying, "We are delighted to join hands with HDFC Life to take our product offerings to the next level. HDFC Life's forward-thinking strategies, and profound understanding of the digital landscape, perfectly complement our mission to make insurance simple and accessible for all consumers.

HDFC Life's strengths in product innovation, digital expertise, and seamless technology integration will empower INSURE24 to effectively engage with today's digitally-savvy consumers."



## A LEGENDARY DIRECTOR C.S.RAO CENTINARY CELEBRATIONS NGL TRUST CONFERRED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD TO MUSIC SCHOLAR SRI. V. A. K. RANGA RAO.

Chennai Jan 22, 2025: C S RAO 100 marks a day to celebrate the 100th Birth Anniversary of a doyen in Indian Cinema, a famous Director, actor and script writer, Sri. Chittajallu Srinivasa Rao. He is the son of legendary Director of the Telugu Cinema Industry, Sri Chittajallu Pullaiah.



CS Rao has directed 65 movies in many South Indian languages, namely, Tamil, Telugu, Kanada, Malayalam and Oriya. He has also worked as an Actor in Telugu & Tamil movies.

On this day NGL Trust is celebrating the film journey of Cine Director C S Rao - his daughter Smt. Devi Krishna along with the Rotary Club of Chennai Spotlight, Rotary International District 3234, takes pride in conferring the

Lifetime Achievement Award to Sri. V. A. K. Ranga Rao, an octogenarian, film historian, dancer and music scholar, who holds a record for his collection of over 53,000, 78 rpm gramophone records in Indian and foreign languages. Several members of the film fraternity, Rotarians, well wishers and family will be present at this event at Andhra Social and Cultural Association, T. Nagar, Chennai.

## INDIA, FRANCE MARITIME DIALOGUE FOCUS ON SHARED VISION

Chennai Jan 22, 2025: India and France held the 7th Maritime Cooperation Dialogue in New Delhi on January 14, during which both sides reaffirmed their shared vision for maritime security, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and protecting freedom of navigation.



The Dialogue was co-chaired by Pavan Kapoor, Deputy National Security Advisor, National Security Council Secretariat, India, and Alice Rufo, Director General for International Relations and Strategy, Ministry for the Armed Forces, France. Both sides discussed enhancing their cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region and reaffirmed their shared vision for maritime security, a key element of the India - France Strategic Partnership. India and France reiterated their strong commitment to upholding international law, supporting multilateralism, including through regional organisations, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and protecting freedom of navigation, a statement said.

Recalling their vision for a free and open Indian Ocean Region, first expressed in the 'Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region' in 2018, India and France agreed to support free and secure access to sea lanes of communications through collaboration between their maritime assets and organisations. France welcomed the participation of the Indian Navy in the Combined Maritime Forces and looks forward to India's leadership of the appropriate Combined Task Forces. India and France agreed to develop a joint assessment of the threats to maritime security in the region; to counter illicit maritime activities, including piracy and armed robbery, maritime terrorism,

contraband smuggling, Illegal Unreported and Unregulated fishing; hybrid as well as cyber security threats and marine pollution.

Both sides agreed to strengthen existing mechanisms of cooperation such as implementation of the agreed framework of exchange of information through enhanced information exchange between Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region, Gurugram and Regional Coordination Operations Centre, Seychelles and Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre, Madagascar in the Indian Ocean Region and explore opportunities for coordinated surveillance whilst deployed to counter threats to

maritime security in the region. India and France committed to mutually support each other in maritime security engagements and constructs. As part of their joint commitment towards the conservation of biodiversity and the protection of oceans, India and France also agreed to preserve marine resources in the Indian Ocean Region, through the United Nations Ocean Conference. Both countries welcomed the progress made on biodiversity and blue economy during the last bilateral dialogue on blue economy and ocean governance, and agreed to pursue cooperation at the regional level, as members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association, it a d d e d .

## INDIA, JAPAN TO ENHANCE STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

Chennai Jan 22, 2025: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held a bilateral meeting with his Japanese counterpart Takeshi Iwaya in Washington during which they took stock of the bilateral cooperation, and EAM extended an invite to the Japanese FM to visit India.

This was their second meeting, after the one on the sidelines of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Italy on

November 26 last year, a statement said. The Ministers utilised the meeting to take stock of salient issues in bilateral cooperation, including in the political, security, economic, technological, and people-to-people domains. They expressed satisfaction at the level, range, and pace of exchanges between the two countries.

They agreed to maintain strategic communication through

frequent dialogue, including Strategic Dialogue and the 2+2 Dialogue of Foreign and Defence Ministers. In this context, EAM extended an invitation to Foreign Minister Iwaya to visit India.

On the 40th anniversary of the signing of the first Memorandum of Understanding between India and Japan on Science & Technology in 1985, the Ministers declared 2025-

26 as the India-Japan Year of Science, Technology and Innovation. The Ministers also welcomed efforts to enhance people-to-people exchanges, especially in areas of technology, skills, and education.

The meeting reinforced the enduring friendship between India and Japan based on mutual trust, shared values, and commitment to regional stability.

## JUSTICE (RTD) SHRI U.U. LALIT CALLS FOR LAW EDUCATION THAT EQUIPS LAWYERS TO RESOLVE COMPLEX ISSUES OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Chennai Jan 22, 2025: Shri Justice Udai Umesh Lalit, Former Chief Justice of India called for law education that equips lawyers to resolve the complex issues of social and economic justice. His comments came during his keynote address at a plenary session of the International Annual TradeLab Conference organized by The Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL), established by the Department of Commerce, Government of India. The session was part of the two-day conference organised in collaboration with the TradeLab Network and the WTO Chairs Programme on 13th and 14th December 2024 at Tamarind Hall, Indian Habitat Centre, New Delhi.



He highlighted the landmark decisions of the Supreme Court of India that brought to the forefront the issue of affirmative action and the fundamental right of every child to free compulsory primary and good quality education. He also highlighted the importance of economic justice coupled with liberalization policy in shaping India's robust socio-economic fabric. In this context, he praised the TradeLab initiative that imparts clinical education to law students on a pro bono basis that can equip future lawyers and academicians to resolve the complex issues of social and economic justice within the ambit of international economic law.

Shri Sanjay Chadha, Head of Public Policy,

Uber Technologies delivered the opening remarks. He emphasized the significance of International Economic Law, which examines how sovereign states interact in trade, blending legal and economic perspectives. He shared real-life anecdotes from his experiences in trade negotiations. He highlighted the gap in understanding trade agreements and the need for more capacity and building in negotiation skills and legal expertise to better equip negotiators.

The conference's main theme was advancing teaching pedagogy and clinical legal education in the realm of international trade and investment law. Panel discussions were held on various pertinent and ongoing topics within this legal domain. Additionally, closed-door sessions were conducted for TradeLab executive committee members and academic supervisors to provide valuable feedback.

Day 1 of the conference included a closed session for Tradelab executive committee members followed by open sessions including the

Experience-sharing session by TradeLab India, the session on Scope & Opportunities of Clinical Legal Education in International Legal Practicum and the final session on Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Teaching Pedagogy. Day 2 of the conference witnessed three panel discussions and three student presentations of TradeLab projects of MNLU Mumbai, GNLU, QMUL London conducted during the past year, followed by the closing session.

The Conference led to the diffusion of key insights regarding the development of the TradeLab clinics that can foster innovative approaches and develop capacity amongst law students to conduct groundbreaking research in international trade and investment law.

TradeLab India is headed by CTIL to develop India's capacity in international economic law by establishing TradeLab clinics at law schools in a hub and spoke model. So far, CTIL has produced around 15 projects, and at present, 6 top-tier Universities are running

CTIL's TradeLab clinics.

The TradeLab-India initiative spearheaded by CTIL stands at the forefront of capacity building of legal education and practice in international economic law. TradeLab-India has equipped students with practical experience and contributed towards shaping the future of India's engagement with global trade and investment issues

TradeLab was initiated by Professors of International Law, Prof. Joost Pauwelyn and Prof. Sergio Puig and has attained a global presence since 2013 with renowned practitioners and academicians like Ms Jennifer Hillman, Prof. Debra Steger and Prof. Valerie Hughes joining the initiative. TradeLab is incorporated in Switzerland as a non-profit under the Swiss Civil Code.

TradeLab students have actively participated in the 2023 & 2024 WTO Public Forum. Membership of TradeLab is open only to universities/centres that participate or want to participate in a legal clinic or practicum part of the TradeLab network.

## INDIA CELEBRATES PARAKRAM DIWAS 2025 TO HONOUR THE LEGACY OF NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 128TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY



Chennai Jan 22, 2025: On the occasion of Parakram Diwas 2025, a grand celebration is set to unfold from 23rd January to 25th January, 2025 at Barabati fort in the historic city of Cuttack, the birthplace of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The multifaceted celebration will honour the legacy of Netaji on his 128th birth anniversary. The three day event, scheduled for 23rd-25th January, 2025, will be inaugurated by Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, the

Chief Minister of Odisha, on 23.01.2025.

Following the government's decision to commemorate Netaji's birth anniversary as 'Parakram Diwas', the first Parakram Diwas was held that year at Victoria Memorial in Kolkata. The year 2022 saw the unveiling of a hologram statue of Netaji at India Gate, New Delhi; and in 2023, 21 unnamed islands in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago were named after the 21 Param Vir Chakra Awardees. In

2024, the Prime Minister had inaugurated the event at the historic Red Fort in Delhi, the site of the INA trials.

Continuing the tradition, this year the Parakram Diwas celebration is being organised by the Ministry of Culture at Cuttack, Netaji's birthplace and the city that shaped his early sensibilities. The three day long event will start with the Chief Minister, Odisha and other dignitaries paying homage to Netaji and

hoisting the National Flag at the house where Netaji was born, which has now been converted to a Museum dedicated to him. Subsequently, the Parakram Diwas celebration at Barabati fort will begin with a video message by the Prime Minister and will feature a Book, Photo and Archival exhibition focused on Netaji's life, showcasing rare photographs, letters and documents as well as an AR/VR display chronicling his remarkable journey. A Sculpture workshop and a painting competition-cum-workshop are also being planned on the occasion. The event will also feature cultural performances honouring Netaji's legacy and highlighting the rich cultural tradition of Odisha. Besides, films on Netaji's life will also be screened during the event.

## APOLLO HOSPITALS EXPLORES THE ROLE OF DIGITAL TWINS IN HEALTHCARE

Chennai Jan 22, 2025: Apollo Research Academy hosted an exclusive guest lecture by Prof. Peter Coveney on the topic "The Role of Digital Twins in Healthcare" today at Madras Club for senior healthcare consultants. The event was organised by Dr. Madhu Sasidhar, President & CEO of Apollo Hospitals Division, along with Prof. Ravi Mahajan, Director – Research & Innovation, Apollo Hospitals Group

Digital twin technology is a tool which involves the creation of a detailed, real-time virtual replica of a physical object or a system. When applied to

the medical field, this technology can have a profound impact, as creating a 'twin' of a patient's body may help visualize and predict how their body may react to certain treatments. With today's computing power at hand, a complete simulation of the physical body of a patient, including internal systems, biological processes and genetic makeup as well as patient history can be created. Using this virtual twin, doctors can then prescribe highly personalized treatment plans, while being able to predict how the body may heal over time. In essence, a digital twin



helps doctors optimize any medical intervention with precision and foresight. Photo Caption : L to R - Prof. Ravi Mahajan, Director, Research and Innovation, Apollo Hospitals group; Prof. Peter Coveney, Director, Centre for Computational Science, Professor of Physical Chemistry, Honorary Professor in Computer Science, Associate Director, Advanced Research Computing Centre, University College London; Dr. Madhu Sasidhar, President and CEO Hospital Division, Apollo Hospitals; Mr. Sivaramakrishnan Venkateswaran, CEO, Apollo Knowledge.

## CM ASKS CENTRE TO WITHDRAW DRAFT UGC REGULATIONS

Chennai Jan 22, 2025 In an effort to rally opposition to two contentious draft regulations recently released by the University Grants Commission (UGC), Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday penned a letter to the Chief Ministers of all opposition-ruled states, urging them to pass resolutions in their respective assemblies against the proposals.

The letter was addressed to the Chief Ministers of Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Telangana, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, and Delhi. Referring to the resolution passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly, which called for the immediate repeal of these guidelines, Stalin emphasized the importance of states adopting a unified stance.

Highlighting the draft regulations' problematic aspects, including limiting states' roles in appointing vice-



chancellors and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, mandating entrance exams for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) admissions, Stalin said: "These guidelines infringe on states' rights and undermine the autonomy of universities, posing a threat to the federal structure of our country. We must stand united to oppose this centralization of power."

In addition to addressing state leaders, Stalin wrote to Union

for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2025.

Stalin also opposed the idea of permitting arts and science undergraduates to pursue PG degrees in engineering without a solid grounding in basic engineering principles.

Appointments of Vice-Chancellors: He reiterated the state's objection to the proposed changes, which eliminate state governments' roles in selecting vice-chancellors for state-funded universities.

Stalin warned that allowing non-academicians to serve as vice-chancellors could result in the appointment of individuals lacking essential academic and administrative expertise.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister enclosed a copy of the resolution passed by the state assembly earlier this month, urging other states to adopt similar measures to safeguard their educational autonomy.

## 27TH PRIME MINISTER'S SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (PM-STIAC) MEETING DISCUSSES CELL AND GENE THERAPY IN INDIA

Chennai Jan 22, 2025 : 27th meeting of Prime Ministers' Science, Technology & Innovation Council (PM-STIAC) was convened today, 21st January 2025 under the chairmanship of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood at Vigyan Bhawan.

Along with the PM-STIAC members, the meeting brought together key government officials, industry players, health professionals and academicians to discuss Cell and Gene Therapy in India.

Member (Health) NITI Aayog Dr. VK Paul; Scientific Secretary at the Office of Principal Scientific Advisor to Government of India Dr. Parvinder Maini; Secretary, Department of Biotechnology Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale; Secretary, Department of Health Research Dr. Rajiv Bahl; Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO Dr. Samir V. Kamat; Secretary, Department of Space Dr. V. Narayanan; Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, and Secretary, Department of Science and Technology Prof. Abhay Karandikar also joined the meeting.

In his opening address, Prof. Sood emphasized that approximately 70 million people in India suffer from rare diseases, with 80% of these being genetic in nature. He pointed out the significant disease burden in the country, which includes a rise in cancer cases. Prof. Sood highlighted the immense potential of Cell and Gene Therapy (CGT) to meet these critical medical needs. He noted that advancements like the Genome India Project uniquely position India to lead in personalized gene therapies. Building on the successes of CAR-T cell therapy and gene therapy for Hemophilia, Prof. Sood mentioned that efforts could result in



affordable and accessible healthcare. Industry's work in Effective CGT. Additionally, implementation presentations proposed. The requires collaboration emphasized the need importance of Centers among government, for regulatory reforms, of Excellence was healthcare providers, indigenization of raw stressed to foster researchers, and materials, enhanced innovation and build industry, along with a infrastructure for capacity along with holistic program to clinical trials and ensuring affordability, address costs, research, and and accessibility for regulations, capacity-building the country's infrastructure, and efforts to develop healthcare needs and public perception. skilled human priorities.

Dr. VK Paul, resources to meet Dr. Paul Member NITI Aayog, industry demands. summarized the emphasized the urgent Dr. Rajeev discussion by need for India to Raghuvanshi, the identifying key actions accelerate progress in Drugs Controller required to enhance CGT. He highlighted General of India the nation's capability the importance of (DCGI), presented the in CGT products. He synergizing efforts existing guidance for emphasized the need between academia and C G T d r u g for technology sharing industry, with strong development and and transfer from support from the current regulatory academia to industry government. Dr. Paul framework. He and in complementing discussed the emphasized the the capabilities of encouraging success ongoing reforms stakeholders in rates of CGT aimed at enhancing the product development. compared to approval process, Additionally, he conventional including digitization highlighted the treatment methods. He to streamline importance of asserted that through p r o c e d u r e s , ensuring access and collaboration between strengthening the affordability through the government, Scientific Expert cost-effective industry, start-ups, Committees (SEC), analysis. Dr. Paul also regulators, and and building capacity underscored the academia, CGT to advance CGT while necessity of securing treatments can be upholding stringent funds to drive these made more affordable safety standards. efforts forward.

After the In his concluding The first session of presentations, the remarks, Prof. Sood the presentations Chair invited reiterated the showcased the interventions from suggestions of initiatives, special invitees who participants including advancements, and e c h o e d t h e the importance of programs of the suggestions and adopting a mission- Department of findings of speakers. mode approach to Biotechnology, the P M - S T I A C advance CGT in India. Council of Scientific members emphasized He emphasized that and Industrial the broad potential of this approach is crucial Research (CSIR), the Cell and Gene for indigenizing all Therapy (CGT) in aspects of the CGT Medical Research (ICMR), and the treating various supply chain and disorders, including developing new technologies. He Department of cancer. They highlighted the crucial highlighted the need role of CDSCO and Pharmaceuticals in the development of Cell for a national mission on CGT to drive ongoing efforts in and Gene Therapies. advancements in the streamlining the field. Discussions regulatory processes for C G T s . Dr. Rahul Purwar from IIT Bombay and Dr. Alok Srivastava included the creation of a centralized Sood underscored the need for a centralized Hospital in Bengaluru database to compile dashboard to foster information on efforts, synergy among all on the development of resources, and disease relevant stakeholders. As a way forward, he India's first data, aiding in creating a comprehensive CAR-T prioritizing diseases therapy and gene relevant to the Indian C G T c l i n i c s comprehensive mission document by the H e m o p h i l i a , suggested to establish ICMR in consultation with DBT and other agencies to prepare the C G T c l i n i c s To promote industry roadmap for cell participation and and gene therapy.

Industry colocalized with government hospitals to improve trial accessibility. To promote industry participation and

## AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT: RS 1,561 CRORE CONTRACT INKED WITH HEAVY VEHICLES FACTORY, AVNL FOR 47 T-72 BRIDGE LAYING TANKS FOR INDIAN ARMY

Chennai Jan 22, 2025 Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed a contract with Heavy Vehicles Factory, a unit of Armoured Vehicle Nigam Limited, for the procurement of 47 Tank-72 Bridge Laying Tanks (BLT) for the Indian Army at a total cost of Rs 1,560.52 crore. The contract was inked by the senior officials of MoD and HVF/AVNL in the presence of Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh in New Delhi on January 21, 2025.



The BLT is a critical equipment which is employed to launch bridges during offensive/defensive operations by Mechanised Forces. It provides integral bridging capability to the Tank and Armoured Vehicle fleet enhancing the battlefield mobility and offensive capability. The present case being a Buy (Indian - Indigenously Designed and Manufactured) will give

impetus to the Make-in-India initiative in defence.

This project will also play a pivotal role in boosting the overall economy and increasing employment avenues in the country.