


RAISING FUNDS BY FOLLOW-ON ISSUANCE

National Highways Infra Trust (NHAI InvIT), the infrastructure investment trust sponsored by National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) to support Government of India's National Monetization Pipeline, has raised a sum of Rs 1,430 crore from domestic and international investors through placement of its units, for part funding its acquisition of three additional road projects from NHAI. The placement of units with institutional investors, witnessed strong demand from both existing investors, who reposed their commitment by participating in the process, as well as new investors. The units have been subscribed by a gamut of institutional investors including Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board, State Bank of India, SBI Pension Fund, SBI Mutual Fund, IOCL Employee Provident Fund, L&T Staff Provident Fund, Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Karamchhari Pension Fund, TATA AIG and Star Union Daiichi Life Insurance. NHAI subscribed to the units through preferential allotment to maintain its unit-holding of at least 15 per cent. The units were subscribed through a book build process at INR 109 per unit, at a premium over floor price of Rs 107.12 per unit.

In addition to above, NHAI InvIT has also filed prospectus with SEBI for issuance of Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) to raise Rs 1,500 crore. The NCDs would carry a coupon of 7.90 per cent payable semi-annually and would be available for subscription by both retail and institutional investors. The success of the follow-on issuance of units by NHAI InvIT demonstrates its attractiveness to sophisticated institutional investors. Their participation in this round supports National Monetization Pipeline, in which NHAI has the largest share and is crucial for Prime Minister's and Minister of Road Transport and Highways' vision of development of roads sector in the country. "In a historic first, NHAI InvIT has, through a transparent & market driven process, raised the funds in a follow-on issuance with entire premium accruing to NHAI. We thank the existing investors for their continuous faith in NHAI InvIT as well as new investors for coming on board in making NHAI InvIT a success," said Alka Upadhyaya, NHAI Chairperson. Launched in November 2021, NHAI InvIT had raised Rs 8,011 crore for NHAI in its maiden round, with initial portfolio of five operating toll roads of aggregate length of 390 Km. With the acquisition of three additional road projects, NHAI InvIT will own, operate and maintain a portfolio of eight operating toll roads with an aggregate length of 636 Km spread across the states of Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh, with concession period ranging between 20 to 30 years.



OFF 'D' CUFF

Fix Your Attention on Him

There have been many thinkers who wrote reminiscences of those persons who resurrected after death. Their experiences after death have been recorded. Most of them said that after death they heard the sounds of tiny bells. They saw a halo of light. You cannot imagine that light on the basis of worldly light. They said this also; initially it was a light. Later on they saw it in different forms of appearances. To some it was in the form of Lord Krishna, to others as Lord Shiva, and to still others as Jesus Christ. Everyone sees that glow of light initially. Later it transforms itself into different appearances. These different forms conform to how and which God you have been worshipping in your life. It manifests in the appearance which you worshipped when you were alive. Your life and death become meaningful and relevant in this manner.

Maintain deep inside your heart that feeling, that disposition and that form in which you worship your God. Finally, that Parmeshwar, in the form of light, will make Himself realize and felt by you in that very form in which you worship Him. Therefore, go on thinking, contemplating and meditating upon that form only. There are many gods and goddesses but, as people say, you should have one god of your own, your Ishtadev. Worship all gods and goddesses you see in the temple but keep only one Ishtadev, whom you like and of whom you think day and night. Ask all that you want from Him, cry before Him only. If you have to complain, complain to Him only, and thank him only; to the rest, you may just salute though, respectfully. You may worship Mother Durga, or Hanuman, or Lord Shiva, or Lord Ram, or Radha-Krishna, or you may worship abstract, formless form of God i.e., Nirakar. Then contemplate light, a bright halo of light. Fix your thoughts and mind at one place and then continuously think of that only. 'Dhyeyam Shreepatim' contemplate and concentrate daily, continuously in an unbroken manner, upon the visage or appearance of Shreepati, Lakshminipati, Hari Narayan. Keep that image in mind daily and let

Relevance of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita in modern times

■ OMKAR DATTATRAY

The relevance of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita in the modern times cannot be exaggerated. It is a spiritual treasure which guides us and shows us how to live a life of contentment. It is a nectar coming from the lips of the Lord Krishna and everyone of us should partake this nectar meaning thereby that we should read and study the treasure kept by the Lord in this book. This scripture has got universal applicability and it is cosmopolitan in nature. Its significance and importance cannot be denied in present world. This spiritual treasure is especially relevant in the modern greed-torn world where everything is weighed on the touchstone of gain or loss. In these days of the materialistic world, where there is mad race for money ,name and fame this treasure helps us to lead a contented life and the book shows us as to how the purposeful life and meaningful life can be lived in this materialistic world. The world celebrates Gita Jayanti on December 14 with great fervor and enthusiasm and on the occasion of the Gita Mahantsava, Gita recitation was done and the importance of this scripture was brought home to the people by the learned men who had mastery over Gita. It was also brought fore to the people that the habit of reading and studying of the Gita is very useful especially in the modern times where there is greed and cunningness in the world and in such a situation the significance of this treasure is next to none. Bhagavad Gita is a philosophy and it is shows a way of life to the universe. In fact the study of this scripture helps the mankind to lead a balanced life and it guides us towards the supreme and ultimate truth. The Gita is the sum total and essence of

Upanishads and one who reads Gita is said to have understood Upanishads also. The greatness of the Gita is that it is a guide for the practical life and it shows us how to live a life in the world and live a life, like a lotus away from the worldly mud and filth. Gita teaches us renunciation not from the world but renunciation from the wrong and selfish activities. Thus it teaches us to renounce the bad actions and live a selfless life. It never teaches us to renounce the world but to renounce all the negative thoughts and actions in the world. This scripture teaches us to live a saintly life away from the materialism and greed but it in no way exhorts us to leave the world. It teaches the mankind to leave the sense pleasures and live a life of contentment and a meaningful life away from the madness of the world. The Gita teaches us the highest philosophy of Karamyoga and exhorts us to perform the allotted works and duties in a selfless manner and leave the results of the actions in the hands of the Almighty. It teaches us as to how we will perform our duties and works without attachment while remaining in the world. Therefore it teaches us to work incessantly without bothering about the fruit of our actions. So it teaches us detachment from the materialistic pleasures and the Gita ordains us to perform our duties and works without caring for the results of our Karnas. Thus the philosophy of Karamyoga is the greatest philosophy to lead a life of purpose and teaches the people how to work and perform duties in a detached manner. Therefore selfless service and the service to mankind is borne home to the people through Bhagavad Gita and the reading and its practice makes us noble individuals so that we work and per-

form duties with selfless devotion. It teaches and helps us to work and live in the world like a saint. Therefore, Gita exhorts us to live a detached life while performing our allotted duties and works. It says that work is your right and the fruit of the work should not bind you to the worldly pleasures. So it teaches the people not to renounce the duties and works but to renounce the selfishness while working and living in the world. Gita in fact is an empirical and scientific knowledge and thus it guides us in the practical world. It is the Chapter third of the Gita which teaches the people the philosophy of Karamyoga. Thus this chapter of the Gita teaches us to live a life of a Karmyogi and work without caring and bothering about the fruits of your activities. Gita also teaches the humanity the yoga of knowledge as well as the Bhakti yoga which is total surrender and love for the God. It is said of the Kaliyuga that the surrender and the love of the almighty is the simplest way to reach and attain the God and thus the philosophy of the Baktiyoga is the only simple way to know the Supreme Being. In fact the philosophy of love and devotion is the sure way to attain God in this universe. It is the chapter eleventh of the Bhagavad Gita which is dedicated to Baktiyoga meaning yoga of devotion. It says that total devotion and love for the God is the simplest way to reach the almighty in this Kaliyuga. Thus the people observe total devotion and love for the almighty to reach to the ultimate goal and attain God. Thus the Lord Krishna exhorts the humanity to perform total devotion and practice the devotion and love for the God and in this way we can attain the supreme Lord. Thus we should do total devotion to the

God and surrender to Him and in this way we can reach to God and so yoga of devotion is a simple way to attain the supreme being and therefore we should perform devotion to God so that we will be successful in this Kaliyuga and reach the ultimate truth. So the Karmyoga and Baktiyoga are the two ways to realize the god and their description is given in Gita along with other forms and systems of yoga. Gita is the complete text of philosophy and shows us how to lead a life in this materialistic world were greed reigns supreme and thus Gita is the practical guide to lead a happy and contented life in this world. Since Gita is the essence of Upanishads because the Vadanta Philosophy is made easy for understanding through it. When the Upanishads are compared to cows, the Gita takes the position of milk. When one has plenty of milk at disposal one need not undergo laborious task of maintaining cows. One who has studied and understood Bhagavad Gita may be said to have caught the cardinal teachings of the Upanishads. The importance and relevance of Gita cannot be exaggerated in the modern world as it has much practical value and relevance for the mankind. Let us all read and study the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita in order to be successful in the world. When the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi was facing any problem in life he was seeking the solution in the Gita. The significance of Gita can be rightly be summand in the words of Ashborn who has said, "Burn all libraries of the world for their essence is in Bhagavad Gita".

(The author is a Retired Education Officer and Columnist).

G20 summit: UP ready to host Biden to Putin

■ VIVEK SHUKLA

After exactly four decades when Non-Aligned summit was held at New Delhi in 1983, India is again going to host major international event when G20 summit would be held in national capital on 9-10 September 2023. India will assume the Presidency of the G20 for one year from December 1, 2022, to November 30, 2023. Apart from head of the states of G20 member nations, India is likely to invite several other countries as an observer. In nutshell, it would be a very important world event. India will position itself as a major tourism destination during its year-long Presidency of G20 with visa reforms and ease of travel. In the backdrop of G20, the Uttar Pradesh government is working overtime to attract head of the states, ministers, delegates, journalists and others attending the G-20 summit. Four cities of Uttar Pradesh, including Luck now, Varanasi, Greater Noida and Agra, will host events of the G-20 summit. Gujarat's Rann of Kutch, West Bengal's Siliguri, Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir, Goa and some other cities will also host G20 meetings and seminars.

Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is himself taking meetings of state government officials in order to make four cities of the state fully prepared to host the G20 delegates. It goes without saying that hosting the mega event in cities of UP will serve as an opportunity to introduce 'Brand UP' to the world. Of course, Varanasi is the most venerable city in India for Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. Every Hindu wishes to visit there at least once in his/her lifetime and Sarnath is located 10 Km north-east of Varanasi. It is here where Gautama Buddha first taught the Dhamma, and where the Buddhist Sangha came into existence. And Parshvanatha, the twenty-third Tirthankara of Jains, was born here. According to Jain tradition, it the birthplace of three more Tirthankaras, namely Suparsivanatha, Chandraprabha and Shreyansanatha.

Meanwhile, all those who wish to visit India always think of visiting Agra to see architectural marvel Taj

Mahal. Agra attracts millions of tourists every year as it has several other places too related to Mughal era, including the mausoleum of great Mughal Emperor Akbar. If Agra and Varanasi have very rich past, Lucknow is the seat of UP and Greater Noida is a bustling modern city with plethora of educational institutions and corporate offices. Hundreds of foreign expats work here. Surely, the choices of these four UP cities are good enough to showcase the life and times of India's most populous state.

As President Xi Jinping of China, France President Emmanuel Macron, Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, Russian President Vladimir Putin, John Biden, President of United States, Liz Truss, Prime Minister of United Kingdom and many more influential leaders would be in India during the G 20 summit, Uttar Pradesh government is leaving no stone unturned to impress the G20 delegates. Of course, the world leaders would visit different places, including UP, to know more about India. It is most likely that some big-ticket foreign heads visit UP. It may be recalled that the slain Japanese premier Shinzo Abe had a long association with Varanasi. He had visited the city along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 12, 2015 and attended the Ganga Aarti. He loved the people and mood of holy city. In any case, very large number of tourists from Japan and various Buddhist countries visit Varanasi every year. They visit Sarnath without fail. All the four UP cities would host the G-20 delegates according to the Indian spirit of 'Atithi Devo Bhava'. Accordingly, preparations are going on to make the event grand in these districts. UP had a rich history, and therefore, its ancient art, culture, history, and archaeological features should be compiled and presented at the G-20 platform. Yogi Adhityanath has told his officials, "To make the whole world aware of the potential of 'New India's New Uttar Pradesh', we have to systematically present the cultural, spiritual, social, economic and industrial features of the state."

G20 or Group of Twenty is an intergovernmental forum

comprising 19 countries and the European Union (EU). The G20 member nations are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. Union Tourism Secretary Arvind Singh said India plans to position itself as a 'major tourism destination' during its Presidency of G20. We plan to ensure due rigour, dedication, and showcase our cultural richness while welcoming the world to our nation. We plan to bring in necessary interventions including visa reforms, ease of travel, traveler-friendly immigration facilities at airports and openness to international travel. Not only UP, others Indian states should also work hard so that G20 summit gives them an international recognition. They have to realize the fact such summits don't take place very often. So they must grab this opportunity with both hands. Tourism sector in India has a massive potential to grow thick and fast. It gives foreign exchange and creates massive job opportunities. Foreign tourist arrivals account for the country's third largest share of foreign exchange (forex) earnings. Forex earnings from the tourism sector saw around 9.4 per cent annual growth in the 2011 to 2019 period. A further push to the sector can result in much higher forex reserves in India which are of great significance, especially when the global energy and food prices are northward bound. Data suggests that G20 member nations account for the highest foreign tourist arrival numbers in India. Surely, if UP and other states improve their tourist infrastructure, India would reap huge fruits in time come. It is said that Saudi Arabia was predominantly seen as a religious destination, people were visiting it mainly for Mecca and Medina. Post G20, it is open to travelers from Europe and other countries. Hence, it is an opportunity for India to truly utilize G20 in 2023. This is an event that we should look forward to; the Government of India looks forward to, for positioning and projecting India as an important destination for the rest of the world.

Missile Man of India

■ KULJEET SINGH

As we all know today 15th of October is the birthday of Sir A P J Abdul Kalam and on this great, I would try to highlight few points from his autobiography book 'Wings of Fire'. It is sure that with the help of this book we can easily understand life-history and contribution of the great son of Mother India Dr A P J Abdul Kalam.

Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam (A P J Abdul Kalam) was one of India's greatest scientists. He was an Aerospace engineer, professor, and chancellor of the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology. On top of this, he also served as the 11th President of India from 2002 to 2007. During his term as President, he was popularly known as the People's President. He was responsible for the development of India's first satellite launch vehicle, the SLV-3. Kalam is popularly known as the Missile Man of India for developing ballistic missiles and space rocket technology. Kalam also played a pivotal role in India's Pokhran-II nuclear test in 1998, the first since India's initial nuclear test in 1974. He also received honorary doctorates from thirty universities and the country's three highest civilian honors - Padma Bhushan (1981), Padma Vibhushan (1990), and Bharat Ratna (1997).

Wings of Fire: A P J Abdul Kalam intro-

duces us to his early life in Rameswaram where he was born and raised in a secure middle-class Tamil family. He proceeds to describe the communal harmony in Rameswaram and the stable atmosphere for healthy discussion of spiritual matters. Hailing from a predominantly Muslim locality, Kalam learned respect for other faiths from his parents. During Kalam's early life, his close relatives encouraged Kalam to excel in studies and would talk about the discoveries of literature and science beyond Rameswaram. Inspired to fulfill his dreams, he left his home to attend Schwartz High School in Ramanathapuram Kalam throws light on the time he got selected at Madras Institute of Technology (MIT) for engineering when admission fees were expensive. His elder sister stood by him and helped him financially which deeply moved Kalam to study hard for a scholarship. At MIT, he dreamed to fly an aircraft and hence chose aeronautical engineering. Dr A P J Abdul Kalam sends a message to the future engineering students that 'when they choose their specialization, the essential point to consider is whether the choice articulates their inner feelings and aspirations'. He was determined to join either the Air Force or a job at Directorate of Technical Development and Production, DTD&P (Air) at the Ministry of Defence. However, Kalam was not successful in join-

ing the Indian Air Force and could not fulfill his dream to fly. Frustrated, Kalam turned to Swami Sivananda who taught him to accept his destiny and go ahead with life. He learned that this was not in his destiny. He got accepted as a Senior Scientific Assistant at DTD&P (Air). Here, Kalam faced his first failure. His indigenous Hovercraft 'Nandi' was shelved by a new ministry which favored imported hovercrafts. Kalam learned the harsh truth that certain events may be out of control in life. However, 'Nandi' had created interest by then and as if destiny came knocking, Kalam was called for an interview at Indian Committee for Space Research for the post of Rocket Engineer. At this interview, he met Prof Sarabhai, father of the Indian space program. He learned many valuable management and leadership lessons from Prof. Sarabhai. At an early stage of his career, Kalam trusted that leadership with the free exchange of views was more desirable than giving directions. Kalam also learned that leaders exist at every level. Kalam throws light on his work schedule when he started leading projects. On entering his office he would first clean the table, prioritize papers for immediate action & remove everything else from sight. This memorable line has aged well which tells us to take action now when we are interested in doing a good thing and want to be remembered for it. Interestingly, He

preferred a daring attitude with persistence to perfection. He favored allowing mistakes as a learning process as they are inevitable but generally manageable. He advocated building own education, skills and keeping up-to-date. Kalam narrates his experience when he was faced with three deaths in his family. He faced failure when the first flight trial of Indian SLV-3 crashed for which Kalam took responsibility as a leader. He describes two visionaries Prof Dhawan and Dr Brahm Prakash who mentored him during such days. Kalam received the Padma Bhushan after SLV-3 was successfully launched. He then moved to rocketry at the Defence Research and Development Organization and successfully introduced the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme for the development of five missiles namely Prithvi, Trishul, Akash, Nag and Agni. On the successful launch of India's missile program, Kalam received the Padma Vibhushan. Despite repeated failures faced, Kalam always maintained that failures are seeds of further learning and emphatically believed that India can be a technological leader. There is no limit for describing A P J Abdul Kalam he is unexplainable but here I have only tried to summarize words of his book Wings of Fire. At last one of the greatest scientists left us on July 27, 2015 at an age of 83 but he was always alive in the heart of everybody.

YOUR COLUMN Save Soil, Save Earth

Dear Editor,
Essentially soil is the basic entity on which all terrestrial life depends. Ninety five percent of all the food that is consumed by human comes from soil. As much as 95% of all antibiotics taken by human and animal also came from soil & this clearly shows that soil and life have evolved together. There is no life without soil and vice versa. Undoubtedly, soil is one of the vital living ecosys-

tems and natural resources for sustaining all creatures of God; human, animal, vegetation & the mineral kingdom. It is not possible for the ever increasing world habitats and population to procure food, cloth or shelter without soil. Climate change, food security, nutritional security, water quality, water renewability, biodiversity, land grab, political stability, human health, well being, peace and prosperity - soil is the basic of all that. Now the major issue has been human greed & market driven, indiscriminate and out of proportion use of chemical fertilizers & pesticides. This has left an accumulative effect on the fertility of soil, impacting negative financial and

environmental consequence all over the world and India in particular. Other threats to the conservation of soil resources are soil erosion both by water and air, salinization/alkalinity, acidity, organic carbon losses, nutrient imbalance, pollution/contamination by toxic substances, and soil sealing and capping. Urgent measures are required to arrest the degradation process and to restore productivity of degraded soils so that more food could be produced to provide livelihood and environmental security to the increasing Indian population.

Vivek Koul,
Jammu.