

OPINION 6
DIETARY PATTERNS AND
THEIR ECONOMIC IMPACT

WORLD 8
WEST IS WAGING 'REAL WAR'
ON RUSSIA, SAYS PUTIN

MONEY 10
MARKETS END FLAT IN VOLATILE TRADE
AMID WEAK TRENDS IN GLOBAL EQUITIES

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY MAY 10, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



**CSK TO FACE
DELHI CAPITALS
IN IPL TODAY**
12 SPORT

www.dailypioneer.com

Pilot bombards Gehlot with 'graft' questions

Gehlot's leader Raje, not Sonia: Raj ex-Dy CM
PNS ■ JAIPUR/NEW DELHI



Congress leader Sachin Pilot addresses a press conference at his residence in Jaipur on Tuesday. PTI

Disgruntled senior Congress leader and former Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot on Tuesday once again declared an "open war" against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, second within a month's time.

He said the recent speech by the Congress veteran (Gehlot) indicated that his real leader is BJP's Vasundhara Raje Scindia and not Congress leader Sonia Gandhi.

Mounting pressure on Gehlot and the party's central leadership in the run-up to the Assembly polls, Pilot also announced a "Jan Sangharsh Yatra" over "corruption" and the recent cases of leaking of papers for State Government recruitment exams.

leader also reminded that he is the one asking Gehlot to probe charges of "corruption" during Raje's tenure as the Rajasthan Chief Minister. He pointed at the "contradiction" in what Gehlot is claiming — that the BJP had conspired to topple his Government and at the same time Raje helped save it.

"After listening to the CM's speech in Dholpur, it appears that his leader is not Sonia, his leader is Raje Scindia," he told reporters.

Assets of 2 Cong MLAs, treasurer attached in C'garh coal levy case
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday said it has attached immovable assets, luxurious vehicles, jewellery and cash worth over ₹51 crore belonging to Chhattisgarh Congress MLAs Devender Yadav, Chandradev Prasad Rai, PCC treasurer Ramgopal Agarwal and IAS officer Ranu Sahu among others in the alleged coal levy probe case.

Imran's arrest from court sparks unrest

Supporters storm Army HQ; HC CJ summons top officials to explain arrest
PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/LAHORE



Pakistan's former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan being arrested by paramilitary Rangers from the Islamabad High Court, where he was present for a hearing of a corruption case, in Islamabad on Tuesday. PTI

Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan was arrested and bundled into a prison van by paramilitary Rangers on Tuesday from the Islamabad High Court, sparking massive protests across Pakistan by his supporters who stormed the Army headquarters in Rawalpindi and the Corps Commander's residence in Lahore.

Meanwhile, Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq took notice of the arrest by Rangers when Imran was present at the court to mark his biometric attendance.

summon the Prime Minister if the Islamabad police chief failed to appear. "Come to court and tell us why Imran has been arrested and in which case," Justice Farooq said.

CAPSULE

'THE KERALA STORY' WILL BE TAX FREE IN UP: CM
Lucknow: "The Kerala Story" will be tax free in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced on Tuesday, prompting the opposition Samajwadi Party to say the state government should not use cinema and literature to impose "poisonous agenda on nation".

CHARGES FRAMED AGAINST Aaftab IN SHRADDHA CASE
New Delhi: A city court on Tuesday framed charges of murder and disappearance of evidence against Aaftab Amin Poonawala who is accused of strangling his live-in partner Shraddha Walkar to death and chopping her body into pieces.

CYCLONE MOCHA TO INTENSIFY, ALERTS ON
Port Blair: The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration has alerted the people as the cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal is likely intensify from late on Tuesday night.

STUDENT SLAPPED BY TEACHER LOSES EYE IN UP
Shahjahanpur: A Government schoolteacher was booked after a five-year-old student lost an eye when he was allegedly slapped by her, police said.

K'taka people's dream my dream, their wish my resolve, says Modi

Seeking the blessings of "brothers and sisters" of Karnataka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday tweeted, "Dream of every citizen of Karnataka is my dream. Your resolve is my resolve. When we come together and set our minds to a goal, no force in the world can stop us."



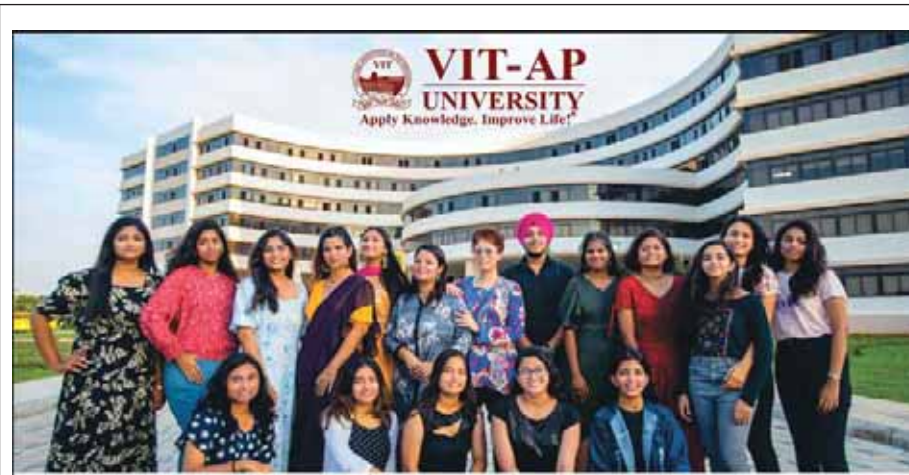
Modi expressed his gratitude for the affection he received in the State over the last few days, and said it has strengthened his resolve to make Karnataka number one across all sectors.

In our "Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal", we Indians have aimed to make our beloved country a developed nation, and Karnataka is keen to lead the movement to realise this vision, Modi said.

India is the world's fifth-largest economy, our next aim is to reach the top three.

Love goes sour: Cheetah dies during macho male mating bid
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India lost yet another imported cheetah on Tuesday, third in as many months, this time a female cheetah named Daksha to a courtship mating bid by her male counterparts inside the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh which the Government said was "common during such attempts".



The VITAL place for Higher Education
ADMISSIONS OPEN - 2023
APPLY NOW at www.vitap.ac.in

PROGRAMMES OFFERED

with unique Curriculum for Outstanding Professional Success (COPS)*

- Majors: CSE, ECE & Mech
- CSE with specialisation in Business Systems (in collaboration with TCS)

Under Design Your Own Degree (DYOD)* student chooses

B.TECH. SPECIALISATIONS / MINORS / DOUBLE MAJOR within 4 Years

Data Analytics, Networking and Security, Artificial Intelligence, Edge Computing, Software Engineering, Geo Informatics, Blockchain, VLSI, Embedded Systems, IoT, Computational Mathematics, Image and Video Processing, Digital Manufacturing, Robotics, Digital Marketing, Econometrics, FinTech, Corporate Law, Electrical Vehicle Technology, Performing Arts

5-YEAR INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES (For students after their 12th Standard)

- M.Tech Software Engineering
- M.Tech CSE (In collaboration with Virtusa)

Ph.D PROGRAMMES

Engineering, Sciences | Management | Commerce
Law | Humanities | Languages

BUSINESS PROGRAMMES

- B.B.A (General Management / FinTech Digital Marketing / Business Analytics)
- B.B.A (with 2+2 option of continuing at University of Michigan at Dearborn)
- B.B.A in Business Analytics (with 2+2 option of continuing at Arizona State University)
- B.Com. (Finance)

LAW PROGRAMMES

- B.B.A., LL.B. (Hons.)
- B.A., LL.B. (Hons.)

DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES with UG Exit Option

- B.Sc. - M.Sc. Data Science
- B.A. - M.A. Public Service with integrated training for UPSC

PG PROGRAMMES

- M.Tech. (VLSI Design)
- M.Sc. Data Science
- M.Sc. Physics
- M.Sc. Physics (Specialization in Energy Technologies)
- M.Sc. Chemistry Specializations: Pharmaceutical Chemistry / Analytical Chemistry)

VITEEE ONLINE COUNSELLING DATES

Phase-1: 29-04-2023 to 30-04-2023 (Rank: 1 - 20000)
Phase-2: 10-05-2023 to 11-05-2023 (Rank: 20001 - 45000)
Phase-3: 21-05-2023 to 22-05-2023 (Rank: 45001 - 70000)
Phase-4: 01-06-2023 to 02-06-2023 (Rank: 70001 - 100000)
Phase-5: 13-06-2023 to 14-06-2023 (Rank: More than 1 Lakh)

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ranked #1 among Emerging State Private Universities in India (Indian University Rankings 2022)
- 45 Industry Partners
- 707 Super Dream & Dream Offers
- Highest CTC 34.4 LPA
- Total Offers 1519 still counting

Data for 2023 Graduating Batch

VIT-AP University, Beside AP Secretariat, Near Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh-522237 | admission@vitap.ac.in | 08632370444 | 7901091283
Hyderabad Admin Office: 4th Floor, Bansal Pride Building, Near YSR Statue, Madhapur, Hyderabad - 500081 | 04029559555 | 7901311658
www.vitap.ac.in | [vitap.university](https://www.facebook.com/vitap.university) | [vitap.university](https://www.instagram.com/vitap.university) | [vitap](https://www.youtube.com/vitap) | [VITAPUniversity](https://www.linkedin.com/vitap) | [VITAP](https://www.tiktok.com/vitap)

Nitish calls on Patnaik, but both claim 'no talks held on Opp alliance'



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, with Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, addresses the media after a meeting in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday. PTI

the Opposition parties. However, both the CMs claimed that no discussion on any political alliance between the JD(U) and the BJD for the Lok Sabha elections next year was held in the hour-long meeting.

24 killed, 41 hurt as bus falls off bridge in MP
Locals gather at the accident site in Khargone district on Tuesday. PTI



At least 24 people were killed and more than 42 others injured when a speeding private bus packed with passengers plunged into a dry river bed after breaking through railings of a bridge in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district on Tuesday morning, Agriculture Minister Kamal Patel said.

Brigadiers, Generals to don common uniform

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to enhance more synergy in senior leadership, the Army has decided that officers of the rank of Brigadiers and above will now don a common uniform irrespective of their parent cadre and appointment. The order comes into force on August 1.

This decision to have a common uniform "in order to promote and strengthen common identity and approach in service matters amongst senior leadership, beyond the boundaries of regimentation," was discussed at great length among the various stakeholders and during the recently concluded Army Commanders' Conference, sources said here on Tuesday.

In the Army, Brigadiers and above officers are those who have already commanded units, battalions and are mostly posted at headquarters or establishments where officers from all arms and services work and function together.

Continued on Page 2

Continued on Page 2

Continued on Page 2

Continued on Page 2



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

A sad story

UP and MP find *The Kerala Story* so good that they make it tax-free, Mamata Banerjee bans it in Bengal

Do we have the rule of law, or the rule of men and women? The former is supposed to be objective and well-defined, while the latter is the product and function of rulers' whims. The drama following the release of *The Kerala Story*, a movie about a conspiracy by jihadists to convert non-Muslim women to Islam, suggests that the rule of law is weak in our country. The Government of Yogi Adityanath found the movie to be so good that it made it tax-free in Uttar Pradesh. The Shivraj Singh Chouhan Government did that earlier in Madhya Pradesh. But Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee found *The Kerala Story* so bad that she decided to ban it in the State on the grounds that it may create unrest. Evidently, opinion on *The Kerala Story* is divided on political lines, as was also the case with Kashmir Files: BJP supporters like the two movies, and the opponents oppose them. This is not surprising; predilections towards arts, culture and cinema often guide choice. But should the differences be so stark, even brazen? And should it have such an impact on governance? After all, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal are both States of India and both follow the same Constitution and laws. So, what makes it possible for the laws to be interpreted in such a diverse manner? This is not just the politicisation of art but also of governance.



Then there is the issue of freedom of expression, a Fundamental Right that is enshrined in our Constitution. If a movie is banned just because some politicians are not comfortable with the idea

that a filmmaker espouses or the message that he or she wants to be disseminated, the action practically muzzles free expression. The Supreme Court and several High Courts did the right thing by dismissing the petitions to proscribe *The Kerala Story*. "You must think of the actors, producer... You must be very careful about staying films. The market will decide if it is not up to the mark," a Bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said while dismissing a petition seeking ban on the film. If someone doesn't like a film (or, for that matter, a book, song, etc.), they can avoid watching it. Why should they want the others to be deprived of the opportunity to watch it? They can also make another movie on a theme antithetical to that of the movie they dislike. Filmmakers too should try to be focused on their work rather than on claims that fuel controversy. Before its release, the makers of *The Kerala Story* showed a teaser in which an actress claimed that her character was one among 32,000 women from Kerala who had become Islamic terrorists. When this claim was disputed, the makers updated the description on YouTube to the "compilation of the true stories of three young girls from different parts of Kerala." The earlier claim was unfortunate.

PICTALK



Karni Sena members take part in a procession to celebrate Maharana Pratap Jayanti, in Nagpur

Dietary patterns and their economic impact

The impact of our dietary choices extends beyond our well-being; it affects the economy, growth, and other related sectors

The way we eat and what we eat plays a crucial role in shaping our economy. In this context, this article examines the food consumption patterns of Indians and how they differ across various occupations and states. This will give us a better understanding of the dietary behaviour of different segments of the Indian population.

This study has employed the Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS) data from CMIE from January to June 2022 to evaluate the well-being of households in India. The CPHS is an ongoing survey that endeavours to measure and track changes in household well-being across various domains. This survey collects data from a sample of households across India following a multi-stage stratified design. Data is collected in Waves, and each Wave is completed over four months. CMIE has surveyed 1.78 lakh households for the waves of CPHS that are used for this analysis.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS Based on this survey, an Indian with an average monthly income of Rs 17169 typically allocates around 25% of their income, or approximately Rs 4225, to food expenditures, regardless of their occupation or region. The household's consumption expenditure is presented as a percentage of its income. However, some states and union territories, such as Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jammu Kashmir, Jharkhand, Kerala, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, and West Bengal, spend more than the national average on food (25%). In contrast, states and union territories like Chandigarh, Meghalaya, Punjab, Telangana, and Uttarakhand have the lowest percentage of income spent on food, ranging from 16% to 20%.

FOOD CONSUMPTION Apart from these percentage values, what does the Indian population consume? The Indian diet comprises a diverse range of food items that can be broadly classified into three categories: nutritious foods, junk foods, and beverages. Food items like meat, egg, fish, fruits, vegetables, milk products, cereals, pulses, and



essential health supplements can be included in nutritious foods. Ready-to-eat food, noodles, flakes, chocolate, cakes, and ice cream are considered junk foods to be consumed occasionally. Assuming an average Indian household with a monthly income of Rs 17169, the average consumption of nutritious foods is approximately 16%. Meanwhile, the consumption of junk foods has increased to around 1% over the years.

The top five states/UTs that spend more than the national average of 16% on nutritious food are West Bengal (24.6%), Bihar (23.4%), Gujarat (22.2%), Tripura (22%), and Jharkhand (20.8%). In contrast, the bottom five states/UTs in terms of consumption of nutritious food are Uttarakhand (9.4%), Chandigarh (11.7%), Punjab (12.1%), Meghalaya (13%), and Karnataka (13.2%).

OCUPATION EFFECT India's diverse population can be classified into various occupational groups, including farmers, agricultural labourers, entrepreneurs, white-collar employees, wage labourers, business/salaried employees, managers, industrial workers, small traders, and qualified self-employed professionals. In Gujarat, where food expenditure is highest, most occupational groups spend more than the national average. Similarly, other low-earning classes in



ASSUMING AN AVERAGE INDIAN HOUSEHOLD WITH A MONTHLY INCOME OF RS 17169, THE AVERAGE CONSUMPTION OF NUTRITIOUS FOODS IS APPROXIMATELY 16%

the state, such as agricultural labourers (42%), wage labourers (41%), and organized farmers (39%), spend a significant portion of their income on food, while the wealthy classes (business and salaried employees/entrepreneurs/white-collar job holders) spend only 19-27%. Nationally, low-earning classes spend 25-33% of their income on food, while wealthy income groups spend 15-20%.

INCOME IMPACT Let's examine the income aspect of food consumption across different states. Chandigarh, with an average income of Rs 46918, is the highest-earning state/UT, while Sikkim, with an average income of around Rs 5055, is the poorest. Among the various occupational groups in Chandigarh, such as support staff (44%), wage labourers (48%), industrial workers (42%), and self-employed entrepreneurs (42%), food consumption is higher than the national average values. In contrast, Sikkim spends comparatively less on food items, but farmers, both organized farmers (33%) and small/marginal farmers (31%), spend a significant portion of their income on food.

In conclusion, it is evident that the production and income levels of each state greatly influence consumption patterns. Given that rice,

wheat, and pulses are the dominant crops, they make up the primary food sources for the average household regardless of income. While these foods are nutritious, it's also alarming that the lower-income groups spend a disproportionate amount of their income on food, leaving little for other necessities. To address this issue, the government's policy must focus on these populations as they are left with a bare minimum income for their remaining needs. To better understand consumer behaviour in a country as diverse as India, policymakers need to conduct a comprehensive analysis that takes into account the major socio-economic parameters, including food habits and occupational groups. Only by doing so can they develop effective strategies to ensure that everyone has access to nutritious food and is not forced to spend more than they can afford.

The article has been co-authored by Biswajit Patra, Santosh Kumar Dash and Bhavana. (Patra is an Assistant Professor of Economics at the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) Bhopal, Dash is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA). Bhavana is a BS-MS Student in Economics)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS DOWNGRADED

Sir — India's world ranking in freedom of the press further lowered whereas the ranking of Pakistan and Afghanistan is better than India why it is so I quote here two instances which held recently and will clarify why the ranking of the country is so much low:

The basic ingredients of democracy are government by the people for the people of the people. But when this democracy is converted into 'Buy the People Far the People and Off the People' then ranking automatically downgraded. It is worth mentioning that rating can be improved by the government and only by the government.

How press freedom had been gagged can be judged from the ranking as India's ranking in the 2023 world press freedom index which has slipped to 161 out of 180 according to the latest report released by the global media watchdog, Reporters without Borders. Constraints on press freedom due to hostile working conditions and threat to the physical and mental safety of personnel severely impacts the ability of journalists to gather, select, produce and disseminate news in the public interest.

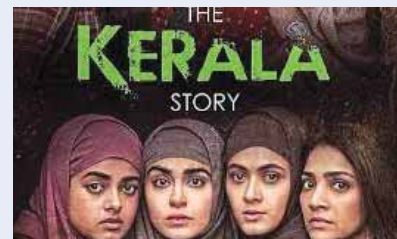
This extreme right-wing authoritarian regime has ensured that whatever vestiges of the free press remain in India are gagged or made beholden to the ruling dispensation. We should all hang our heads in shame at this dubious distinction. And in the last, we as common citizens can only pray and expect from the Govt that necessary steps should be taken to improve the ranking so that the sanctity of democracy be strengthened

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

SEBI REGISTERS RUSSIAN INVESTORS

Sir — The recent registration of three Russian investors with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to enter the Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) list has been viewed as a win-win situation for both parties. Foreign Portfolio Investors are entities that invest in the Indian market, primarily in stocks, bonds, and other finan-

Screening ban



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday ordered an immediate ban on the screening of the controversial film 'The Kerala Story' to avoid "any incident of hatred and violence", and called it a

propaganda film. She warned that strong action will be taken against any theatre found showing the film and possibly their licence will be cancelled as per the official report. Mamata Banerjee described 'The Kerala Story' as a distorted movie, aimed at defaming the southern state. 'The Kerala Story', directed by Sudipto Sen, depicts how women from Kerala were converted to Islam and recruited by Islamic State terrorist groups. The film was released on May 5. With this, it is possible that non-BJP opposition rule states may follow the example of Bengal and will ban the screening of the controversial film *The Kerala Story* in the coming days.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

SEPARATE SCHOOLS FOR POOR CHILDREN

Sir — A new school session is going to commence soon and it is a timely measure to build separate schools for the poor children. The underprivileged children need to get quality education and it is time to inculcate basic knowledge among the poor. These poor students must be a force to reckon with and instead of having roadside schools, regular schools can do a world of good. Instead, the government should start separate institutions for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and make it compulsory for all parents from these strata of society to send their children to such schools. Has anyone thought of the mental agony and the psychological impact of such a move on the minds of young students?

The stark difference in their social, economic and cultural upbringing will create a rift in the classroom. This will only create a new generation of frustrated and rebellious youngsters. Let's not bring politics to the doorstep of education. The government should set up schools at par with private ones.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Mudslinging in election campaign

Namecalling by the campaigners in Karnataka has made the ambience of the election vicious and ugly

Persons occupying top positions in the country and who are leading lights in the public domain should be role models for the people, especially for the youth. But the slanging match which is going on in Karnataka as part of electioneering to the assembly tells the world how an election should not be fought and the decency to be maintained during the campaigning.

Instead of ideology and development agenda, what we hear from a State known for its beautiful literature, music and brave soldiers is the choice of abuse by the main protagonists. Last week saw D K Shivakumar, the chief ministerial candidate of the Congress accompanied by his sidekick filing a police complaint against one of the star campaigners of the BJP, the main challenger. The run-up to the election saw many prominent figures of the BJP crossing over to the Congress protesting over the denial of tickets to them to fight the polls. Those who crossed over include a former chief minister and a former deputy chief minister.



For these leaders, membership in the legislative assembly is the minimum requirement to serve the people.

The name-calling by the campaigners has made the ambience of the election vicious and ugly. An octogenarian leader, who should have confined himself to his palatial bungalow pampering his grand and great-grandchildren, is out in the scorching sunlight showering the opponents with terms and phrases which are alien to the organisation which he leads. The response from the other side is equally deplorable, reminding one of the wordy duel between two characters in a famous

short story. While the more aggressive of the two addresses the rival with grubby and nauseating terms, the latter retaliates by calling the former names of fruits like apple, tomato, orange, guava etc. At the end of the slanging match, one of the bystanders asked the latter why he did he address the rival with names of fruits while the former had used only manky terms, the answer he gave was interesting. "The gentleman told me the kind of things he consumes and I said the materials I use." It is not known whether these leaders have heard this story or not.

Election campaigns should be a learning process not only for the voters but for the contesters too. The focus should be on why the State continues to lag in infrastructure and what prevented the rulers from opening more and more hospitals, schools, and institutes of higher learning. The debate should have pinpointed the lacuna and failures of those who administered the State for decades. Name-calling has no space in this festival of democracy. Politicians

should not turn this festival into a cacophony. Campaign meetings are the ideal classrooms for the citizens to know about the success and failure of democratic values. After listening to the speeches delivered by the leaders, the public should be able to choose the right person for the right job.

No purpose would be served by name-calling and the use of abusive language. In Kerala, there is a temple at Kodungallur where the devotees assemble once a year and sing POORAPPATTU, songs made of filthy words that the common man would never sing even if he is all alone. If the reports coming from Karnataka are to be believed, the campaign speeches are thousands of fathoms deeper than POORAPPATTU. Our politicians are not setting a precedent for the youngsters. Let the voters in the State elect a party with an absolute majority so that we don't have to wait with bated breaths to watch live "crossing over" of MLAs and resort politics which were the hallmark of Karnataka politics. God save Democracy.



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN



FIRST COLUMN

STUDYING ABROAD CAN SHAPE YOUR FUTURE

An international student can explore new opportunities available abroad



KARUNN KANDOI

I wouldn't be in the position I am today if it wasn't for studying abroad. I gained tremendous experience from the unique qualities an international education offers, the exposure to studying abroad, and the networking opportunities with other classmates, which led to life-long friendships and connections.

Below I've rounded up some of the key ways studying abroad makes you stronger, shapes your character, and leads to positive outcomes for your future.

LOOK BEYOND THE CHALLENGES

In the early days of my career, I realized I wanted to study abroad to pursue higher education as working with people from other countries indicated there is plenty to learn from different cultures and backgrounds. I started by researching and identifying the institutions that provided scholarships and teaching assistant positions for students. This improved my prospects of keeping costs down and receiving the education I wanted in a foreign country.

In 2004, I completed my MBA in Product Management and Marketing in the United States. My first three months as an international student were the most difficult because I had to uproot my life to a new country. There were language barriers, the culture was completely new to me, and I was still building my confidence. As an international student, you learn to stretch your learning capabilities and comfort zone in ways that you never thought you could. I quickly learned how to network and build confidence even in scenarios where I didn't naturally feel at ease.



EMBRACE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Being an international student led me to engage in activities and sign up for new opportunities that I had never tried before. I was motivated to meet and embrace new cultures and thought processes in order to make the most of my experience abroad. The professionals that I met along the way and the networking opportunities helped me build some lifelong friendships.

My advice to any students planning to study abroad is to extend their friend circle outside of their own community and form friendships with people from different cultures. This helped me gain a global perspective. To this day, I have friends in different parts of the world that I can discuss business ideas with and whose networks I can leverage.

BUILDING BLOCKS TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

Even though I was hired for a job after my MBA program, I was inspired to make a difference in the education field and start a business in my home country. I ran a company for several years where I was able to apply the global best practices I learned and the curious mindset I had developed.

I used my study abroad journey as an opportunity to build my character, mindset, and a stronger sense of self. Letting go of the fear that comes along with risk-taking is a skill that I've used in every aspect of my personal and professional life. All in all, the experience trained me and prepared me for future career opportunities.

Today we live in a global village, with the transformation of connectivity and information exchange. In this new evolved world, education across borders can give you the exposure to build businesses and serve global customers from wherever you are.

My journey as an international student led me to continue to find meaningful and impactful ways to improve and fix a problem that I'm very passionate about to this day, enabling access to education.

(The writer is Head of Business Operations - India, ApplyBoard)

Nano fertilisers can reduce subsidies



UTTAM GUPTA

Nano fertilisers can yield better results but they can't perform miracles. For a substantial reduction in subsidy, the Govt must implement agri reforms

On April 26, 2023, Union Minister for Home and Cooperatives Amit Shah launched liquid nano-diammonium phosphate (nano-DAP) developed by the Nano Biotechnology Research Centre (NBRC) (Kalol) of Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO). During the current fiscal, IFFCO plans to produce 50 million bottles (500 ml) of nano-DAP which will be scaled up to 180 million bottles by 2025-26. According to US Awasthi, Managing Director of IFFCO, by then imports of DAP might not be required; currently, India imports over 50 percent of its DAP requirement.

Earlier, on October 17, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched liquid nano urea also developed by NBRC. IFFCO started its production on August 1, 2021, and produced 29 million bottles (500 ml) till March 31, 2022. The central government has also roped in public sector undertakings (PSUs) such as Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers Ltd (RCF) to make it. During 2022-23, the total production of nano-urea was 50 million bottles of which IFFCO produced 27.5 million.

According to the Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers Mansukh Mandaviya by 2024-25, India will be producing around 440 million bottles of nano urea and after 2025 India need not import urea as domestic production of conventional and nano liquid urea could be sufficient to meet domestic demand.

Urea imports decreased from 9.83 million tons in 2020-21 to 9.13 million tons during 2021-22 and further down to 7.48 million tons during 2022-23. Whether or not these can be brought down to zero by 2025, we can only wait and watch. As for DAP, these are early days as production has just started.

A tantalizing claim refers to the possibility of nano-fertilisers enabling the complete elimination of fertiliser subsidies. For a better understanding, let us look at some basics.

To make fertilisers affordable to farmers, the Centre controls the maximum retail price (MRP) of urea at a low level unrelated to the cost of production and distribution, which is higher. The excess cost over MRP is reimbursed to the manufacturer as a subsidy, which varies from unit to unit depending on its cost. For non-urea fertilisers, it fixes 'uniform' subsidies on a per-nutrient basis for all manufacturers and importers. Subsidy on every ton of fertilizer produced and sold multiplied by the total tonnage gives the total subsidy paid from the Union Budget.

Fertilizer subsidy went up from an already high of Rs 162,000 crore during 2021-22 to Rs 253,000 crore during 2022-23. The budget estimate (BE) for 2023-24 is Rs 179,000 crore (this reduced allocation is no consolation as invariably, the actual payment turns out to be higher than the BE; for instance, during 2022-23 the actual was more than double the BE of Rs 105,000 crore).

Nano urea is urea in the form of a nanoparticle containing nitrogen particles of 20-50 nanometres in size. It provides nitrogen to plants in liquid form as an alternative to conventional urea. A 500ml bottle of nano urea is equivalent to a 45kg bag of conventional urea. While the former is available to farmers for Rs 240 without any subsidy support, to supply the latter at the same price, the government has



THE INNOVATOR ALSO CLAIMS THE EFFICIENCY OF NANO UREA IS OVER 80 PER CENT AGAINST AROUND 40 PER CENT FOR CONVENTIONAL STUFF

(The writer is a policy analyst)



to give a subsidy of Rs 2410. If all of the conventional urea is replaced by nano-urea, the urea subsidy can be brought down to zero.

Likewise, nano-DAP provides nitrogen and phosphate nutrients to plants in liquid form as an alternative to conventional DAP. A 500-ml bottle of nano-DAP is equivalent to a 50-kg bag of conventional DAP. While the former is available to farmers for Rs 600 without any subsidy support, the latter is made available at more than double this price or Rs 1,350 and that too with the government giving a subsidy of Rs 2650. If all conventional DAP is replaced by nano-DAP, DAP subsidy can be brought down to zero. Additionally, farmers will need to pay half of what they currently pay.

If a similar outcome is possible in the case of a third major fertilizer viz. muriate of potash (MoP) (currently IFFCO is working on nano-Potash as well besides micronutrients such as nano-Zinc, nano-Boron, etc), overall the government could save on the entire gargantuan payout on fertilizer subsidy. It seems to be too good to believe. There is something amiss. Take the case of urea. The basic material for making nano urea is none other than conventional urea. The former contains by weight 85 to 99.98 per cent of the latter, 0.01 to 5 per cent of quinquedron, and 0.01 to 10 per cent of calcium cyanamide. The upper end of the range is 99.98 per cent, almost the entire raw material (even at the lower end 85 per cent,

it is overwhelming) for making nano urea is conventional urea. Then, how can the cost of producing the former at Rs 240 be a tiny fraction of the latter's cost at Rs 2650? This could be possible if only nano urea is mammoth times more efficient than conventional urea. To unravel this, let us look at the equivalence ratio between the two.

A 45kg bag of conventional urea contains 46 per cent nitrogen (N) nutrient or 20 kg (45x0.46), whereas a 500ml bottle of nano urea has 4 per cent 'N' or 20 grams (500x0.04). In other words, urea in nano form with a mere 20 grams can achieve what conventional urea does with 20 kilograms. The former is 1000 times more efficient than the latter. If agriculture experts can demonstrate, this indeed is the case then India could be heading for a revolutionary transformation with zero fertilizer subsidy budget. But, that is daydreaming.

The innovator (read: IFFCO/NBRC) also claims the efficiency of nano urea is over 80 per cent against around 40 per cent for conventional stuff. Furthermore, nano urea increases crop yield by 3-16 per cent. Its use causes less soil, water and air pollution. These claims don't take us into a land of fantasy though the claim with efficiency gain is somewhat inflated.

Normally, urea is applied in two dosages: one, basal application being even spreading of solid fertilisers over the entire field before

or at sowing or planting; two, top dressing which involves applying fertiliser directly to the leaves as opposed to in the soil. Nano urea is meant to replace conventional urea only in top dressing even as basal application is entirely in solid form.

This means that the benefit of 80 per cent efficiency (albeit of nano urea) will be available only on 50 per cent of the total quantity of fertiliser applied. Hence, the achievable effective efficiency would be 60 per cent (80x0.5 + 40x0.5). In other words, the efficiency gain with the use of nano urea would be only 20 per cent instead of 40 per cent as revealed by a plain reading of numbers.

This together with a yield increase of 3-16 per cent puts nano-urea in a vantage position; the same when used in conjunction with conventional urea will give promising results. Likewise, the substitution of conventional DAP by nano-DAP (according to Shah, replacement of up to 20 per cent in crops such as sugarcane and wheat is possible) can deliver gains in efficiency of use and increase in yield.

To conclude, nano fertilizers can yield better results but they can't perform miracles. For a 'substantial' and 'sustainable' reduction in subsidy, the government should implement long-pending reforms such as the removal of all controls on fertilisers and direct benefit transfer (DBT) of subsidy to farmers.

Opportunities in the Indian tech startup ecosystem

India has the required capabilities, a stable banking system, responsive administration and a strong government supporting the country's startup dream

India has the required capabilities, a stable banking system, responsive administrative bodies, and a strong government supporting the country's startup dream

Startups from diverse industries, like data analytics, artificial intelligence, and blockchain, regularly rake in angel and seed funding. A few of these companies have even made news over acquisitions by major tech firms like Facebook, Google, and Apple. Though the country's ever-evolving startup space attracts the youth with its success stories, certain significant challenges exist. Despite showing much promise in their early stages, numerous Indian startups fail to scale as they mature.



VASUDEVA KOTHAMASU

(The writer is General Manager and Leader for Engineering at Contentstack, India)

Challenges Encountered by Indian Startups

Funding crunch: Even with the Indian startups crescendoing, the prevailing macroeconomic uncertainty and the threat of a recession have signalled the arrival of a funding winter for Indian startups. According to Inc 42's Indian Tech Startup Funding Report, there has been a 77% YoY decrease in mega deal counts.

Skill gap: The growing skill gap in emerging technologies is another concern for leaders across industries. While the number of STEM graduates has increased over the years, the number of individuals with employable skills leaves much room for improvement. If the current situation prevails, India will

look at a shortage of 14-19 lakh tech professionals by 2026, per the NASSCOM-Zinnov 2022 report.

Offer shopping: The growing prevalence of offer shopping in the industry is making the hiring situation trickier for IT companies. Xpheno, a popular specialist staffing firm, identified that the average offer acceptance rate for positions in data science, full stack development, frontend, and backend engineering slumped to 50% in 2022 from 73% in 2021. This rising rate of offer shopping makes it highly challenging for companies to hire desired talent, slowing the whole hiring process.

Diverse market: While the customer base of the Indian startup ecosystem is

diverse in terms of regions and cultural backgrounds, most companies have limited knowledge of the market beyond the areas they are familiar with. Such a diverse divide makes it challenging for Indian startups to create impactful products for the country.

Opportunities for Startups

Technically sound population: India's position as the third-largest startup hub following the US and China is strongly backed by its rising tech-savvy English-speaking talent, meeting the IT sector's demand for superior communication skills. Growth of smaller cities: The Indian Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities have become the new and emerging loci of development for

IT/ITES companies. Cities like Jaipur and Ahmedabad are emerging as the new hubs and have experienced 40 per cent growth. Government-backed endeavours like The Digital India, Startup India campaigns, JAM Trinity, and Smart City Mission promote urban transformations of India's Tier 2 and 3 cities. Zinnov reports out of the 1,257 Global In-house Centres established by 976 MNCs, 68 are in Tier 2 cities. Government initiatives: The GOI is proactively supporting the growth of Indian startups through a slew of policies and campaigns like the Startup Leadership Program, Startup India Seed Fund, and ASPIRE, among others. The recent budget extended startup income tax benefits till

March 2024 to boost the country's entrepreneurship environment. Extending the DigiLocker benefits will also go a long way to provide ease of doing business, ensuring paperless administration.

Internet Connectivity: India has the second largest internet user base after China, thanks to the affordable data plans available. The 5G rollout will further increase the number of internet users and positively impact the Indian tech space. Startups working with AR, VR, AI, and IoT can introduce more advanced features with 5G connectivity. Though the rollout was initially slow, it is moving on hot wheels. Indigenous innovation: India's innovation capabilities are not new to the world, and one such was the

UPI or Unified Payments Interface. Launched in 2016, the UPI proved favourably for the country's SMBs, simplifying transactions and eliminating costly point-of-sale devices. Its success is now crossing borders, piquing the interest of many nations.

Challenges exist in every sector, and the Indian startup ecosystem is no different. But despite the multiple challenges, there are ample opportunities in the industry that tip the scales in favour of the country's tech entrepreneurs. India has the required capabilities, a stable banking system, responsive administrative bodies, and a strong government supporting the country's startup dream—and in time, will be leading the global tech space.

Giroud 'hungry' for CL success with Milan



Euro showdown with Milan 'the derby': Inzaghi

AP ■ MILAN

Simone Inzaghi said Tuesday that Inter Milan's Champions League semi-final with rivals AC Milan is more than just another local derby.

The Milan giants, who between them have been crowned European champions ten times, face off on Wednesday in the biggest match between the two sides in nearly two decades, and Inter coach Inzaghi is well aware of its importance.

It will be the first time the Serie A pair have played each other in Europe's top club competition after 2005's so-called "derby of shame", a quarter-final won by Milan whose second leg was abandoned after livid Inter fans launched a barrage of flares onto the San Siro pitch with their team way behind in the tie.

"It's not a derby, it's the derby," Inzaghi told reporters. "We know what it means for us, the club, our fans and myself. But I'm feeling calm because I've seen that the boys are very concentrated. Over the last 20 months we've played seven derbies... we've won and we've lost. Every match is its own



story, there will be times when we will be more offensive and times when we will be more defensive. Just as we did in the last 16 and quarters we will have to play all together and make sacrifices. Inter come into the match on a run of five straight wins and with a previously misfiring attack suddenly banging in the goals.

Inzaghi's side have scored fourteen goals in that run, ten of which have been netted by the forwards, with Romelu Lukaku and Lautaro Martinez both in a hot streak. "We had a period in which the attackers weren't having a great time but now thankfully they have started scoring again and that's what

we want," said Inzaghi. "I'm not worried now just as I wasn't worried before. The problem for me is when attackers don't have opportunities, but our forwards always had chances to score." Italy defender Federico Dimarco was still a child and a San Siro regular in 2005 and is keen to get stuck into a tie which could be revenge for one of the most painful derby defeats for his boyhood club. "Thinking that 20 years ago I was watching the match and now I'm playing in it is an incredible feeling," said Dimarco. "We know the importance of match and of the derby, we'll give it a good go."

AP ■ MILAN

Olivier Giroud on Tuesday said that he has a young man's hunger for European success ahead of AC Milan's all-Italian Champions League semi-final with Inter Milan. Veteran France striker Giroud won the competition with Chelsea in 2021 and wants to continue his Italian summer at Milan with another triumph after winning the Serie A title last season. Milan host local rivals Inter on Wednesday in the first leg

of the biggest local derby the Italian city has seen for nearly two decades. "I'm motivated more than ever. For me it's a big opportunity to win it again. Almost 37 years old but still hungry like a young boy," Giroud told reporters. "In football it's never good to underestimate the others. I know what I'm talking about. At that level every single game is very tough and it's on small margins, small details, that you win it." Giroud was a key figure in Milan's league title win this

time last year and this season has netted five times in his team's impressive run to a blockbuster derby in the last four. He scored the decisive goal which sent Milan through at the expense of Napoli, who last week dethroned the seven-time kings of Europe as champions of Italy. "JUST WANT TO DREAM" Milan are gunning for their first Champions League final since the last time they won the competition back in 2007. "We are focused on Inter

and we just want to dream," added Giroud. "This club is special... Last year I couldn't hope for better than to win the Scudetto this year and in the second year still be in the race for the top four and in a semi-final of the Champions League. I'm very proud of this team." Coach Stefano Pioli is sweating on the fitness of star forward Rafael Leao, who suffered a thigh injury in Milan's home win over Lazio. The Portugal winger has started every single one of Milan's ten Champions League

matches and played the crucial pass for both goals in the last-eight triumph over Napoli. Milan have won only one of the eight matches this season which Leao has either missed through injury or not started. "Today he did the work that he was scheduled to do, tomorrow we'll try to push him and on the basis of what happens in the morning we'll decide what to do," said Pioli. "Tomorrow it will be Rafa and the doctors who tell me how he is. If he's well we'll pick him, if he's not, we won't."



Everton, Forest rise out of relegation zone

AP ■ LONDON

Everton moved out of the Premier League relegation zone with a ruthless 5-1 win at Brighton on Monday, while Leicester's hopes of survival are hanging by a thread after a 5-3 defeat at Fulham. Nottingham Forest also pulled themselves clear of the bottom three as they beat fellow strugglers Southampton 4-3.

Brighton are in the hunt to qualify for Europe for the first time in the club's history, but a heavy schedule appeared to have taken its toll on Roberto De Zerbi's men as they were torn apart by an Everton side that had not won away since October. The Toffees had the dream start as Abdoulaye Doucoure opened the scoring after just 34 seconds.

Doucoure's brilliant volley from Dwight McNeil's cross doubled Everton's lead before Brighton goalkeeper Jason Steele deflected McNeil's cross into his own net. De Zerbi responded by making four half-time substitutions and Brighton peppered the Everton goal but were caught out on the counter-attack when McNeil showed great poise to round Steele to make it 4-0. Alexis Mac Allister pulled a goal back after Kaoru Mitoma's initial effort came off the post. But McNeil had the final say as he rounded off a dazzling performance by smashing into the top corner in stoppage time. A first win in eight games lifts Sean Dyche's men two points clear of the drop zone.



Brighton remain in seventh, two points behind Tottenham with two games in hand, but their outside shot at a top-four finish appears gone. Victories for Everton and Forest pushed Leicester into the relegation zone and they also face a tough run-in with Champions League-chasing Liverpool and Newcastle to come before ending the season at home to West Ham. Only Leeds and Bournemouth have conceded

more goals than Leicester in the Premier League and defensive deficiencies were again their undoing at Craven Cottage. Goals from Willian, Carlos Vinicius and Tom Cairney put Fulham 3-0 up before half-time. Cairney and Willian struck again either side of Harvey Barnes' consolation goal to make it 5-1. James Maddison converted a second penalty before

lead from the penalty spot, but they had to survive some nervy moments after Lyano's header made it 3-2 early in the second half.

Daniolo rounded off a fine team move 17 minutes from time to give Cooper's men breathing space at the bottom despite James Ward-Prowse's penalty in stoppage time cutting the arrears once more. Southampton are eight points from safety with three games remaining.

BARCA VS KOBE

Barcelona will play a friendly against Andres Iniesta's Japanese team Vissel Kobe in Tokyo after the La Liga season finishes, the runaway Spanish league leaders said on Tuesday.

The game will take place at Tokyo's National Stadium on June 6, two days after the final day of the La Liga season. The announcement comes amid Japanese media reports that the 38-year-old former Spain and Barca midfielder Iniesta will leave Kobe this summer. Iniesta is contracted to Vissel until the end of the year but reports say he will be released early so that he can find another club in the United States or Middle East. Iniesta joined Vissel in July 2018 after making almost 600 appearances for Barcelona.

He signed a two-year contract extension with the Japanese club in May 2021. He has played a total of 38 minutes in three league appearances for Kobe in 12 games so far this season. Vissel are currently top of the J-League table.

Neymar ready to leave PSG

AP ■ PARIS

Neymar no longer feels welcome at Paris Saint-Germain and believes he'd be better off playing elsewhere next season, sources told ESPN's Julien Laurens. The Brazilian reportedly had a change of heart after being targeted by dozens of hardcore supporters at his house last week. The ultras demanded he and Lionel Messi leave the club in vulgar protests that PSG strongly condemned.

Neymar would prioritize a move to the Premier League if he were to leave the French capital, according to Laurens. Chelsea reportedly reopened talks with PSG over the 31-year-old forward, who initially attracted the attention of the Blues in the summer and has a big admirer in Chelsea co-owner Todd Boehly. With Neymar currently earning around £40 million per season, any prospective deal would require a significant financial outlay. He still has four years remaining on his contract with PSG, but Laurens reports that the Ligue 1 leaders won't stand in his way if he wants to end his time in Paris. PSG could even allow him to leave on loan, eschewing a hefty transfer fee just to get his wages - which rank among the highest in world football - off their books.

Messi scoops individual, team Laureus double

AP ■ PARIS

Argentina and Paris Saint-Germain veteran star Lionel Messi on Monday scooped a unique double, landing individual and team Laureus awards for his exploits and those of his World-Cup winning nation. Messi, 35, finally landed a first World Cup winners medal in Qatar last December after a thrilling penalty shootout final win over France - enough to earn him an individual accolade while the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner also accepted the team award at a prestigious Paris ceremony. The Argentine, who attended the ceremony with wife Antonela Roccuzzo, previously had won the award jointly with British Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton in 2020. The accolade saw Messi see off competition notably from clubmate Kylian Mbappé, whose World Cup final hat-trick was not enough to earn him glory in Qatar. Jamaican sprinter Shelly-

Ann Fraser-Pryce, who last August earned a fifth world 100m crown at Eugene, Oregon, picked up the female athlete award while US Open tennis champion Carlos Alcaraz earned the World Breakthrough of the Year award. Going back to football, Denmark and Manchester United star Christian Eriksen earned a Comeback Award for returning to the top of the European game after collapsing with cardiac arrest during the Euros two years ago. Swiss para-athlete sensation Catherine Debrunner meanwhile picked up the Disability Award after triumphing in her opening two marathons. The Sport for Good Award was presented to TeamUp - a programme for children displaced by war - by Barcelona and Poland star Robert Lewandowski. Meanwhile, Chinese-American Olympic ski freestyle champion Eileen Gu won the World Action Sportsperson accolade.

Messi set for megabucks Saudi move: Source



AP ■ RIYADH

Argentine superstar Lionel Messi will play in Saudi Arabia next season under a blockbuster deal, a source told AFP on Tuesday, potentially joining his arch-rival Cristiano Ronaldo as the kingdom lavishes its oil wealth on sport. Messi will sign a "huge" deal with an as-yet-unnamed club, said the source, who is close to the negotiations that are taking place just months after the 35-year-old lifted the World Cup in Qatar. "Messi is a done deal. He will play in Saudi Arabia next season," said the source. "The contract is exceptional. It's huge. We are just finalising some small details," added the source. There was no confirmation

from Messi's current club Paris Saint-Germain, which noted simply that he was under contract until June 30. A separate PSG source said: "If the club had wanted to renew his contract, it would have been done earlier." Just five years after allowing its first non-Muslim tourists visit and letting women drive, Saudi Arabia is attempting to open up its conservative society and diversify its oil-reliant economy. The world's biggest oil exporter has thrown hundreds of millions at sports deals including Ronaldo's signing, F1 in Jeddah and the divisive LIV Golf tour, drawing frequent claims it is "sportswashing" its human rights record. Messi was suspended by Qatari-owned PSG last week for

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST OIL EXPORTER HAS THROWN HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS AT SPORTS DEALS INCLUDING RONALDO'S SIGNING, F1 IN JEDDAH AND THE DIVISIVE LIV GOLF TOUR, DRAWING FREQUENT CLAIMS IT IS 'SPORTSWASHING' ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD

an unauthorised mid-season trip to Saudi, where he is a tourism ambassador. His expected arrival follows in the footsteps of his long-time sparring partner Ronaldo, who joined Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr in a massive deal in January. Ronaldo's agreement to June 2025 is said to total more than 400 million euros (\$439 million), making him the world's highest paid athlete according to Forbes. Both deals - along with others including LIV Golf and the 2021 purchase of Newcastle United football club - are being bankrolled by the Public Investment Fund (PIF), one of the world's biggest sovereign wealth funds, the source said. "The negotiations didn't take as much time as the ones with

Ronaldo. As we now know the recipe to contract world-class players," said the source. "It's Saudi Arabia that brought him not a specific club. The Money comes from one place -- PIF." Despite several reports linking Messi with Al Hilal, one of the top Saudi teams, club sources said they had not been in direct contact with the Argentine's team. "He is a player at the end of his career and he is not here only for football. He is here to secure international attraction for the kingdom," said the source following the Messi negotiations. "The plan is not only Messi and Ronaldo, the plan is to bring glorious players like these two and also upcoming youth players who have a promising future. We want people to visit

Saudi Arabia to watch football stars," the source added. "Who could imagine that local league matches would attract foreigners? It's just the Ronaldo impact." Messi, who turns 36 in June, has had two lacklustre seasons in Paris after a glorious era at Barcelona where he won four Champions League and 10 La Liga titles, and is still worshipped by the fans. The record seven-time world player of the year, joining a mouth-watering attack featuring Kylian Mbappe and Neymar, scored just 11 goals in his first season as he helped PSG to a routine Ligue 1 title. But PSG have got no closer to a coveted maiden Champions League victory, bowing out twice in the last 16 even with the illustrious Argentine in their line-up.

