

Is defecting from an alliance legal or constitutional?

Coalitions are not mentioned in the Constitution. It might not be 'unconstitutional,' nevertheless. Referred to as Raja Dharma or Dharma, this constitutional term refers to the legal system or alternatively, to 'Ram Rajya,' or good government.

A new 'law' was created by the Constitution as a result of the deft political manoeuvring of the Dal and Badal, which turned into a 'Leela' (a play). Some politicians filed writs or PILs to challenge it in the Supreme Court and the High Court. Several rulings created extremely complex 'law'.

The Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, often known as the 'Anti Defection law (Dal Badal Virodhi Kanoon),' prohibits elected MPs from defecting from one party to another if they are deemed to be 'Dal.'

The anti-defection law addresses instances in which (a) political party members, (b) Independent members and (c) nominated members

desert their original parties in the legislature of a state or in Parliament. The law permits lawmakers to switch parties under certain conditions without running the danger of losing their seats.

Are alliances legal or moral?

Due to political changes and defections, in spite of the Anti-Defection Law, new governments and parties are emerging necessitating coalitions of two or more parties. Pre-election coalitions appear to be 'legal.' A party may break an alliance and form a new group with the support of the Centre. There is no law to prohibit an alliance between two or more political parties. They can join any Sanghathan Badal or break it. So defection from one coalition to another is resulting in overnight governments installed by different political groups. The Tenth Schedule legally prohibits defection, but there is no 'coalition' defection. MPs had no time to frame an anti-defection of 'alliance' law. Parliament may not create an Eleventh Schedule!

There is a moral bond in a pre-election coalition, but post-election it is happening as a temporary arrangement. An explicit agreement including seat sharing between two or more political parties before elections is known as an alliance or coalition.

There is a moral bond in a pre-election coalition, but post-election it is happening as a temporary arrangement. An explicit agreement including seat sharing between two or more political parties before elections is known as an alliance or coalition. This is only an arrangement where-by the alliance members split the total number of seats among themselves and nominate candidates. It is not a legally binding agreement. It is not permitted for candidates of one political party to contest against those from another. There is neither ethical nor legal support for any such

'arrangements,' which are opportunistic without any principles or theories. For example, the TDP, the Jana Sena and the BJP combine of 2014 resulted in a government led by Chandrababu Naidu. But the 'pre-poll' alliance was broken, one fought with the others. Again, a new 'pre-poll' alliance was arranged in 2024. Recently, the TDP of Chandrababu Naidu contested 135 seats, the BJP eight (under Modi's leadership), and the Jana Sena 21 (led by Pawan Kalyan) together contested all the 175 Assembly seats in Andhra Pradesh. This alliance fought the YSRCP and confined



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it to 11 seats. In the Lok Sabha, the TDP won 16 of 25 seats, the Jana Sena two, the BJP won three of six, and the YSRCP got four seats in the Lok Sabha.

Based on understanding or misunderstanding!
What binds the ruling alliance or the alliance called INDIA? They may be based on a 'memo of understanding.' It might be referred to as an implicit agreement, which is

unenforceable in court. Is there a fixed term? If they continue as NDA partners for the full five-year term, it may result in a stable administration.

Are the NDA or INDIA morally or legally bound? Will this 'Memo of Understanding' between the NDA partners or the INDIA alliance survive for five years?

The matter at hand is to examine whether the Prime Minister's NDA or the opposition INDIA took any action to safeguard the 'bond' despite the agreement, if any. One is called a 'right' wing alliance while the other is left of centre.

After its founding in 1998, the NDA has grown significantly in power in India and now it governs 19 Indian states as well as one Union Territory. Now the chairman of the NDA is Amit Shah (Union Cabinet Minister) while the Lok Sabha leader is Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Piyush Goyal (Union Cabinet Minister) is the leader in the Rajya Sabha.

Its first chairman was the

then Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. LK Advani, former Deputy Prime Minister, took over as chairman in 2004 and served until 2014.

The NDA lost 60 seats in the 2024 general election. On June 5, Modi confirmed the support of 293 MPs to President Droupadi Murmu. This marked Modi's third term as Prime Minister and his first time heading a coalition government with the TDP of Andhra Pradesh and the Janata Dal (United) of Bihar emerging as two main allies.

The alliance led by the BJP included several regional parties, like the Samata Party and the AIADMK, as well as the Shiv Sena, the only member who shared the Hindutva ideology of the BJP. But Shiv Sena broke away from the alliance in 2019 to join the Maha Vikas Aghadi with the Congress and the NCP. It then split into SS and MVA of Sharad Pawar, to create a new alliance engineered by the BJP in Maharashtra.

The Samata Party broke away from the alliance in 2003 after the formation of the Janata Dal (United). Later, outside support from the TDP helped Vajpayee to return as PM. The BJP was the only party in power in Jharkhand and Delhi during the alliance's journey. It also had a coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. The three states of West Bengal, Kerala and Telangana have never seen the NDA in power except when the BJP controlled United Andhra Pradesh in alliance with the TDP from 1999 to 2004.

Recently, governments have changed at the drop of a hat amid 'developments' overnight. There can be other political variables at play right now that can also lead to new partnerships. The leaders of all major parties began to receive calls to quit the NDA and join INDIA. Whether a coalition is helpful or harmful to the country's stability, no alliance is morally obligated to join it.

Challenge before BRS is to protect Opposition status

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

After terrible defeat in the Lok Sabha elections, the first challenge of the BRS is to protect the main opposition status in the Assembly. To get main opposition status in the 119-member strong Telangana Assembly, at least 10% members in the total strength is required. That means to get main opposition status any party must have at least 12 MLAs. In the 2023 Assembly elections the BRS won 39 seats and the Congress won 64 seats. In the Secunderabad Cantonment Assembly byelection the BRS was not able to retain its seat and the ruling Congress won this seat.

Bhadrachalam BRS MLA

Tellam Venkat Rao and Khairatabad BRS MLA Danam Nagender joined the Congress before Lok Sabha elections. With this, the BRS strength in the assembly has come down to 36 from 39 and the Congress strength has increased to 67 from 64.

Senior Congress Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy is repeatedly claiming that 25 BRS MLAs are ready to join the Congress party. If 25 MLAs switch to the Congress, the BRS will have only 11 MLAs. Then the BRS will lose the main opposition status and BRS LP leader K Chandrasekhar Rao will lose opposition leader status. To retain the opposition status in the Assembly, the BRS has to protect at least 12 MLAs.

As the Lok Sabha elections are over, the Congress party may concentrate on BRS MLAs. The Congress wants to do what KCR did as a Chief Minister to defect the BRS MLAs to save them from Anti-Defection Act.

If the two-thirds BRS MLAs decide to join the CLP, they will not attract the Anti-Defection Act and they can merge in the CLP without any problem.

In Andhra Pradesh, TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu becoming the Chief Minister is an advantage to Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. When Revanth Reddy was in the TDP Chandrababu was his 'political guru'. In the present BRS MLAs, a majority are former TDP and Congress MLAs.

The former TDP MLAs and present BRS MLAs were colleagues of Revanth Reddy.

BRS president and the former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is the common political enemy to both Telugu Chief Ministers, Revanth Reddy of Telangana and Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh. Political circles feel that if necessary, Chandrababu may help Revanth Reddy in the defection of BRS MLAs. Now KCR has to protect his MLAs from two Chief Ministers. After the tragic defeat in the Lok Sabha elections the BRS leaders, including MLAs are worried about their political future. Congress leaders want to cash in on this weakness of the BRS MLAs.

Sheep scam: ACB takes 2 accused into custody

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Nampally Court granted police custody of two accused, CEO of Telangana Live Stock Agency Sabavath Ramchander (A-9), and Ex OSD Gundamaraju Kalyan Kumar (A-10) from June 10 to 12 over the Rs 700 crore sheep scam. The police have taken them into custody to the Banjara Hills office after medical examination on Monday. Considering the age and health condition of the accused, the investigating officer was asked to take them into police custody from the jail at 10 am on each day and hand them over to the jail at 5 pm the same day. On completion of police custody period, the investigating officer should produce the two accused before the court on June 12 at 5 pm.

No Rythu Bharosa funds for real estate bizmen & hills: Adi Srinivas

- Govt will waive farm loans by Aug 15: Adi Srinivas
- Harish must ready his resignation letter in Speaker's format: Adi Srinivas



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BRS government gave Rythu Bandhu sops to real estate businessmen, hills and mountains, Government Whip Adi Srinivas said the Congress admin will not give Rythu Bharosa to the above three categories.

He said the Congress government will stick to its word that it would waive farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh taken by farmers by August 15. He asked BRS MLA Harish Rao to get ready his resignation letter in the Speaker's format as per his challenge on the farm loan waiver scheme.

Adi Srinivas asked Harish to get ready mentally without running away. He said the Congress government will always stand by farmers.

He said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy stands for farmers and that the Congress government had disbursed Rs 7,625 crore under Rythu Bandhu to 68 lakh farmers. He said the Congress government had disbursed this money much before the BRS government had deposited it in 2022-23.

Adi Srinivas warned that spurious seed sellers would face detention under the PD Act. He said the government has been framing rules for

Rythu Bharosa and that the government would deposit Rythu Bharosa funds in time without delay. He said the government is sticking to its six guarantees.

He said that Harish is trying to survive in politics and that he did not learn any lesson even though the people defeated the BRS.

KCR started new circus to send Harish into BJP: Rammohan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leader K. Chandrasekhar Rao has started a new circus to send his nephew T. Harish Rao into the BJP, TPCC Media Committee Chairman Sama Rammohan Reddy said in a post on X on Monday.

In his post, Rammohan said that KCR had raised the curtains to new conspiracies to protect the BRS by sending Harish into the BJP. He ridiculed KCR saying that BRS MLAs are confused as they are not in a position to understand KCR's old strategies like "you act like beating and I act like scolding." Rammohan said the

Telangana public has been observing KCR firing guns keeping them on the shoulder of Harish to protect his daughter, party and his assets.

It may be recalled that there was a big debate during the Lok Sabha elections saying that big changes will take place after the Lok Sabha election results come out.

After the LS polls, Modi formed his 3.0 government, the BJP grew a lot in TG and the BRS lost ground. Although no big changes have taken place Rammohan's allegations have become a hot topic among political observers.

Nirmala's budget to lay out economic roadmap

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Back in saddle in signs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi preferring continuity in policy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is likely to lay out the government's economic agenda when she presents the first annual budget of Modi 3.0 next month. Her task is cut out as she will have to look at measures to boost growth without hurt-



ing inflation as well as look for resources to meet the coalition government's compulsion.

The economic agenda

would include steps to fast-track reforms to make India a USD 5-trillion economy in near future and turn the country into a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

Last week, RBI projected the economy to grow 7.2 per cent in the current fiscal on the back of improving rural demand and moderating inflation.

The new government inherits a strong economy

with fiscal prudence in place. Icing on the cake is a bonanza from RBI which has announced the highest-ever dividend of Rs 2.11 lakh crore for FY24.

The key policy priorities for the Modi 3.0 government would include dealing with stress in the agriculture sector, job creation, sustaining capex momentum and pushing revenue growth to stay on the fiscal consolidation path.

TG gets Rs 2,937 crore as...

Continued from page 1

The Interim Budget for 2024-25 provides for the devolution of Rs 12,19,783

crore to states. With this release, the total amount devolved (for FY 2024-25) to states till June 10 is Rs 2,79,500 crore.

Ghose...

Continued from page 1

Notices have been issued to seven individuals to appear on Monday, with an additional 18 individuals scheduled for appearance on Tuesday. Once the technical aspects of the investigation are completed, the focus will shift to administrative, financial and other related issues.

The commission has received all necessary reports from the government which are currently being reviewed. Justice Ghosh affirmed his commitment to conducting a thorough, unbiased investigation to ensure that all facts are accurately reported.

Kishan gets Coals & Mines, Sanjay...

Continued from page 1

Reddy's biggest challenge will be to ensure an adequate supply of coal to electricity generating plants, which are working overtime to meet peak power demand.

Another area that would need his attention will be increasing private sector par-

Centre approves...

Continued from page 1

The government of India is implementing the PMAY since 2015-16 to provide assistance to eligible rural and urban households for the construction of houses with basic amenities. Under PMAY, a total of 4.21 crore houses have been completed for the eligible poor families under the housing schemes in the last 10 years. All the houses constructed under PMAY are provided basic amenities like household toilets, LPG connection, electricity connection and functional household tap connection through convergence with other schemes of the central and state governments.

participation, expanding coal gasification and production of Coal Bed Methane.

In the mining sector, the lukewarm response from bidders to the first round auction of critical minerals underscores the need for a pragmatic policy approach.

The government had earlier cancelled the auction for 13



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Monday his office has become a "catalytic agent" which infuses new energy and dynamism into the system, and claimed that it used to be seen as a big power centre 10 years ago.

Addressing staffers of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) after he began his third term, Modi said his only goal is "nation first" and his only motivation "Viksit Bharat", adding that this was his expectation from them as well. "My every moment is for the country," Modi said, asserting that he has promised to work round the clock to achieve the goal of India

becoming a developed country by 2047.

"The PMO should be for service and it should be a people's PMO and not Modi's, he said, adding that he was not born to rule and he does not think about accumulating power.

The prime minister said the 140 crore people of India are always on his mind and he considers them a form of God. In the last three months, Modi, in an apparent reference to the election campaign, said he witnessed their strength, dedication and energy for a new resolve.

That is why people have again given him the opportunity to serve the country, Modi said, a day after he was sworn in to office.

Born to middle-class farmer-parents in Ranga Reddy district of Telangana near Hyderabad, he started his political career as an ordinary worker in 1977. He has held important party positions, including the president of the BJP's state unit and national president of BJP's Yuva Morcha (BJYM).

Restive Valley

There has been a sudden uptick in terror incidents, coinciding with the plans to hold elections in J&K

Terror-mongers in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) don't share the enthusiasm and optimism of the local population and political parties, nor of the Election Commission's, to hold polls in the Union Territory anytime soon. There has been a noticeable increase in terror attacks in the region aligning with the conduct of the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. The stability and security of the region, which has a protracted history of conflict and violence, are seriously threatened by this escalation. There have been several insurgency stages in the area, especially since the late 1980s, when militant organisations wanted to combine Kashmir with Pakistan or grant it independence. A turning point was the Indian Government's abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, which gave J&K special autonomy. This action resulted in heightened tensions and an upsurge in militant activity. There are various reasons for the revival of militancy in the strife-torn region, which had only recently started limping back to normal. Militant groups have been actively seeking new members, frequently using social media to draw in young Kashmiris. Furthermore, despite intense surveillance, cross-border infiltration continues to be a problem. For their part, militant organisations frequently seek to sabotage elections in order to cast doubt on the authority of the State machinery and to express opposition to the democratic process that the Indian Government wants to nurture in the region. The J&K security and administration are severely impacted by the rise in the incidents of terror attacks.

Additionally, these accidents cause disruptions to daily life, which hinders the growth of the region by impacting tourism, education and economic activity. In response to the increase in violence, the Indian Government and security services have taken a number of initiatives. In an effort to drive away militants, there has been a rise in cordon-and-search operations. These activities are intended to reduce collateral damage and are frequently predicated on particular intelligence inputs. Also, increased efforts have been made to win over the hearts and minds of the local population. Conversations with local authorities, youth involvement initiatives and development projects that enhance livelihoods and infrastructure are among other similar initiatives. In terms of politics, the Government is eager to hold elections in J&K to install a local Government, which it views as essential to ensuring long-term peace and stability. However, the current state of security presents considerable obstacles to this undertaking. Even while the Government and security services are working hard to pacify the area, there are still many obstacles in the way of long-term development and stability. In order to achieve enduring peace in J&K, it is imperative that the underlying reasons of alienation are addressed, effective governance is ensured and a sincere dialogue with all stakeholders is fostered.

PICTALK



Clouds hover over the skyline, in Bastar district

PTI

Sunshine on shoulders, a spring in my step!

We still have time to take a step back to pause, reflect and act, to leave a better world for the generations to come

Summers have been harsh this year. I do not recall Delhi temperatures shooting to 50 degrees plus in the 26 years since we shifted to the national capital. Advisories have been issued by the state governments to avoid venturing out in the afternoons. However, a month down the line, we would forget the harrowing days; and long for a glimpse of sun as monsoon clouds darken the skies. A few months back, I looked out of my window one morning. The sun was struggling to light up the day with just a pale glimmer of its full-blown glory. It transported me back a few decades when I was posted in a railway production unit in east India. One afternoon in March or April, while driving me back to the office after lunch, the driver commented, "Sir, I don't like this month. The days are so sad." His observation was a revelation to me. The afternoon during the two months is often dull in the eastern part of the country, with a haze of moist air shrouding everything. I have travelled to England a couple of times for vacations.



We were chilled to the bones during the first visit as we braved the heavy rains lashing us. We walked with a spring in our steps as bright sunshine greeted us the second time. We noticed that on such rainy days, even the locals longed for the sun to peep out of the clouds. This welcome respite would be enough for the parks to be filled with screaming children, sedately walking adults, and sprinting health enthusiasts. Sun plays an important role in our lives in other ways also. My wife, and even others, insist on drying clothes under the sun. I have also witnessed this in other countries. I have often wondered about the reasons despite the availability of devices serving the same purpose. The argument

is that no equipment can impart the antibacterial properties or the fresh smell and crisp feeling that exposure to sunlight does. I would tend to agree, as even I do not like the smell of moist clothes left indoors to dry under the fan during rainy months. There are health benefits too. We are told to spend a few minutes under the sun to get the sunshine vitamin, most essential for our health. Sunshine is also celebrated through numerous phrases that compare the people in our lives or even their attributes to the bright light. A friend calls an octogenarian friend, 'sunshine', simply because the older person is ever smiling. There are several other similar compliments like 'You are the sunshine that brightens my world with love'

or 'Smiles are little rays of sunshine' and many more. Eulogies have been paid to other celestial bodies as well, but they pale when compared with the brightest star in our firmament. Sun Temple in Konark is a testament to the importance accorded to the life-giver. Many cultures, religions, and earlier civilizations were based around sun worship. All these myriad thoughts flitted through my mind as I sat sipping my tea that pale morning. I realised that the feeble sunlight was also due to our self-serving desires without paying heed to the need to create a pollution-free environment. We still have time to take a step back to pause, reflect, and act, to leave a better world for the generations to come! They also have the right to hum the timeless opening lines of the beautiful song by John Denver, "Sunshine on my shoulders makes me happy. Sunshine, almost always, makes me high." (The writer conducts workshops on creative writing for young adults and corporate executives. Views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

What actually upset the Modi appplecart

There is a long list of people-centric achievements, both at home and abroad, that defines Modi 2.0. But then, public perception inexplicably turned against him

What would Prime Minister Narendra Modi be feeling? So little recognition for doing so much! Why? Did he err somewhere to have endured the reduction to 240 seats from the erstwhile 303? Was aspiring for his country to join the First World by 2047 wrong? Or was promising that Bharat would enlarge its GDP to be the third largest in the world before long, a mistake? Or introducing the GST, which laid the foundation of transforming the national economy? Indirect tax collection is rising and reducing the transport time by 40 per cent. Isn't that a gift to the economy? Maybe asking for beyond 400 was misunderstood as having already won the election and therefore no pressing need to go out to cast one's vote, especially when the weather is very hot. Perhaps the schedule of seven phases of voting was phased out over too long a period of 43 days, enough time for possible mischief. Some might have resented the abrogation of Article 370, but the economy of Jammu & Kashmir has prospered substantially. Modi's Government over the last 10 years has pulled out some 25 crore out of poverty. Whatever was given to them was directly to the individuals, not through village headmen. According to the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, only 15 paise of a rupee reached the poor people, while 85 paise were eaten away by the middlemen. Such corruption significantly explained the contemptuous expression coined by the Nehruvian acolytes "Hindu rate of growth". India's economists used to proudly claim that 40 per cent of the Indian economy was black or 'informal' and 60 per cent was white or 'formal'. The back of this black economy began to be broken on the night of November 8, 2016, when Modi demonetised ₹1,000 and ₹500 currency notes. The measure was not confided even to his Finance Minister for the sake of secrecy. Public opinion in India was divided down the middle; those who lost money con-

demned the measure. Those who did not lose, praised the move as having taught the tax evaders a lesson. What most people did not know was that a former regime was getting Indian currency notes printed by the same supplier who printed Pakistan's and Bangladesh's currency notes as well. These neighbours could thus import India goods without spending any foreign exchange, in fact any money, except the purchase price of the fake notes. Until this demonetisation, our neighbours were financially comfortable. Not long after November 8, 2016, news came that Pakistan was moving towards shambles. Later, we had to loan Bangladesh \$9.5 billion. One cannot deny there is still black money in the economy today, but at least half the original quantum is gone. Implementation of GST and digitalisation has also helped in this objective. White money is wealth that can be invested, lent out; it can be used for expanding the economy. Black money, on the other hand, is largely unproductive and, in private hands, a source of fear from thieves and income tax raids. It cannot be lent with confidence or even a minimal lack of worry.



“MAYBE ASKING FOR BEYOND 400 WAS MISUNDERSTOOD AS HAVING ALREADY WON THE ELECTION. PERHAPS THE VOTING SCHEDULE WAS PHASED OUT OVER TOO LONG A PERIOD

Do all these deserve only 240 seats? This is indeed a painful question. While voting, many Hindus forgot that it is this Government and this Supreme Court that enabled them to see the magnificent temple of Shri Ram Lalla at Ayodhya become a reality, considering five centuries had run their course since Mughal invader Babar's henchman Mir Baiqi had destroyed the original temple that had immortalised Shri Ramjanmabhoomi. The splendid new temple has been built in the flash of a year. This was a revival, recovery and replacement of a lost temple and civilisational ethos. This Government has also made history dance. I doubt whether any religion has enabled another religion to build its place of worship in its own country. This Government has been able to charm the Sultan of Abu Dhabi to donate 27 acres of land on the main highway to Dubai for Hindus to build a grand temple in what most Muslims would consider a violation of the forbidding of *butparasti* or idol worship. This was the Sultan's celestial endeavour to atone for all the temples desecrated in India over the centuries. As a wag

put it, this was a magnificent reconciliation that should have gifted, as it were, a thousand seats. All Hindus should pray for having overlooked this unique sacrifice on behalf of Islam. The only excuse that can hold was yet another omission, like many others. Only two days ago, an acquaintance from Lucknow dropped in to explain why the Lok Sabha seat that contains Ayodhya was lost. A number of shops and houses were demolished to broaden the main street. Compensation was offered, although at the old rates. With the rapid construction of the temple, real estate prices went up much faster than expected. As a result, the old rates seemed like peanuts and, therefore, unacceptable to the old-time residents and shopkeepers. Meanwhile, lakhs of pilgrims had come, gone and enriched the shopkeepers, who weren't really short of money. In the process, they not only protested but also voted for the opposite side. When asked by journalists what they gained by voting against the temple, they had no answer. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha; views are personal)



PRAFULL GORADIA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WATER CRISIS IN THE CAPITAL

Madam — Apropos the editorial "Parched Capital," published on June 10, this is my response. As a daily newspaper reader, it's alarming to witness Delhi's worsening water crisis. The refusal of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh to supply water during these scorching months significantly impacts millions in the NCR. The Supreme Court's directive for these states to uphold water-sharing agreements is crucial, but enforcement appears weak. The Delhi BJP's call for a special Assembly session is a necessary step to prioritise this dire issue. Delhi's 35 million residents face severe water shortages, exacerbating public health risks and forcing reliance on unreliable private tankers. This situation demands a multi-faceted approach: strict adherence to water agreements, improved infrastructure and public education on water conservation. Investing in treatment plants and reservoirs, along with enhancing wastewater recycling and rainwater harvesting, could provide long-term relief. It's imperative for states to cooperate and ensure a stable water supply to prevent further hardship and potential health crises.

Meera Rao | Raipur

VIGILANCE FOR FOOD SAFETY

Madam — Apropos the news story "Protecting health through food safety," published on June 10, this is my response. As a daily newspaper reader, I'm alarmed by the state of food safety today. We often overlook the quality of what we eat, leading to chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Street food stalls, which are popular in many places, frequently lack hygiene standards and even supermarket food is not always trustworthy. The inconsistency between food labels and actual ingredients is troubling. The WHO's statistics are staggering: 600 million people fall ill annually from contaminated food, with 420,000 deaths. This year's World Food Safety Day theme,

Modi's historic third term



Apropos the news story "Narendra Modi sworn in as Prime Minister for the third consecutive time," published on June 10, this is my response. As a daily reader of the newspaper, it's clear that Narendra Modi's third consecutive term as India's Prime Minister marks a significant chapter in the nation's political history. Mirroring the legacy of Jawaharlal

Nehru, Modi's repeated electoral success underscores his enduring popularity and political acumen. The swearing-in ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan was a testament to India's vibrant democracy, drawing participation from key political figures and foreign dignitaries. This underscores India's growing influence on the global stage. However, the BJP's reduced Lok Sabha seats highlight a more complex political landscape, necessitating greater reliance on NDA allies. The strategic inclusion of allies like the TDP and JDU in ministerial positions suggests a pragmatic approach to coalition politics. As Modi 3.0 unfolds, it will be interesting to see how the government balances internal dynamics while continuing developmental policies. The next few years will be crucial in determining the trajectory of Modi's legacy and India's future.

Saanvi Jain | Jamshedpur

"Prepare for the Unexpected," highlights the urgent need for robust food safety measures. The globalisation of our food supply chain complicates these efforts, making contamination harder to trace. Technological advancements like blockchain for traceability and IoT sensors for real-time monitoring can help. Ensuring food safety is a proactive commitment necessary for public health. We must innovate and stay vigilant to protect humanity from foodborne illnesses.

Vihaan Sharma | Udaipur

ATTITUDE SHAPES HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Madam — Apropos the news story "Factors that influence our attitudes," published on June 10, this is my response. Reading about the *Mahabharata* and its timeless narratives offers profound insights into human nature. The epic, attributed to sage Veda Vyasa and transcribed by Lord Ganesha, vividly portrays the complexities of human attitudes. It showcases a spectrum of emotions and standpoints that drive actions, often influenced by external factors.

Duryodhana, a prominent character, exemplifies how arrogance and anger, fueled by his uncle Shakuni and others, lead to destructive behaviour. This mirrors historical atrocities like the Nazi genocide, highlighting the dangers of prejudice and hatred. Conversely, the story of the Zen Master and the Thief underscores the transformative power of compassion. The Master's forgiveness and understanding helped the wayward student reform, illustrating that empathy can foster positive change. Human attitudes, shaped by social interactions and experiences, can lead to either constructive or destructive outcomes. This continuous learning process underscores the importance of compassion and understanding in shaping a better society. Harold S Genen aptly encapsulates this, emphasising that leadership is reflected in attitudes and actions, not just words.


Aarush Kapoor | Vijayawada

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FIRST COLUMN

A TREASURE TROVE OF TIMELESS WISDOM

The Puranas, with their vast and varied content, are living texts



SWAMI CHARNASHRIT

The Puranas are a vast genre of ancient Indian literature that holds a significant place in the cultural, religious, and philosophical tapestry of India. These texts are not merely historical or mythological accounts; they are rich repositories of wisdom, encompassing a wide array of subjects that continue to resonate with and inspire people across generations.

Origin and Structure of the Puranas

The term "Purana" is derived from the Sanskrit word "pura," meaning "ancient" or "old." Traditionally, the Puranas are attributed to Vyasa, the sage who is also credited with compiling the Mahabharata and the Vedas. There are eighteen major Puranas, known as the Mahapuranas, and an equal number of secondary Puranas, known as Upapuranas. Each Purana varies in length and content but generally follows a similar structural format comprising five main topics: the creation of the universe (Sarga), the secondary creation (Pratisarga), genealogies of gods, sages, and kings (Vamsa), the reigns of Manus (Manvantara), and the history of dynasties (Vamsa Charitra).

Cosmology and Metaphysics

The Puranas offer a profound exploration of cosmology and metaphysics, detailing intricate theories about the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe. The concept of cyclical time, as opposed to linear time, is a central theme, with the universe undergoing endless cycles of creation and dissolution. This perspective provides a holistic view of existence, emphasizing the impermanence of the material world and the eternal nature of the soul.

Ethical and Moral Teachings

At their core, the Puranas are repositories of ethical and moral teachings. They emphasize the principles of Dharma (righteousness), Artha (prosperity), Kama (pleasure), and Moksha (liberation). Through various narratives and parables, the Puranas highlight the importance of living a virtuous life, the consequences of actions (karma), and the ultimate goal of attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Theistic Devotion

The Puranas are rich in devotional content, promoting Bhakti (devotion) towards various deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, and the Goddess. They provide detailed descriptions of the forms, attributes, and stories of these deities, fostering a personal and emotional connection between the devotee and the divine. This devotional aspect underscores the idea that sincere love and devotion can lead to spiritual enlightenment and liberation.

Social and Cultural Insights

The Puranas play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting the cultural and religious traditions of ancient India. They serve as encyclopaedic texts, containing information on rituals, festivals, pilgrimages, and social customs. By doing so, they have helped maintain continuity in cultural practices and have provided a sense of identity and continuity to generations.

The Arts and Sciences

The Puranas are remarkable for their integration of art and science. They include discussions on astronomy, astrology, medicine, architecture, and even the performing arts. For instance, the Vishnu Purana and the Bhagavata Purana provide elaborate accounts of cosmology, while the Agni Purana offers insights into various scientific disciplines, reflecting the comprehensive knowledge system of ancient India.

(The writer is a spiritual guide, views are personal)

The long and short of Modi's welfarism



UTTAM GUPTA

The Govt is doing a good job of supplying food, fuel and fertiliser at subsidised cost but the largesse recipients are unlikely to make space for other deserving people

An overarching policy instrument Prime Minister Narendra Modi uses in relentless pursuit of a welfare State is his unflinching commitment to ensuring adequate supply of three essential items, namely fertilisers, food and fuel, to the target beneficiaries/consumers at 'throwaway' price or even for free. In fact, he tells them about his intentions in this regard well in advance. Look at these facts: Urea is a widely used fertiliser that supplies primary nutrient nitrogen or 'N' and constitutes nearly half of India's total fertiliser consumption. To make it affordable to farmers, the Union Government controls its maximum retail price (MRP) at a low level unrelated to the cost of production/import and distribution, which is much higher. The excess cost over MRP is reimbursed to the manufacturer/importer as subsidy which varies from unit to unit, depending on its cost. During its first term, under a comprehensive New Urea Policy 2015 announced on May 13, 2015, the Modi Government had frozen the urea MRP of ₹268 per 50 kg bag for a period four years till 2019-20. Even thereafter, the price remained unchanged at ₹242 per 45 kg bag (currently, urea is sold in 45 kg bag; so on pro rata basis, the price is the same as earlier). This price is nearly one-tenth of the cost of making it available leading to huge subsidy payout. On June 28, 2023, Modi announced its continued availability to the farmers at this price for three years, up to FY 2025-26. As for food, the National Food Security Act (NFSA) enacted by the erstwhile UPA Government in 2013 had provided for giving wheat, rice and coarse cereals to eligible beneficiaries at a throwaway price of ₹3/2/1 per kg respectively. The excess of minimum support price (MSP) paid to farmers plus handling and distribution costs over this price (read ₹3/2/1 per kg) was reimbursed to the State handling agencies such as the Food Corporation of India (FCI) as subsidy. Even as the NFSA had frozen the price to be paid by beneficiaries for three years, ie till 2016, the then Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Ram Vilas Paswan, announced that the price won't be increased for three years. In 2020, due to the Corona pandemic, under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the Government also started giving 5 kg of rice or wheat per person per month for 'free' to all the 820 million beneficiaries under the NFSA. Meanwhile, the pandemic-induced PMGKAY was withdrawn from January 1, 2023. However, from the same date, the Government started giving regular supplies under the NFSA for 'free' (instead of ₹3/2/1 per kg charged earlier). This modified scheme was renamed as PMGKAY. Later in the year, in November 2023, addressing a poll rally in Chhattisgarh, Modi announced extension of the PMGKAY for another five years, ie till 2028. In case of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), ever since 2015, the Government remains committed to making it available for household consumption at a low price although unlike in fertilisers and food, Modi hasn't announced as to 'for how long'. At present, over 100 million poor households who have been provided free gas connection under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) are eligible to receive subsidy at the rate of ₹300 per cylinder (14.2 kg) for 12 fills per annum.



WE COULD END UP WITH A SCENARIO WHERE CRORES OF PEOPLE DON'T NEED TO EARN THEIR LIVING AND SIMPLY WAIT FOR THE STATE FREEBIES TO TAKE CARE OF ALL THEIR NEEDS

If the welfare scheme beneficiaries are assured that they will continue to receive the benefits perpetually, all the more when these concern essential items such as fertilisers, food, fuel and that too with zero or near-zero price tag, they couldn't have asked for more. They can use the money thus saved for spending on other things, say education, health etc that can help them enhance their productive capacity and improve the quality of living. But, this may not happen in all cases. What if they fritter away the savings on unproductive stuff? A bigger risk has to do with complacency that this could give rise to amongst the recipients of the benefits. When the Government arranges their basic needs for free (in Delhi, the State Government gives electricity and water free), it could trigger a feeling as to 'why should they work at all?' We could end up with a scenario where crores of people don't need to earn their living and simply wait for the State freebies to take care of all their needs. Such an approach also comes in the way of extending the benefit of welfare schemes to other deserving persons who are currently not included in beneficiaries list. For instance, the current list of PMGKAY beneficiaries being based on the Census of 2011, over 100 million persons who became eligible post-2011 don't have access to

free food. Giving them access without deleting equivalent number from existing list will require more allocation for food subsidy. If fund constraints don't permit hike in the budget, those 100 million will continue to be denied access. Under the current system of giving fertiliser subsidy, farmers are prone to excessive use of urea leading to imbalance in fertiliser use, drop in crop yield, deterioration of soil health and adverse impact on the environment. Even as there is a dire need to reduce imbalance by curbing excess use of urea, its availability at throwaway price won't let that happen. For this very reason, there is rampant leakage/diversion of urea for industrial uses. Further, because manufacturers and importers get full reimbursement of the excess of cost over the MRP as subsidy on 'actual' basis, there is no incentive to reduce cost and improve efficiency in operations. The existing system of giving food subsidy also suffers from leakages, misuse and inefficiency in operations. When Modi says the supply of fertilisers and food for free or at throwaway prices will continue perpetually, dubious operators too get to continue with their illicit gains. To address these anomalies, the Government needs to drastically restructure its welfare schemes. First, there should be an exit clause

for a beneficiary under the scheme. The clause can be triggered when she crosses the poverty threshold. For instance, 250 million persons who have come out of poverty shouldn't be eligible for free food under PMGKAY. Two, our political brass should do away with the 'free' tag to any item even if it is food. While no one can deny the need for some subsidy to make it 'affordable' to the poor, insisting that the commodity be given for free or at small fraction of the cost (as in case of urea) is a risky idea. It is an invitation to all kinds of wrongs such as fictitious claims, diversions, inflated cost and so on. Three, instead of delivering a commodity at a low price, the Government should deposit the subsidy in the account of the beneficiary. The latter can buy her needs from the market where prices are determined in a competitive manner, thereby ensuring that the gains of efficiency improvements and cost reduction accrue to all consumers. In this scenario, there won't be any scope for misuse or diversion. Four, a plethora of subsidies under different heads can be merged and given as a single lump sum amount as income support. This can save a lot of administrative work and associated costs involved in running multiple schemes. *(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)*

Canada in covert talks with India over Nijjar's killing

India and Canada share a complex relationship, shaped by historical ties, diaspora influence and geopolitical interests

In the intricate dance of international diplomacy, Canada's intelligence chief, David Vigneault, embarked on clandestine visits to India earlier this year, delving into the shadowy realms of the Khalistani activist's controversial demise. These covert exchanges, veiled in secrecy, unfold against the backdrop of heightened tensions between the two nations, as a parliamentary report unveils India's ranking as the second most significant foreign threat to Canadian democracy, closely trailing behind China. With Prime Minister Trudeau's pledge to confront foreign interference head-on, Canada grapples with safeguarding its democratic integrity amidst the swirling currents of global power struggles.



SANTOSH MATHEW

India and Canada share a complex relationship, shaped by historical ties, diaspora influence, and geopolitical interests. The Indian diaspora in Canada, particularly the Sikh community, has played a significant role in shaping Canadian society and politics. However, issues related to Sikh separatism and human rights in India have often been contentious points in bilateral discussions. Nijjar's assassi-

nation has brought these issues to the forefront once again, reigniting debates about the treatment of minorities in India and the extent of Canada's involvement in addressing these concerns. The Indian diaspora in Canada is significant and steadily growing. It's estimated that there are over 2 million people of Indian origin in Canada, making the Indian community one of the largest and most influential ethnic groups in the country. Over the years, the Indian diaspora has made significant contributions to various sectors of Canadian society, including business, politics, academia, and culture. This demographic's influence is a testament to the deep-rooted connections between the two nations.

Nijjar's assassination has prompted a range of reactions from both Indian and Canadian officials. Canadian officials have condemned the act and called for a thorough investigation, while also reaffirming their commitment to dialogue and cooperation with India. However, the incident has undoubtedly strained relations between the two countries, with potential implications for trade, investment, and strategic partnerships. Some argue that Nijjar's death underscores the need for greater attention to human rights violations in India, while others caution against jumping to conclusions and emphasize the importance of evidence-based investigations. At the diplomatic level, the fallout from Nijjar's assassination



has led to increased scrutiny of Indo-Canadian relations. The alleged involvement of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and a close aide of Ajit Doval in covert operations underscores the complex interplay between intelligence, diplomacy, and geopolitics. As India seeks to assert itself on the world stage, it must navigate these challenges with

caution, ensuring that its actions are guided by principles of transparency, accountability, and respect for international law. For Canada, the incident has highlighted the delicate balancing act it must perform in managing its diverse population while upholding democratic values. The Canadian government's response has been measured, focusing on ensuring justice for Nijjar while maintaining diplomatic channels with India. This approach is crucial for preserving the multifaceted relationship that exists between the two countries. While differences may exist on certain issues, there are also areas of common interest where cooperation can flourish. Moreover, the tragic loss of Jaswinder Singh Nijjar serves

as a reminder of the importance of upholding democratic values and protecting the rights of all individuals, regardless of their beliefs or backgrounds. This commitment to justice will not only honour Nijjar's legacy but also reinforce the values that both nations espouse. Moving forward, Indo-Canadian relations will likely face challenges as both countries navigate the aftermath of this incident. However, with mutual respect, dialogue, and a commitment to shared values, there is hope that they can emerge stronger and more resilient than before. In conclusion, the assassination of Jaswinder Singh Nijjar has cast a spotlight on the intricacies of Indo-Canadian relations, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities

that lie ahead. It is a pivotal moment for both nations to reflect on their shared history, reaffirm their commitment to justice, and work towards a future marked by cooperation and mutual respect. The road ahead may be fraught with difficulties, but with a concerted effort, India and Canada can continue to build a relationship that is both robust and resilient, benefiting not only their citizens but also contributing to global peace and stability. Indo-Canadian relations are like a symphony, where each note, no matter how different, contributes to the harmony of the whole. Let us play our parts with respect, understanding, and a commitment to peace. *(The writer is an associate professor, views are personal)*

MONEY MATTERS

Gold remains flat at Rs 71,800/10 grams; silver rises Rs 200

Gold prices remained flat at Rs 71,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday. According to Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, gold traded flat on Monday, after Comex spot gold declined as much as 3.45 per cent on Friday, the most since August 2021. However, silver prices rose Rs 200 to Rs 92,100 per kg. In the previous session, it had closed at Rs 91,900 per kg. "In the Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are trading flat at Rs 71,800 per 10 grams, unchanged from the previous close," Gandhi said. In the overseas markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at US\$ 2,293 per ounce, down US\$ 1 from the previous close. However, silver was quoted higher at US\$ 29.50 per ounce. It had ended at US\$ 29.15 per ounce in the previous session. "Gold prices traded within a narrow range, after a minor gap-down opening. This movement was mainly influenced by the strengthening US dollar, following strong nonfarm payrolls data," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.



Reliance Power becomes debt free on standalone basis

Reliance Power has become a debt-free company on a standalone basis clearing all outstanding dues to lenders, sources said. The company had a debt of around Rs 800 crore, which has been repaid to banks, they said. Between December 2023 and March 2024, Reliance Power signed multiple debt settlement agreements with various banks, including IDBI Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and DBS. The company has now repaid the entire debt to these banks, sources said. As a result of that, Reliance Power, on a standalone basis, has become a debt free company. In December 2023, Reliance power sold the development rights of its proposed 1,200 megawatt hydro-electric project in Arunachal Pradesh to THDC for Rs 128 crore. In March 2024, the company sold its 45 MW wind energy project in Vashpet, Maharashtra to JSW Renewable Energy for a consideration of Rs 132 crore. Proceeds from the sale of these projects were used to retire debt.



Rupee falls 10 paise to close at 83.50 against US dollar

The rupee settled for the day lower by 10 paise at 83.50 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, following a rising American currency in overseas markets and a sluggish trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the downside in the rupee was restricted by easing political uncertainties as Narendra Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister on Sunday for a record-equalling third term. At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened at 83.48 and settled for the day lower by 10 paise at 83.50 (provisional) against the American currency. On Friday, the rupee appreciated 13 paise to 83.40 against the US dollar. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on strong US Dollar amid rising expectations of a delay in interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve due to tight job market," said Anuj Choudhary – Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. However, softening crude oil prices and optimism over a stable government may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may take cues from inflation data from India and the US.



RBI raises GDP growth projection to 7.2% for FY25

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Friday revised upwards the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal to 7.2 per cent from 7 per cent on rising private consumption and revival of demand in rural areas.

Unveiling the bi-monthly monetary policy, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said estimates released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) placed India's real gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.

"During 2024-25 so far, domestic economic activity has maintained resilience," he said, adding that manufacturing activity continues to gain ground on the back of strengthening domestic demand.

Also, the services sector maintained buoyancy, as evident in available high-frequency indicators.

Later replying to a question



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if the economy was overheating, RBI deputy governor Michael Debabrata Patra said: "We are not seeing signs of overheating because, remember, that level of output had fallen very low during the pandemic and even these high rates of growth are enabling it to catch up with that level. So, no signs of overheating".

In his monetary policy state-

ment, Governor Das said private consumption, the mainstay of aggregate demand, is recovering with steady discretionary spending in urban areas.

The revival in rural demand is getting a fillip from improving farm sector activity, and investment activity continues to gain traction on the back of ongoing expansion in non-

food bank credit.

He also said the forecast of above normal south-west monsoon by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) is expected to boost kharif production and replenish the reservoir levels.

"Taking all these factors into consideration, real GDP growth for 2024-25 is projected at 7.2 per cent with Q1 at 7.3 per cent, Q2 at 7.2 per cent, Q3 at 7.3 per cent, and Q4 at 7.2 per cent. The risks are evenly balanced," Das said.

He also emphasised that the healthy balance sheets of banks and corporates, the government's continued thrust on capex, high capacity utilisation, and business optimism augur well for investment activity.

External demand should get a fillip from improving prospects of global trade, the governor said.

The developments relating to growth and inflation are unfolding as per "our expectations", he noted.

Modi govt 3.0 can usher in next phase of reforms towards Viksit Bharat: India Inc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi taking oath for the third time, India Inc on Monday expressed optimism that the new government under his leadership can usher in the next phase of reforms to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat.

Several corporate leaders posted congratulatory messages on X, formerly Twitter, after Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday, becoming only the second PM after Jawaharlal Nehru to secure a third consecutive term.

Vedanta Group Chairman Anil Agarwal tweeted, "Congratulations to @narendramodi ji on being elected Prime Minister of India for the third consecutive time. Bharat has crossed many milestones under your visionary leadership. We are confident that the country will continue on its remarkable growth trajectory!".

In a post on X, JSW Group CMD Sajjan Jindal said: "Congratulations @narendramodi ji on assuming office



CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said as India continues to think and act 'big' under Modi, continuity in the reform agenda will carry India forward on the path to becoming a developed nation.

as Prime Minister for the third time, a feat last achieved by

CII President Sanjiv Puri in a statement said building upon a strong growth rate of 8.2 per cent in 2023-24, the new government under Modi's leadership can usher in the next phase of reforms to make the most of the global opportunities and build on the robust fundamentals of the economy.

development and prosperity of

India," he said in a post on X. CII President Sanjiv Puri in a statement said building upon a strong growth rate of 8.2 per cent in 2023-24, the new government under Modi's leadership can usher in the next phase of reforms to make the most of the global opportunities and build on the robust fundamentals of the economy.

NON-SUBMISSION OF NOMINATION

Sebi junks rule to freeze demat a/cs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Monday eased rules for existing investors with abolishing the norm of freezing demat accounts and mutual fund folios in case of failure to provide a 'choice of nomination'.

Additionally, investors holding securities in physical form would be eligible for receipt of any payment, including dividend, interest or redemption payment as well as to lodge grievances or avail any service request from the RTA (Registrars to an Issue and Share Transfer Agents) even if they did not submit 'choice of nomination'.

Earlier, the regulator set

June 30, 2024, as the deadline for all existing individual mutual fund holders to nominate or opt out of nomination. Failure to comply with the rule could have led to the freezing



of their accounts for withdrawals.

Based on representations received from the market participants, for ease of compli-

ance and investor convenience, Sebi has decided that for existing investors or unitholders, non-submission of 'choice of nomination' will not result in the freezing of demat accounts as well as mutual fund folios, according to a circular on Monday.

The regulator said that payments withheld presently by the listed companies or RTAs for not submitting a 'choice of nomination' will be processed accordingly.

Sebi further said that all new investors/unitholders would continue to be required to mandatorily provide the 'choice of nomination' for demat accounts/ mutual fund folios (except for jointly held demat accounts and mutual fund folios).

'Slim majority for BJP poses challenges to reforms agenda'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP losing its outright majority and now having to rely on allies to form a government may delay more far-reaching elements of economic and fiscal reforms like land and labour and impede progress on fiscal consolidation, global rating agencies said on Wednesday.

Fitch Ratings and Moody's Ratings in separate notes spoke about the implication of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP losing its majority for the first time since 2014, winning 240 seats in the 543-seat Lok Sabha. BJP now plans to form a government with smaller



parties in the National Democratic Alliance, which won another 53 seats, giving the alliance a 293-seat majority.

"It appears the BJP-led NDA is likely to form the next government, returning Prime Minister Modi for a third term, but with a weakened majority that could pose challenges for the more ambitious elements of the government's reform agenda," Fitch said.

Equity mutual fund inflow swells to Rs 34,697 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity mutual funds witnessed a staggering growth with inflow reaching a record high of Rs 34,697 crore in May, marking a 83 per cent surge from the preceding month, propelled by contributions from thematic funds and intermittent corrections that provided buying opportunity to investors.

This also marks the 39th consecutive month of net inflows in equity funds, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Monday.

Moreover, monthly contributions from Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) rose to

Rs 20,904 crore in May, from Rs 20,371 crore in April, marking the second consecutive month of inflows exceeding Rs 20,000 crore.



Overall, the mutual fund industry has witnessed an inflow of Rs 1.1 lakh crore in the month under review as compared to Rs 2.4 lakh crore in April. The inflow was due to

investment in equity as well as debt schemes. With these inflows, the industry's net assets under management rose to Rs 58.91 lakh crore in May-end from Rs 57.26 lakh crore in April-end.

As per the data, equity-oriented schemes witnessed an inflow of Rs 34,697 crore in May, way higher than Rs 18,917 crore in April. Except for the focused and equity-linked saving schemes (ELSS) categories, all the other categories witnessed good net inflows.

Sector/thematic funds continue to attract investor attention with the highest net inflows of Rs 19,213 crores during the month.

Sensex, Nifty breach record levels but settle lower amid profit-booking

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Monday after hitting their all-time high levels in early trade amid selling in blue-chip IT stocks and HDFC Bank.

After breaching the 77,000-mark during the early trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex came under selling pressure at the fag-end of the session and ended 203.28 points or 0.27 per cent lower at 76,490.08. During the day, the benchmark jumped 385.68 points or 0.50 per cent to

hit a new record of 77,079.04. Halting its three-day rally, the NSE Nifty dipped 30.95 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 23,259.20. Intra-day, it climbed 121.75 points or 0.52 per cent to hit the lifetime peak of 23,411.90.

Narendra Modi was sworn in as Prime Minister on Sunday for a record-equalling third term, heading a 72-member Union Council of Ministers that put emphasis on continuity, youth and experience, while also rewarding partners in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

DPIIT Secy pitches for strengthening quality system in country

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Strengthening the entire quality system in the country is crucial for moving towards excellence, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said on Monday. Speaking at an event to celebrate World Accreditation Day, organised by the Quality Council of India (QCI), Singh said there is a need to go beyond standard practices and develop processes.

"He mentioned that strengthening the accreditation body and the entire quality system is not just a necessity but a strategic move towards excellence," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement.

The National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) and the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) constitute the accreditation infrastructure in India.

'Higher property prices, changes in law to boost debt recovery'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Recovery of debt from stressed residential realty projects is set to increase in the current financial year due to higher property prices as well as changes in rules, a report said on Monday.

The bad loan recovery rate is estimated to touch 16-18 per cent at the end of FY25 from 11 per cent as on March 31, 2024, domestic rating agency Crisil

said in a report. "This will be driven by improved viability of stressed projects due to healthy demand and price appreciation seen in residential real estate and greater investor and promoter interest in reviving such projects," the agency said.

It added that recent amendments to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) regulations for real estate projects should also



strengthen resolution of stressed real estate assets in the medium term.

The agency said it analysed the performance of its portfolio comprising security receipts

of Rs 9,000 crore from 70 stressed realty projects with a saleable area of 66 million square feet while arriving at the estimates.

It said residential realty demand is set to increase by 10-12 per cent courtesy a healthy economic growth and buoyant demand across housing segments in top-six cities.

Additionally, it said low unsold inventories across major

micro markets will also help ARCs (asset reconstruction companies) turn around stressed real estate projects faster with support from promoters or external investors.

A bulk three-fourths of the projects it analysed turned non-performing assets (NPA) between 2019 and 2022, and were impacted by falling sales and slower collections during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Southeast Asian nations top choice for Indians travelling abroad: Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Southeast Asian countries have emerged as the favourite destinations for Indian travellers planning short vacations abroad, while the United States, Europe, and Australia were among the preferences for long stays, according to a survey released on Monday.

According to OYO Global Summer Vacations Travelopedia 2024: Southeast Asia has emerged as the top choice of Indian tourists for shorter stays of 5-7 days, making the most of long weekends and holidays after visa relaxation.

The final sample size com-



prised around 4,000 respondents, providing a data set to analyse emerging trends and preferences in the overseas travel behaviour of Indian tourists.

Bali emerged as the top destination with 38 per cent

respondents voting in its favour, closely followed by Pattaya, Bangkok, and Dubai.

Southeast Asian destinations such as Indonesia and Malaysia emerged as preferred countries following relaxed visa norms, OYO said.

Europe and the United States of America emerged as the top choice for long-haul destinations where Indian tourists tend to stay for 10-15 days (about 2 weeks) or even more.

OYO Founder and CEO Ritesh Agarwal said, "With improved air connectivity, visa facilitation, and a wide range of travel options, it has become more convenient than ever for Indian travellers to explore the beauty of Southeast Asia. Our ongoing program to increase the number of premium properties in the region will help Indian tourists with a range of stay options at all the popular holiday destinations."

NSE warns investors against deepfake videos of its chief recommending stocks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Monday cautioned investors against deepfake videos of its MD and CEO Ashish Kumar Chauhan giving investment advisories. In a statement, the exchange said it has observed the use of face/voice of Chauhan and NSE logo in a few investment and advisory audio and video clips

falsely created using technology.

Such videos seem to have been created using sophisticated technologies to imitate the voice and facial expressions of Chauhan. Accordingly, the bourse has asked investors not to believe in such audio and videos and not to follow any such investment or other advice coming from such fake videos or other mediums.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL OFFICER, PANCHAYATH RAJ MAHABUBNAGAR
TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. TO/Tender/1 to 33/2024-25 Dt. 10.06.2024
No. of works 330 Calling the works under FDR, PMGSY II, MRR/FDR/2022-23, XV Finance Commission & GDP 2023-24 Grants in Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool & Narayanpet Districts. Estimate Cost: Rs.3679.77 Lakhs. Tenders Schedules can be had from e-procurement market from 12.06.2024 to 20.06.2024 for each tender with minimum (7) working days to participate from date of upload. Other details can be had from a procurement market place @ https://tenders.telangana.gov.in; email id: sa_pr_mbrng@yahoo.co.in. Further details can be had from the office of the Superintending Engineer/Regional office PR Circle Mahabubnagar.
R.O. No.: E-DIVEL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2024-25 Sd/- Regional Officer, PR, Mahabubnagar.



Suleman Hirani and Zeenat



Zain and Alisha



Darpan Furnishings has launched its 9th store at Kompally. The event was attended by actresses Tejaswi Madivala, and Varsha.



Tejaswi Madivala



Sindu



Prachi



Urimila



Aiswarya



Aasha



PARTY

Photos by - SV Chary

Summer of Sustainability 2024 focus on water conservation

As global concerns about water scarcity and conservation continue to escalate, SmarterHomes, announces the launch of its "Summer of Sustainability 2024 -Water Wise Communities", a campaign focused on the need for water conservation. This innovative campaign is designed to instill a culture of responsible water usage, empower apartment communities to take control of their consumption, and recognise those actively contributing to water conservation efforts. Additionally, the campaign aims to foster a sense of community involvement and collective responsibility towards water conservation.

PNB MetLife announces Sameer Bansal as new CEO

PNB MetLife India Insurance Co. Ltd., a leading life insurer, announced the appointment of Sameer Bansal as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, effective July 1, 2024, subject to the necessary regulatory approvals. Sameer has over 25 years of experience in financial services, including extensive and successful experience in leading Distribution through Bancassurance, Agency, Digital, Employee Benefits and Direct marketing business models. He joined PNB MetLife in 2007 and is currently Chief Distribution Officer and a member of the leadership team.

BIC Cello brings 'Hallyu' to classrooms

BIC Cello recently launched its highly anticipated K-POP & K-Drama Fountain Pens, a remarkable fusion of writing elegance and South Korean cultural charm. As the global 'Hallyu' phenomenon continues to captivate audiences worldwide, India stands proudly as the second-largest consumer of Korean content, with an astonishing 775 million views for the iconic K-pop group BTS on YouTube in 2023 alone. The nation has also seen an upward spike in fandom for Korean dramas. Recognizing this fervent enthusiasm, BIC Cello has meticulously crafted a line of fountain pens that pay homage to the vibrant and influential South Korean entertainment industry. These exquisite writing instruments are designed to resonate with fans and enthusiasts alike, offering a tangible connection to the cultural phenomena they hold dear.

vivo launches 'Made in India' X Fold3 Pro

Vivo launched its segment redefining foldable smartphones – the 'made in India' X Fold3 Pro. It is "India's slimmest, lightest, largest foldable display, boasting the "brightest display. X Fold3 Pro delivers a remarkably light and slim design without compromising on flagship performance, durability, or battery capacity. Combining exceptional camera capabilities, fine-tuned in collaboration with ZEISS for professional-level imaging results, with powerful performance and dual flagship chip, stunning immersive displays, and an OS tailored for foldable devices, X Fold3 Pro is engineered for an all-around seamless experience and enhanced productivity. The X Fold3 Pro will be available at INR 159,999 (16+512 GB) in Celestial Black colour. It is also available for purchase on easy EMI of INR 6666/Months for 24 Months with No

Marwadi University excels in placement of students from TG

Marwadi University based in Rajkot, Gujarat, announced the successful placement of three of its outstanding students hailing from Telangana, in prestigious companies from India. Three students namely Mallavarapu George Sandeep from Vijayawada, Polaki Sandeep from Tathapatnam, and Komarapalem Bhanu Sri from Avanigadda, have been offered roles as Trainee Engineers in reputed companies with handsome pay packages. They are among the 10+ students from Telangana who are pursuing their education at Marwadi University in different courses in the engineering stream.

Sriya unveils special edition Timex and Guess watches

US-based watchmaker Timex Group commemorates their strong partnership with their Hyderabad-based partner Kamal watches (Aparna Mall) through a special edition watches collection from Timex and Guess. At a grand celebration, popular Actor Sriya Reddy was invited to grace the occasion and unveil the special collection.

H&M introduces its Home Concept to Hyderabad

H&M India, inaugurated its H&M Home concept in Inorbit Mall, Madhapur, spanning a dedicated floor space of 2012 square meters. This significant addition marks a new chapter for H&M in Hyderabad, offering customers an elevated shopping experience with the highly anticipated H&M Home collection. The store features the latest Summer Collection alongside the H&M Home range, catering to a wide array of customer needs.

Universal Sampo partners with Maruti Suzuki

Universal Sampo, reaffirms its commitment to enhancing insurance penetration and awareness in the region. With a vision aligned with IRDAI's goal of achieving "Insurance for All by 2047", Universal Sampo has initiated impactful activities to promote insurance coverage across various sectors. Partnering with Maruti Suzuki Insurance Broking, Universal Sampo has launched a pioneering initiative to provide free vehicle checkups in Andhra Pradesh. Under the theme 'Insure today for a safe tomorrow', the program aims to raise awareness about the importance of insurance in safeguarding against unforeseen risks. Covering a wide range of insurance products including motor, health, personal accident, fire, and burglary insurance, Universal Sampo is dedicated to ensuring comprehensive protection for individuals, assets and businesses alike.


At the 12th Asian Para-Cycling Road Championships in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in 2024, the Indian Paracycling team displayed remarkable talent and perseverance. Through their incredible performance, the team won a plethora of medals, including a gold medal in the C2 category for Jyoti Gaderiya of Maharashtra, a silver medal for Shaik Arshad of Andhra Pradesh in the men's C2 division, a silver medal for Prashant Arkal of Maharashtra in the hand-cyclist division, and a bronze medal for Yogesh Ahire of Maharashtra in the same division.






The experts at the 4th Good Air Summit Edition overwhelmingly agreed that achieving net zero by 2050 is the only path to a healthy future and that, in order to have a stronger impact, environmental protection calls for widespread public knowledge and proactive individual actions. Bringing together leading experts, policymakers, industry representatives, and advocates, the fourth edition of the groundbreaking Good Air Summit tackled air pollution and its far-reaching effects on public health.


ARCHIE




GARFIELD




NANCY




GINGER MEGGS




CAVIN AND HOBBS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	
6				7	8
9			10		
				11	
12	13			14	15
17				18	
19					

SUDOKU

	2	7		9		4			5
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	5		7	4	2	9	1		
7		5	2					4	
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Yesterday's solution

7	2	1	3	5	6	4	9	8
8	5	9	7	4	2	1	6	3
3	6	4	9	8	1	2	7	5
9	1	6	4	2	5	8	3	7
2	3	8	1	6	7	5	4	9
5	4	7	8	3	9	6	2	1
4	8	5	6	7	3	9	1	2
1	7	2	5	9	4	3	8	6
6	9	3	2	1	8	7	5	4

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- Got better after illness
- A money-holder
- The parts along the end or sides of something
- A group of people in a court who decide if someone is guilty or not
- Film theatre
- Going to live elsewhere
- Trip over
- A tube used for drinking
- Approximately
- Extremely frightened

DOWN

- Mistake
- Follow an order

SOLUTION

C	O	S	I	N	E			
A	F	T	E	R	S	M	A	L
T	H	A	T	E	R			
H	E	I	P	E	R	B	E	S
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R	A	P	T	W	N			
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L	I	T	T	E	R			
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IT'S OFFICIAL! BALAKRISHNA, BOYAPATI SREENU TEAM UP ONCE AGAIN

In the realm of cinema, the collaboration between an actor and director often defines the essence of cinematic brilliance. Such is the case with the formidable duo of the God of Masses, Nandamuri Balakrishna, and the blockbuster maker, Boyapati Sreenu. Their trilogy of blockbuster hits—*Simha*, *Legend*, and *Akhanda*—etched their names in the annals of Indian cinema as one of the most celebrated combinations. Now, this iconic pair is set to reignite the screens with their fourth collaboration. The much-anticipated project, *#BB4*, was officially announced on the auspicious occasion of NBK's birthday. Raam Achanta and Gopichand Achanta, renowned for their production of *Legend*, will be producing *#BB4* under the prestigious banner of 14 Reels Plus. The film is presented by M

Tejeswini Nandamuri. The announcement poster exudes a divine aura, featuring a colossal chariot wheel set against an ethereal backdrop. The number 4, adorned with a Rudraksha bracelet, hints at the spiritual essence of the film. The crimson sun and cascading comets evoke intrigue, leaving audiences eager to unravel the narrative woven by the maestro director and the iconic Nandamuri scion. The illustrious partnership of Balakrishna and Boyapati has long been hailed as a benchmark in Telugu cinema. *#BB4*, undoubtedly, will elevate this legacy to new heights, promising a cinematic spectacle of grand proportions. With top-notch technical prowess and a formidable budget, *#BB4* is poised to become Balakrishna's most extravagant venture yet.



SPECIAL B'DAY GLIMPSE FROM NBK109 IS HERE



Sithara Entertainments treated fans with a special birthday glimpse of Nandamuri Balakrishna from his upcoming film, *NBK109*, directed by the renowned Bobby Kolli. Known as the "Natural Born King" and the "God of Masses," Balakrishna's recent performances have been the talk of the town, with his memorable characters and blockbuster hits captivating audiences. Produced by Sithara Entertainments, one of Telugu Cinema's busiest and most successful production houses, *NBK109* promises to be a lavish cinematic spectacle. The glimpse introduces Balakrishna's character as "a

monster that even evil would fear," hinting at an enthralling and dangerous mission. Director Bobby Kolli, known for his thundering action blockbusters, appears to present Balakrishna at his stylish and violent best in *NBK109*. The stunning visual choreography, coupled with S Thaman's adept background score, promises an immersive viewing experience. Cinematographer Vijay Kartik Kannan's portrayal of Balakrishna in mass frames adds to the anticipation among fans. Noteworthy contributions from Niranjana Devaramane's editing and Avinash Kolla's production design further elevate the film's appeal. Bollywood actor Bobby Deol is set to play the antagonist role, adding an extra layer of intrigue to the narrative. Produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya of Sithara Entertainments, in association with Fortune Four Cinemas, and presented by Srihara Studios, *NBK109* will set new standards in Telugu cinema.

KALKI 2898 AD TRAILER Prabhas dominates the screen with his action

Following massive anticipation, the much-awaited trailer of the upcoming sci-fi epic *Kalki 2898 AD* has finally been unveiled. Offering an extraordinary introduction to the *Kalki 2898 AD* cinematic universe, the trailer, spanning two minutes and fifty-one seconds, draws audiences into a world of Indian mythology, complemented by top-notch sci-fi and VFX. The film's trailer is available to watch in multiple languages including Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and English.

In the electrifying trailer, megastar Amitabh Bachchan brings to life the enigmatic Ashwatthama with unmatched intensity, showcasing his action prowess. Meanwhile, Ulaganayagan Kamal Haasan looks truly unrecognisable in his intriguing portrayal. Elevating the excitement, Prabhas dominates the screen with his power-packed action and undeniable chemistry with the futuristic vehicle and his trusted best friend 'Bujji'. Further, Deepika Padukone adds depth to the narrative with a range of emotions in each frame.

Additionally, Disha Patani impresses with her incredible action sequences. The trailer is filled with references to a 'naya yug' (new era) on the horizon and an impending battle.

With power-packed dialogues, phenomenal BGM and breathtaking VFX, the *Kalki 2898 AD* trailer promises an adrenaline-fueled cinematic journey for audiences to look forward to. Expressing his thoughts on the film's trailer, Director Nag Ashwin stated, "My heart is filled with so many emotions today. As a filmmaker, I have always been fascinated by Indian mythology and science fiction. Merging these two elements in *Kalki 2898 AD* is nothing short of a dream, made possible by the incredible talent and dedication of our artists and team. It has taken us a lot to witness this day today. From our producers and star cast to the brilliant creative minds and the entire crew of *Kalki 2898 AD*, each person has poured their heart and soul into this film. We hope the trailer makes the Telugu audience and the entire nation proud, leaving them excited for what's to come."



Lakshmi Manchu unveils the mystery behind Yakshini

Lakshmi Manchu, a stalwart in the Indian entertainment industry, has consistently dazzled audiences with her remarkable performances. With an impressive repertoire that includes notable projects like *Monster*, *Lakshmi Bomb*, and *Pitta Kathalu*, among others, she has carved a niche for herself as a versatile artist. Now, she gears up to enthrall viewers with her upcoming Telugu web series, *Yakshini*, set to premiere on Disney Plus Hotstar. Amidst mounting anticipation following the release of the series' poster and trailer, Lakshmi sheds light on her role and the premise of *Yakshini*. Speaking candidly about her character, she reveals, "In the web series, I portray Yakshini. For those unfamiliar, Yakshinis are celestial beings who guard temples. Our story delves into mythology while infusing a modern, fictional twist. It explores the journey of Yakshinis cursed to walk the Earth, grappling with their existence amidst humans."

Elaborating on the series' premise, Lakshmi adds, "We delve into the intriguing dynamics of Yakshini's adapting to earthly life, offering a captivating blend of fantasy and contemporary storytelling. It's an exhilarating experience to be a part of this project, and I'm eagerly awaiting its release." With Lakshmi Manchu at the helm, *Yakshini* promises to be a riveting fantasy series, tailor-made for audiences who revel in immersive storytelling. As excitement mounts among fans eager to witness Lakshmi's stellar performance, the series emerges as a must-watch spectacle.

Kaala Bhairava comes on board Gunasekhar's Euphoria

Renowned director Gunasekhar's upcoming youthful social drama, *Euphoria*, promises to captivate audiences with its compelling narrative and soul-stirring music. Adding to the excitement, musical sensation Kaala Bhairava, known for his mesmerising vocals and musical prowess, has been roped in as the music director for this highly anticipated project. Having mesmerised audiences with his rendition of the Oscar-winning song *Naatu Naatu* and graced the prestigious Oscar stage, Kaala Bhairava brings his unique blend of talent and innovation to *Euphoria*. Under the visionary direction of Gunasekhar, acclaimed for his diverse filmography and blockbuster hits, *Euphoria* is poised to set new benchmarks in cinematic excellence. As the pre-production gears up at a rapid pace, anticipation mounts for the commencement of filming. In a special announcement video, the film's production unit revealed Kaala Bhairava's involvement as the music director, igniting further excitement among fans and industry enthusiasts alike. Produced by Neelima Guna under the esteemed banner of Guna Handmade Films, *Euphoria* promises to be a cinematic spectacle like no other.



Shree Paadha Creations unveils first look of Thufaanu Hecharika

Prepare for an enthralling journey into the world of suspense and intrigue with *Thufaanu Hecharika*, the latest offering from Shree Paadha Creations. Helmed by director Jagadish KK, this riveting crime thriller stars Allu Ramakrishna and Suhana Mudwani in lead roles and marks the second venture from the production house. In an unveiling ceremony on Monday, the film's first-look poster was revealed, offering a glimpse into the intense narrative awaiting audiences. Director Jagadish KK shared insights into the film, stating, "Today, we present the first poster of our film, *Thufaanu Hecharika*. It delves into the suspenseful realm of crime thrillers, where a young man's tranquil existence in a picturesque hill station is abruptly disrupted by a storm. The story chronicles his journey as he navigates through adversity and emerges triumphant." Acknowledging the dedication of the cast and crew, Jagadish KK expressed gratitude, saying, "Our team displayed exceptional

commitment and resilience, braving challenging weather conditions of extreme cold and rain to bring this thrilling tale to life. We spent a year capturing the breathtaking landscapes of Lambasingi and Chintapalli, ensuring that the visuals resonate with the story's essence." Highlighting the contributions of cinematographer RK Naidu in capturing the essence of the hill station, Jagadish KK praised the collaborative effort of the entire team across various departments. "I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our producers, Dr. Srinivas Kishan, Dr. Rajinikanth S, and Sunny Bansal, for their unwavering support and shared passion for this project," he added. The producers echoed the sentiment, affirming that filming has been completed, and the project is currently in the post-production phase. *Thufaanu Hecharika* promises to deliver a captivating cinematic experience and is slated for release in the near future.



Yash's Rajadhani Rowdy set to release on June 14

Produced by Santosh Kumar of Santosh Entertainment, starring the renowned KGF fame Yash as the hero and Sheena as the heroine, *Rajadhani Rowdy* is directed by K.V. Raju. The film is a narrative centered around the lives of four youngsters who are led astray by substance abuse and alcohol consumption. *Rajadhani Rowdy* depicts the consequences of their actions, highlighting the importance of making informed choices. The film is an amalgamation of entertainment and a powerful message. Prakash Raj delivers a remarkable performance as the police officer, showcasing his extraordinary acting skills. Mumtaz Khan adds charm with her presence. Arjun Janya composes fantastic music for the film. The makers are proud to present such a good film in Telugu. The makers have announced on Monday that the film will hit theatres on June 14.



YVS Chowdary set to launch another Nandamuri hero

The lineage of the illustrious Nandamuri family in Telugu cinema is set to witness another chapter with the grand debut of Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao, the scion of a legendary legacy. As the great-grandson of the iconic Shri NTR, grandson of Hari Krishna, and son of the late Shri Janaki Ram, Taraka Ramarao is poised to step into the limelight under the mentorship of renowned director YVS Chowdary. The debut film will be produced by Yalamanchili Geetha under the banner "New Talent Roars," with Ramesh Attili serving as the executive producer. Having undergone rigorous training and mastering the requisite skills, Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao is all set to take on the mantle of a lead actor. YVS Chowdary, known for his knack of introducing fresh talent to Tollywood, has taken it upon himself to orchestrate the grand launch of Taraka Ramarao with this much-anticipated project.

With a rich history of collaboration with the Nandamuri family, including stalwarts like Hari Krishna and Balakrishna, YVS Chowdary brings his wealth of experience to shape Taraka Ramarao's debut venture. The untitled film was officially announced on the auspicious occasion of Nandamuri Balakrishna's birthday, marking a significant milestone in Taraka Ramarao's journey. Crafting a narrative that highlights the inherent talents of Taraka Ramarao, YVS Chowdary has meticulously penned the story and screenplay. The film promises to offer a captivating cinematic experience for Telugu movie aficionados, showcasing Taraka Ramarao's prowess on the silver screen. Further details regarding the film's genre, female lead, and other pivotal aspects will be unveiled in due course.



Harshith Reddy launches trailer of Seetha Kalyana Vaibhogame

Seetha Kalyana Vaibhogame is an upcoming love and action entertainer starring Suman Tej and Garima Chauhan in the lead roles. The film is produced by Rachala Yugandhar under the banner of Dream Gate Productions and directed by Satish Paramaveeda. *Seetha Kalyana Vaibhogame* is getting ready for its theatrical release on June 21. As the release date is not far away, the makers have opted for aggressive promotions. On Monday, *Balagam* producer Harshith Reddy launched the film's theatrical trailer. The trailer opens with Shivaji's voiceover: "Ahinsa Paramo Dharma, Dharma Himsa Tathaiva Cha (Non-violence is the ultimate dharma, so too is violence in service of Dharma). Dharmanni Nilabetadaniki Enthathi Himsaina Paramo Dharmame," says he. The phrase *Ahimsa Paramo Dharma* is mentioned several times in the Mahabharata. The trailer then shows the romantic angle in the movie demonstrating the love story of the lead

pair who enjoy time together in the village. They truly appear like Rama and Seetha. Things turn upside down with the entry of Ravana into their lives. How Rama takes on the evil-natured Ravana to protect Seetha and marry her forms the crux of the story.

The story looks very interesting and the narrative is engaging from start to end. While Suman Tej and Garima Chauhan played their parts efficiently as Ram and Seetha, Gagan Vihari stole the show with his exceptional acting as the Ravana. Parasuram's camera blocks are impressive, whereas Charan Arjun added an extra layer of beauty with his compelling score. The production standards are quite high. The trailer further hikes prospects for the movie.



Introducing the latest addition to the world of SWAG

Excitement is in the air as the world of *SWAG* welcomes its newest feminine energy, Sharanya Pradeep, on board! With anticipation building up, fans and enthusiasts are eagerly awaiting the debut of this talented individual. Directed by Hasith Goli, the film stars Sree Vishnu and Ritu Varma in lead roles. While the film went on floors last year, recently the makers announced that actress Meera Jasmine has joined the cast of the film. Now Sharanya Pradeep onboarding comes as another surprise to the audience. As a pure Telugu film, the experience gets ready to load; all eyes are on Sharanya Pradeep to see what she brings to the table. On the technical front, it has music by Vivek Sagar, cinematography by Vedaraman Sankaran and editing by Viplav Nyshada.



STANDALONE



Following the passing of Ramoji Rao, the renowned producer and founder of the Eenadu firm, the Telugu cinema industry is in sorrow. Celebrities from Telugu cinema arranged a program at TFFC on Monday to honour his passing. Chadalavada Srinivasa Rao, producer and director; producer KS Rama Rao; Paruchuri Gopalakrishna; Vijayendra Prasad; vice president of MAA association Ravi; President Veera Shankar of the Directors Association; director Ajay Kumar; secretary Subbareddy of the Director Association; President Damodar Prasad of the TFFC; secretary Prasanna Kumar; Sravanti Ravi Kishore; Ambati Srinu; Vijayendra Reddy; Shivalinga Prasad and others were in attendance.

Demoralised Pakistan eye big win against Canada to keep T20 WC hopes alive

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Shocked by the USA and scarred by India, Pakistan have little to play for and everything to lose when they meet Canada in their penultimate group league encounter of the T20 World Cup here on Tuesday. If the Super Over loss against the co-hosts in their opening Group A match was not enough, Pakistan slumped to six-run loss at the hands of arch-rivals India in a low-scoring match here on Sunday. Pakistan's Super Eight qualification chance now hinges on winning big against Canada and Ireland, besides hoping that the Americans lose big to India and Ireland. Even in that scenario, both the teams will end on four points each and it will boil down to which team has a better net run rate. Hence Pakistan can only pray for divine intervention in best case scenario. USA after two wins enjoy a healthy run-rate of +0.626 and just a victory against Ireland would suffice while Pakistan with a dismal NRR of -0.150 would not only need to win but also by comprehensive margins. In the two matches so far, the 2009 champions never really looked the formidable side it was once known to be. There seems to be no clarity in Babar Azam's leadership. The two factions in the team -- one led by the skipper with his close friends Mohammed Rizwan and Shadab Khan while other including, recently



sacked Shaheen Shah Afridi is also making matters worse. Not a single department clicked for Pakistan in the two matches so far and they will need a more cohesive effort in the remaining matches to give themselves an outside chance. While Babar and Shahadab Khan scored 40 odd runs against USA to post 159 for 7, Pakistan failed to defend the target, losing the match in Super Over. And then while chasing an underwhelming 120-run target, none of the Pakistani batters could up the ante as they consumed 59 dot balls to be restricted 113 for 7. Pakistan's major concern going forward is the underwhelming

performance of their batters as the likes of Fakhar Zaman, Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan and Iftikhar Ahmed played loose shots to make life difficult for them against India. While Mohammed Rizwan took 44 balls to score his 31 runs, Wasim consumed 23 balls for his 15. The only bright sport for Pakistan on Sunday was the performance of their bowlers with Naseem Shah (3/21) and Mohammad Amir (2/23) leading from the front. But premier fast bowler Shaheen needs to take more responsibility upfront in the remaining two games to give Pakistan an outside chance. He has hardly been able to get

swing in conducive conditions. Going forward Pakistan will have to do some soul searching if they want to revive their faltering campaign. Canada, on the other hand, are placed third in Group A with one win out of two games. After the seven-wicket loss to USA, Canada bounced back in style to beat Ireland by 12 runs in their next match. In Navneet Dhaliwal, Canada have a veteran top-order batter who was a part of that 2019 victory over Ireland, and a lot will be riding on him. Canada will also take heart from the defeat against the USA because they had posted an imposing 194, albeit in a losing cause.

Pakistan lost the plot after 15 overs, players under pressure: Kirsten

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Perplexed by Pakistan's sudden disintegration in the T20 World Cup match against India here, the team's recently-appointed head coach Gary Kirsten said his batters "lost the plot" after 15 overs and are under pressure after failing to perform at their best. Pakistan are on the verge of being eliminated from the tournament after consecutive losses to debutants USA and arch-foes India. The loss to Rohit Sharma's on Sunday was a classic case of implosion with the side going from 80/4 in the 15th over to ending at 113/7 while chasing a modest 120. Kirsten emphasised the significance of strike rotation, particularly on challenging surfaces like the one here. He said his team failed to follow the strategy. "I think certainly on a pitch like that, it is really, really important to be able to rotate the strike. So, I agree with you that sometimes it's fun to watch a game like this where it's not only about hitting boundaries," Kirsten said in the post-match press conference. "But you also have to be able to use 120 balls really well. As I said, we did for 15 overs and then we lost the plot...We're losing too many wickets. "As a batting unit, you can't lose as many wickets as we are losing. Players have got to take responsibility when that opportunity comes," he added. Pakistan were guilty of consuming 59 dot balls during the chase. Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah did the most damage with figures of 3/14 in his four overs.



The side's next game will be at the same venue against Canada on Tuesday. It will be a virtual do-or-die encounter for the runners-up of the last edition. "These guys are all international players and they're aware that when they're not performing at their best that there's going to be pressure put on them. That's understandable," Kirsten, who has coached the 2011 ODI World Cup-winning Indian team, said. "...But a lot of these guys have played a lot of T20 cricket around the world over many, many years and it's really up to them to decide how they're going to take their games forward," the South African stated. Asked if the team lacks the ability to handle pressure, Kirsten stressed upon the importance of continual growth and adaptation in the fast-paced world of international cricket. "I'm having a look into the environment and looking at what the issues are. I look at these players, I've watched them play many, many years on TV and kind of getting to

know them, they're fantastic guys," Kirsten, who was appointed just a few weeks before the World Cup, said. "I mean, there's a lot of very disappointed guys in the change room now. I think for me the most important thing for every international player is that you continue growing..." he explained. "The game is changing pretty much every year. So, if you're not up to it and you're not improving, you're going to get found out somewhere." On what exactly was the team's strategy while chasing, Kirsten said the focus was on capitalising on loose deliveries and rotating the strike. However, he expressed disappointment over the team's loss of momentum during the crucial phase of the innings. "...I thought we did that brilliantly for 15 overs. We kept it at a run a ball, and then we lost wickets and then we stopped scoring ones and then we were looking for boundaries and once you've got to that point, it was always going to be hard. "So, the message was to do

what we executed on for 15 overs," the coach said. Amid the disappointment of defeat, Kirsten found solace in the team's bowling performance, especially in the death overs. "(It) got better and better and we've tracked their stats over the last 15 odd games, and they've been an incredible bowling unit from overs 10 to 20. I think our record between overs 10 to 20 as a bowling unit is up there with the best," he said. "We've got four fantastic seamers and Imad Wasim I thought bowled really well today as well. So, we've got some nice options on the ball with the team and I think we're going to be a difficult team to bat against if we bowl like that," he added. Kirsten diverged from the criticism aimed at the drop-in pitches of the Nassau stadium, refraining from joining the bandwagon of discontent. Despite witnessing a series of low-scoring matches, he remained diplomatic about Sunday's wicket and the chatter surrounding its uneven bounce, which has been dubbed dangerous in several quarters. "I think it wasn't dangerous, I mean the odd one rose up, but not many. Generally it kept a little bit lower, it was difficult to score from both batting sides and also a fairly slow outfield so it was never going to be a big total," said Kirsten. "I would have said 140 would have been a really good score on that pitch, so India didn't get that and so I thought we had the game," added the South African.

Year ago people asked if I am finished, now they say I am at my best: Bumrah

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Jasprit Bumrah couldn't help but laugh at how the narrative about him has changed in a year's time -- from being someone whose career is finished to the one who is at the peak of his prowess. In 2022, Bumrah underwent surgery for a lower back stress fracture and missed the T20 World Cup in Australia. Just before his comeback in a home bilateral series, he developed a strain and was out for more than 10 months. As a result, people became sceptical of his ability to handle the workload of three formats. But Indian cricket's rare gem sealed the lips of 'Doubting Thomases' with 67 wickets across three formats in the last one year, including a match-winning 3/14 against Pakistan in the low-scoring T20 World Cup thriller on Sunday. "See a year ago, the same people were saying that I might

not play again and my career is over and then now the question changed," he said taking a shot at all those who doubted his ability to fight back. India restricted Pakistan to 113/7 after posting a mere 119 here thanks largely to Bumrah's stupendous performance. He understands the fickle nature of criticism and knows that despite being a cliched phrase, controlling the controllables works best for him. "For me, I am not looking at whether I am bowling at the best of my ability. I try to solve the problem that is there in front of me. I know it's a cliched answer...But I was trying to focus on what is the best option over here on a wicket like this," the 30-year-old revealed. "How do I make shot-making difficult? What are the best options for me? So that way, I try to stay in the present and focus on what I have to do." **NO BAGGAGE OF IPL:**

Outside noise and pressure can gobble one up in a high-stakes game. But it's something that Bumrah successfully avoids by creating his own bubble. "Because if I look at the outside noise, if I look at people and pressure and emotion takes over, then things don't really work for me," the 30-year-old explained. The IPL-17, that concluded last month saw an unprecedented 1260 sixes being hit on tracks that resembled roadways. The 'Impact Player' rule also hurt top quality bowlers who were often dispatched to the stands with disdain. "When it's bat vs bat, I switch off the TV. I have been a fan of bowling since childhood. When there is a challenge between bat and ball, that is the game I like," Bumrah said. But the Indian bowling unit that has come for the T20 World Cup hasn't shown any scars of the IPL. "Obviously, the IPL that we played was not very bowler-



friendly but we are very happy that we didn't come here with that baggage and when we are getting help here, we were trying to use it. "I have played a lot of cricket in

my young years. - when the bat and ball challenge is good it is more interesting to watch the match." **ROHIT, BUMRAH AND THE 'MI TEMPLATE':**

Bumrah, the bowler, has played most of his franchise cricket under Rohit Sharma's captaincy. The captain-strike bowler combination was central to Mumbai Indians' five

title wins and Bumrah saidn he knew how to control low-scoring games. "So, once we started, we were very clear the message in the huddle was that now that is over, what is next? What are the things that are in our control? So, we will try to focus on that and not to create panic because yes, there will be boundaries here and there. "People might play good shots, but we'll have to try and be composed and try to hold our shape. So that was the biggest positive, not at any stage did I feel that the panic had spread in the team and we were looking too far ahead. So that's a really positive sign for us." **MAGIC DELIVERIES OFTEN DON'T WORK:** Low-scoring matches often force bowlers to try effort deliveries like yorkers or bouncers but Bumrah doesn't want anyone to overdo that stuff. "If we go for magic deliveries and try to be too desperate,

run-making becomes easy and they know the target. So, we had to be very mindful of not overdoing it," he said. "Whenever there is help, you can get excited. You can try pole hunting -- bowl bouncers, out-swingers, in-swingers. But you don't have to do that. I have learned that. "But this time, it was not happening a lot. The ball was not doing a lot. Yes, we did create pressure. A little bit of lateral movement was there but not too much, not as pronounced as the last game." **JASSI JAISA KOI NAHIN:** As one of greatest pacers active currently, Bumrah could well be called the leader of 'Fast Bowlers' Union'. "I always advocate bowlers, but we're very happy with the appreciation that bowlers have received because our country is obviously a batsman-loving country and we understand but we are very happy that bowlers are coming up front," Bumrah said.

Lamichhane to join Nepal team in West Indies for last two league matches

PTI ■ KINGSTOWN (ST VINCENT)

Denied US visa, Nepal's most high-profile cricketer Sandeep Lamichhane is joining his team for its Caribbean leg of the T20 World Cup campaign, the country's cricket association said on Monday. Lamichhane, who had an eight-year sentence for rape overturned on appeal because of "lack of evidence", was denied US visa twice last month despite interventions from the Nepal government. The 23-year-old was initially included in Nepal's 15-member squad for the tournament last month. The T20 World Cup is being co-hosted by the United States and West Indies. "We would like to inform you that Nepali player Sandeep Lamichhane will be included in the Nepali national cricket team for the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in West Indies," the CAN said in a statement. Lamichhane also confirmed the development on X. "I am now joining the national team for the last two matches in the West Indies and looking forward to fulfilling my dreams and the dream of all cricket lovers," Lamichhane posted on X, formerly Twitter. He was arrested in October 2022 over allegations of



raping an 18-year-old woman, leading to his suspension by the CAN. But after he was acquitted by the Patan High Court in May, the player was reinstated by the country's apex cricket body.

Lamichhane's addition to the Nepal squad will have to be approved by the ICC's Event Technical Committee. Nepal take on South Africa on June 14 and play Bangladesh on June 16.

New Zealand looked rusty and disorganised: Ian smith

PTI ■ PROVIDENCE (GUYANA)

Former New Zealand cricketer Ian Smith has questioned the readiness of his country's team in the T20 World Cup, saying it looked rusty and completely disorganised in the humiliating defeat against Afghanistan. New Zealand suffered an embarrassing 84-run loss to Afghanistan in their tournament opener here on Friday. They were dismissed for 75 in their chase of 159, with Rashid Khan and Fazalhaq Farooqi grabbing four wickets each. The Kiwis are placed fifth and last in Group C and will next play the West Indies in Trinidad on Wednesday with the negative net run rate making their task of qualifying for the knockouts an uphill task. "They've got to beat the West Indies, and hope that they (West Indies) get beaten by Afghanistan, because New Zealand's run rate situation is so poor - we're going to be very behind the eight ball when it comes to that," Smith, who has played 63 Tests and 98 ODIs, told Sen Radio on Monday. "I just don't know they're going to get up to speed from the flat performance they had the other day (against Afghanistan). What kind of team are they going to pick? Are they going to make any changes? The people they bring in haven't played any cricket either," he added. New Zealand had made it to the semifinals of the 2022 T20 World Cup after topping the group stage, riding on fine performances from Devon Conway, Kane Williamson and Daryl Mitchell, among others. But with Conway returning to the side after a long injury layoff and Finn Allen not quite hitting his straps, things are not looking great for the



Kiwis, known for their work ethics and competitive spirit. Besides, they have entered the World Cup having not played a single official warmup match. "He (Conway) looked decidedly rusty, in fact very average, he looked down

on practice with the gloves on. And he's been out of form with the bat for a little while," Smith said of the top-order batter who missed the entire IPL 2024 due to injury. "Apart from the fact that he's had injuries, Conway played no cricket in

the IPL even though he was contracted, and still they maintained they didn't need to have anything like a specialist wicketkeeper in this tournament." With Finn Allen going for a first-ball duck and Conway mustering just eight runs, the Kiwis didn't get the desired start in the chase against Afghanistan. "They missed opportunities to put pressure on Afghanistan early on, one partnership was all they needed to win the game. It was probably one of the worst performances I've seen, when you consider all aspects of the game, from a Blackcaps side that I can recall," Smith said. "It was underdone, it was rusty, it was disorganised -- they were so far not ready it was not funny." "Finn Allen has got a bit to prove, I've been saying this for a while -- they basically ended the career for Martin Guptill to make way for Allen. They couldn't pick him in the 50-over World Cup because he wasn't consistent enough at that point, and I don't see much difference between then and now," Smith added. Smith also lamented the poor Kiwi fielding, saying it was quite unlike the side that puts its heart and soul into every aspect of the game. "One thing New Zealand has always done over the years is field well as a unit. We've been able to answer (to that) pressure with some really good fielding performances, we aren't doing it at the moment. "Here again, we start with a poor performance, and I kept going back to Kane Williamson (in the post-match interview) and he said 'we lost it in the first ten overs' because that set the tone," Smith said. "The only way you get those things sorted is to play cricket."