

Modi attends swearing-in ceremony of BJP's Majhi, TDP's Chandrababu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BHUBANESHWAR/AMRAVATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union Cabinet Ministers and Chief Ministers attended the swearing in ceremony of first BJP chief minister of Odisha Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with TDP supremo and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister-designate N Chandrababu Naidu at the latter's swearing-in ceremony, in Amaravati, on Wednesday

Apart from Modi, BJP chief JP Nadda, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Bhupendra Yadav, Dharmendra Pradhan, Jai Oram, Ashwini Vaishnav and others attended the ceremony.

Ram Singh Khuntia, Suryabanshi Suraj, Pradeep Balasantan, Gokula Nanda Mallick and Sampad Kumar Swain were sworn in as ministers of state (independent).

BJP for the first time got a clear mandate in Odisha, ending the 24-year stint of the BJD. The saffron party stormed to power in Odisha by securing 78 seats in the 147-member Assembly while Patnaik-led BJD got 51 seats, Congress (14), CPI(M) won in one seat while Independents got three.

Bihar CM appoints Cabinet colleagues as Ministers in charge of various districts

PTI ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday appointed all his cabinet colleagues as ministers in-charge of various districts. According to a government order, Deputy Chief Ministers - Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha - have been made ministers-in-charge of Patna and Muzaffarpur districts respectively.



Jehanabad. Leshi Singh will be in charge of Madhubani, Madan Sahni (Supaul), Nitish Mishra (Araria and Gaya), Nitin Nabin (Buxar and Kaimur), and Dilip Kumar Jaiswal of Saharsa.

669 candidates file nominations for historic civic body polls in Nagaland

PTI ■ KOHIMA

A total of 669 candidates filed their nominations for the elections to the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in Nagaland that will be held on June 26. According to the State Election Commission, 669 candidates, including 238 women, filed their nomination papers for the three municipal councils and 36 town councils.

women, and tax on land and properties had held back the polls. The tribal bodies were asserting that these two provisions infringe on the special rights for Nagaland guaranteed by Article 371(A) of the Constitution.

Malviya to file criminal defamation case against lawyer Santanu over slanderous remark

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Senior BJP leader Amit Malviya on Wednesday said he would file a criminal defamation case against Kolkata-based lawyer Santanu Sinha for allegedly making 'slanderous' comments against him in a social media post.

BJP's IT cell posted. Malviya added, "On 8th June, my advocates served a legal notice on Santanu Sinha, demanding an unqualified conditional apology. Sinha's subsequent retraction of June 11, 2024, is qualified and not unequivocal. It also fails to meet the demand, as laid out in the legal notice.

allegations" against Malviya, on Tuesday claimed that his statements were "misinterpreted". Sinha also said he will not withdraw the post but expressed "heartfelt sorrow" if it hurt Malviya.

Six newly elected MLAs take oath in Himachal Pradesh

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Six newly elected legislators on Wednesday took oath as members of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly. Former minister and BJP MLA from Dharamshala, Sudhir Sharma was the first to take oath followed by Congress MLA Anuradha Rana from Lahaul and Spiti.

Vivek Sharma. Congratulating the new MLAs, Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania expressed hope that they would raise issues related to the state and public welfare in the assembly.

ticket. Leader of the Opposition Jai Ram Thakur said the BJP won four Lok Sabha seats and two assembly bypolls and is reviewing the reasons for the defeat of four MLAs in the assembly bypolls.

sustainable tourism. Winning the by-election was crucial for the ruling party for stability of

the Congress government which now has 38 MLAs in the 65-member House.

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ASSOCIATE SIGNALING WORK AT LUMDING DIVISION: E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Name of work: Associate Signaling work in connection with replacement of existing 1 in 12 with 1 in 16 turnout at Mahur, Mandarisa, Dibolung, Mailbag, Daotuhaja & Langting station in Hill section of Lumding division.

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NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE: Invitation of tender through E-tendering (e-Procurement Systems). NIT No. 242321. Name of Work and its Location: Tender for 'AMOC (Removing, cleaning, repairing and refitting) of Bio-Digester Tanks of LHB coaches with material.'

CORRIGENDUM: Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No. 23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110005. Notices under SARFAESI Act for Loan Account No. LBDEL00001801026 Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower SANJAY KAPOOR/ ANAMIKA KAPOOR Notice under SARFAESI Act 2002, Symbolic Notice dated September 17, 2021. Possession Notice dated May 20, 2024 published in News Paper 'The Pioneer (Eng.) & Pioneer (Hindi)' on September 22, 2021 & May 23, 2024 respectively.

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority: Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, (U.P.) Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in. E-TENDER NOTICE: E-Tender are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned.

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CHANGE OF NAME: I, hitherto known as Tridha D/o Anil Kumar Bajaj R/o 1616-17 Chandrawad Road, Subzi Mandi, Ghanta Ghar, Malka Ganj, North Delhi-110007 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Tridha Bajaj. PD(522)C I, Tarlochan Kaur W/o Shri Balvinder Singh R/o A-90, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110052 have changed my name to Trilochan Kaur for all future purposes. PD(523)A

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE: Invitation of tender through E-tendering (e-Procurement Systems). NIT No. 242321. Name of Work and its Location: Tender for 'AMOC (Removing, cleaning, repairing and refitting) of Bio-Digester Tanks of LHB coaches with material.'

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Downward spiral

Manipur violence has seen a fresh burst of activity. Is the Govt doing enough to assuage feelings there?

Manipur continues to experience violence and instability due to a complex interplay of historical grievances, political factors and ethnic conflicts. Over time, the state of affairs there has deteriorated, resulting in widespread demonstrations and ongoing bloodshed. Several ethnic communities, such as the Meitei, Naga and Kuki populations, each with its own unique identity, culture and territorial claims, inhabit Manipur. These groups have deep-rooted hostility and conflict over resources, land and political representation due to grievances which go back a long way. Historically, the Meiteis, who live in the Imphal valley and are primarily Hindus, have held political power. This has caused the hill tribes, especially the Nagas and Kukis who live in the neighbouring steep terrain and are primarily Christians, to feel marginalised. One of the main causes of conflict has been the hill tribes' quest for increased autonomy. The demand by Naga groups for the unification of Naga-inhabited areas under a single administrative unit has been a divisive topic that frequently conflicts with Manipur's concerns about maintaining its territorial integrity. The complexity of the situation is increased by the existence of multiple insurgent organisations. These organisations, representing distinct ethnic populations, frequently resort to violence to make their demands known. Violence has increased as a result of the widespread availability of weapons and these groups' participation in illegal activities like drug trafficking.

The State and Union Governments' precarious relationship characterises Manipur's political environment. A major contributing factor to the ongoing unrest is the policies and actions — or the lack thereof — of the Centre. The common belief among Manipur's population is that the Union Government has disregarded the problems facing the State. Inadequate economic development, poor infrastructure and a lack of focus on the region's particular ethnic and cultural sensitivities all contribute to this impression. Dialogue has shown to be an unproductive means of addressing the challenges. The public's disenchantment has been caused by the persistent stalling of peace negotiations with rebel groups. There are drawbacks to the extensive military presence mandated by AFSPA. Although meant to keep the peace, it has given rise to claims of violations of human rights, thus escalating anti-Government feelings. There is a long history of civil society activism in Manipur. Demanding justice, accountability and policy changes, organisations and activists — including women's groups like the Meira Paibis — have been at the vanguard of rallies. A complex strategy involving open communication, inclusive political processes, economic growth and respect for human rights is needed to address these issues. To promote peace, harmony and development in Manipur, the Union and State Governments must cooperate with each other and involve all stakeholders.

PICTALK



Tourists raft over the rapids of Beas river, in Manali

Modi left with lesser manoeuvring room

Though winning a third term is a significant achievement, the Prime Minister's future now majorly depends on the demands made by his coalition partners



KALYANI SHANKAR

The new National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition Government led by Narendra Modi has just taken office, and it's too early to predict how it will perform. India is familiar with coalitions, as it has a messy history of multi-party Governments.

Former Prime Minister and BJP leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee also faced an unprecedented alliance of 24 parties from 1998 to 2004. India has experience with coalition Governments, which are known for being somewhat tumultuous.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi winning a third term is a significant achievement in his political career. His party got only 240 out of the 272 seats to govern independently. So, he now leads a coalition Government with the National Democratic Alliance allies. His future depends on his partners. Modi is too smart a politician not to understand what the situation requires of him.

The NDA is a political coalition of Centre-Right parties led by the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The allies secured 43 seats in the recent elections, bringing the NDA's total to 283 seats, 11 more than the required number to form the Government. This is a new situation for Modi. As a leader who believed in centralising power, forming a coalition Government challenges Modi's authority. This change could significantly alter the course of his political agenda, potentially resulting in a greater emphasis on policies that appeal to the varied coalition partners rather than the BJP's agenda. The formation of the NDA coalition's Government could lead to a shift in the Government's priorities. There might be a greater emphasis on the coalition's policies and a potential moderation of Modi's religious nationalist agenda. This could have far-reaching implications for India's political and social fabric. Modi, now in his third term, is expected to continue his policies on economic reform, national security and social welfare. Yet, he now faces the extra challenge of managing a diverse coalition. Dealing with coalition partners and running Parliament may be challenging as he faces a more influential Opposition. In his third term, Modi faces several challenges. There are lingering questions about the extent of his authority, particularly as the BJP has lost its majority. New political dynamics have emerged, with the party's primary NDA allies now playing pivotal roles in the ruling coalition. The shift can be attributed to various factors, including regional political dynamics. The first major hurdle was forming the Government, which required him to navigate the complexities of coalition politics. Continuing his assertive and independent political style may take time and effort. The next step is allocating portfolios that are satisfactory to the allies. Both Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu are tough negotiators and demanding significant portfolios. Smaller allies also assert their influence, shaping the Government's policies and decisions by overseeing key Ministries. The main point is to keep the NDA together. Rumours sug-



THIS IS A NEW SITUATION FOR MODI. AS A LEADER WHO BELIEVED IN CENTRALISING POWER, FORMING A COALITION GOVERNMENT CHALLENGES MODI'S AUTHORITY. THIS CHANGE COULD SIGNIFICANTLY ALTER THE COURSE OF HIS POLITICAL AGENDA

gest the rival INDIA coalition wanted to lure the JD(U) and TDP to form the Government. This move had failed now, but it could lead to a realignment of political forces, tilting the balance of power within the coalition. Whether Modi's NDA allies will remain loyal or undermine him is political speculation is a million-dollar question. This uncertainty, rooted in the allies' history of unreliability, needs to be watched. Some of the BJP's key allies, such as the TDP, Shiv Sena, AIADMK and Akali Dal, have ended their partnerships in the past decade. In 2018, the TDP left the alliance because Andhra Pradesh didn't receive special category status. Now, the TDP and JD(U) are back in partnership with the BJP. However, in the future, Modi will need to consider the feelings of important allies like the Telugu Desam Party and the Janata Dal (United). Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar, with 28 seats between them, are labelled as 'kingmakers'. They have long advocated for special status for their respective States and are known for their slippery character. Nitish Kumar, known as 'Palto Kumar' for his frequent

changes in stand, ended his partnership with the BJP in 2014 over the issue of the BJP declaring Modi the prime ministerial candidate. He later joined the NDA and again broke with the BJP in 2022 to form the Government with the RJD. This year, he again returned to the NDA fold. Due to coalition politics and a weakened mandate, passing laws for the Government's ambitious reform plans may take time and effort. Despite not having a majority, the Opposition will have enough members in the parliamentary committees to prevent the passing of controversial Bills. This means that Modi's ability to push the BJP's agenda forward will be challenged. Important policies such as the Uniform Civil Code and 'One Nation, One Poll' could be delayed, potentially slowing down policy-making and leading to a rethinking of the Government's reform plans. Changes in political alliances wouldn't be surprising. Modi may focus on changing his minority Government into a majority over the next two or three years. But initially, it will be walking a tightrope to balance power. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN RUSSIA

Madam — Apropos the news story "CBI to seek Interpol Notice against trafficking network members pushing Indians in Russia War Zone" season three," published on June 11, this is my response. Reading about the recent CBI revelations on human trafficking, I'm deeply disturbed by the extent of deception and exploitation at play. It's appalling that vulnerable individuals were lured into the Russia-Ukraine war zone under false promises of lucrative jobs. The involvement of various agencies and individuals, including Ramesh Kumar Palanisamy and Faisal Abdul Mutalib Khan, who are now sought by Interpol, underscores a well-organised and ruthless network. These unscrupulous recruiters preyed on people's desperation, exploiting social media channels and local agents to create a façade of legitimate employment opportunities. It's shocking to learn how they manipulated legal processes, turning tourist visas into a one-way ticket to a war zone. The reported 35 cases are likely just the tip of the iceberg, raising urgent questions about safeguarding job seekers and cracking down on such nefarious operations. The need for stringent oversight and international cooperation in tackling human trafficking has never been clearer.

Trisha Deshmukh | Kanpur

MIRZAPUR SAGA CONTINUES

Madam — Apropos the news story "Prime Video sets July 5 premiere for 'Mirzapur' season three," published on June 11, this is my response. As an avid newspaper reader, the announcement of "Mirzapur" Season 3 streaming on Prime Video from July 5 is thrilling news. The series, a brainchild of Excel Media and Entertainment, has captivated audiences with its gritty portrayal of power struggles in a fictional Indian town. Directed by Gurmeet Singh and Anand Iyer, this 10-episode season promises higher stakes and a broader canvas. Fans are eagerly waiting to see if the cov-

Apple's big AI leap



Apropos the news story "Apple poised to launch its late start in the AI race with ambitions to overtake the early leaders," published on June 10, this is my response. Apple's upcoming World Wide Developers Conference is set to mark the company's entry into generative artificial intelligence, a move many believe is as significant as the launch of the iPhone. This late but

strategic entry is expected to enhance the functionality of Apple devices, particularly by making Siri smarter and improving various features like photos, music, and texting. Despite Apple's traditional secrecy, CEO Tim Cook's recent hints suggest the company is ready to reveal substantial AI advancements. This shift is crucial as competitors like Google and Samsung have already integrated AI into their products, raising concerns that Apple might be lagging. Analysts, such as Dan Ives, are optimistic, predicting that infusing AI into Apple's ecosystem could significantly boost the company's market value. However, privacy concerns linger, and Apple may address these by leveraging its chip technology to process AI features on-device, ensuring user data remains secure. This event is poised to be Apple's most pivotal in years, potentially igniting a new phase of growth.

Riya Sen | Rajkot

eted throne of Mirzapur will be earned or snatched in this new battle of power and dominance. With trust being a luxury no one can afford, the tension is palpable. The ensemble cast, including Pankaj Tripathi and Ali Fazal, has become integral to popular culture, and their return is highly anticipated. Nikhil Madhok from Prime Video India and producer Ritesh Sidhwani of Excel Entertainment underscore the immense fan support driving this franchise. Their commitment to delivering compelling content ensures that Season 3 will be a thrilling continuation of the "Mirzapur" saga.

Sanvi Khatri | Jabalpur

AUSTRALIA AIMS FOR SUPER EIGHT

Madam — Apropos the news story "Australia face Namibia with an eye on Super Eight; SL in a must-win situation against Nepal," published on June 11, this is my response. Reading the latest updates on the T20 World Cup, it's evident that Australia is living up to the favourite's tag with back-to-back wins. They showcased

remarkable teamwork by scoring over 200 runs against England, a feat no other team has matched yet. Their upcoming match against Namibia seems like a formality to secure their Super Eight berth, especially considering their previous victories against England and Oman. David Warner's form is a huge boost for Australia, as he continues to deliver explosive starts. Along with Travis Head, Warner has set a solid foundation for the team's batting lineup. Namibia, on the other hand, will rely heavily on David Wiese, whose experience and recent performances could be pivotal. Their left-arm spinner, Bernard Scholtz, has also been commendable, but whether that's enough to challenge Australia remains doubtful. Overall, it looks like Australia is set to advance confidently, with Scotland also in a strong position to move forward, leaving defending champions England in a precarious spot.

Reyansh Gupta | Bhopal

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Global power dynamics undergoing sea change

As technological prowess and energy resources become pivotal, the global landscape is rapidly evolving and new power centres emerging



NISHAKANT OJHA

The global landscape is undergoing a significant transformation among the top 50 nations in the aftermath of Covid and the Ukraine-Russia conflict. In the past two years, traditional alliances are shifting, and there's growing interdependence among leading countries driven by economic synergies. During the Covid pandemic, many strong nations found their healthcare systems overwhelmed, while some emerging nations managed the crisis effectively. India notably excelled in controlling the pandemic domestically and globally by providing vaccines, medical equipment, and technology to less developed nations, enhancing its reputation among historically Nonaligned countries. The US is currently experiencing severe economic challenges, including high inflation. It is attempting to reassert its dominance in global politics, resisting the rise of new economic powers and non-US-centric power centers. Since the fall of the USSR, the US has been the predominant global power for over three decades.



Technological strength is now a key factor in global supremacy, with new forms of informational warfare becoming prominent. Other significant areas of competition include arms, oil, energy and pharmaceuticals, with China emerging as a leading challenger in the past decade. Russia has made significant strides in the oil and gas sector, surpassing the US in cost efficiency and logistics. Russia is also poised to dominate the Arctic region in terms of oil and logistics, challenging the combined influence of the US and the EU. The US is working to regain influence over NATO allies, a struggle evident in the Ukraine-Russia conflict. While Ukraine is directly engaged with Russia, the broader context involves a Cold War-like standoff between the US-led NATO and Russia, with the EU Council and Ukraine playing significant roles.

The South China Sea remains a potential conflict zone between ASEAN nations and China. The QSD-Quad, comprising India, the US, Japan, and Australia, was formed to address these issues. Observing India's actions during the global Covid pandemic, the Afghanistan crisis, and the Ukraine war, it's clear that India is increasingly non-aligned, assertive, and balanced in its approach. India's balanced diplomacy was also evident during the Israel-Palestine crisis. The US uses NATO to assert its influence over Russia and the EU while utilising the QUAD to counter China's growing influence in the Pacific. Despite high tensions in Ukraine and Taiwan, trade between the US and Russia, and the US and China, has not declined. India is pursuing a unique diplomatic strategy with each nation, based on mutual respect and the philosophy of equal nations. India no longer positions itself as a prominent member of any regional or global group. India does not seek support from any alliance or group for its open issues with neighbours. It is a member or

an invitee to most regional alliances and is globally respected for its actions and policies. In the post-Ukraine conflict world, regardless of the war's outcome, a clear division into two technology groups is emerging. One group will undoubtedly be led by the USA, while China or Russia could lead the other. In this context, it is crucial for India to avoid joining either group, maintaining good relations with both the USA and Russia based on issue-specific synergies. India must remain firm against external pressures and uncompromising on matters of national interest within the international framework. Self-reliance across all economic sectors has become vital for India. National programs aimed at self-sufficiency are on the right track. India should focus on its legacy issues and avoid unnecessary expenditure of energy and resources on matters where it is not a direct party. (The writer is an eminent Expert-Counter Terrorism for Middle East & West Asian Countries; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

THE IMPACT OF MOBILE RADIATION ON CHILDREN

Despite parental warnings, modern kids can't seem to keep away from cell phones



SHAINY SHARMA

As we know smartphones are incredibly versatile devices with a wide range of uses that make them indispensable in modern life but the impact of mobile phone usage on children is a topic of increasing concern among parents, educators and several health professionals. Today, mobile devices allow instant communication through calls, text messages, emails and various messaging apps while keeping the people at large connected regardless of their location. This enables easy communication with friends, family, colleagues and businesses. Browsing websites, searching information, accessing news, watching videos and engaging with social media platforms, all from the palm of their hand. While mobile phones provide numerous benefits at the same time, they also pose several potential risks, the impacts of which can be broadly categorized into physical, mental and emotional health, well-being, social development and academic performance. Prolonged exposure to the radiofrequency radiation emitted by mobile phones is a concern, although research is ongoing regarding its long-term health effects. The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies this radiation as "possibly carcinogenic," but definitive conclusions about its effects on children are still not established. Children of today, can develop a dependency on mobile phones, leading to addiction-like behaviours where they spend excessive time on their devices to the detriment of other activities. What leads to the cause of concern is that children absorb more radiation because they are exposed to the same amount of radiation as adults as they have thinner skulls, smaller heads and smaller brains as compared to adults which can lead to digital eye strain, causing symptoms like dryness,



irritation and blurred vision. Moreover, the blue light emitted by the screen interferes with the production of melatonin (a hormone that regulates sleep) that can lead to difficulties in falling asleep and poorer sleep quality as these emissions fool the brain into not realising that it's nighttime.

Moreover, excessive use of mobile phones also contributes to a sedentary lifestyle, reducing the time children spend on physical activities, which is essential for their overall health and development. High usage of social media and mobile phones has been linked to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and loneliness in children. The constant stimulation from mobile phones has made it difficult for children to focus on tasks, potentially leading to attention deficits and decreased academic performance. Not only this, but use of such devices has also reduced opportunities for children to engage in face-to-face social interactions thereby impacting the lack of development of social skills and emotional intelligence.

Every technique and technology have an inherent ideology. With each technological tool that an individual or child adopts, the worldview shifts a little to accommodate it and such tools give credence to one view or value over another.

The only way to mitigate this is parents and guardians encouraging moderate and supervised use of mobile devices, using hands free options for calls and limiting screen time before bedtime. Also, choosing devices with lower Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) values can help reduce exposure to radiation.

(The writer is an educator, views are personal.)

BJP must enlarge its imprint in TN, Kerala



KS RADHAKRISHNAN

Though the time is ripe, the politics of north cannot be replicated in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The BJP will do well to have its ear close to the ground

Since the defeat of the Congress in 1967, Tamil Nadu has been sort of a bi-party State. Only the two Dravidian parties — the DMK and ADMK — have been the occupants of Fort St George. The poor voters, fed on a diet of the dogma called Dravidism, have unknowingly created an illusion of entitlement and privilege for these two parties. What DMK grandiosely peddled as its paradigm-shifting political philosophy and the platform of social justice, has been quietly dismantled to build personal edifices for its first family.

It won't be long before the citizens of Tamil Nadu would unmask the façade of Dravidianism, and truly embrace the spirit of nationalism. But this can be better served by the BJP which has, within a decade, transformed the world image of India into one of assertiveness, boldness and competence. Assertiveness of what is truly good for India at the global forum. Boldness in pursuing policies that unite and strengthen the nation into *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. Competence in chartering into areas driven by science and technology for Viksit Bharat — Digital India, Startup India and Covid vaccines are a few of the many key initiatives by the BJP to drive the Indian growth story.

Tamil Nadu has only much to gain from these. However, in the specific context of electoral wins in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, BJP should have its ear close to the ground. Omandur Ramaswamy Reddiyar, the first Premier of the Madras Presidency, was the original proponent of social justice - Madras Temple Entry Authorization Act 1947 and the Devadasi Dedication Abolition Act of 1947 were passed during his period. He rendered yeoman's service for Tamil language, promotion of literacy through compulsory primary education and agriculture. In 1947, with the help of P Theoran, a Tamil poet-scholar, and Minister of Tamil Nadu, Avinashilingam Chettiar, Reddiyar published Tamil's first encyclopedia, *Kalaik Kalanjyam*. He said that Tamil Nadu and Kerala were unique regions that require unique approaches for governance.

As a keen observer of Tamil Nadu politics for more than five decades, I have noted with interest and intrigue issues that have been part of the ethos and economy of these two States. However, confining the discussion here to Tamil Nadu, I would wager that its uniqueness spans the spectrum of language, culture, religious practices, including deep cultural relationship it shares not only with the contiguous States but also with countries across the ocean. It is unfortunate that a State which could have scaled much greater peaks - culturally and economically --- has been left to be overtaken by the two alternating Dravidian parties for over five decades, all in the name of one family! Politics in Tamil Nadu has been reduced to false promises, street corner harangues and hollow talks.

The Tamils of Sri Lanka, even long after the civil war has ended, continue to be denied their rightful share of opportunities and dignity - politically and economically. Their religious beliefs have also been breached. There has been large-scale encroachment of Hindu places of worship by non-Hindus in Sri Lanka, a country which Tamils made their home centuries back. It is estimated that Sri Lanka has demolished over 2,000 Hindu temples in



Trincomalee. Every effort should be made through diplomatic negotiations to preserve the religion in a place which has only been enriched by the heritage of Tamils.



THE CHALLENGE FOR THE BJP TO BREAK INTO THE CITADELS OF TAMIL NADU AND KERALA IS HARD. APPROACHING THESE TWO UNIQUE STATES AS HEAD OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT IS NOT SUFFICIENT ARMOUR FOR POLL WINS

Trincomalee. Every effort should be made through diplomatic negotiations to preserve the religion in a place which has only been enriched by the heritage of Tamils. At this juncture, I recollect the DMK's complicity in handing over on a platter one of the family jewels of Tamil Nadu — Katchatheevu — by the Congress. The BJP should review this to heal the emotional wound of Tamilians, especially of those along the coast in south Tamil Nadu. We should recognise that Indian Tamils are like our buffer State - it is our vicarious liability to resolve the Tamil issue in Sri Lanka. In addition to this, the issue of ambiguity in fishing areas should be settled as this has caused frequent skirmishes between them with their counterparts in Sri Lanka.

The growing Chinese presence in Sri Lanka may not only de-prioritise the Tamil issue for the Sri Lankan Government, it will also be a threat to India's security. The reins of Colombo Port Eastern Terminal and Hambantota Harbour are already in China's hands. Even the controversial Katchatheevu is not free from Chinese domination - China has put up windmills near this island and it won't be long before it sets foot there, too. China is set to expand its presence in the Indian Ocean region further. There are more in the form of army training camps in the Indian Ocean region by Pakistan, South Africa and China. Add to these spy ships crisscrossing the Ocean. Need I say about Mauritius, which is turning

hostile to India, thanks to China? The once-peaceful zone, with the crowding of other countries, will only destabilise the region and be an imminent threat to the future of India.

There are threats to India from other sides too — Pakistan in the west, Maldives and pro-China Sri Lanka in the south, Nepal and Bangladesh in the east. With close to four lakh temples, by far the most in India, Tamil Nadu is unequivocally a cradle of Sanatan Dharma. It is also home to some of the world's largest temples. More proof of Tamil Nadu's rich Hindu heritage and its practise in Tamil Nadu can be found in almost continual excavations of panchaloka idols, stone sculptures dating back to the Sangam era by the ASI and even by farmers.

With a history that dates back to over 6,000 years with evidence of 3,200-year-old civilisation discovered recently, it is important for the BJP to recognise that this really tugs at the heart strings of Tamilians. Modi has admirably and rightly platformed Tamil language across the country and the world abroad through Sengol and Kashi Tamil Sangam. The whole country has got a glimpse of the richness of Tamil language, culture and heritage. BJP should build on the platform it has assiduously built, and take it to the next level during its third term.

The incumbent ruling party in Tamil Nadu is a party of turncoats. The loyal foot soldiers of DMK who walked the extra mile for the party's growth and duly recognised

by Kalaigarn have been sidelined by his heir, MK Stalin. Vaiko, who walked out of DMK opposing the importance given to the then heir apparent, now shares stage with the heir. The MLAs who call the shots in DMK are from the ADMK! It would be too naive to believe that a party full of opportunists would work for the people.

But the politics of north cannot be replicated in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. These two States are unique, as observed by Ramaswamy Reddiyar decades back. Their rich Hindu heritage, enterprising nature of its people with maritime trade traces back to hundreds or even thousands of years. Further, they are high on literacy, health and other social indices. 'One size fits all' should be shunned; strategies and action plans specific to these two States should be drawn up.

The challenge for the BJP to break into the citadels of Tamil Nadu and Kerala is hard. Approaching these two unique States as head of the Union Government is not sufficient armour for poll wins. It should have its ear to the ground and work towards being accepted by their people as one among them. They should emit what I loosely translate here as 'fragrance of the soil' — *manvaasana*. The ripe banana is peeled and kept ready. There is also sugar beside that to dip into and turn it into a relish. Will the BJP seize the moment?

(The writer is a political activist and an advocate; views are personal.)

Spotlight on reality: MIFF's role in documentary cinema

The film festival's 18th edition comes with a first-of-its-kind 'Documentary Film Bazaar' aimed at supporting the documentary, film and animation content

Documentary film festivals play a crucial role in the world of cinema by offering a unique platform for non-fiction films that explore real life events, individuals, important societal issues and diverse cultures. These festivals serve as a stage for filmmakers dedicated to telling factual stories - a genre often overlooked in the commercially driven landscape. By spotlighting documentaries, these festivals promote creativity, facilitate learning opportunities and encourage meaningful social discussions. This not only enhances the audience's awareness of complex global and local topics but also elevates the value of documentary filmmaking as a powerful tool for sparking change and providing



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insights. The Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF), established in 1990, holds a position in this field, especially within Asia where it ranks among the oldest and most esteemed gatherings for documentaries, short films and animation. Taking place biennially, MIFF has emerged as a meeting point for documentary filmmakers from India and across the globe. Over time, the festival has evolved significantly. Initially focused on nurturing filmmaking talent, it has expanded its scope to include international filmmakers - a testament to its growing influence and importance, on the global stage. MIFF has skillfully adapted to the changing technology and trends in the film industry like

filmmaking and virtual screenings, especially highlighted during the adjustments made due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In today's world, marked by the rise of OTT platforms and a wide range of digital content, MIFF continues to demonstrate its relevance and significance. It is recognised as an event that actively supports and advocates for documentary filmmaking. Apart from showcasing films, MIFF contributes to the community by hosting various educational activities such as workshops, interactive discussions and masterclasses. These efforts aim to promote learning and professional growth for filmmakers while offering audiences deeper insights into the artistry and impact of docu-



mentary cinema. This comprehensive approach ensures that MIFF remains an influential presence in the ever changing global film landscape. The Mumbai International Film Festival, known for its presence in the documentary film industry, is gearing up for its 18th edition from June 15 to 21, 2024, with an exciting 'new venture' - the

first-of-its-kind 'Documentary Film Bazaar' starting on June 16. This fresh initiative aims to support the documentary, film and animation content by facilitating important connections and boosting visibility. The Documentary Film Bazaar strives to highlight stories and facilitate partnerships between filmmakers and potential global producers reshaping the landscape of documentary content creation, distribution and consumption.

In its 2024 edition, the Documentary Film Bazaar introduces three sections focused on nurturing and promoting film projects at different production stages. The 'Doc Co Production Market' (CPM) stands out as a plat-

form featuring 15 films from six countries connecting filmmakers with potential collaborators, producers, co-producers and financiers worldwide. Moreover, the 'Doc Viewing Room' (VR) offers an exclusive space for only the registered delegates to screen a curated selection of films, a pivotal opportunity to secure distribution deals, attract co-producers and obtain essential finishing funds, for festival screenings.

The Mumbai International Film Festival is an example of the enduring significance of such events, serving as a platform for documentary filmmakers from India and abroad. MIFF has continuously evolved to meet modern challenges by embracing technological advancements and

expanding its offerings to align with the transient landscape of media consumption. This flexibility ensures that MIFF remains a forum for showcasing documentaries fostering professional growth and promoting cultural exchange. Through these efforts MIFF is not just broadening its range of offerings but also establishing itself as a unique and ground breaking platform in the global documentary film community. This strategy not only reaffirms MIFF's position in the changing media landscape but also ensures its leadership in driving innovation in documentary filmmaking.

(The writer was Addl DG, DFF & director IFFI. Views are personal. Inputs by Zoya Ahmed & Vaishnavie Srinivasan)

Address injustice, says AIFF seeking probe into Qatar's controversial goal in WC qualifier



PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The All India Football Federation has sought an investigation into the controversial goal awarded to Qatar in their crucial World Cup qualifying match in Doha, AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey said on Wednesday while urging the concerned authorities to "address the injustice".

The AIFF chief said India have asked for a thorough investigation into the goal that was allowed by South Korean referee Kim Woo-Sung despite the ball clearly going out of play during the most-won match that the visitors lost 1-2 at Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium on Tuesday.

"Victory and defeat are part and parcel of the game, we have learned to accept gracefully, although one of the two goals scored against India yesterday night left a few questions unanswered," Chaubey said in a statement. The goal sparked widespread outrage as it deprived the Indians of what would have been their maiden entry into the third round of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers for the 2026 edition.

"We have written to FIFA Head of Qualifiers, AFC Head of Referees, and the match commissioner, regarding the grave supervision error that practically cost us a place in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers Round 3. "Given its severity, We call upon concerned officials for a thorough investigation. We have urged them to explore the possibilities of sporting compensation to address the injustice and we trust that FIFA and AFC will take necessary steps," he added.

Tamberi puts on a show in Rome to win another European high jump title

AP ■ ROME

Gianmarco Tamberi bowed to Italy's president before and during the competition. Then came an embrace in the stands with his country's leader when the charismatic Olympic high jump champion clinched another European title and sealed his status as a favorite to defend gold at the Paris Games.

Tamberi, styled in his preferred half-shaved beard, had already won the competition before he cleared a championship-record 2.37 meters on his first attempt to add more luster to his third title at the European athletics championships on Tuesday.

"I knew I was in a superb shape and I proved it," Tamberi said. "I pretended to be injured and hid springs in my shoes. I think some people fell for it. I did great things. Now it's time for the Olympics." Two Ukrainians, Vladyslav Lavskyy (2.29) and Oleh Doroshchuk (2.26), took silver and bronze, respectively.



Up next for Tamberi, who shared gold with his good friend Mutaz Barshim at the Tokyo Games, is another meeting on Thursday with Italy President Sergio Mattarella to officially be handed the country's flag that he and fencer Arianna Errigo will carry at the Paris opening ceremony on July 26.

Tamberi is also the captain of Italy's rapidly improving athletics team, which is leading the medals table at the Euros with a national record 10 golds and 20 medals overall. Karsten Warholm of Norway and Femke Bol of the Netherlands won the men's and women's 400 hurdles, respectively, by large margins - with both setting championship records.

Bol finished nearly two seconds ahead of silver medalist Louise Maraval of France, while her Dutch teammate Cathelijne Peeters took bronze.

So how does Bol keep going when she's so far ahead of the rest of the field? "I visualize I'm running toward someone. It always helps me a lot," she said. "But when you have an atmosphere like this, it also helps a lot. You hear the crowd and you just want to do well for them. ... They were already applauding for Gianmarco. It was something crazy."

Turkey can expect strong support from Turkish-German community at Euro 2024; so can Germany

AP ■ DUESSELDORF (GERMANY)

Six years ago, Ilkay Gündogan's place on the German national team was in question over a photograph with Turkey's president. Now, he's the team captain.

Turkish national team shirt for his six-year-old son, cut them in half, and stitched the halves together to make his hybrid kit. "I think there will be a lot of people who support both national teams and who would probably be pleased if they were to meet at some point in the semi-finals or final," Aver told The Associated Press. One of those supporting both Germany and Turkey is Osman Eroglu, who is a goalkeeper and board member at Türkgücü Ratingen, a Turkish community soccer club on the outskirts of Euro 2024 host city Düsseldorf.

Others question whether players from minority groups might be scapegoats for German fans or the media if the team falls short. Some even see choosing Germany over Turkey as an act of betrayal. Gündogan was particularly targeted with booing by some fans of the Turkish national team in a friendly game against Germany in Berlin last year that Turkey won 3-2.

When Gündogan and teammate Mesut Özil, another star German player of Turkish heritage, posed for photos with Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the run-up to the 2018 World Cup, they faced pointed criticism from the German soccer federation's president at the time, Reinhard Grindel, who said Erdogan didn't sufficiently share the organization's "values."

never played for Germany again and retired from soccer last year. Younis Kamil is an academic and soccer coach of Sudanese and German heritage who is working with a major Turkish community organization in Germany and the national Olympic committee on a project around Euro 2024 and sports participation for people with a family history of migration.

enthusiastic support. "In Germany, we're going to be like a host country," Turkey defender Ozan Kabak, who was born in Turkey but plays his club soccer in Germany, said in a recent interview. "A lot of Turkish people live here, and I think whole stadiums (are) going to be full of Turkish people."

World War II meant West Germany had an acute shortage of labour. A history of migration from places like Italy, Greece and Croatia - and more recently the arrival of refugees from Ukraine - means those teams are also likely to get substantial local support.

Titmus sets a women 200-metre freestyle world record at Australia Olympic swimming trials

AP ■ BRISBANE (AUSTRALIA)

Ariarne Titmus set a world record in the women's 200-metre freestyle on Wednesday at Australia's Olympic swimming trials. Titmus finished in 1 minute, 52.23 seconds in the final, taking almost two-thirds of a second off Mollie O'Callaghan's world mark of 1:52.85 set at last year's world championships.



great swim, and I have the chance to do it again in Paris," she said. The 20-year-old O'Callaghan said she experienced pre-race anxiety, entering as the record holder. "I couldn't really sleep last night," she said. "I'm still learning. I am only young, and I am not as experienced as the other girls. So, I will take anything at this point."

Man United manager Ten Hag to keep job after performance review, AP source says

AP ■ MANCHESTER (ENGLAND)

Erik ten Hag will stay on as Manchester United manager and is in negotiations to extend his contract, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press on Tuesday. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the decision had not been publicly announced.



David Moyes, Louis van Gaal, Jose Mourinho and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer all failed to return the club to its past glories. Ten Hag went into the cup final under intense pressure and it was not known if a win would be enough to save his job.

"don't want me anymore then I go somewhere else to win trophies because that is what I did my whole career." Ratcliffe assumed control of United's failing soccer operations after investing \$1.3 billion in shares and injecting a further \$300 million cash into the club.



Valpuaia to remain at Mumbai City FC until 2027

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Hmingthanmawia Ralte, also known as Valpuaia, has extended his contract with Mumbai City FC and will remain at the club until the summer of 2027. The club made the announcement in a release on Wednesday that Valpuaia, who hails from Mizoram, has been a 'reliable player' at the club being a part of the team's 2020-21 historic season in which they won the ISL League's Shield as well as the ISL Cup.

