









THE ASIAN AGE

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Naidu returns to NDA to fight 'invincible' Jagan

Even as the incumbent chief minister of Andhra Pradesh continues his "Siddham" (prepared) campaign across the state seeking all 175 Assembly constituencies...

Interestingly, the third party in this alliance, the Jana Sena Party (JSP) led by Tollywood "powerstar" K. Pawan Kalyan who is younger brother of megastar Chiranjeevi...

N. Chandrababu Naidu, a three-time CM, was instrumental in stopping the BJP from coming to power in 1996. He then went on to enable alliance governments headed by H.D. Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral...

After facing an existential crisis for the last five years, Mr Naidu has been working hard to win the favour of the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah duo for over a year now and his efforts have borne fruit

five years. Mr Naidu has been working hard to win the favour of the Modi-Amit Shah duo for over a year now and his efforts have borne fruit. He must have been certain that he would not be able to fight Mr Reddy alone.

Mr Naidu, who called the alliance with the BJP a "win-win situation" in Andhra Pradesh and India, however, was not given an audience with the PM whom he had once famously abused while out of the NDA.

The alliance, besides facing a formidable YSRCP and popular leader in Mr Reddy, also faces internal contradictions and social engineering challenges.

The alliance hopes the leadership of Mr Modi will give the edge it requires to challenge Mr Reddy, and Mr Naidu, who has never come to power or won an election fighting alone, hopes to get lucky yet again.

India sweeps 'Bazball' aside

Team India is in clover after topping the English brand of 'Bazball' in Test match arenas and getting back to the top of the Test ladder and hence topping all three formats.

The deeds of Yashvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Sarfaraz Khan and Dhruv Jurel ensured that Team India had the runs on the board, irrespective of tough match situations.

Team England were competitive up to a point after snatching victory in the first Test when they were a sweeping success with their positive sweep shot tactics.

Aby led by Rohit Sharma, who put away concerns over his form with two centuries, Team India showed ideal enthusiasm for the Test match game also and the cricket board stepped in to incentivise further the longer format the purists swear by with an attractive payment scheme.

In the end, Team England, prone to boasting of their tactics of always showing positive intent and attacking in every situation, were taken to the cleaners by the home team that applied itself diligently with Test match skills.

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Subhani



Modi 'guarantees': Flurry of projects on eve of polls



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

The Press Information Bureau's releases for Prime Minister Narendra Modi have turned into a constant refrain about "multiple development projects". In the first week of March, Mr Modi was in West Bengal, in Bihar, in Telangana, in Odisha and in Assam.

So, the buzzword is "Viksit Bharat". But he does not just harp on the word. He announces and inaugurates projects in the name of "Viksit Bharat". And the projects run into thousands of crores of rupees.

On March 1, he announced "multiple development projects" worth ₹7,200 crores. On March 2, in Aurangabad in Bihar, he announced projects worth ₹21,400 crores; and in Begusarai, the same day, he announced oil and gas projects worth ₹1.48 lakh crores, development projects worth ₹13,400 crores, and railway projects worth ₹3,917 crores.

The Prime Minister's vision of a future India is escapism into the future. The idea that Indians will somehow make it big in the next five, 10 or 25 years is nothing but a lotus-eater's dream.

There is, however, the more basic fact that must be taken into account in the case of Prime Minister Modi's announcements. He is misusing his position in the government to make announcements that only someone in the government can do.

The fact that Mr Modi finds it necessary to make announcements of development projects at the end of his term in office also reveals a flaw in his governance model. First, his invocation of a developed India by 2047 is a cunning way to sidestep the issues of the day.

health, challenges to agriculture, manufacturing and upgrading technology. Mr Modi offers the opiate of "developed India in 2047" as an answer to all these issues.

The private professional colleges of medicine and engineering have always been a scandal in this country, and the private universities are getting to be part of the scandal now. That Indian institutes are struggling to get into the list of world rankings tells a cruel tale of its own.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

MYSTERY EXIT

The resignation of EC Arun Goel just before the elections are due in a couple of months comes as a complete surprise. It is very unusual for such resignations to happen before elections.

Anthony Henriques Mumbai

EQUAL CITIZENS

IN A SHOCKING incident in India's capital, a Muslim while performing jummah prayer on the road was hit by police. Since the BJP came to power in 2014, there have been many hate crimes against Indian Muslims.

Faizan Ahmed New Delhi

SELF-SERVING

PEOPLE TRYING to defend the indefensible by furnishing the argument that a certain industrialist "provides employment to thousands of Indians" and are hence entitled to enjoy the state privilege of getting an Army airport converted to an international airport for 10 days just for the sake of the comfort of his VVIP guests arriving to attend a private function need to be told in no uncertain terms that the industrial group has provided employment to thousands perhaps to serve themselves and lead comfortable lives!

Kajal Chatterjee Kolkata

As consumers, let's reflect on the challenges we face in making informed choices, particularly in India, where the need for transparency in our complex marketplace has never been more pressing.

This struggle is aggravated by a lack of transparency, where inadequate product information, ambiguous labelling, and deceptive advertising make it difficult for consumers to make the best choices.

A study "India: Health of the Nation's States" by the Indian Council of Medical Research says the prevalence of deaths attributable to non-communicable diseases (NCD) in India increased from 37.9 per cent in 1990 to 61.8 per cent in 2016, rising further to 66 per cent in 2019.

In Indians compared to individuals in the Global North. Further, a 2021 study published in the American Journal of Preventive Cardiology, revealed that while death rates from coronary artery diseases are declining in most rich nations, they are on the rise in Global South, including India.

The surge in NCD-related death rate in India is not solely attributed to inadequate healthcare facilities but is also linked to various other prime factors. These include lack of stringent regulations and implementation within our food sector and the widespread availability of processed and unhealthy foods without adequate warnings for consumers.

Recently, in its Asia-Pacific SDG Progress Report 2024, UNESCAP said that the escalating levels of obesity among children pose a significant challenge to India's economic progress towards

achieving SDGs by 2030. Despite such multiple cautionary reports on health in recent times, the persistent disagreement between the preferences of health experts and the influence businesses have in shaping health rules has left the informed public questioning whether the authorities are genuinely concerned with public health and well-being of its citizen-consumers.

Today, the social media is buzzing with criticism and impactful videos, where both experts and individual consumers vehemently express concerns about the rampant sale and effortless accessibility of unhealthy and deceptive food products in the Indian market.

In the realm of public health policymaking, it is vital for regulators and policymakers to recognise the growing resentment and respond promptly, prioritising national health over short-term economic interests.

In this challenging context, manufacturers also bear a moral and social responsibility to present healthier food choices. Prioritising public health, food safety and acknowledging consumers' right to be informed, they should willingly provide transparent and detailed information about nega-

tive ingredients through warning labels. Such actions would align with the Prime Minister's sentiments expressed during the B-20 summit on August 27, 2023, where he urged businesses to prioritise consumer well-being and proposed an International Consumer Care Day. His call for balanced global commerce and consumer-centric policies underscores the need to reconsider conventional economic governance frameworks.

Further, embracing a shift towards healthier products not only aligns with ethical considerations but also opens doors to lucrative markets for our agricultural products in the realm of wholesome and nutritious foods. Then, alongside regulatory and voluntary measures, promoting consumer education is vital.

The authors work for CUTS International, a global public policy research and advocacy group

Pradeep S. Mehta and T.B. Simi

Warning labels for informed choices over food: How to navigate challenges







