

UNION TERRITORY INDEPENDENT

₹20

OCTOBER 16-31 2023

VOL . 33

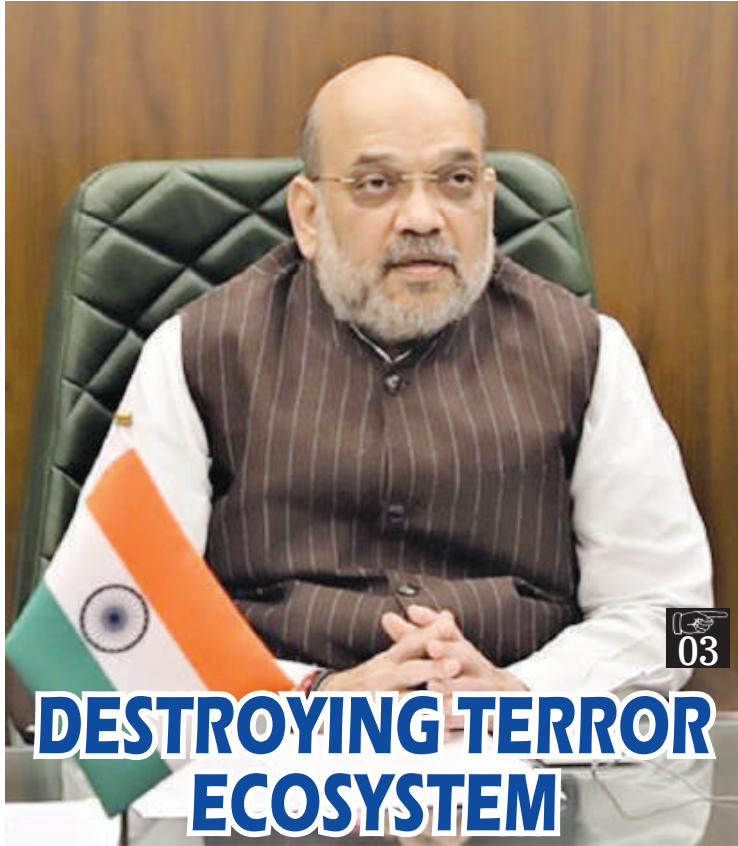
ISSUE 08

NEW DELHI

PAGES 20

www.utindependentnews.in

US 50c | UK p50



03

**DESTROYING TERROR
ECOSYSTEM**



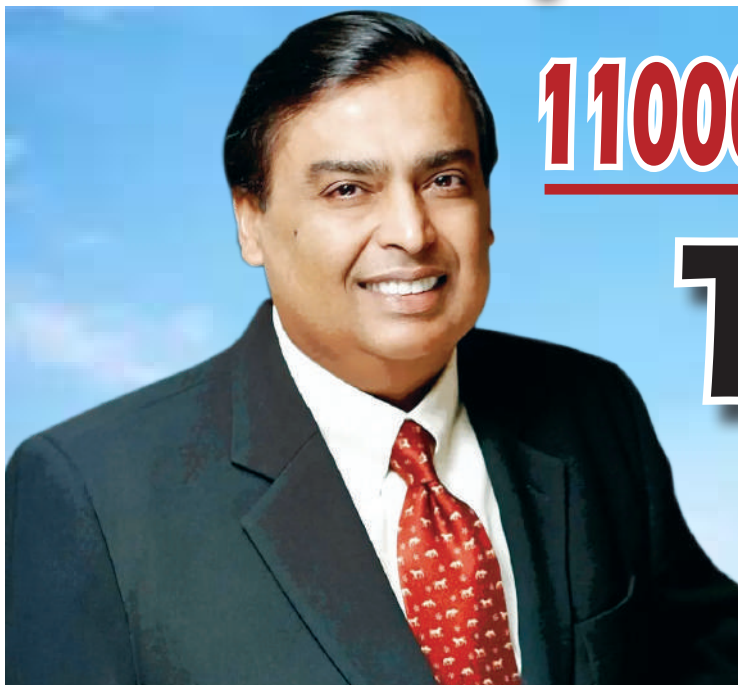
20

**Labourer Turned
Trillionaire Exposed**



15

**BALL IN
ISRAEL'S COURT!**



11000 CR GOVT EXCHEQUER LOSS

**TRYING TIMES
FOR RELIANCE**

UNION TERRITORY
INDEPENDENT

PATHETIC SPORTS SECTOR

In the recently concluded 19th Asian Games 2023 in Hangzhou, China, Indian Athletes brought home a haul of 107 medals, making India proud. This was the first time ever India performed so well to grab the 4th rank in this game. Will this continue to be improved upon in the other mega events too? Indian sports men and women have done their job well. They are hard core patriots. What next for them? On their arrival crowd would gather, clap, some media glare, shower appreciation and then, all are back home, doing the same menial work for a living. It's only pains all their life after so much of hard work and performance par excellence.

Indian sports men and women have unending woes.

The lives of athletes are pathetic, annoying. Majority hail from poor families. They cannot afford even a one time meal. India is abundant with talents who could be moulded to become world class sports men and women. But they dare not pursue sports as a passionate career as they cannot afford to leave their homes. Their families survive on their income. Educating the rural and semi-rural youth to take up sports as a career has to start at the earnest. Sports men and women should be offered a permanent source of income, either a secure decent job or subsidies and low to interest-free financial and technical assistance for them to start their own chosen businesses. They should all get preferential treatment all their life, something similar to what the army men get after retirement. Sports sector is infested with rampant corruption, dirty politics, nepotism, groupism, infighting, largesse to a select chosen few and ill treatment to sportsmen, especially the sports women, who unfortunately are looked upon as mere sex toys and not as budding talents who will make country proud. Lack of government focus is another impediment. There is lack of decent sports budget to build lasting infrastructure, shoe-string spends on talent identification, mentoring and training. There is total lack of education to the rural youth, where the talents are abundant, on the merits of opting sports as passionate career and a decent regular secure income to free their minds to focus only on the sports discipline they are being trained. The talent identification should start in early lives of children and imbibe that passion, confidence and pride in them to train their minds for bringing laurels for the country. This brain storming of children should start right from their primary schooling levels. While on building sports infrastructure across rural and urban regions in the country, there should also be stringent laws, rules and guidelines for compulsory optimal use of the built infrastructure. Once crores spent to build the sports infrastructure they are hardly put to use, neither are they properly maintained. There are instances where the premises are used for all illicit purposes. It is time for sweeping aggressive reforms and Bureaucracy held accountable for non optimal use of built infrastructure. They have to be forced to have compulsory regular programs and perfected system to identify talents also from rural and semi-rural areas, mentor and train them. Every official should be given a compulsory target to be met in churning out world class talents in every sports discipline from every sport infra and complexes built. Only the policy of 'stick' on officials will do this trick. They will do out of fear of losing their secure jobs and other form of penalties for non-performance. Drastic changes and aggressive reforms are needed if India wants Indian sports men and women to excel in world sports events in every discipline.

Instant changes is the need of the hour. Only long term vision, decent sports budget and doable plans to improve the lot, supported by stricter laws and drastic reforms with absolute accountability will do wonders for India in the sports sector.

S H A Badshah

HC PULLS UP Kejriwal Govt

The Health Care system in Delhi, even being the Capital of the Country, is in pathetic state and the Kejriwal Delhi Government ignored the Health of the people. Just opening and shutting down of useless "Mohalla Clinics" that hardly has any qualified doctors or medicine inventory, is not Health Care. With Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal busy with facing his own created issues of corruption and money laundering cases of his close aides, the Chief Secretary of the Delhi Administration steps in to relieve the miseries of the people in Delhi.

The burning need of the hour is that the procedure required for availing free medical treatment must be streamlined, including various surgeries, as well as surgeries for implants/devices and to put in place a single-window mechanism with designated nodal officers at each hospital in Delhi. Kejriwal's Government, refusing to implement the Centre sponsored Ayushman Bharat under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) just because it is from PM Modi, he has formulated "Delhi Arogya Kosh" and "Delhi Arogya Nidhi" schemes, with these initiatives being complemented by ancillary programmes aimed at providing medical services to the residents of the city.

Similarly, the central government has launched schemes like the Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi and the Health Minister's Discretionary Grant. All know it is not easy to avail the benefits of these health schemes. The system is so complicated fanning only rampant corruption. This all the more makes it difficult for the people, especially the EWS when attempting to avail financial aid for treatment using these schemes.

These constraints manifest at various stages: during treatment, submission of applications for financial assistance, procurement of quotations concerning implants, procedure for disbursing amounts, and finally, while undergoing medical procedures including surgeries, the Court Highlighted. The schemes are extremely troublesome for patients since they are made to run from pillar to post to obtain various certificates from authorities even before they



could submit their application to the Patient Welfare Cell of the Directorate of Health Services. Taking into account the procedural impediments, the court said the process for availing medical facilities under these schemes should be significantly streamlined and made extremely easily accessible using a single window and the responses to patients should be instant as it involves the life of patients.

Delhi High Court has pulled up the AAP's Delhi Government and also the Centre and direct them to streamline the process of availing facilities under health welfare schemes to relieve the miseries of the people in the Capital city in the all important Health Care systems. The court highlighted the difficulties faced by economically weaker individuals in availing the benefits of these schemes. Looking at all these miseries of the people, Delhi High Court has directed both the governments to streamline and simplify the process for accessing medical facilities under various health welfare schemes.

Kejriwal busy in pursuing his political ambitions, having ignored to address the miseries of the people, especially the economically weaker sections, a 7-Member Committee, led by the Delhi Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, has been formed to address the shortcomings in the current Health Care system and iron out the difficulties and constraints in the systems, faced by people from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) wanting to enjoy such benefits.

The terms of reference of the committee include ensuring maintenance of a dynamic information list of drugs by hospitals, implants and devices on the website of the departments concerned which may be revised frequently

so those seeking treatment are aware of their availability in real time. This may also help citizens donate drugs / implants / devices as per the need of each hospital.

The ministries of Health and Family Welfare at both levels (Centre and state) as well as the MCD should create revolving funds to cater to the recurring expenditure of patients suffering from chronic, rare, debilitating or lethal diseases, including all necessary forms of treatment such as surgeries and procurement of implants and devices, the Court noted.

"Funds/grants should be made available in the hospitals concerned expeditiously on the basis of demand. This will benefit hospitals established in the peripheral areas and also those established in the well habited areas in respect of their unique issues," the court observed.

The court said the procedure for securing financial assistance under different schemes must be made less cumbersome so the public could comprehend it with little assistance, and instructions must be displayed prominently and clearly in language they are able to understand. The hospital must become patient-friendly and accessible to the society at large, Court correctly noted.

"Emphasis must be on processing the applications instantly. All forms must be available in regional languages and English and Hindi and the requirement of accompanying documents must be kept minimal to minimal, keeping in mind that these are for medical emergencies and also entail stop-gap arrangements at various hospitals to mitigate the pain and suffering till final treatment or surgery is done," Court further noted.

CO-OPS ON GROWTH TRACK

Subsidised loans to Co-operatives (co-ops) is all set to reach ₹50 K-Cr this financial and is a “matter of great pride” said Home Minister Amit Shah.

In July 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi government created a Ministry for Cooperation, helmed by Shah, spacing it out of the farm ministry. The Centre has since rolled out several changes to digitise and expand a sector that plays a key role in the rural economy. The key objective behind the formation of the new Cooperation Ministry was to empower the farmers in specific and generate huge employment opportunities for the youth in the rural and agriculture and food processing sectors.

Among a slew of sweeping reforms, the Parliament had passed the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2022, in July. The reformed law seeks to bring transparency in the governance of cooperatives, paves the way for a “cooperative election authority”



to bring electoral reforms and prevent malpractices in this sector that contributes a lot to the National economy.

Besides from being a large provider of employment, the sector has nearly 38,000 viable primary agricultural cooperative societies, which are now being digitized. This mega digitization move will benefit the co-ops and the customers and bring in the much needed transparency, ending obvious corrupt practices that freely allowed conniving erring of-

officials and vested interests make huge illicit money co-ops funds of the government.

India is looking to boost the huge economic potential of its large number of cooperatives spread across the country with sweeping reforms that can accelerate the country's ambitious GDP expansion to reach a targeted \$5 trillion by 2025.

Cooperatives are collectives owned by participating members who share profits and losses, such as a rural business

or banks. Cooperatives in short are Societies formed by a group of likeminded people. This co-ops sector counts 290 million farmers as members. The popular milk brand Amul, for instance, is a cooperative. So is India's largest fertilizer maker, IFFCO.

The state-backed National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), was set up in 1963 and is an implementing agency for development programmes of the Union Government.

The NCDC has helped to foster the economic development of cooperatives in the country, from creating infrastructure facilities related to “agricultural marketing and inputs to processing, storage and cold chain”. The ambit of NCDC has widened to include newer, tending and needed areas in keeping with the needs of the society and boost income of youth in the country.

Government in a bid to expand the power of farmers provides loans through established channels mon-

itored and controlled by the Cooperation Ministry and the Central Bank. The disbursements to cooperatives in the current financial year is to touch ₹50,000 Crore from ₹5,300 crore in 2013-14, which was a “matter of great pride”, said Amit Shah.

Interestingly the system has been so designed, regularly monitored that has resulted in full recovery of advanced subsidized loans, with no NPAs – Non-Performing Assets, or say in simple terms ‘dead loan’.

The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) is set to achieve a nearly tenfold growth in disbursing financial assistance since 2013-14, said Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah.

The NCDC is all set to achieve a nearly tenfold growth in disbursing financial assistance since 2013-14, Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah said at the 89th general council meeting of the state-backed entity.

Destroying Terror Ecosystem



There is no denying the “Terror Ecosystem” has to be completely destroyed and to achieve this ruthless approaches are needed. It is needless to add that not only terrorism, but the entire ecosystem of the terrorists has to be destroyed in totality.

Home Minister Amit Shah echoed this in his address while inaugurating the two-day anti-terror conference organised by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) led by its boss Ajit Doval who is also India's National Security Advisor.

The home minister said tough decisions taken by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi government have yielded very good results in handling challenges posed by cryptocurrencies, hawala, terror-funding, organised crime syndicates and narco-terror links. Still a lot more is to be done, he said.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah added anti-terror agencies will have to adopt such ruthless approach that no new terrorist group is formed in the country. “All anti-terror agen-

cies will have to adopt such a ruthless approach that new terrorist organisations cannot be formed,” he said. He said to deal with terrorism, the Centre and the states, their agencies and inter-agency cooperation will have to think in vertical and horizontal ways.

Shah said there is a need to not only combat terrorism but also dismantle its entire ecosystem, and for this “we must work with the spirit of the whole of government and Team India”.

Home Minister said under the leadership of Modi, the central and state agencies have succeeded in firmly curbing all forms of terrorism in the country in the last nine years. But enough, a lot more are to be done to achieve “zero tolerance” to any form of terrorism anywhere in the country.

Amit Shah added the task of NIA, anti-terror squads and state task forces should not be limited to just investigation but they should also think out of the box and take innovative measures to counter the terrorism and numb

the terrorist outfits and their thinking process.

The home minister said the fight against terrorism requires collaboration from the global level to the grass-roots, involving various states within the country, as also international cooperation.

The event witnessed the Home Minister awarding medals to NIA officials for their excellence in service.

In another event, 49th All India Police Science Congress, Union Home Minister Amit Shah continued with his batting for sweeping law reforms to empower the law enforcing agencies and to plug the escape routes the criminals resort to. He justified the need to replace the IPC, CrPC and the Evidence Act saying any law becomes “obsolete” after 50 years. The scale and form of crime has changed, and so has the method of committing them, but there has been no change in the method of dealing with them and hence sweeping reforms are needed to maintain law and order at all times, weeding out the evil forces right from their roots. W

RENTING MADE EASY IN UTS



weep Tenancy Regulation, 2023.

This is a long pending good move. The decision will help in creating a transparent ecosystem for tenants in these remote Union Territories.

According to the Cabinet, the regulations will provide a legal framework for creating an accountable and transparent ecosystem for renting premises in the Union territories by balancing the interests and rights of both the landlord and the tenant.

The regulations is designed to give a fillip to private investment and entrepreneurship in the rental market, create adequate rental housing stock for various income segments of the society, including migrants, formal and informal sector workers, professionals, students and the likes. Now doing business or staying in these remote UTs would be simpler and easier.

Cabinet okays tenancy regulations to provide transparent ecosystem for renting premises in remote Union Territories.

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for promulgation of tenancy regulations, Information and Broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur said, while briefing media on deci-

sions taken by the government.

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for four separate promulgations vis-a-vis The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Tenancy Regulation, 2023, The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Tenancy Regulation, 2023, and The Lakshad-

Lakshadweep MP Faizal DISQUALIFIED



Member of Parliament and NCP leader Mohammed Faizal P P stands disqualified from the membership of Lok Sabha from the date of his conviction, a recent Lok Sabha Secretariat bulletin said.

He was disqualified as Lok Sabha member on early this year, days after a sessions court in Kavaratti convicted him and three others on charges of attempting to murder P Salih and sentenced all the four to rigorous imprisonment of 10 years.

Faizal's disqualification was revoked months after the Kerala High Court suspended his conviction and sentencing in the case. However, in August this year, the Supreme Court set aside the Kerala High Court order on an appeal filed by the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. The apex court termed the high court decision as "erroneous" and set aside the verdict suspending the conviction of the NCP lawmaker.

The top court, however, had temporarily protected the status of Faizal as Lok Sabha member for three weeks, saying the

benefit of the high court's impugned order, staying the suspension, will remain in operation during the period, keeping in mind that there should not be any vacuum with regard to representation of the Lakshadweep Lok Sabha constituency in Parliament.

It had referred the matter back to the high court and asked it to decide afresh the lawmaker's application seeking a stay of his conviction within this period. Disqualified Lakshadweep MP Mohammed Faizal has knocked the doors of the Supreme Court once again against a fresh order of the Kerala High Court refusing to suspend his conviction in an attempt to murder case.

The special leave petition filed by Faizal before the Supreme Court said that the recent decision of the high court failed to appreciate that the electorate of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep would also suffer grave prejudice and hardship if his conviction is not suspended.

The courtroom drama continues for the Lakshadweep NCP MP!

NCP leader Mohammed Faizal P P has been disqualified as a member of the Lok Sabha, after the Kerala High Court rejected his plea to suspend his conviction in an attempted murder case. This is the second time he has been disqualified, with his previous disqualification being revoked earlier this year. The Supreme Court has set aside the Kerala High Court's decision, stating that it was erroneous. As a result, the Lok Sabha now has five vacancies.

UT of Lakshadweep

New Port Blair Airport Terminal



Operations begins at Rs 700 Crore new terminal of Port Blair airport.

A special programme was organised at the new Airport terminal to mark the commencement of operations. Besides tribal dance forms, the flyers were welcomed with flower bouquets and traditional 'aarti and tilak' on the first day.

Nicobari traditional hats made of palm fronds were also gifted.

The new terminal, which is shaped like a shell depicting the natural environs of the islands, has been built at a cost of Rs 707.73 crore. The terminal, which has a total built-up area of 40,837 Sq Metres, has 100 per cent natural lighting. It has a capacity to handle 1,200 passengers during peak hours, and around 40 lakh passengers annually.

The three-storey building is equipped with 28 check-in counters, 12 immigration counters, three passenger boarding bridges and four conveyor belts. The new apron at the airport has the facility to park 10 aircrafts at any point of time.

The state-of-the-art Airport Terminal Operations at the new terminal building of the Port Blair airport has begun.

The operations began with the arrival of an IndiGo flight from Chennai. The flight, 6E-6213, landed at the Veer Savarkar International Airport with 83 passengers at 7.10 am, they said. The second plane which arrived was of Air India. The flight, AI-549, landed at 7.20 am with 84 passengers from Chennai, they added.

The IndiGo plane was also the first one to de-



part from Port Blair, at 7.35 am with 159 passengers for Chennai. The Air India flight also returned to Chennai with 161 passengers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the new integrated terminal building of the airport in the capital city of Andaman & Nicobar Islands in July this year. The project was completed at lightning speed after the inauguration to ensure operations commencement before the end of 2024, which has been accomplished, said a senior official.

The UT of Andaman & Nicobar Member of Parliament Kuldeep Sharma welcomed the commencement of the new terminal operations and said this would increase not only the convenience of the flyers to and fro to the island, but also would boost tourism in the island clusters.

There are a lot to be done to develop this island cluster, and the terminal operations was also the one that was pending for a long time, said the A&N MP Kuldeep Sharma.

FADING Congress In UTs



Congress bosses appear to have concluded to have lost the 2024 election in the UT of Daman & Diu (D&D) and Dadra Nagar & Haveli (DNH). Both the territories surprisingly have no Congress activity, not even a party office! They fail to realize that though these two are tiny territories, they can increase their MPs count by 2.

When late Mohan S Delkar was with the Congress as Member of Parliament from DNH, he had full control of the party as its uncrowned supreme, its workers and supporters in the territory. He was accessible, interacted with the workers and people of his constituency, and did all possible to resolve issues quickly. But ever since his demise, the Congress has lost all its sheen in the territory.

Similar is the case with Daman & Diu. Late Dayabhai Patel, the Congress MP and boss of the party in this territory kept the party flying with undaunted respect and mass support. He was considered a "peoples' Leader. He was loved by all and was quick to solve issues of the people. He kept very cordial relations with the Administration and even the opposition Leaders. His interaction with all was absolute.

However, all these changed with his demise and his son Ketan Patel taking over his father's space. He was a selfish businessman and focused only in minting money using the party banner. He

was arrested in an alleged case of corruption and money collection from the businesses and industries. He was called the 'vasoli man of Daman'. In the past several years this Congress territory President was not seen at all anywhere near the territory, leave alone nourishing party interests. The party doesn't even have an office. He is said to have almost settled in Dubai, promoting his business interests. This tiny territory also has been ignored by the party.

In a cosmetic type of action, Congress bosses had nominated an outsider, Mahesh Sharma, a native of Rajasthan, as the Working President of DNH and D&D. Workers allege he is hardly known in the territory and he never interacts with party workers, leave alone the people of DNH. Workers also allege that he is only using the party banner and his cosmetic position to further his financial interests from these territories. Party workers allege that he doesn't visit to interact with the workers ever. He appears to be yet another one taking undue advantage of the party banner to promote his personal interests. He is not at all involved in re-popularising and firming up the party interests in the UT territories.

It is a fact that in so many decades the political Leaderships have only been furthering their financial interests and did nothing for the people. No development is seen in

the territories. BJP took the initiative to better the lot. Prime Minister Modi gifted the territory with the first Medical Institution developing campus in Dadra Nagar & Haveli. BJP ensured development of road connectivity to the area with its ambitious Flyover Bridges at Ring Road project and other similar connectivity projects, which are under process of completion.

In a coordinated attempt to develop further the territories Prime Minister Narendra Modi appointed a very able Administrator Praful Patel who is doing a great job to provide a clean and people-oriented Administration. With the crucial 2024 elections less than a year away, BJP as such has become proactive in both these territories, dwarfing further the prospects of the Congress Party.

People of this UT want the Congress party back. But the Congress party looks orphaned in both these tiny territories. With these territories producing 2 Parliament Members adding to the overall member count for any party, these two tiny UT territories cannot obviously be ignored.

It should be interesting to note that the barring two, rest of the UTs are very small and it is pathetic that the Congress has not been able to win even these small UT territories. It is time the Congress did a retrospective review of its strengths and come with strategies to change this status at least in UTs.

What the Congress National President Malikarjun Karge and his team are doing to re-foster the prospects of the party in these two tiny territories, ask the still remaining loyal party workers and block level leaders. They say the Party President is not at all giving attention to the this UT territories.

It is a different issue if the party has decided to gift the territory prospects to BJP in the coming elections. But if it is serious about re-gaining popularity in this UT, the party has to take tough decisions.

BSP IDENTITY

The 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections brought in two surprises, return of Bharatiya Janata Party, BJP, to political power with a full majority for the 2nd term despite perceived anti-incumbency notions, and total decimation of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).



Behen Mayawati, the National President of BSP had the mantle of Uttar Pradesh as Chief Minister 5 times of which four have been for short periods and once a longer one. Rampant corruption was alleged during her terms, but Mayawati went on winning elections.

BSP managed to win just a single seat at the 2022 UP State polls, the Rasara constituency in Ballia district. BSP's vote share also dropped to an alarming 12.88% signaling her losing popularity even within her own dalit and other OBC communities. Since the 2022 drubbing at the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, BSP supremo had been lying low.

BSP supremo Mayawati is the national president of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which focuses on a platform of social change for Bahujans, more commonly known as Other Backward Castes including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as well as religious minorities since 2003. Lower vote share meant she was not able to woo even her traditional vote banks. Mayawati who was once called "miracle of democracy" by former Prime Minister late Narasimha Rao, had her own good and low times in politics. But she always had stood firm in her philosophy championing the causes of Bahujan samaj, meaning backward classes termed 'dalits'. She also smartly appeased the Muslim vote bank, which always had the character to tilt the vote counts in her favour. But all these changed after the 2022 polls.

Mayawati may have been nursing the election drubbed wounds, but is not totally off the political scene yet. Lying low has its own issues. Several senior party leaders crossed over to other greener pastures, Congress, BJP and Samajwadi Party (SP) and the likes. But she remained cool, unperturbed.

It is mega election time again. 2024 general elections is going to be a battle for power, BJP trying to retain power for the 3rd term, and the opposition blocs challenging him to the core to unseat him.

It would be interesting to observe that Mayawati had never made any attacks on PM Modi, nor did the BJP or any of its leaders saying anything against her. Both have kept a calculated distance thus far.

BSP Chief Mayawati admitted that her party's rout in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election was a "lesson" well learnt. She pointed out that the negative campaigns orchestrated by the opposition was clearly to mislead the people of the state. She urged her party workers not to be disheartened but to continue their efforts to carry forward the BSP's movement of coming back to power in the state.

"Negative campaigns succeeded in misleading, that BSP is BJP's B-team, while the truth is exactly the opposite. BJP vs BSP war was not only political but principled and electoral as well," the BSP chief said. She obviously tried sounding stable and will regain quickly. But, the BSP supporters are of the view that it is very difficult from here to bounce back as in the next five years the BJP will try to consolidate its support base among Dalits by ensuring them more welfare schemes. Even loyal hard core BSP supporters are doubtful of a bounce back by Mayawati. Mayawati surprised all when she refused to join the newly formed opposition grouping, I.N.D.I. alliance. All think she is exuding with over confidence. The opposition bloc is worried on BSP's stand to go alone in the coming 2024 elections.

BJP is would be the most happiest to see Mayawati fight all the seats alone. BJP's added strength in UP would be to see BSP fight alone and cut into the vote banks of Dalits, OBCs and the hard core anti-Modi religious minorities, which otherwise just might go to Congress and SP. Even if BSP wishes to fade away, BJP would do all to see BSP actively alive. BSP fighting a lone battle would surely be advantage Modi and his BJP-NDA combine in the coming 2024 elections!

IDBI Bank Officials Involved

₹600 Cr AIRCEL SIVA FRAUD

In the ongoing investigations against some top IDBI officials for their nexus with the involved fraudster companies, Madras High Court refused to quash the case against bank officials and advised the Central Investigating agency CBI to proceed with their investigations.

THE JUDGMENT

Madras high court has refused to quash prosecution against senior IDBI Bank officials and others, including Directors, in connection with a 600 Crore fraud case. Denial of sanction to prosecute under the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act cannot automatically extend the protection from prosecuting them for offence under IPC, court observed.

"IDBI Bank is a private banking institution in which the Union Government and LIC have major shares. Refusal to grant sanction by competent authority for prosecution under PC Act certainly



cannot be an umbrella for IPC offence also", the court added.

THE COURT ORDER

The sanction of loan to a company registered overseas to repay the loan of other companies defaulted in India and abroad does not sound sensible and practical by any stretch of imagination, more so when the said loan remains unpaid, the judge pointed out.

"Withoutf any compunction after causing several hundred crores of rupees loss to IDBI, these peti-

tioner claim that the loan granted to M/s ASL was cash neutral and the IDBI Bank had not incurred any loss, even though they have advanced 600 crore to recover dues of 391 crore," the court said.

Dismissing the pleas, the court directed the CBI to proceed further with their investigation.

KEY STORY

According to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the senior management of IDBI conspired with the promoters/directors of Siva Group of

Companies to cheat the bank under the garb of restructuring the loan of M/s Win Wind Oy (a company incorporated in Finland) by granting loan of US\$ 83 Million to M/s Axcel Sunshine Ltd (ASL), a company based in Virgin Islands which is an associate company of Siva Group of companies.

"It is a flagrant violation of the regulatory guidelines of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on foreign investments in India. This is a case of fraud on the bank by the executives of the bank and promoters of the group of companies involved to derive wrongful gains and cause loss to the banks to the tune of Rs600 crore," observes CBI.

CASE OF FRAUD

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had filed a case against Axcel Sunshine Ltd (ASL) and Win Wind Oy (WVO), companies controlled by former Aircel promoter C. Sivasankaran, for allegedly

defaulting on loans worth Rs 600 crore from IDBI Bank.

The case, which involves some of the country's top bankers, had been referred by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), CBI said. The agency has registered cases against 39 individuals.

This company is held by Siva Investments and Holdings Ltd, which is a Seychelles-based entity. This is one of the firms of the Siva group of companies whose chairman is C. Sivasankaran.

In February 2014, IDBI sanctioned another loan of Rs 523 crore to ASL, based in the British Virgin Islands. ASL was part of Siva group and the money was used for repaying loans of other associate companies of the group, including WVO.

IDBI Bank had given the loan to Axcel Sunshine Ltd in February 2014, which became NPA in December 2015.

What Next For Indian Athletes'?

It is yet another proud moment for the Indians. Indian sports men and women set new benchmarks for themselves at the 19th Asian Games 2023 in Hangzhou, the People's Republic of China.

It was the first time in Asian Games history that India's medals tally crossed the two-digits, the three-figure mark. By doing so, they became the only fourth country after China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to win 100 or more medals in a single edition of the Asian Games.

This signals the rise of Indian athletics on the global stage.

India snatched the 4th position in medals tally this 2023 Asian games at Hangzhou, China. Indian sports men and women bagged an unprecedented haul of 107 medals that included 28 Gold, 38 Silvers and 41 Bronze medals.

India sent 655 athletes to compete in 41 disciplines at the Asian Games 2023 held from September 19 to October 8, 2023. It was India's largest representation at the Asian Games editions held so far.



This beats India's own previous best medal haul. This medals tally bypassed the 2018 Asian Games tally in Jakarta, Indonesia, when Indian athletes' returned with 70 medals, including a haul of 16 Gold medals. India had sent 570 athletes for this 2018 event.

2023 Asian games saw few firsts, and some records were rewritten. Athletics turned out to be the most productive sport for India at the Asian Games 2023 with a 29 medals tally - 6 Gold, 14 Silver and 9 Bronze. Athletics at the Asian Games 2023 saw Indian track and field stars

rewrite three national records.

Vithya Ramraj equalled the legendary PT Usha's national record in the women's 400m hurdles after almost four decades. The games also saw the youngest and the oldest to win medals, setting new records.

The 15 years old Sanjana Bathula became the youngest Indian to win a medal at the Asian Games after she won the bronze in the women's speed skating 3000m relay event. Jaggy Shivdasani became the oldest Indian to win an Asian Games medal at 65

years. He was part of the men's bridge team that won the silver medal.

Indian shooters won seven gold medals and accounted for the most gold medals for the country. Not just this, 4 of India's 7 Gold medals created world record this time. It was heartwarming to see teenagers bagging gold. The 17-year-old Palak Gulia won the gold in the women's 10m air pistol with an Asian Games record of 242.1.

India over shadowed past achievements in archery too. Indian archers, led by Jyothi Surekha

Vennam and Ojas Pravin Deotale, won 9 medals in archery at the Asian Games 2023. The men's and women's Indian cricket teams also won their first gold medals in the Asian Games on their tournament debuts. Men's decathlon, steeplechase, cycling, archery, badminton, javelin throw are other events where Indian athletes claimed significant milestones for India. It was also the first time that India swept the podium in these events. Though Indian swimmers did not win any medals, they reset six national records in swimming at the Asian Games 2023.

Well, the Indian sports men and women have done their job in bringing honour to India. But, is the government proactively watching to improve their economic conditions for a better life, recognize their talents and performance and help them all to train and practice further preparing them for bigger events? Will the government provide relief to their never ending woes in pursuing their sports career to excel?

YECHURY OPINION

CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury cleared the speculative air saying that the Prime Ministerial face for the new opposition grouping would be decided after the alliance comes to power in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Talking to reporters in Bihar's Rajgir in Nalanda district, Yechury said it is not an appropriate question to ask now who will be the PM face for the I.N.D.I. Alliance.

The opposition I.N.D.I. Alliance, of which the CPI(M) is a constituent, was formed with a view to preventing the division of anti-BJP votes in the parliamentary elections in 2024. "All alliance partners of the I.N.D.I. Alliance will decide on the Prime Minister after winning the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Elected MPs from the coalition will elect the Prime Minister," CPIM's



Yechury said.

The question about the Prime Ministerial face was raised before the 2004 parliamentary polls. "What happened in the 2004 Lok Sabha polls? The UPA came to power and Manmohan Singh became the PM and he remained PM for 10 years", said Yechury.

Later, Yechury attended the valedictory session of the CPI(M)'s state-level

training camp.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter by Yechury read "In the midst of heavy rains, urging the people of Rajgir, Nalanda (Bihar) in the CPI(M) organised public meeting to join the battle to save India today in order to change it for the better by emphatically defeating the BJP & ensuring I.N.D.I. Alliance wins all 40 seats in the state.

Kerala A Knowledge Economy

Kerala is evolving into a knowledge economy, despite the Information asymmetry prevalent in current world order. This critically hinders the dissemination of models that addresses various challenges.

Despite the challenges posed, Kerala has achieved a Human Development Index (HDI) comparable to that of developed nations through the Kerala Model of Development, which is commendable.

Speaking at the 20th international conference of the Global Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation, and Competence-building Systems (GLOBELICS), Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan emphasised the importance of global connectivity for sharing ideas and highlighted the prevalent information asymmetry in the current world order.

Kerala state has also made significant strides in poverty reduction and boasts a thriving startup ecosystem with global recognition, CM Vijayan said.

Vijayan announced that his government has declared internet access as a right to our citizens and established the 'Kerala Fibre Optic Network', aiming to over-

come barriers related to physical, social, regional and financial factors. He said his government was working to ensure that the society was connected to the global information highway, so that ideas can be freely assimilated and disseminated.

It is yet another first-of-its-kind experiment in our country," he said. He described this initiative as a pioneering effort in India. Vijayan added that there were several such interventions from the Global South that have become models to the world. Kerala CM urged the conference to deliberate on interventions needed to amplify the visibility of successful models from the Global South. "However, the prevalent information asymmetry in the current world order often serves as impediments to propagating and popularising such models," CM Vijayan claimed.

He lauded Kerala's achievements in health, education, and Sustainable Development Goals, asserting the state's unparalleled performance in poverty eradication and providing skilled manpower. Vijayan credited Kerala's successful development model to a rich

tradition of collective learning, renaissance movements, progressive campaigns, and various intervention programmes.

He also acknowledged the challenge of creating vibrant economic sectors for generating employment opportunities within Kerala, emphasising the role of science, technology, and innovation in achieving these goals.

The digital divide across the country remains a serious concern. To address this issue, the Kerala State government is actively working on establishing a digital system through the K-FON project, providing low-cost internet access to the general population. This initiative is expected to create more job opportunities and increase people's income.

Highlight of achievements and as first, Kerala is the first state in India to introduce a separate R&D budget in 2023, a practice that will continue in future budgets.

Only hopes that every other Indian State and UTs will take the cue from Kerala and provide such budgets and opportunities to the youth and the eligible citizens in the country.

Vijayan Worried About Indians in Israel

According to Kerala government estimate around 7,000 People From Kerala are Stuck In Israel.

Days after a Malayali Caregiver was injured in Israel amidst Hamas-Israel conflict, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has written to External Affairs minister S Jaishankar, seeking urgent intervention.

According to estimates, around 18000 Indians live in Israel, of these, little less than half are from Kerala. Many of them are working as Caregivers in Israel. Even a pilgrim group, according to reports are stranded in Israel, but are said to have informed their families that they are safe. Expressing concern over the plight of Indian nationals in Israel, Mr. Vijayan said that around 7,000 of them are from Kerala and the continuing hostilities were putting them to extreme hardship and their family members were in a state of extreme anxiety.

Amidst the war be-

tween Palestine terror outfit Hamas and Israel, Kerala CM Vijayan has written to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar seeking intervention to ensure the safety of Indian citizens in Israel.

"I request your good self to intervene in every possible manner to ensure the safety of our citizens in Israel," the Kerala chief minister wrote to EAM Jaishankar.

"A good number of people around 7000 are from the state of Kerala. The continuing hostilities are putting these civilians to extreme hardship and their family members are in a state of extreme anxiety," Vijayan said in letter to the Union Minister Jaishankar.

A woman from Kerala working as a caregiver in Israel was injured in the conflict. The CPI-M Kerala Secretariat in a statement had urged the central government to take steps to ensure the safety of the Keralites stuck in Israel.

Vijayan Blasts Centre

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan alleged that the Centre has an unfavourable attitude towards the Kerala State, especially in matters of improving ties with foreign countries.

Centre is not allowing Kerala to improve its ties with foreign countries, Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan lamented.

There are a good number of foreign countries which have very good ties with Kerala, but the Centre doesn't allow us the leverage and the freedom to better the existing ties. CM Vijayan added that permission was denied by the Centre to conduct the 'Abu Dhabi Marathon'. The attitude of the Centre is that nothing good should happen in Kerala, he said. CM Viayan also alleged that Congress and BJP did their best to tarnish the image of the ruling Left at the 2021 Assembly elections. But all the smear campaigns fell on deaf ears and the voters were intelligent, smart and well informed.

The Congress Party has never worked for the good of the State. They took the help of the Kerala State BJP to approach the Centre which sent numerous Central Investi-



gating Agencies here, said Vijayan.

He then pointed out that the BJP in Kerala was unable to get a hold because the CPI-M led left is strongly working against it. The game plan is to weaken the left and with that, the Congress will come to power and once that happens, the BJP will take over, added Vijayan.

State Congress President K Sudhakaran reacted to the Chief Minister statement and said that till date Vijayan has not spoken a word against the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It's he who has clandestine relations with the BJP and hence he is being safe-guarded in cases like SNC Lavalin which has been adjourned almost three dozen times in the past several years.

BJP is listening with a broad grin!

Land Registration Scams Galore

THAMBI MARI MUTTU

Temple Land Grabbed, Dual Identity, Grabbed Land Sale, Forgery, Mafia Goondalism, What Not? It is corruption galore in Land Registration Department! Recent revelations point to rampant corruption in the Land Registration Department that have stunned not only the public, but also the CB-CID sleuths and bosses. Is the Government doing anything to root out corruption systematically?

Generally the land grabbing and forgery are done by the Land mafia in connivance with the government servants of respective departments. But in shocking reversal, it is alleged that in Puducherry it is the government servants, who know the complete intricate registration processes, have committed these crimes using mafia goons and Land Grabbing Mafia Dons.

50 Cr Temple Land Sold

Few officials of the Administration have been found involved in the case related to grabbing of temple land and selling it for building flats. The CB-CID sleuths have arrested a former revenue department official, also the former director of fisheries, in connection with the land-grabbing case of Sri Kamatchiamman temple at Rainbow Nagar on Bharati Street. The accused, D Balaji, 44, is the 16th person apprehended in the case.

The investigation agency said Balaji while serving as the settlement officer (survey and records) helped for changing the patta of the temple land in the name of one of the accused persons, Periyarayagasamy alias Arulraj, based on forged and fraudulent 'will' documents without verifying the parent and link documents.

The case pertains to 'forging' documents and the 'will' of the agricultural land, measuring 64,035 sq ft, which belongs to Sri Kamatchiamman temple at Rainbow Nagar, and its fraudulent sale by creating two portions on the grabbed land by private builders in 2021.

The GLR value of the land is Rs 12.49 crore and the market value is around Rs 50 crore. Based on a complaint by the Trustees of the temple, an FIR was registered in August 2022.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) led by R Mohankumar, SP, and CB-CID collected documents from the registration and survey departments and examined officials and oth-



er witnesses.

The investigation revealed that the accused persons had forged documents that they used to register the temple land in their name with the help of officials from the registration department and the Directorate of Survey and Land records of Puducherry.

Balaji has been accused of changing the land's 'patta' in the name of the accused Periyarayagasamy alias Arulraj without perusing the parent-link documents, police said. With Balaji's arrest, the number of accused persons apprehended in connection with the case has gone up to 16. The agency has so far arrested 16 people that includes several government servants and has launched a hunt for all the people involved in this temple land grabbing case.

Those arrested earlier include the Sub-Registrar of Villianur Taluk, Sivasurya, and a former Village Administrative officer. Director of Survey and Land Records M S Ramesh, also is named as an accused is yet to be arrested.

The Agency has registered a case against several people after the Trustees of Sri kamatchiamman Temple charged that their property belonging to the temple measuring 64,035 Sq.Ft worth 50 Crore was grabbed by creating fake and forged documents.

The agency began investigations and collected documents from various offices of the Registration department, survey department and other offices and examined officials and other witnesses. It found that the accused people forged documents and prepared fraudulent documents for the temple land, used them as genuine documents and changed the 'patta' in their names. They registered the forged documents with the help of government servants in the registration department and Directorate of Survey and Land Records.

Over 100 Cr Worth 'Wills' Tampered

Yet another case of tampering of "Wills" doc-

uments with the Registrar's office have come to light. The findings, so far, of forgery and tampering of documents related to 'Registered Wills' of unwary people is estimated to run into more than Rs 100 Crores.

CB-CID probe has been sought into tampering of Wills at Puducherry Registration Department.

The District Registrar's Office has asked for a probe, after mismatches in the particulars of 8 registered wills at the Sub-Registrar Office in Oulgaret came to light recently.

The District Registrar's Office has demanded a detailed probe by the CB-CID into the manipulation of certain registered Will deeds at the Sub-Registrar Office in Oulgaret, Puducherry.

Following detection of a mismatch in the particulars pertaining to eight registered wills in Book-3 (a register to keep wills) and in the register that maintains thumb impressions of those who executed the documents, the District Registrar, with the approval of the Inspector-General of Police, has approached the CB-CID for a detailed investigation into the suspected tampering of documents. Revelations of forged land registration documents in the Puducherry Land Registration department and consequent action by the CB-CID sleuths has stunned the people.

Following this Revelations of fraud and forgery, the government has ordered scanning of all the registration documents related to assets, farm and temple lands and will documents. Forgery and fraud of around 32 will documents have come to light so far in the deep-scan action of the government. Of this 32 cases, 29 are of Oulgaret (Uzhavarkarai) Municipality Registration office and 3 from Pagur Registration office. These amount close to minimum estimated Rs 100 Crores of fraudulent transactions.

It is being reported that the Complainants who dare to approach the police and other redres-

sal departments are being terrorised by the officials through the conniving land mafia goons. Affected people knocked the Court doors that has directed the Administration to investigate and book all the involved culprits without sympathy. But the mafia is not to be intimidated. Even after the Court directions more such forged will registration cases are going on unchecked fearlessly, of which few have been exposed, shocking everyone.

Sita-Lata Dual Identity Fraud

Among all the scams, the Sita-Lata forgery should be one of the most stunning incidents reflecting height of fearless rampant corruption and forgery, fooling even the Court.

The Sita-Lata forgery case unearthed from the Land Registration office under Oulgaret (Uzhavarkarai) Municipality corporation limits has stunned even the CN-CID sleuths. This is an interesting case.

This stunning instance of fooling even the Court involves changing "Will" details in 1980 related to a plot measuring 3500 Sq Ft valued around 20 Lacs at that time, located at Kavikul Street, Ashok Nagar, Lawspet locality of Puducherry UT, registered in the name of one Pushpa.

The name of Pushpa was replaced with the name Sita in the Will along with other relevant details and a fresh "Will" was registered Sita's name. Based on this forged Will document Sita transferred this land to another person in the name of Lata for a sale value of Rs 4,50,000.

Lata claimed the land should be in her name in the land records, which was not done. She knocked the Court doors. She submitted all the relevant purportedly original documents to the Court in her petition alleging that while she transferred the agreed land sale value amount to Sita, the land title ownership has not yet been transferred by Sita in her name. Strangely Sita did never appeared against court summons on all the court assigned dates right

from the beginning of the case. Based her non-appearance, the Court gave a different verdict directing the Land Registration department to register the land documents immediately in the name of the new purchaser and complainant, Lata and submit the proof of having done this to the Court.

Here comes the shocking twist!

When the land records were being registered in the name Lata per Court's direction, it shocked everyone that this new owner Lata was the same as the seller Sita! When this dual identify of same person news hit the headlines, the relatives of the original owner of this land per original registered "Will" document, Pushpa, approached the Land Registrar office and the police with their complaint of forgery of replacing original owner Pushpa's name with Sita and then Lata per Court orders. This now is the most stunning case of highest of level of corruption in Puducherry Land Registration department. It is to be noted that this case also is one of the 32 Forged "Will" documents that has been unearthed by the CB-CID sleuths per government order for complete close scanning of all documents in the Registrar offices of UT of Puducherry.

These forgery, fraud and corruption are from just one municipality limit. Look at the colossal fraud in just one Registrar office. What would it be when whole of this UT offices are scanned? Government cannot afford to sit quite. It is time the government wakes up to the magnanimity of these frauds including several government servants, who in the bargain all have minted hundreds of crores of unwary land owners denting the government exchequer, in addition to maligning the image of the UT government. It is time the Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan and Chief Minister N. Rangasamy pulled up their teams and engage the Chief Secretary & Chief Vigilance Officer Rajeev Verma, I.A.S. to lead thorough investigation across the UT, book the culprits, terminate the involved government servants in addition to ceasing all their assets in all forms and in all names. People of this UT are agast and tired of rampant corruption in every department and seriously worried of the future. All are waiting to see quick results from the government.

VILLAIN VENU

S.H.A. BADASHAH

The congress is being ruined by its own Central party bosses chosen leaders at high sensitive positions, which is sure to have telling effects on the party performance in the coming 2024 challenge, where Prime Minister Modi and his BJP-NDA combine are confident of their 3rd term in power.

Senior Leader Rahul Gandhi's favourite KC Venugopal, a native of Kerala, is in the centre of controversy within the party. Large number of party workers and loyalists are utterly unhappy with his upgraded positions and increased interference in State party affairs.

Congress party workers and loyalists say that Venu's rise in the party is uncalled for and he is not fit to hold any of these sensitive positions and that he is only ruining the party and its electoral prospects.

Biggest issue is Rahul Gandhi leans on Venugopal for his political advises. He has the knack of becoming close to the party bosses, without doing anything worthwhile for the party anywhere. Much to the dismay of the party workers and State leaders, Venu has risen in the party to become AICC General Secretary (Organization). With no popularity and knowing well he can never win any election anymore, he has entered the Parliament back doors, nominated as Rajya Sabha Member, that too from Rajasthan, not even Karnataka or his na-

tive State Kerala, bypassing several capable and eligible leaders for this nomination.

Issue with Venugopal is also lack of Hindi knowledge, which is essential to take a central stage in the party, albeit his closeness to the party super bosses. But, being cunning, always manages to remain in limelight by being close to the top bosses, giving them all incorrect information about the status of party ranking, hiding facts. With the 5 State elections having been announced, party divided the state units for ease of management, but he did nothing to unite the party, it is alleged. Instead he is only encouraging factionalism, the loyalists say.

But it is not his total mistake although, as he tried and failed in his attempts to grab seats.

With a well-thought plan, Venugopal, it is alleged, advised Rahul Gandhi to contest from Wayanad, Kerala during 2019 Lok Sabha Elections in addition to Amethi. Venu, it is said thought Rahul will either lose Waynad or win both Amethi and Waynad, in which case Rahul will leave Waynad and Venu would get the ticket for the by-elections and win on Rahul's hard work and the new popularity gained in the new LS constituency.

But this unfortunately fell through as voters of Amethi rejected Rahul Gandhi as they felt he was no more serious about their constituency. Rahul lost in Amethi, the otherwise strong-

hold of Congress. Rahul had to retain Waynad. This totally ruined Venu's bigger plans, the party workers say. However, being shrewd and cunning, he convinced the bosses to get him nominated to Rajya Sabha.

It is also alleged that when Venugopal was AICC in-charge of Karnataka, he, in nexus

with the BJP, damaged the party adversely in the elections. It is alleged that whenever he used to visit state capital, kept in touch with BJP, stayed in 5 Star Hotels partying, that his weakness being expensive US-made liquors. It was alleged that he just enjoyed staying in luxury, never met workers regularly to motivate them and as a result, the party lost Assembly Elections then. The party bosses appear to have ignored all these and kept on elevating him owing to his closeness with the party bosses, allege the loyal party workers. Even during the recent Kerala Assembly elections he tried his games that only brought shame to the party in the State. How congress failed in Kerala? Of course, the policies and selfish-oriented strategies of Venugopal, the party workers allege in sad voice of discontent.

Kerala party loyal workers allege that of the 90 seats, Venu ensured 42 seats to those belonging to Nair community, which is just eight per cent. Even in that, he further ensured tickets were given to over 50 new faces loyal to him,



with a view this would catapult him becoming the Chief Minister of Kerala. To his shock, only three won among them. Workers' further allege that he and his favoured men minted money during the elections, as he and his cornies duped the party HQ and amassed huge donation money during Assembly Elections. These may be just allegations, but are worth a true dissection by the Party HQ and its super bosses.

His entry into active politics in itself is interesting, say the workers who had watched his earlier days closely. It is said that Venugopal in earlier times was just a helper doing house work, in former Kerala Chief Minister late Karunakaran Nair's residence, supplying vegetable and other daily core items. It is said that the late CM's wife got impressed with his daily core services and asked her husband to look after him as he also belonged to the Nair community like them. Later with Karunakaran's help he climbed the latter in politics became NSUI President,

Legislative Assembly Members, MLA and MP and later also a Central Minister.

Loyal party workers feel that this controversial figure is involved in serious cases, including facing a serious rape charge from Kerala Solar Panel Scam kingpin. Prime accused in the Kerala Solar Panel Scam case, Saritha Nair, named K C Venugopal among others who had sexually assaulted her. This instance involving Venugopal left the Congress party red-faced at that time. CBI is still investigating this case, which is taking a long time to conclude, as several political bigwigs of the party are involved. It is understandable.

Active party workers and loyal supporters feel that he is not worth the posts he is holding, never interacts with party workers and State Leaders. Loyal party workers and supporters feel he only will grow to be bigger liability to the party and that he is removed from all his positions to save the party from getting ruined further, at least till the cases against him are completed.



Frustrated Patil

erful and own the party are said to be interfering with the working of the Maharashtra Congress party. It is alleged that these two from Thane Congress party are doing majority of the appointment in the Congress Party.

They are alleged to be terrorizing the Maha Congress Party office bearers with their clout with the party HQ and the bosses.

It is also being alleged that they are not allowing the veteran Leader, the former BJP Leader and MP now in Congress, former Maha Assembly Speaker and Maha Congress Committee President Nana Falgunrao Patole is not being allowed to do his role in shaping the Maharashtra Congress party and preparing them for the forthcoming 2024 elections. Patole, being an outsider in the party, he is being harassed by vested interests who want to

see him go.

Added to this is irony of the wrong choice of General Secretary in-charge of Maha Congress, H K Patel, who is said to be totally neglecting the party and does not visit the party and interact with the office bearers, senior leaders and party workers. Party workers allege that they no don't remember seeing him anywhere in Maharashtra in recent times. The allegation are also that whenever H K Patel comes, it is only partying all the time, but no party work.

He may be busy with his ministerial work. He may be a popular leader in his constituency, having won the Assembly elections from there on the emerging popularity of Congress in the State and also a Minister of Law and Justice in Karnataka. But loyal party workers feel that it should be his prime duty

to strengthen the party in Maharashtra, he having been given this role with so much faith and confidence by the party supremo.

Just visiting and partying does not strengthen the party.

All know how important the coming 2024 election is going to be for the party and Rahul Gandhi. It is important to strengthen the party in Maharashtra as strong planning has to be done for the coming election and also with an eagle eye on the State elections though far away. Congress has to come back to the ruling mode soon.

Loyal Congress workers only are hoping that the party bosses in Delhi will take note of these, pull up the office bearers, listen to their woes and make instant changes wherever necessary. Sure they are listening.

Maharashtra Congress is still in sleeping mode. Loyal party workers are worried and also confused.

It appears that Maha Congress has decided not to give an even fight in the most crucial 2024 elections that will decide if Prime Minister Narendra Modi will get his 3rd consecutive term.

Maha Congress party workers say that there is no activity at all in the State party offices. The most convincing reason is the wrong

choice of Hanumanthagowda Krishnegowda Patil as General Secretary party in-charge of Maharashtra.

It also appears that the Maha Congress party in-charge HK Patil is not at all interested in his party winning in the coming election.

It is being alleged that Thane District Congress President Vikram Chouhan and also the Pradesh Mahila Congress President Sandhya Sawalakhe, who think they are more capable and pow-

₹ 11000 CR GOVT EXCHEQUER LOSS

Trying Times For RELIANCE



The 11,000 Cr dispute over “gas migration”, literally meaning stealing, from ONGC’s (Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd) Block to the adjacent block of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and its consortium partners has been through several judicial and arbitration processes, but very strangely has not yet been investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) to unearth the truth. The Delhi High Court has agreed to hear the government’s plea in a dispute relating to the KG-D6 gas block arbitration case, involving Reliance Industries Ltd and its partners. The centre had filed a plea against Reliance Industries and its partners UK-based BP Plc and Canada’s Niko Resources, for allegedly siphoning gas from state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp’s (ONGC) block in the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin in the Bay of Bengal.

GAS MIGRATION – THE DISPUTE

The Mukesh Ambani-led behemoth is the operator of the KG-D6 block with 60 per cent interest while BP PLC holds 30 per cent and the remaining 10 per cent is with Niko. Reliance had a product-sharing contract with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Niko Ltd., and BP PLC for natural gas extraction. Their block was next to ONGC’s allocated blocks.

The dispute began in 2014 when state-run ONGC claimed that Mukesh Ambani-owned conglomerate and its consortium partners had deliberately, willfully and knowing well their wrong doing, drilled wells close to the common boundary of their blocks and pumped out gas from ONGC’s adjoining block. ONGC has accused the RIL conglomerate consortium of committing fraud and unjust enrichment of over US\$ 1.729 Billion by siphoning gas from deposits they had no rights to exploit.

UK-based BP Plc and Canada’s Niko Resources, for allegedly syphoning gas from state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp’s (ONGC) block in the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin in the Bay of Bengal.

In 2016, the oil ministry slapped a colossal exchequer loss demand close to US\$ 3.5 Billion on the RIL-BP-Niko consortium for “unfairly” producing natural gas from assets belonging to ONGC.

Earlier, in 2011, ONGC informed the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons about potential gas migration between their and Reliance’s blocks. In 2014, ONGC took the matter to the high court, which instructed the ministry to investigate a report from an expert agency confirming the gas migration.

RIL, BP and Niko on their

part of usual denial, had claimed that it has drilled all wells within its boundary wells but their claim has not so far been substantiated.

RILS RS 11000 CR STEAL

The issue was examined by the Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas who promptly advised thorough investigation into the matter as it involved a whopping Rs 11000 Crore loss to ONGC. US-based consulting agency D&M who was engaged to assess and reveal the facts, said in its report that gas worth over Rs. 11,000 crore had migrated from idling KG fields of ONGC to the adjoining KG-D6 Block of RIL.

In 2015, After the findings of D&M report, Government formed a high-powered committee under Hon’ble Justice A.P. Shah to assess the report and suggest further actions.

In 2016 the committee’s report concluded that there has been “unjust enrichment” and said that Reliance had unfairly benefited from the ONGC block. The government had claimed that the consortium had produced about 338.332 million British thermal units of gas that had seeped or migrated from adjoining ONGC’s blocks into their KG-D6 block over seven years. The government’s compensation claim for “the unjust benefit received and unfairly retained” flowed from the findings of the Justice (retd) AP Shah Committee.

Nathwani Misguided RIL Here started the problem for RIL. It is alleged that on advise from its Corporate Director and friend of Mukesh Ambani, Reliance chose not to participate in the committee’s proceedings. This naturally irked the government and the one man committee inquiry also felt that RIL’s absence is their

possible agreement of accepting wrong doing with ONGC gas bloc. The committee found RIL and its consortium partners guilty and suggested punishing penalties.

Based on this report, the ministry demanded US\$ 1.72 Billion from Reliance for diverting gas from the block, US\$ 1.55 Billion for alleged fraud and over US\$ 174 Million for “unjust enrichment. After deducting \$71.71 million royalty paid on the gas produced and charging interest at the rate of LIBOR (London Inter-bank Offered Rate) plus 2 per cent - amounting to \$149.86 million - a total demand of \$1.55 billion was made on the consortium for alleged fraud of siphoning gas from ONGC bloc that it had no right to extract and exploit.

RIL, in turn, disputed the government’s demand as being based on a “misreading and misinterpretation of key elements of the PSC [Production Sharing Contract]”, and claimed that such a demand was without precedent in the oil and gas industry.

It is alleged that Parimal Nathwani, the Director Corporate Affairs intervened and advised RIL against taking a legal course through Courts and strongly advised them to seek relief using the Arbitration route. He, it is alleged, thought could manipulate and get a verdict in RIL consortium favour.

Consequently, as a response to the government claim of penalties, Reliance invoked the arbitral clause of the PSA contract. A week later, the consortium issued an arbitration notice.

In a hurry without wasting any time, a three-member arbitration panel was constituted. An international arbitration tribunal, headed by Singapore-based arbitrator Lawrence Boo, the head of the

Singapore-based Arbitration Chambers, was appointed as president of the tribunal and RIL-appointed arbitrator former English High Court Justice Bernard Eder.

The international arbitral tribunal concluded that Reliance was allowed to sell gas from deposits next to its contract area and ruled in favour of Reliance by a 2:1 decision.

Not just this! To the shock and surprise, The Arbitral Tribunal also awarded costs of \$8.3 million (Rs 56.44 crore) to be paid by the Government of India to the RIL-led Consortium. This in itself exposes that the arbitration was orchestrated, say the analysts.

APPEAL AGAINST TRIBUNAL REJECTED

Subsequent to the arbitration decision in favour of RIL, the Delhi High Court dismissed the Union Government’s appeal against the arbitration tribunal’s decision that favoured RIL. Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani, a single-judge bench, found no issues with the tribunal’s decision and rejected the government appeal.

RIL and Parimal Nathwani were jubilant that their manipulation worked. However, this joy was not to continue for long.

RIL’s troubles did not end there. The government has reportedly started also pressing the RIL consortium to cough up \$174.9 million of additional profit petroleum after certain costs were disallowed after the output from the KG-D6 block was lower than the target. This was in addition to the penalties the ministry awarded the RIL consortium. Profit petroleum refers to profits from gas production after recovering costs that is available for sharing between the contractors and the government. Significantly, disallowing cost recovery will result in the government’s profit share rising.

GOVT’S APPEAL AGAINST TRIBUNAL

It is alleged that the calculation and manipulation of Parimal Nathwani again started going wrong. The Union Government approached Delhi High Court once again. The Delhi High Court admitted the appeal. A division bench of the Delhi High Court has now sought a response from Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) and its partners on the government’s appeal.

DEMAND FOR CBI INVESTIGATION

The dispute over gas migration from ONGC’s Block to the

adjacent block of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and its partners has been through several judicial and arbitration processes but has not been investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) so far to find out the truth.

The case has now been filed by the Government in the Delhi High Court accusing Mukesh Ambani’s-owned conglomerate and its partners of committing an “insidious fraud” and “unjust enrichment” by siphoning gas from deposits that RIL had no legal right to exploit through unethical manner.

It is alleged that role of Parimal Nathwani, MP and lobbyist of Mukesh Ambani’s RIL had manipulated and with aggressive lobbying, the case was referred to Singapore-based arbitrator when there was no need to entrust already decided case to a foreign arbitrator.

The burning question is when hundreds of thousands of crores have been unethically and illegally gained by the RIL-led consortium at the cost of ONGC’s exchequer, why the Government is still going through the time consuming legal channels?

Analysts and Senior Supreme Court Advocates say that this is very big whooping Rs 11000 Crore siphoning issue and the case should have been entrusted to the CBI for intense investigations for this scam committed by the RIL. They opinion that the CBI should start the investigation, file FIR against the RIL Chairman Mukesh Ambani, its Director Exploration and the consortium partners BP and Niko, grill them all on this huge literal steal of government gas assets and make them all pay more than the imposed penalty. It is enough the big and powerful used their influence and money power to fleece the government exchequer. The CBI also should find out the truth and extent of the alleged role of Parimal Nathwani in this Gas Steal Scam escape route? All these are only rupturing the name and reputation of RIL. Are the RIL bosses watching the damage Nathwani are inflicting on RIL? Is the Government under tremendous pressure from vested interests not to hand over this case to CBI? Why and from where the pressure is coming? With 2024 election round the corner, and should there be a change of government, this issue is sure to take unpleasant turns. CBI should investigate this RIL consortium inflicted losses to ONGC and unearth facts and book the culprits. People are waiting for the CBI inquiry into the whole affair.

BU-PO-MA COAL LOOT IN MCL CONTINUES!



JITENDRA KUMAR DAS
Coal Bureaucracy-Polity-Mafia (BuPoMa) nexus continues unabated. This deadly evils nexus is affecting output quality triggering financial losses to the government and the PSUs. When they become a free game of the mafia, then it becomes all the more necessary to put an end to these and book the culprits and punish without sympathy and emotions. Odisha's Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd (CIL) has become the centre of such mafia nexus game where billions are looted day after day, without control and without fear, openly. People are flabbergasted to see the open loot by the nexus combine. Talcher City is the Coal, also termed Black Diamond, capital of Odisha. This Black Diamond City of India is home to two Maharatna PSUs, NTPC and Coal India Ltd.

Talcher coalfield is one of the largest storehouses of premium priced "power grade" coal in India and plays a major role in the socio-economic development of the Odisha State and the Nation. Talcher has India's one of the largest open cast coal mines. There are several Open Cast Coal Mines like Hingula (Balaram), Jagannath, Bharatpur, Ananta, Bharatpur, Lingaraj, Bhubaneswari, Kaniha, Lingaraj, etc. From these coal mines, huge quantity

of coal is being mined and sent to PSU sectors like NTPC, TTPS, NALCO, and also private sectors like Jindal Steel and Power, Monnet Power Company, Bhusan Steel Limited, Rungta, BRG, Nav Bharat, Bindal Sponge Iron, Lanco, Aditya Birla, Paradip Port, Gopalpur Port and other small and medium companies by rail and road transport. Coal Mafias are known for their roaring illegal coal business in this Coal Capital city, Talcher. Thanks to the BuPoMa (Bureaucracy-Polity-Mafia) nexus.

In Talcher, all coal mines are under Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), a subsidiary of CIL. MCL is the controlling authority of coal mining business. MCL had given tendered contract to few Coal Transport Companies to lift the mined coal from mines to its Coal Handling Plant (CHP). The MCL contracted companies include Sainik Transport Pvt. Limited (STPL), Jai Hanuman Transport Company, Alok Transport Company, Chetak Transport Company Ltd. etc.

Large numbers of people from outside the State come to Talcher and stay in the city for their coal business. It is alleged that the transport companies are creating issues by forcefully doing illegal work in MCL coal mining area in the garb of transportation of coal. It is also alleged that they are harassing local people,

migrant workers and visiting businesses, compelling them to leave the mining areas in an attempt to carry on with their illegal mining business freely without hindrance. This to ensure their illicit mining work does not have witnesses.

The natural resource, the premium quality power grade coal, is the key target of mafias as they mint billions out of it. The MCL is in the alleged grip of transport mafias controlled by Captain Siddhu and G C Mirg, to name a few. It is alleged that they not only interfere in the transportation of the mined coal, but also in the very coal mining. They, in nexus with local officials of MCL, State ministry officials and local politicians, manage to categorise superior quality 'power grade' coal as waste, buy at dead cheap rates and sell in the open market at exorbitant prices.

As is the process practice, mined coal is washed to free them off the impurities. In this process some quantity of impure or dust-stuck coal is rejected. But the unscrupulous officials, who act in nexus with the mafias, allow large quantities of superlative quality power grade coal be termed as coal wastes. This is bought by the mafias at lowest rates of Rs 600-700 per Metric Ton who then sell this coal to consumers at rates beyond Rs 3500 per Metric Ton. Look at the

huge profits the BuPoMa, the officials-polity-mafia nexus, is making!

Normally, the MCL should arrange coal at a stipulated location away from active mining locations from where the transporters should load it for transportation. But at present, the transporters are allowed to load from right from coal mines. The mafias get sanction for one truck but they take nearly 10+ trucks inside the mining area. As noted earlier, the entire transportation is being controlled by Capt. Siddhu through his benami companies, it is alleged. His henchmen V K Saigal and Kartik Patra are the main persons who are managing the entire transportation in MCL areas. Under the patronage of Capt. Siddhu and G C Mirg, the transportation companies also exploit labourers and when they refuse to obey their orders, they use musclemen from outside the state and also hired local goons to tame the labor force and control their illegal activities. Interestingly, the coal mafias, police, MCL officers, district administration and local politicians are allegedly working hand-in-gloves to loot the natural resources freely and fearlessly. This evil and dreaded combine work with unity and perfected coordination, due to the understandable common interest, as illegal sale

of superior quality power grade coal provides huge money for all.

The transport mafias have spread their wings everywhere and even their influence is noticed in the Ministry of Coal & Mines. They are hiring musclemen from outside to run their illegal business smoothly. That is a bad trend.

Allegedly, the coal mafias have increased their influence not only in mines but they have also encroached upon the government land. They are making huge money at the cost of government exchequer, that is of the honest tax payers. They have become so powerful that several officials in MCL and Coal Ministry are under the grip of the dreaded and brutal coal mafia gangsters.

Based on complaints, when Union Coal & Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi came to know about the illegal activities of coal mafias, he initiated proper action. The mafia combine kept a low profile for couple of months. But again now it is all the same old loot game in Talcher coal mines by mafia. It is alleged that at the MCL Headquarters, their CMD, allegedly, gives tips on how to earn illegal money that is shared between the illicit activity combine, continuing huge losses to the exchequer.

The General Managers in almost all coalfields, it is alleged, are encouraging rampant corruption in nexus with transporter and coal mafias. It is needless to add that their dominance is harming the interest of the government and the people. The state can earn crores of rupees and in return it can provide several public-oriented programs and ensure safe and secure environment for the local people," said a retired official of MCL. With so much of rampant corruption in MCL and the mafia nexus eating away the government exchequer, the demand of the people is to institute CBI inquiry into the whole affair of the corporation, book the culprits in MCL, CIL, polity and the mafia gang, cease all their assets which all possibly would be in benami names and put all of them behind the bars and punish them severely so that no one dare these in the coming times.

MODI'S STATE POLLS MASTERSTROKE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a master politician with perfected political marketing techniques, springing surprises all the time. The world is in awe as such at the Modi Model of governance and international relations. This for sure resonates in his growing popularity in the country where he is appearing unstoppable posing a challenge to the opposition.

The crucial 2024 testing ground State elections are just a few weeks away. BJP-NDA combine and the opposition parties are vying for their shares of the vote banks. 5 States, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram are going for the State polls in the next few weeks. Largely considered a precursor to the general elections, all the parties are out to test their popularity and their prospects in the coming bigger 2024 election.

There is no denying that the BJP hopes Prime Minister Modi's charisma and the honest work he

done in his two terms will help it win forthcoming 5 State and the 2024 National polls.

PM Modi is unpredictable and impossible and always springs surprises taking the opposition unaware and beating them all in their own games. He indeed is a masterstroke politician with a charisma that reverberates in the Indian voters' minds all the time. Even the hard core anti-Modi gangs are attracted towards him.

When PM Modi is around and to win elections, he springs surprises with all-new strategies that none earlier would have tried. The inside details of BJP's strategy for the upcoming State elections are very interesting filled with bold and surprise moves.

Going by what is being observed BJP is adopting customized poll strategies for every State based local conditions of the strength of the party, but the ticket distribution largely is based on the masterstroke strategy of Modi this time

around of making few select sitting MPs to contest local elections and of course several new faces to boost the poll prospects. The plans clearly signal curbing nepotism and avoid "dynasty politics" jibes. It looks like that to demonstrate this, the party will now give only one ticket per family. A good move for the long run too.

BJP relies on "collective leadership" and the "Modi factor" to sweep the five state polls due in the few weeks. The plans will also take into account the lessons learnt for the loss of Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh in recent polls.

Observing from the recent moves, BJP will try not to project a chief ministerial candidate in majority States going to the polls, an attempt to keep regional leaders' ambitions alive, rivalries in check, and reinforce the BJP's "party above individual" philosophy. In simple terms, by nominating few select MPs to the State constituencies, the BJP

is hoping big-name candidates will secure seats in which it is weaker and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal will see the party win another round of elections. All doors open strategy for chief minister's post should act as an incentive to encourage regional leaders to work harder and together.

Modi's plans are also to curb nepotism and avoid "dynasty politics" jibes, particularly since the allegation is one the PM lays at the door of the Congress.

A glimpse of these Modi strategies were visible in the party ticket distribution in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Implementation of these plans were first visible in Madhya Pradesh, where 4 MPs, 3 Union Ministers, and a National General Secretary have been asked to contest the local polls. Good idea. An MP constituency comprises of 4-8 MLA constituencies. An MP winning the seat reflects his popularity in the the 4-8 constituencies. While assuring a re-

peat win for MP in the MLA seat, the other contesting MLA prospects would have the expertise and support of the MP all the time during the poll times. The BJP has repeated the same to dislodge the Congress from Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, and also in Telangana, where Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) is challenging Modi.

The BJP has taken a contrary route in Chhattisgarh, where it has named Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's nephew, Vijay, as its candidate for the top post. In a predictable twist, the party will want family divides to play out in its favour, for it has planned an interesting 'Baghel Vs Baghel' contest!

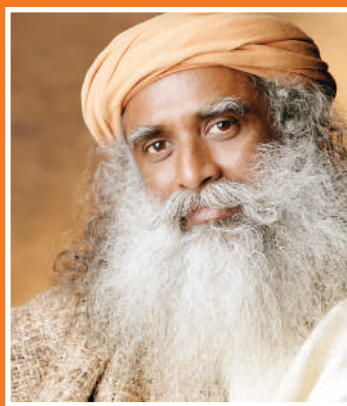
The BJP's moves in Telangana appears as a part of its current 'Mission South' plan, to woo voters in a bid to form a government in South India. However, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have always been hard nuts to crack.

Sadhguru Blessing Nirmala!

AIADMK boss Edappadi K Palaniswami announced recently severing its decades long electoral alliance with BJP-NDA grouping, quoting displeasure on Tamil Nadu BJP Chief K. Annamalai's controversial comments about the leaders of the AIADMK, dead and living.

The breakup is seen as a serious setback for Bharatiya Janata Party, BJP, in Tamil Nadu, with the crucial 2024 general elections nearing. The long rope the leadership had given to Annamalai might have been a strategy to grow out of the AIADMK's shadow. However, the BJP central leadership thought of initiating efforts to "patch up" with its ally with 2024 in mind, according to sources.

Added to this is Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin's son Udayanidhi Stalin overly Hindu-hate speech demeaning Sanatan Dharam followers where he said the Hindus are like dengue and malaria and are to be eradicated. AIADMK has not been able to take firm stand on this either to support or condemn. BJP's presence in the Southern States, barring Karnataka, has been lacking. Barring Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal popularity in the region, BJP has not yet been able to erode into the vote banks of the



regional parties. Loosing AIADMK as its electoral ally in Tamil Nadu will seriously affect even its little prospects in the coming crucial 2024 elections.

BJP, naturally will not sit quite. It has to find new ways to win the voters. Needs new alliance partners with enough power to increase BJP-NDA Legislative Members count from Tamil Nadu. Its firebrand leaders Amit Shah, Yogi Adityanath, Rajnath Singh, Surya should all be working and brain storming to overcome this situation in this southern state, looking for newer avenues and solutions.

This is where Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's role starts and where the spiritual Leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev also steps in on a BJP damage management initiative, as the outcome in southern

states is crucial to the BJP's Lok Sabha poll ambitions.

Recently Finance Minister Sitharaman was in Coimbatore for a credit outreach programme sponsored by NITI Aayog for which the district's three AIADMK MLAs were invited. Legislators V Jayaraman, Amul Kandasami and A K Selvaraj called on her before the event and also shared the dias with her. She is also said to have secret meeting with few prominent leaders of AIADMK and other alliance parties, in the sidelines of the function she attended.

This is seen as Nirmala's strategy to patch up and or find new avenues for an effective alliance in Tamil Nadu. Edappadi, though has consolidated his position in AIADMK, the party is ridden with factionalism with different powerful leaders vying for prominence

and control of the party. S P Velumani is one of the prominent AIADMK leaders who is said to command support of over 33+ MLAs and is a possible challenger to Edappadi in coming times. It is only natural that BJP leadership is eyeing to rope him in, for others to follow later and Edappadi eventually falling in line. There are also few other prominent AIADMK leaders who command sizeable support whom BJP is said to be in touch with. Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev is a very powerful spiritual Leader from Coimbatore and is said to have great influence on political parties in the State. He is also a strongman of Coimbatore. He is said to have very cordial and strong relationship with BJP leaderships at the centre. BJP is sure on his favour list. Sources say that Sadhguru is putting his weight around

the AIADMK to calm them down and patch up with BJP-NDA alliance.

Vanathi Srinivasan, National President of BJP's Womens wing and Tamil Nadu Assembly Member also has a strong base in her area and is all out to consolidate the BJP prospects. It is said she also has been assigned the job in the AIADMK patch up work and familiarizing BJP more among the women voters. It is said that BJP is also eyeing a tie-up with Kamal Hassan's Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) that contested the 2019 General Elections and surprised many political pundits with an impressive vote share. So Hassan's MNM is another political force that BJP does not want to ignore. It is said Sadhguru Jaggi is trying to rope him this time in the BJP-NDA alliance in this Southern State. BJP needs a strong alliance partners in the Southern States. Modi and Amit Shah are great master strategists and planners who execute them with precision. Assigning patch up job with AIADMK and roping in other possible parties is the current focus and BJP would not leave anything to chances. It will be interesting to wait and watch the political arena in Tamil Nadu in the near future.

Huge Loss To Government FLOURISHING MINES MAFIA!



This is just the tip of the iceberg. Similar cases of looting of government funds in illicit mining running into several hundred thousands of crores are prevalent across the country, it is alleged. Rampant corruption and amassing of illicit wealth from illegal mining by the mining mafia in nexus with the polity and top officials appear to be the norm of the day. Surprisingly all these illicit mining totally controlled by the mine mafia has been going on for decades, uncontrolled and fearlessly. From gold and coal to even sand is controlled by the mafia, of course in nexus with the polity and the officials.

Just imagine how many lakhs of crores is being lost by the government day after day owing to illegal mining and the illicit business ways of the mafia combine!

Actions are initiated by the government only when someone is caught, but never on public complaints. In fact these activities need no complaints. These are so obvious. Just because of the inaction by the government agencies, the mafia is ruling the mining business in India.

It is time that the government frames stricter laws to empower the investigating agencies to conduct regular checks on the activities of government-oriented businesses and book the culprits. Just suspending an officer or transferring is not action of punishment. Their services should instantly be terminated without sympathy, all their assets including those in benami names be immediately ceased and attached to the government assets and mete out rigorous punishments to all the wrong doers, irrespective of the position they hold in government or politics.

When will these happen? Will there ever be an end to the Mafia Raj nexus combine?

Mining is one of the most lucrative businesses globally, controlled by the Mines mafia, in connivance with top figures in government and politics. Mines and mining is a multi trillion dollar sector. It is in the illicit mining and quality manipulation where trillions of dollars of money lay.

Mining is the extraction of valuable geological materials from the Earth and other astronomical objects. Mining is required to obtain most materials that cannot be grown through agricultural processes, or feasibly created artificially in a laboratory or factory.

India's major mineral resources include Coal (4th largest reserves in the world), Iron ore, Manganese ore (7th largest reserve in the world), Mica, Bauxite (5th largest reserve in the world), Chromite, Natural gas, Diamonds, Limestone and Thorium (world's largest along coast of Kerala shores).

Indian States abundant with mines are Jharkand, Odisha, Rajasthan, Andra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Assam and Nagaland. Recent to get added is Reasi District of Jammu & Kashmir where huge reserves of Lithium is found.

The ores extracted or mined, used in several applications and proj-

ects and also sold for huge profits.

In India, where there is huge money and or limited sources, there has to be a mafia working in tandem with the Bureaucracy and Polity. The nexus of these three are so coherent that it takes longer time for the culprits to be caught.

There are several cases where top officials were caught and the mafia nexus exposed. Not too long ago Pooja Singh, a 2000 batch IAS officer from Dehuradun and Secretary Mines & Industries department in Hemant Soren's Jharkhand government was caught and arrested under Money Laundering Act, by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). There appear to be some special breed of officers who are born to fan corruption. Pooja is one. She has always been in limelight for wrong doings in every posting she held. embezzlement of laborer funds under MGNREGA, allocating huge NREGA funds to unscrupulous NGOs in the name of plantations to allocating forest land as Kathautia mines for mining coal, violating all norms.

Her 2nd husband, a businessman, Abhishek Jha also is presently under ED radar as he is accused of having set up his roaring business with the support of his wife Singal and here ill-gotten money.

Canva Partnering WITH IITS-IIMS

Australian Graphics and Design company Canva to Invest heavily in India's Rapidly Growing Market, partnering with IITs and IIMs, to mentor students. It has committed a India is fast growing also as a pivotal market for global social media giants, given its substantial user base for platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Facebook. Social media companies are strategically eyeing India as they seek to monetize their various products through their customer base. Canva is actively engaged in partnerships and initiatives in India, such as the Canva for Startups program, which offers free trials to startup communities in collaboration

designs and ideas into various content formats with a single click, Brand Voice, a copywriting assistant, and Magic Design, capable of transforming prompts or media into compelling, fully designed videos and presentations.

It is designed to be comprehensive and interoperable, catering to individuals, teams, and organizations. Its about complex tasks made simple. Magic Studio will also provide access to the Canva Apps Marketplace, offering AI-enabled design and productivity tools, including Dall-E, Imagen by Google, MurfAI, and Soundraw. Education emerged as a prominent 'use case' for Canva in India, with a substantial number of



with incubators and accelerators like Headstart, Razorpay, and Instamojo. This program has already benefited over 1,000 Indian startups and SMBs.

Additionally, Canva has partnered with esteemed institutions in India, including the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), to provide support and mentorship to students through competitions and entrepreneurship cells. Canva has also collaborated with education-focused organizations like the Centre for Teacher Accreditation, Vedantu, and state and central Education Departments, along with leading school networks, to offer teacher training and mentorship support, promoting visual learning in classrooms.

Canva launched its 'Magic Studio', an AI design platform, offering a suite of AI tools built on proprietary models in partnership with industry leaders. This introduces new features like Magic Media, Magic Expand, Magic Grab, Magic Morph, and Magic Edit, available in 11 Indian languages. Notable features within Magic Studio includes Magic Switch, which converts

students being its users. Presentations and social media design are the most popular product categories in the Indian market.

Founded in 2013, the Australian company Canva is valued at US\$ 25.6 billion in 2023, with an estimated turnover \$1.7 billion in annualized revenue, serving 16 million paying subscribers and boasting more than 150 million monthly active users. During the launch of Canva's 'Magic Studio,' Co-founder and COO Clifford Obrecht expressed the company's commitment to investing heavily in India, citing India's ever growing potentials. The launch of Magic Studio marks a significant steps in empowering over 150 million individuals and thousands of businesses to unlock their creativity and achieve their goals.

Canva co-Founder Melanie Perkins emphasized the company's focus on simplifying complex tasks, aiming to empower the vast majority of individuals without advanced design training. During the launch of Canva's 'Magic Studio,' Co-founder and COO Clifford Obrecht expressed the company's commitment to investing heavily in India.

BALL IN ISRAEL'S COURT!

It's the dreaded war time all over. War cries piercing the peace in the world. Human lives being lost in millions. It is immaterial if life lost is that of civilian, soldier or a terrorist. All are human. Israel at war with Hamas, Dragging Ukraine-Russia conflict, Terrorist outfits active to achieve their objectives-good or bad, war preparedness of several countries in expectation of possible escalations, USA's cold war with China & Russia, China's expansionist posture are to name a few. Frightening chill flows all over. It is destruction everywhere. Where the world is heading? Where is the space for Peace that all talk about? United Nation has become ineffective over the years and more so appears to have become puppet in the hands of super powers? Israel at war against Hamas is not small or going to end soon. Israeli casualties would certainly be avenged. Iran sending warning signals to Israel to cease military operations has all the dreaded designs for expanded and extended escalation. The coming days stand as a potential turning point for the future of Israel, Palestine, and the wider region. Will there be any peace anytime around the world?

Israel At War with Hamas

On October 7, Hamas launched a multipronged coordinated land, air, sea and rocket assault, firing over 5000 rockets in the first few minutes, on Southern Israel. Hamas claimed killing more than 1,200 Israelis and took at least 150 hostages, who are not just Israelis. Israel response with hundreds of air strikes on cities in the blockaded Gaza Strip, claimed to have killed more than 1,500 Palestinians and destroying hundreds of buildings. Thousands left gravely injured on both the sides. Millions are running away to safe shelters. Even the Israel's most touted anti air-defense system "Iron Dome" filed under the barrage of such a huge rocket attack.

In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared "Israel was at war" and mobilized roughly 360,000 army reserves, men and women.

Prime Minister Netanyahu was quick, in reaching out to the opposition Member of Parliament Benny Gantz and formed a 'National Unity Government', to preside over the ongoing war and

Israel's imminent ground invasion of Gaza, supported by its Israel's dreaded air power and intelligent war tactics.

The United States deployed two Aircraft Carrier Strike Groups near Lebanon to deter regional actors from further escalation. Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shi'ite militant organization, launched rockets into northern Israel but has not yet launched its own offensive on Israel.

Hamas Mistake

Hamas offensive on Israel was probably more successful than it thought it would be. In 1973, the Egyptian military breached Israeli defenses on the Suez Canal and was briefly in Sinai before Israeli troops drove them back. Though Israel was in strikable distance from Cairo, Egypt's ability to breach Israeli defences, even briefly, in itself was victory for Egypt that it celebrates till date.

Hamas tried to penetrate Israel in a similar way to gain importance and relevance. But by killing hundreds of Israelis and taking 150 hostages in the first day, Hamas has put itself in a very complex position. By committing this mistake, Hamas has done everything to get Israel the world's sympathy and possibly support even from majority of Islamic, particularly Arabic Nations.

Israel is united in its determination to completely wipe Hamas from power. It is hard to imagine that Hamas will be able to retain power in Gaza when the war dust settles. There may be hope for the Palestinian national cause, but there's very little hope for Hamas. PLO, Palestine Liberation Organisation, Hamas and other groups all claim good for Palestine people.

While Hamas has an objective to destroy and take over Israel, PLO works closely with Israel, since its founder Yaser Arafat made peace with Israel for a peaceful life of Palestinians, but still working for a defined homeland for themselves. Hamas, naturally has lost even little favour of world opinion.

What Next In Gaza?

Since the militant Hamas took power in 2007, the Israeli military periodically would intrude into Gaza, fight with Hamas, and destroy some of its infrastructure. Hamas would soon rebuild with funding from its support-

ing alleys like Iran, Syria and Lebanon. Cycle would repeat.

Israelis called this "mowing the grass," an unpleasant but necessary repetitive task for them. With the unapologetic Hamas offensive claiming thousands Israeli lives, this cycle will no longer be the same and acceptable to neither the Israeli people nor the political leaderships.

The question now is what kind of government will emerge in Gaza after the war. It might entail greater control for the Palestinian National Authority based in Ramallah, some sort of new local governance with Israel's support, or may include a coalition with Arab states. Abundant with possibilities, is hard to imagine that Hamas will remain in power and control Palestine for long.

The Hezbollah Factor

The risks for escalation are real. Even Hezbollah was taken by surprise. In fact, many even within Hamas didn't know this was coming. Hezbollah naturally feels it has a lot to lose. Hezbollah is better armed than Hamas. It has up to 150,000 rockets and missiles inventory, many of which must have come through Syria.

The Lebanese economy is in deep crisis. Lebanon has changed. It is now a country with 85% population below poverty line. So, it cannot think of attacking Israel in support of Hamas. They are aware Israel has all the capability to quickly close a war, destroying major parts of Lebanon. So Hezbollah would not want a war with Israel, though just wish to extend moral support to Hamas. Neither would Israel want to open a second war front at this point.

The Critical Hostage Situation

Hamas has made the first mistake. Hamas took hundreds of civilians and Israel military as hostages from several places of Israel, threatened to use them as human shields, and also threatened to execute them as part of its war objectives. Hostages are not just Israelis, but also have citizens from other countries. The hostage situation is unprecedented.

Israel is overly determined to wipe Hamas. Israel is unlikely to forgo its offensive plans to have a comprehensive ground operation with its powerful and tactical air defense system in Gaza to wipe

Hamas completely from power, just because of the hostages.

Israel is naturally worried about the hostages. Israel greatly values human lives, especially its own people and those of its allies. Strategically, Israel is sure to act irrespective of the hostages, while tactically trying to free hostages in any way that it can.

Regional Alignments

Israel is no more the same as it was in 1973. Israel has come a long way. It has forged alliances, huge investments and bilateral ties with several of the Islamic Nations, especially the Middle East, the Arabic Nations. The draconian Hamas offensive against Israel makes it harder for Arab states to deal with at this stage.

Driven by ideological factors, Israel and the Arab states are strategically together on Gaza and West Bank. Virtually all Arab governments are hostile to Hamas, which essentially is the Palestinian version of the outlawed 'Muslim Brotherhood'. Many of these States have jailed its members.

They also fear the dreaded tentacles of Iran, which has openly funded Hamas, armed them and trained its fighters and now warned Israel. Arab governments may have a role in helping shape a political solution in Gaza that helps advance Palestinian national aspirations while also dealing a blow to Islamist movements and Iranian proxies and keeping Israel in their good books.

Global Support

In the ongoing war Israel gets the sympathy as against Hamas. The West bloc have pledged absolute support in all forms to Israel. They will in all probability, when need comes will not hesitate funding and ensure full arsenal stockpile.

Friends like India have already extended moral support to Israel, condemning loss of human lives and urging both the sides to cease offensives and work towards negotiated dialogues for lasting peace. India has always been advocating dialogues, denouncing armed aggressions'. There is no denying that Hamas under no circumstances would be able garner global support for its aggression. US stress is more pronounced. They have to continue the arms, equipment supplies and other aid forms to Ukraine to defend them from Russian invasion and Taiwan to keep China at bay from annexing it. US and its al-

lies also have several other global commitments. Israel now added, it would be bigger strain for the USA and its allies.

India's Role & Peace

India is a friend of all. India is a long time friend of both Palestinians and Israel. India sure is in a very advantageous position compared to any other world Nations to facilitate peace process initiating dialogues between the warring parties. Should there be a need and inclination from both sides, India could intervene to save lives and work for a lasting peace, for the good of all. Describing India's position On the Palestine issue India always has maintained that it would like to see negotiations leading to a Palestine state "living within secure and recognised borders, side-by-side and at peace with Israel.

World can prosper and continue to grow only when there is peace around. Peace is the only catalyst for Development. If world would be at peace all over, the military spending can be channeled for human prosperity enrichment and to face natural calamities with ease and even look at permanent solutions to counter nature's fury of floods, famine, pandemics and more.

Ball With Israel

All said it is for Israel to decide. Israel, though tiny in size, are the most powerful, economically and militarily with perfected defense and intelligence systems. Mossad is world's most dangerous Intelligence Agency dreaded by all. Every Israeli is rich. At the same time there is no match to Israelis in patriotism where every citizen would do and die for their country. Literally the whole of Israel population add to military count where even women are compulsorily trained in military techniques. Jews of Israel control over 80% of finances of the world and majority banks originating from West are controlled and managed by them.

They have a huge financial clout in the Arab States. They are advanced in technology and adept in doing the impossible with ease with limited space and resources. Israelis are the most determined and every citizen is an added arsenal in Israeli offensives anytime anywhere. The course of war with Hamas is totally in the hands of Israel. The war games and its end are with Israel. The ball is in Israel's court!

₹1,788 Crore Fine Game



The Supreme Court of India has asked the Competition Commission of India (CCI) for a response regarding an appeal filed by India's leading tyre maker MRF Ltd, one of the companies fined in a case related to alleged cartelisation and price manipulation in the tyre industry using the data discretely shared by its association ATMA.

The 5 Indian top Tyre Manufacturers in the fine net include MRF Ltd, CEAT Ltd, JK Tyre, Apollo Tyres and Birla Tyres. Their association Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) also was fined separately.

NCLAT, CCI & COURT ORDERS

The case, which began over a decade ago, saw the CCI impose penalties on several tyre companies in 2018. However, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) overturned the order last year and directed the CCI to pass a fresh order, citing errors in calculation and the need to save the domestic tyre industry and also in the larger interest of their due contribution to national economy.

MEGA FINE STORY

This is the story of a mega fine that began more than a decade ago and has now got entangled in challenges and counter-claims. The case relates to the NCLAT's December 2022 order asking the CCI, India's anti-monopoly watchdog, to reconsider and recalculate the fine it imposed on tyre companies over alleged cartelisation and price manipulation.

The top court, while

hearing the CCI's appeal against the NCLAT order, had refused to stay the appellate tribunal's order.

THE INTERESTING BEGINNING

The case at the CCI started more than a decade ago after the Ministry of Corporate Affairs referred it, based on allegations of cartelisation against five tyre companies made by the All India Tyre Dealers Federation (AITDF). The AITDF alleged that the five domestic tyre companies were indulging in anti-competitive activities and price parallelism, and that they controlled 90% of the tyre production in the country. It was also alleged that these companies increased tyre prices under the guise of a rise in the prices of raw materials, including natural rubber, but they never decrease the prices of tyres when raw material prices fell.

THE FINES & PENALTIES

In 2018, the CCI passed an order imposing penalties amounting to Rs 1,788 Crore on the 5 tyre manufacturers. The imposed penalties totalling more than Rs 1,788 crore on the tyre companies, includes Rs 425.53 Crore on Apollo Tyres, Rs 622.09 Crore on MRF Ltd, Rs 252.16 Crore

on CEAT Ltd, Rs 309.95 Crore on JK Tyre, and Rs 178.33 Crore on Birla Tyres. A penalty of Rs 8.4 lakh was also imposed on their association, the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA).

This CCI order of 2018 was kept in a sealed cover as per the direction of the Madras High Court pending decision in a petition filed by MRF Ltd and later delivered to them only in early 2022. Pandemic related issues also played a spoil sport. Later, High Court dismissed the plea filed by the tyre maker, and subsequently, the matter reached the Supreme Court, which was also later dismissed by the apex court in 2022.

CCI'S STAND

The competition regulator's order stated that the ATMA indulged in cartelisation by acting together to increase the prices of cross-ply/bias tyres variants sold by each of the accused Indian tyre maker in the replacement market and to limit and control production and supply in the said market.

CCI also noted that the tyre manufacturers had exchanged price-sensitive data amongst them through the platform of their association, ATMA that collected and compiled information relat-

ing to company-wise and segment-wise data, both monthly and cumulative, on production, domestic sales and export of tyres on a real-time basis. This made the tyre makers decision easier who then took collective decision on the prices of tyres", said CCI in its 2022 release.

NCLAT VIEW POINT

In 2022, the NCLAT overturned the order and directed the Commission to pass a fresh order, citing the need to re-examine arithmetical and inadvertent errors as well as to review the penalty to save the domestic tyre industry which was under various pressures. NCLAT advised CCI to reconsider the penalty to save domestic industry, in view of the fact that the tyre makers are under tremendous pressure from global tyre manufacturing companies where a lot of unutilised capacity is available. According to the tribunal, promotion of domestic tyre industry is also to be kept in mind by the CCI, as the object of the Competition Act requires keeping in view the economic development of the country also. NCLAT further observed that if violations were done by domestic industries, they should be penalized, but also be given a chance of reformatory instead of virtually putting the organizations on weak health. After the observation, the CCI approached the Supreme Court, challenging the tribunal's order.

CALCULATION ERRORS - OR?

The NCLAT in its 2022 observation noted that there were "inadvertent

errors" in the CCI order. "Since the cartel has been found for the year 2011-12 and the same is surrounded by arithmetical errors, it may be leading to wrong conclusions apart from other flaws".

NCLAT also observed that there were errors by the Director General, the investigation arm of CCI, in the calculation of percentage increase in price and the corrected data apparently reveal non-existence of price parallelism. "The calculation of Correlation Coefficient used a wrong period of the financial years 2009-13 instead of financial (year) 2011-12. If correct calculations are made for correlation coefficient, it looks to be much lower. This also provides a ground that there is no violation on account of price parallelism," the NCLAT noted. Tyre companies, which have been fined by the CCI, have maintained that there has been no wrong-doing of any kind on their part. CEAT went to on add that it has never indulged in or was part of any cartel or undertook any anti-competitive practices. On its part ATMA holds the view that as an association of the tyre makers, its duty is to help all and the data collection and sharing in the public domain is one of the prime objectives of the association. While every stake holders in this case from NCLAT and CCI to the tyre manufacturers and the ATMA looks good from their view points, some experts question if there is a nexus between the tyre makers and the legal authorities, signaling corruption in high places?

Indian national in US\$ 2.8 million USA HEALTH CARE FRAUD

An Indian national, Yogesh Pancholi, has been found guilty and convicted by a Federal Jury in Michigan, USA for orchestrating a healthcare fraud and engaging in money laundering worth US\$ 2.8 million. Pancholi used the names and personal information of others to conceal his ownership of his Health Care company called Shring Home Care Inc.

According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, Yogesh

Pancholi, 43, owned and operated Shring Home Care Inc, a home health company based in the US state of Michigan.

Despite being excluded from billing Medicare, Pancholi purchased Shring using the names, signatures, and personal identifying information of others to conceal his ownership of the company.

In a two-month period, Pancholi and his co-conspirators billed and were paid over USD 2.8 million by Medicare for services

that were never provided.

Pancholi then transferred these funds through bank accounts of shell companies and eventually into his accounts in India.

He acted too smart to escape conviction in USA, which got him further deep into the case. After being indicted, and on the eve of trial, Pancholi, using pseudonyms, false names, wrote false and malicious emails to various federal government agencies alleging a government witness had com-

mitted various crimes and should not be allowed to remain in the US in an attempt to keep the witness from testifying. The Federal Jury in the Eastern District of Michigan convicted Pancholi on multiple counts of conspiracy to commit health care and wire fraud, two counts of substantive health care fraud, two counts of money laundering, two counts of aggravated identity theft, and one count of witness tampering. Final sentencing would be ear-

ly next years, after which he will start serving his jail terms in the US. He faces a mandatory minimum penalty of two years in prison for aggravated identity theft, a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison on each of the conspiracy and witness tampering convictions, and a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison on each of the healthcare fraud and money laundering counts. In simple terms he would be behind the bars in the US for life.

SILENT KEJRIWAL



Transport department is running loss close to Rs 9 Crores a month. Thanks to his free ride for women. Many say that if he was so concerned and want to lessen the burden of a section of the society, he should have extended the free ride in busses to Senior Citizens and school children below 12 years. He did not do this, as they are not their vote banks. Since his tenure even the Senior Citizens pension scheme and widowed women compensation have all been stopped. Only those who had registered during the previous Congress regime continue to get these benefits.

He even refused to implement the Centre government sponsored health assurance scheme, The Ayushman Bharat under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) that it provides a cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization across public and private empanelled hospitals in India. His take was that it is Modi's scheme and Delhi government will come with its own health insurance scheme. Where is this scheme and who are benefitting, ask the people. If he was concerned he could have at least come with critical medical care schemes for the Senior citizens and housewives who do not have any regular income. But they are not his vote banks, so he never did this, say the people of the city.

Since he came to power no development work is being done. Whatever one sees in the city today are all the hard and passionate work of previous Congress Chief Minister late Shiela Dixit, who ruled for 15 long years.

Majority of the Autorikshaw walas who supported him in toto once have all gone against him over allotment of auto licenses and free run without control of eRikshaws.

Over all, Kejriwal appears to be waning in his popularity. No wonder he was too quick to join the new opposition grouping, as he possibly has realised he won't be able to win the elections again alone. His Prime Ministerial aspirations also has gone with the wind!

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal wings are continuing to be clipped, so it appears, but not without reasons.

CM Kejriwal has become silent all of a sudden, following the recent arrest by Enforcement Directorate, ED, of his yet another close aide Sanjay Singh, a senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Leader. He is third in line after former Delhi Dy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Kumar Jain, also a former Delhi Minister in Kejriwal's cabinet, who have been languishing in jail for the past several months without any reprieve, as the Courts have repeatedly dismissed their bail petitions. Their arrests are related to the Delhi Liquor scam and money laundering cases.

Arvind Kejriwal's political fortunes nose dives. He should be the one singled out Chief Minister who has won the Delhi elections twice, without doing a single development work, but just on the freebies trend he started to win the voters. He also is the only Chief Minister in the country who has taken any responsibility of any sector, being a Minister without portfolio!

But his own supporters are moving away from him for all the big mouthed talks he does and the wrong doings of his close aides. Kejriwal too is not left out of accusations and allegations.

He is stuck with allegations of having spent a whopping 52.71 Crores for just renovation of his new official Bungalow in Delhi's premier location, Civil Lines. CBI initiated preliminary inquiry into Bharatiya Janata Party's

(BJP) allegation of gross violation of building and other norms in Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal's Bungalow revamp. This is advantage BJP with crucial 2024 general election less than a year away.

He came to politics and then won Delhi elections, courtesy Anna Hazare the Indian Social Activist who took India by storm decades ago with his anti-corruption movement. Kejriwal, a former senior IT official, formed his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and won the elections on few counts: few eye-wash freebies to public, he will live only in a one bedroom house, will not have any security guards and will travel in his own entry level car. But he did everything contrary to what he kept saying. He also said he will be strict and will follow "Zero Tolerance" on corruption, but his rule has been only full of corruption.

A person who says except for him, all others are corrupt is a political personality cannot be more dangerous. An opportunist, people appear to have recognized his real persona. People who voted him to power for their good, have seen nothing in the last 10 years in power, say his own party men.

There appears to be total blockade of development in the city since he came to power. He is one Chief Minister in India who has not taken the responsibility of any portfolio. This people allege is to ensure all wrong-doings are done through his cabinet Ministers.

Officials in the Secretariat also allege that no work is being done.

DMART GROWING REVENUE



DMart, the superstore chain continues on its growth path. Total Q2 Revenue for the quarter ending September 30, 2023 stood at Rs.12,308 crore, as compared to Rs.10,385 crore in the same period last year, registering an impressive 18.5% revenue growth. Neville Noronha, CEO & Managing Director, Avenue Supermarts Limited, that owns DMart superstores chain, said, "Q2 FY 2024 saw revenue growth of 18.5% as compared to the corresponding quarter of last year. Our gross margins continue to be lower compared to the same period in the previous year due to lesser contribution from the higher margin General Merchandise and Apparel business". DMart opened 9 new stores during the quarter taking the total store count to 336 as on date.

DMart is touted to be the only superstore chain in India to register growing revenue and profits, despite offering the wide range consumer goods at the cheapest price to its customers.

DMart opened its first store in Mumbai, Maharashtra in 2002. As on date, the Company has 336 operat-

ing stores with Retail Business Area of 13.9 million sq. ft across Maharashtra, Gujarat, Daman, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, NCR, Chhattisgarh and Punjab.

With 2-months long festive season just about to start, from Navratra to New Year 2024, DMart cant away from the best deals offers to entice its customers more with its unmatched offers on products in its huge stockpile. It is festive season again! 2023 festive season has started, bringing joy to online and offline shoppers across the country. Festive season sales from leading online and offline sellers always offer exciting discounts on latest branded and white labeled consumer products across all categories. There are at least 20 upcoming online festive sales from top online sellers across brands and categories. Amazon's "Great Indian Festival Sale", Flipkart's 'Big Billion Sale', JioMart and Smart Bazaar's "Tyohaar Ready Sale" are some to list.

It is going to be Shopping Joy Mania for customers for the next two months!

CORPORATE BUSINESS

RICHES FROM KABADI

No one really knows how the Kabadiwalas, termed rag pickers, work and how they make money out of the waste materials. While a common man's nose twitches at the very mention of daily waste or kabadi, there is a separate segment that mints money out of these.

Government had taken several initiatives to regularize this fragmented unorganized segment and keep educating people how to dispose of the waste, from daily waste to abandoned computer accessories and even the outdated cars those are sold as scrap. For instance, the Railways have contracted the waste picking to private contractors, to keep the premises clean and also let the contractors make money out of the collected wastes from their premises. Several small plastic bottles shredder machines are installed in several places across the country in key points where the consumer can dispose off the used plastic bottle in the slot in the machine.

India faces challenges due to inadequate waste management infrastruc-



ture and a lack of formal systems, leading to the improper disposal of recyclable materials, environmental pollution, and health risks.

But the reality is there are billions to be minted out of the kabadi. In India, waste management is a US\$ 100 Billion industry largely informal, and cash driven.

There had been attempts by few startups earlier to work on this. Now a Hyderabad startup, Recykal, has come out with a brilliant idea to network the kabadiwalas, an industry in itself, little known and mostly ignored.

Hyderabad based B2B Tech Start up Recykal is revolutionizing India's

waste management industry by use of technology. In a bid to translating Rags to Riches, the startup is digitising kabadiwalas and more interestingly, several national and multinational FMCGs swear by the hidden potential this has.

Recykal is trying to disrupt waste management through a digital marketplace for the sale and purchase of trash. Recykal is helping FMCGs like Coca-Cola, Marico, Nykaa and others to become plastic-neutral. Recykal has cornered prominent investors like Pidilite, Morgan Stanley and Singapore-based Circulate Capital, among others to fund its initiatives.

A rag picker said Mum-

bai riches are in the garbage ("ek kabadiwala bola Mumbai mein sabse jyada paisa kachre mein hai"). Remember Ganesh Gaitonde, a mafia don played by Nawazuddin Siddiqui, in "Sacred Games" who values scrap? In the reel life, Gaitonde understood what scraps can get him. And in real life, the tech startup, Recykal, has made it its core focus money minting project.

Recykal seeks to address the informal and cash-driven nature of waste management in the country, recognizing the untapped potential in the waste management sector. The company aims to provide a means for waste collectors to earn a livelihood through proper waste disposal and offers recyclers and waste processors a steady supply of materials, using technology.

Recykal is creating a digital platform that connects key stakeholders in the waste management sector facilitating collaboration between waste generators, agents (rag pickers and kabadiwalas who hop from house to house buying kabadi), recyclers,

and waste processors in a bid to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The startup offers a range of services, including waste collection, recycling, and the sale of recycled materials. By digitizing these processes, Recykal aims to streamline operations, increase transparency, and overall improve the efficiency of waste management.

Moreover, Recykal's platform features real-time tracking of waste collection vehicles, data analytics to optimize waste management processes, and digital payments for cashless transactions. Recykal not only reduces environmental pollution but also stimulates economic growth by formalizing and digitizing waste management.

Through its tech-driven approach, Recykal is revolutionizing India's waste management industry, making it more formal, transparent, and efficient. These efforts address environmental concerns while fostering economic development.

An appreciable human+tech effort, to make billions in the bargain!

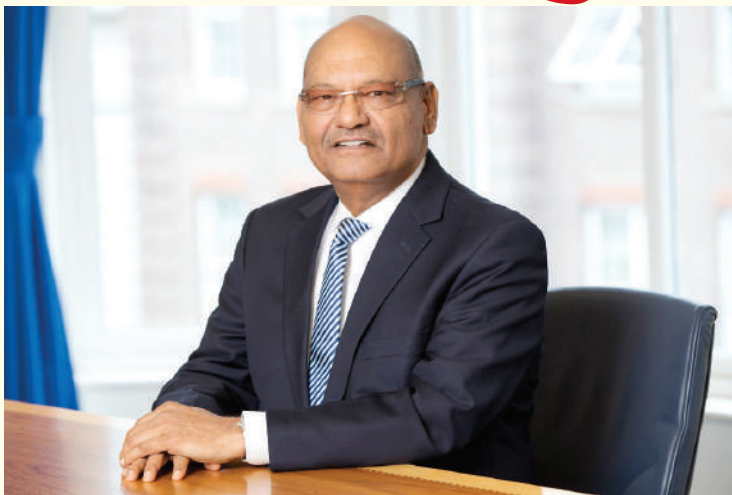
Vedanta Demerger

Vedanta, the multi-business Corporate major is out to set its troubled business right. It is bidding to reduce its debts and systematize its business for enhanced profits in the coming times.

Vedanta, last week, said that it plans to separate its commodities businesses into six listed companies to "unlock value and attract big ticket investment". The board approved a "pure-play, asset-owner business model that will ultimately result in six separate listed companies".

The six listed companies are: Vedanta Aluminium, Vedanta Oil & Gas, Vedanta Power, Vedanta Steel and Ferrous Materials, Vedanta Base Metals and Vedanta Limited.

Following the demerger into 6 entities, Vedanta



Chairman Anil Agarwal indicated Vedanta would sell its steel assets by March 2024. This is in a bid to help the company reduce debts.

The demand for minerals, metals, oil and gas and power is going to grow very rapidly and Vedanta's businesses are uniquely positioned to service this rising demand

and reduce reliance on imports. However, both refinancing and repayment options are open for now when it comes to pending dues.

The steel business that contributed 4 per cent to the company's full-year operating profit will include the domestic iron ore business, Liberia assets and ESL Steel Ltd.

Lottery Don ₹900 Cr Loot

Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax (IT) officials raid at the premises of Burmese Refugee, now a Coimbatore-based businessman, Santiago Martin popularly known as 'Lottery Martin.' Apart from his residence, the IT searches were also at the Corporate office of Martin Group of Companies and also his Martin Homeopathy College in Coimbatore.

'Lottery Martin' has been under the radar of investigative agencies since 2011 for financial fraud and money laundering. Enforcement Directorate and IT Department raided 'Kingpin Lottery Martin' locations, in the ₹910 Crores in the "lottery scam case". Santiago Martin, the Lottery Kingpin, is accused of causing a whopping loss of ₹910,29,87,566 (₹910.29



Crores) to the Sikkim government through the fraudulent sale of lottery tickets and inflating the prize-winning tickets claim in the State of Kerala between 01.04.2009 to 31.08.2010. A former daily-wage labourer in Yangon in Myanmar, Santiago Martin migrated to India from Burma, now known as Myanmar, as a Refugee. He was shrewd, cunning and unsympathetic and went on to establish a ₹7000 crore 'lottery' business and earned the name as "Kingpin Lottery Martin".

What Ails Indian Sports Sector?



India grabbed the 4th position in medals tally this 2023 Asian games at Hangzhou, China. Indian sports men and women bagged an unprecedented haul of 107 medals that included 28 Gold, 38 Silvers and 41 Bronze medals. This is the first time ever that India crossed the base three digit figure.

This is good news. But are the sports men and women happy? Are they worried about their future? Will our performance reach at least respectable levels in medals tally in the mega events like Olympics?

The burning question is why India fairs so poorly at the Olympic and other mega games? India being world's 2nd largest populous country, why is it the last in the Olympic medals tally? Going by population count, India ranks the last in Olympic medals number; India got only 6 medals in the 2012 Olympics, while none were Gold.

To date, the 2020 Summer Olympics are the most successful Games for India since its first regular Olympics appearance in 1920, with Indian Olympians winning 7 medals (1 Gold, 2 Silver and 4 Bronze). What a shameful performance. What are the reasons for India's repeated failures at the world's greatest sports events? It is nothing but lack of government focus to this sector. There are also several other factors adds up to the poor show at mega events by Indian athletes and sportsmen.

One of the factor for poor performance is attributed to very small sports budget. This results in lack of infrastructure and educating the people on the importance of sports in life and world arena. Added to these are the poor health conditions, poverty, girls not being allowed to participate in sports and boys being coaxed into becoming doctors, engineers,

lawyers, IT professionals and the likes.

Just these? No, there are much more to this. The unending popularity of cricket over other sports, India's fading hockey glory and lack of information about the Olympics and other such mega events in rural areas also forms a significant deterrent factor for the country not being able to produce the best of athletes to grab global limelight.

Large gap between rich and poor has made it hard for the poor people even to make a living, let alone saving the energy for sports practice. Adding to this is the government has only little investment on the sports infrastructure and more so even the ones developed is not promoted properly for optimal use by people inclined towards sports disciplines. These infra also lack proper training experts to mentor. The mass sports and competitive sports are both, hence, lagging behind in India.

Besides, a large portion of the population is from lower castes and poverty stricken segments largely suffering from lack of sufficient nutrition and such people hardly get chance for education, what to talk about sports.

The lack of a sports culture in India is also playing havoc and is another key factor resulting in lack of Olympic and other such mega sports event success.

Adding more to this is the fact that majority of the sports budget is swindled by the officials and those at the top of the sports sector in one form or the other, unchecked, fearlessly. Rampant corruption, nepotism and more such evils add to the woes of the eligible sports persons to pursue this as a passionate profession.

Girls though are more competent and eligible are forced to keep away from

taking up sports as a challenging career in their life owing to the ill treatment meted out to them and they being looked upon as sex toys. There are several cases where one hears of molestation and playing with their modesty. The women segment, hence, become helpless and keep away from sports much against their heart's will to pursue with enthusiasm to bring laurels to the Nation.

One of the biggest issues with the willing, able and eligible sports men and women face is regular income to survive and pursue further in their sports disciplines. Gone are those days when even a little win in national and international sports events used to be joyous moment for the countrymen and were greatly recognized by the government. One remembers the days, during the former Prime Minister late Indira Gandhi's regime, the medalists and record breakers in national and international events used to be greatly appreciated, recognized and offered secure jobs in the government departments and corporate houses, showered with gifts in cash and kind. These made their future lives secure and have all the energy to pursue further and excel in their sports disciplines with vigour and love for the Nation. But the sports infra was nil and no avenues were there to mentor and train them at that time.

There are several sports men and women who got jobs in the Railways, Banks, Insurance companies and PSUs. Central and State governments and even private companies and corporate houses showered gifts and money, offered plum jobs and houses to them. This acted as a motivation for others to pursue sports.

But not any more. There are cases of several sports men and women languish-

ing in poverty, even after bringing laurels for the country. There are several of them who after all the hard work and bringing honour to the country are doing menial jobs like selling vegetable, become a porter, coolie, and even few have been spotted by some and the media begging on the streets. This is deplorable.

There are genuine allegations that nepotism and corruption rules this sector for sports men and women to get a berth to represent India in world events.

Indian public are also to blame, as majorities are biased about cricket, or may be to some extent Tennis and Badminton players, the only sports where every selected player mints and rolls in money all their lives. Consumer product companies swarm around only Cricketers and film celebrities who land up with plum Advertisement assignments from them. Have you ever seen any sports man or woman, barring a rare of the rarest few, featuring in any of the advertisements? No!

In the middle of all these there are also few heartwarming initiatives by some Corporate groups.

It is heartening to see several private business houses encouraging and promoting Indian sports all around. For instance, many medal winners in the just concluded 2023 Asian Games at Hangzhou, China are supported by big corporate houses such as Reliance Industries, Tata Group, JSW Group, and Adani Group, which provide sponsorships, scholarships, training, and other initiatives to help emerging talent prepare for the global stage. Nita Ambani, the Chairperson of the Reliance Foundation, stated that athletes backed by the Foundation earned 12 medals in the current Asian Games. The Reliance Foundation, the principal partner of the Indian Olympic Association and Athletics Federation of India, supports over 200 athletes across ten disciplines through mentoring, scholarships and training.

JSW Sports, the group's sports branch, reported that it supported athletes won 17 medals, including four Golds, eight Silvers, and five Bronzes. Through its Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), JSW Sports sponsors 4,000 athletes in track and field, judo, wrestling, boxing, and swimming. Some brilliant performances led this by JSW Sports-represented athletes, include Neeraj Chopra, Avinash Sable and

Parul Chaudhary.

Adani Group and Tata Group have been mentoring and offering training to youth in a bid to preparing them for the national and international mega sports events.

But these are no great solutions. All these business groups engage themselves in such sports mentoring and training of sports men and women only for their self gains, long or short term. Where then is a permanent solution?

The government should allocate more budget for this sector to develop long term infrastructure and also spend big in educating people in semi-rural and rural areas about the advantages of pursuing sports and train themselves to become eligible for participation in national and international events. Great talents lay there, untapped! Just developing infra is not sufficient. Having spent huge money on infra, the government should design stricter laws for their optimal use, buzzing with creative activity all round the year. The officials in charge, who cost the exchequer huge should be made accountable and compulsorily made to generating new talents fit for national and international participation. Percolating the Information about Olympics, Commonwealth, Asian and such mega events in rural areas of India is the key to success at such events. Awareness creates interest. Interest becomes a passion. Passion leads to success in events, with infrastructure in place to mentor and train them. Success will open several permanent income avenues for them, structured by the government in collaboration with private players. Revenue avenue is a super great motivator. This will ensure retention of their passion to excel and being laurels to our country and help identification of several other talents to train and excel.

Will all these happen? Yes for sure. Changes are happening, visibly, albeit slow and lacking the needed impetus and enthu. India is already a growing economic power. It is a dreaded military power. Has become a space-tech super power already reaching the moon. India is a IT giant. Indian digital payment platforms are storming the world. India will soon be a sports super power too in the coming times. Government just needs to recognize this and provide the infra and impetus to this sports sector.

Labourer Turned Trillionaire Exposed

S Jagathrakshakan is the latest on DMK corridors to steal the limelight. The four times Member of Parliament, once on a ADMK ticket and thrice from DMK and former Central Minister for Commerce & Industry gets deeper into Central Investigation Agencies net.

Jagathrakshakan has been under the close scanner of Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax officials for a long time. He was being watched closely.

Actions against him are said to be yet another blow to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, especially to clip his wings of money power. DMK and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin and his family members, his ministers, MLAs and MPs have always been in controversies on charges of corruption. But the partying goes on. Jagathrakshakan is the third in line to be closely scanned by the Central Agency, following the arrest of V Senthil Balaji and raids on K. Ponmudi, yet another Tamil Nadu Minister. Corruption and amassing huge wealth by the TN Leaders has always been the lifeline of Tamil Nadu politics. DMK leads the lot. Both Jagathrakshakan and Senthil Balaji walked over to DMK from AIADMK following the demise of former chief minister and AIADMK chief J. Jayalalithaa in 2016.

Crores In Cash, huge bundles of Rs 2000 notes, Large Quantities Of Gold, expensive Watches and bags of Foreign Currency were Seized By Income Tax Department official after raids at Premises Linked To DMK MP S Jagathrakshakan.

According to reports, cash worth Rs 4.5 crore, two guinea bags full foreign currency notes, 2.7 kilograms of gold were said to have been seized from one of Jagathrakshakan's residence. In raids at a hotel owned by his daughter in Ekkaduthangal, 7 Audemars Piguet watches worth Rs 2.45 crore each and bundles of Rs 2000 notes were seized. During raids at Saveetha Medical College in Chennai, 18 kilograms of gold and Rs 27 crore in cash were said to have been seized. Also, 19 sacks of currency notes

were recovered from the mortuary of the medical college, reports say.

Jagathrakshakan was always in news. In 2020, ED had seized properties worth Rs 89.19 crore belonging to Jagathrakshakan and his family members for acquiring foreign securities in a Singapore based company, where the family members were on board, in violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). His son Sundeeep Anand and his wife and other family members were booked by FEMA for purchasing properties in Singapore in violation of FEMA regulations and guidelines.

In 2016, Income Tax authorities raided his multiple homes and business establishments and reportedly seized more than Rs 100 crore of unaccounted money during the raid including Rs 5 crore in cash seized from one of his residences. IT sleuths conducted these raids after specific information that the former Minister had evaded Income Tax to the tune of more than Rs 200 crore.

The case of rags to riches of Jagathrakshakan is interesting. From being a small time menial worker earning few hundreds a month to growing to be one of the richest, allegedly with hundreds of thousands of crores of illicitly earned money should be an interesting rags to riches real fact story.

Shocking, but true going by published reports. The assets seized talks volumes about Jagathrakshakan's illicit assets building avenues. He has always been in controversies right from liquor license, Coal Mining Scam, Capitation fee sting operation by Times of India where it was proved that he collected Rs 20 Lacs per medical admission, Foreign Investments in Sri Lanka in violation of FDI and FEMA rules, to phenomenal increase in his wealth to his known sources of income.

Added to this is his son Sundeeep Anand who tried for Country Councilorship of Georgia. It is said that Jagathrakshakan manipulated, used his influence and money power and got his son recommended to become the Country

Councilor of the tiny European country Georgia. This tiny country is located at the intersection of Eastern Europe and West Asia, and is today generally regarded as part of Europe. It is alleged that the idea was an easy route to escape from all the allegations and to do more wrong doings with total diplomatic immunity.

However, this initiative failed, as it got stuck at the External Affairs Ministry owing to the criminal track record of the Jagathrakshakan and FEMA violations by his family members.

Jagathrakshakan is one of the prime fund managers for Stalin's DMK. He is largely considered as the ATM machine of DMK.

He is one of Stalin's trusted aides for fund raising and management, especially investment of illicitly earned money. Curtailing Jagathrakshakan's activities is said to have telling effects on fund raising and management for Stalin's party. For decades DMK and its bosses had depended on him for hiding illicitly earned money. It is being alleged that he invested DMK party funds of over Rs 28000 crore in several Sri Lanka projects, which are in jeopardy owing to political turmoil and economic collapse in the island country.

The current onslaught on the DMK leaders are said to be acts to curb DMK money, with coming elections in mind and Stalin's over inclination towards supporting and promoting Rahul Gandhi. DMK is said to have loads of tons of money and these would not affect them.

But all said, clipping DMK stalwart money lords like Senthil Balaji, Ponmudi and Jagathrakshakan will surely clip Stalin's money power in the short term. When free cash flow stops, party functioning gets into deep trouble. This in turn will put DMK into financial stress for a while, which will reflect in lesser spending in the crucial coming elections. This will lead to reduced campaign power of the party, affecting their count in the Legislative Assemblies in the coming times. But, of course these are just smaller fishes in the mammoth DMK party!

