

## Work “progressing well” on TIMS

Hyderabad: Though a bit behind schedule, the three Telangana Institutes of Medical Sciences (TIMS) were coming up well at Alwal, LB Nagar and Sanathnagar in the city. This apart, construction of the super specialty hospital in Warangal is also being expedited and could be completed by the end of this year.

Construction of the three TIMS structures is being supervised by the Roads and Buildings department. They are being constructed at a cost of Rs.2,679 crore and under Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) basis. Sharing images of TIMS, Sanathnagar, BRS working president KT Rama Rao on X said: “Glad to share that the proposed three new TIMS super specialty hospitals at Sanathnagar, Alwal and LB Nagar in Hyderabad are taking shape well...” Glad to share that the proposed three new TIMS super specialty hospitals at Sanath Nagar, Alwal and LB Nagar in Hyderabad are taking shape well“Telangana Institute of Medical Sci-

ences will reshape Hyderabad’s health care ecosystem and provide decentralized medicare for urban poor,” he said.

Expansion works at the NIMS, Punjagutta were also being expedited. Initially, the R&B had planned to complete the super specialty hospital at Warangal early and make it ready for inauguration by June 2 – the State Formation Day, but things got delayed. This was mainly due to the requirements of the health department. Senior officials from the department were finalizing floor wise department segregation. Based on their requirements, the technical committee was assessing things and accordingly, works were getting bit delayed, a senior official from the department said. It is a 1700-bedded hospital and about 25 to 30 departments, including neurology, cardiology, nephrology and others have to be established at the hospital. Though the structures at Alwal, LB Nagar and Sanathnagar would be ready in another couple of months, it could take more time



for inauguration as finalization of other aspects may delay things. Going by the pace,

inauguration of these three hospitals could happen in March 2025, the official added.

## Hyderabad recognised among top Asian cities for startup ecosystems



Hyderabad: Hyderabad has secured a spot in the list of best cities for startup ecosystems in Asia. This recognition is from the ‘2024 Global Startup Ecosystem Report’ by Startup Genome, a well-known US-based startup research firm that surveyed 300 cities across 100 countries. The city has achieved the 19th position on this list. Joining Hyderabad in the list are five other Indian cities—Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, and Pune. The assessment was based on five critical criteria: performance, funding, talent and experience, market reach, and knowledge. “Hyderabad’s transformation

from 200 startups in 2014 to over 7,500 today showcases a focus on fostering an ecosystem for entrepreneurs. T-hub catalyzed this growth by empowering startups in their journey resources, investors, mentors, and support system,” said Mahankali Srinivas Rao, CEO of T-Hub, in the report. Bangalore and Delhi stand at sixth and seventh position in the list followed by Mumbai at tenth and Pune at 26th. Singapore topped the Asian list and ranked seventh globally, while Silicon Valley in the US led the global rankings, followed by New York and London, which were jointly placed second.

## Bank manager trapped by cyber fraudsters in Nagarkurnool

Nagarkurnool: Cyber fraudsters allegedly looted Rs.1.56 lakh from a bank manager in the district after trapping him in their web. The incident came to light on Tuesday, after the bank manager lodged a complaint with the district police. Cyber fraudsters downloaded the bank manager’s display photo from his whatsapp account and morphed it as a nude photo. They started blackmailing the bank manager and fearing consequences, he paid the cyber fraudsters Rs.1.56 lakh, according to re-

ports.

Despite the bank manager paying the amount, the cyber fraudsters continued their harassment. They shared the bank manager’s morphed nude photo to 300 contacts in his contacts list, the reports said. Unable to bear the humiliation, the bank manager lodged a complaint with the cyber crime police. The bank manager complained about harassment by cyber fraudsters and more details have to be ascertained, a cyber police official said.



# With bad news from Cassini, is dark matter's main rival theory dead?

One of the biggest mysteries in astrophysics today is that the forces in galaxies do not seem to add up. Galaxies rotate much faster than predicted by applying Newton's law of gravity to their visible matter, despite those laws working well everywhere in the Solar System. To prevent galaxies from flying apart, some additional gravity is needed. This is why the idea of an invisible substance called dark matter was first proposed. But nobody has ever seen the stuff. And there are no particles in the hugely successful Standard Model of particle physics that could be the dark matter – it must be something quite exotic.

This has led to the rival idea that the galactic discrepancies are caused instead by a breakdown of Newton's laws. The most successful such idea is known as Milgromian dynamics or MOND, proposed by Israeli physicist Mordehai Milgrom in 1982. But our recent research shows this theory is in trouble. The main postulate of MOND is that gravity starts behaving differently to what Newton expected when it becomes very weak, as at the edges of galaxies. MOND is quite successful at predicting galaxy rotation without any dark matter, and it has a few other successes. But many of these can also be explained with dark matter, preserving Newton's laws. So how do we put MOND to a definitive test? We have been pursuing this for many years. The key is that MOND only changes the behaviour of gravity at low accelerations, not at a specific distance from an object. You'll feel lower acceleration on the outskirts of any celestial object – a planet, star or galaxy – than when you are close to it. But it is the amount of acceleration, rather than the distance, that predicts where gravity should be stronger.

This means that, although MOND effects would typically kick in several thousand light years away from a galaxy, if we look at an individual star, the effects would become highly significant at a tenth of a light year. That is only a few thousand times larger than an astronomical unit (AU) – the distance between the Earth and the Sun. But weaker MOND effects should also be detectable at even smaller scales, such as in the outer Solar System. This brings us to the Cassini mission, which orbited Saturn between 2004 and its final fiery crash into the planet in 2017. Saturn orbits the Sun at 10 AU. Due to a quirk of MOND, the gravity from the rest of our galaxy should cause Saturn's orbit to deviate from the Newtonian expectation in a subtle way.

This can be tested by timing radio pulses between Earth and Cassini. Since Cassini was orbiting Saturn, this helped to measure the Earth-Saturn distance and allowed us to precisely track Saturn's orbit. But Cassini did not find any anomaly of the kind expected in MOND. Newton still works well for Saturn. One of us, Harry Desmond, recently published a study investigating the results in greater depth. Perhaps MOND would fit the Cassini data if we tweaked how we calculate galaxy masses from their brightness? That would affect how much of a boost to gravity MOND has to provide to fit models of galaxy rota-



tion, and thus what we should expect for Saturn's orbit.

Another uncertainty is the gravity from surrounding galaxies, which has a minor effect. But the study showed that, given how MOND would have to work to fit with models for galaxy rotation, it cannot also fit the Cassini radio tracking results – no matter how we tweak the calculations. With the standard assumptions considered most likely by astronomers and allowing for a wide range of uncertainties, the chance of MOND matching the Cassini results is the same as a flipped coin landing heads up 59 times in a row. This is more than twice the "5 sigma" gold standard for a discovery in science, which corresponds to about 21 coin flips in a row.

More bad news for MOND. That's not the only bad news for MOND. Another test is provided by wide binary stars – two stars that orbit a shared centre several thousand AU apart. MOND predicted that such stars should orbit around each other 20% faster than expected with Newton's laws. But one of us, Indranil Banik, recently led a very detailed study that rules out this prediction. The chance of MOND being right given these results is the same as a fair coin landing heads up 190 times in a row. Results from yet another team show that MOND also fails to explain small bodies in the distant outer Solar System. Comets coming in from out there have a much narrower distribution in energy than MOND predicts. These bodies also have orbits that are usually only slightly inclined to the plane that all the planets orbit close to. MOND would cause the inclinations to be much larger. Newtonian gravity is strongly preferred over MOND on length scales below about a light year. But MOND also fails on scales larger than galaxies: it cannot explain the motions within galaxy clusters.

Dark matter was first proposed by Fritz Zwicky in the 1930s to account for the random motions of galaxies within the Coma Cluster, which requires more gravity to hold it together than the visible mass can provide. MOND cannot provide enough gravity either, at least in the central regions of galaxy clusters. But in their outskirts, MOND provides too much gravity. Assuming instead Newtonian gravity, with five times as much dark matter as normal matter, seems to provide a good fit to the data. The standard dark matter model of cosmology isn't perfect, however. There are things it struggles to explain, from the universe's expansion rate to giant cosmic

structures. So we may not yet have the perfect model. It seems dark matter is here to stay, but its nature may be different to what the Standard Model suggests. Or gravity may indeed be stronger than we think – but on very large scales only. Ultimately though, MOND, as presently formulated, cannot be considered a viable alternative to dark matter any more. We may not like it, but the dark side still holds sway. Indranil Banik is a postdoctoral research fellow in astrophysics, University of St. Andrews. Harry Desmond is senior research fellow of cosmology, University of Portsmouth. This article is republished from The Conversation.

## Nvidia's stock market value surpasses \$3 trillion

Nvidia's stock price has more than doubled this year after more than tripling in 2023 and it's now the third most valuable company in the S&P 500. Nvidia's stock rose again Wednesday to surpass \$3 trillion in market value. The company is also about to undergo a stock split that will give each of its investors nine additional shares for every one that they already own.

The chipmaker has seen soaring demand for its semiconductors, which are used to power artificial intelligence applications. The company's revenue more than tripled in the latest quarter from the same period a year earlier.

Nvidia, which has positioned itself as one of the most prominent players in AI, has been producing some eye-popping numbers. Here's a look: Nvidia's total market value as of Wednesday. Earlier this

year, it passed Amazon and Alphabet to become the third most valuable public company, behind Microsoft (\$3.168 trillion) and Apple (\$3.029 trillion). The company was valued at around \$418 billion two years ago. That's the one-day increase in Nvidia's market value on Wednesday. The company's 10-for-1 stock split goes into effect at the close of trading on Friday, June 7, and is open to all shareholders of record as of Thursday, June 6. The move gives each investor nine additional shares for every share they already own.

Companies often conduct stock splits to make their shares more affordable for investors. Nvidia's stock closed Wednesday at \$1,224.40 and it's just one of 11 companies in the S&P 500 with a share price over \$1,000. Revenue for Nvidia's most recent fiscal quarter.

# PhonePe partners with PickMe to enable contactless payments for Indian travellers in Sri Lanka

PhonePe, today announced its collaboration with PickMe, Sri Lanka's leading ride-hailing platform, to enable seamless UPI-based QR payments for Indian travellers in Sri Lanka. The partnership signifies a major step forward in enhancing their travel experience through the convenience of cashless transactions on their PickMe rides from the moment they exit the Bandaranaike International Airport. While travelling, managing foreign currency and ensuring enough cash on hand for various expenses can often become a hassle. By integrating PhonePe's UPI-based QR payment system into their platform, PickMe aims to minimise that stress for Indian travellers visiting Sri Lanka. PhonePe users can make secure and quick payments for their rides with UPI.

Commenting on the collaboration, Ritesh Pai, CEO, International Payments at PhonePe, added, "Our partnership with PickMe exemplifies the company's commitment to provide Indian travellers with convenient and trusted payment solutions.

Travel is all about exploring new cultures, where food and local shopping are an integral part of that adventure. Previously, navigating payments in a new country could be a hassle. Now, with PhonePe, Indian tourists visiting the beautiful island nation of Sri Lanka can enjoy the ease and security of UPI payments for their rides."

Jiffy Zulfer, CEO of PickMe added, "Currently, we are the only ride-hailing platform in Sri Lanka to offer such a service to Indian travellers, and we hope to continue to innovate so that we make our ride-hailing service a convenient, safe and cost-effective mode of transportation for everyone.

This collaboration not only enhances the convenience for Indian travellers but also supports our mission to drive digital transformation in Sri Lanka's transportation sector. By enabling QR payments, we are making travel easier and safer for tourists while also providing a new revenue stream for our drivers."



The collaboration follows the launch of PhonePe last month, wherein the Indian High Commissioner H.E. Santosh Jha had urged companies in Sri Lanka to engage with Indian companies to build on the UPI stack for innovations in hotel bookings, cab bookings, delivery services etc. The High Commissioner commended such collaborations saying, "I am confident that with greater commercial engagement in the

fintech sector, India and Sri Lanka will unlock innovation and transformation in the digital domain."

Sri Lanka is one of the most popular destinations among Indian travellers. This collaboration underscores PhonePe's commitment to adding more value to the overall experience of Indian travellers by allowing them to use familiar services like UPI during their visit.

# PBPartners introduces industry-first PBP One program to reward its top-performing PoSP agent partners



PBPartners, Policybazaar's PoSP arm, has introduced an industry-first initiative, PBP One, to recognize and reward its PoSP partners. The PBP One program is an embodiment of PBPartners' ongoing commitment to partner engagement and recognition. This pioneering initiative rewards top-performing insurance agents with LMC Coins, an innovative system designed to acknowledge their exceptional performance. Through this program, PBPartners ensures that their partners are consistently motivated, recognized, and inspired to maintain high standards of performance and dedication.

## How PBP One program works

The coins collected through LMC are accumulated in the PBP One dashboard where a partner can see his performance on a month-on-month basis. LMC Coins are divided into three distinct categories: Loyalty Coins: Earned through consistent monthly performance based on net premium generated; Mastery Coins: Accumulated by cross-selling various insurance products; Contest Coins: Awarded for qualifying in monthly or quarterly contests. The agent partners can redeem their coins during the redemption carnival which is now live. The PoSP partners can redeem their coins for a range of exciting

rewards like automobiles, consumer durables, electronic gadgets, household and kitchen appliances, and trips to exotic locations around the world. The highest rewards given so far to PoSP partners have been cars and gold bars. Dhruv Sarin, Co-founder, PBPartners, said "At PBPartners, we place utmost importance on our partner experience because we believe that only a satisfied partner can serve customers to the best of their ability. The PBP One program is a testament to this belief. This initiative not only provides substantial rewards but also inspires our agent partners to reach new heights of achievement. By fostering a culture of long-term collaboration and recognizing the hard work and dedication of our partners, we aim to build enduring relationships that will drive mutual success. We are confident that this program will significantly enhance our partners' efforts and commitment. Mukul Chaturvedi, a Life Insurance PoSP agent partner from Jaipur, UP says "Winning rewards through the PBP One program has been an incredibly motivating experience for me. The recognition and tangible benefits have significantly boosted my performance and overall satisfaction. I feel truly valued and inspired to continue excelling in my work with PBPartners. This program

not only acknowledges our hard work but also encourages us to push our limits and achieve new heights. I am grateful for the

opportunities and rewards it has provided, making my partnership with PBPartners even more rewarding and fulfilling."

# Farmers in erstwhile Karimnagar worried over depleting water levels in irrigation projects

Karimnagar: Farmers in the erstwhile Karimnagar district are a worried lot over cultivation of crops in the Vanakalam season with all water bodies, including irrigation projects, here remaining almost completely dry. Even the existing meager water levels would dip and reach the dead storage levels if adequate rains are not recorded in the coming days. Cultivation of crops will be taken up depending on the rainfall to be recorded in June and July, they say, adding that things could turn real bad if a good rainfall is recorded by the end of this month. Last year, there was no shortfall for irrigable water since all major irrigation projects were brimming after adequate rainfall was recorded. However, the situation is different this time around. Compared to last year, there is a significant decline in water levels in the three reservoirs of Mid Manair Dam (MMD), Lower Manair Dam (LMD) and Sripada Yellampalli project.

Earlier, water used to be lifted from Medigadda of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project and dumped in the Yellampalli project from where it would be taken to Mid Manair by filling the Nandi reservoir and operating the Gayatri pump house. Besides LMD, water used to be supplied to

the Ranganayaka Sagar in Siddipet district from MMD. However, with water being left out of the Sundilla, Annaram and Medigadda barrages, it is not possible to draw water from Godavari.

Water levels in Yellampalli have declined since there are no inflows from SRSP as well as there is no chance to lift water from the Kaleshwaram project. In order to protect standing crops, irrigation officials had lifted more than 25 TMC from the Kaleshwaram project every year for three years. Now, water levels in Yellampalli have declined to 6.08 TMC as against its storage capacity of 20.175 TMC. This time last year, the project had 13.40 TMC water. Similarly, only 7.79 TMC of water is available in Mid Manair reservoir as against its storage capacity of 27.55 TMC. Last year, 20.87 TMC of water was available. In LMD, water levels have declined to 5.92 TMC as against its storage capacity of 24 TMC. 8.18 TMC of water was available in June last year. LMD is the main drinking water source for Karimnagar town as well as a few villages in Siddipet district. Instead of on a regular basis, water is being supplied to the residents of Karimnagar town every alternate day due to the shortage of water in LMD.

# HDFC ERGO Launches seamless Motor Claim Settlement process on WhatsApp

HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company, India's leading private sector general insurer, has launched instant motor claim settlement on WhatsApp. Aligned to its digital first approach, this unique initiative underscores the Company's commitment to leveraging technology to offer hassle-free services to its customers. In today's fast paced world, customers demand seamless and quick solutions, especially at the time of claims. Over the past few years, WhatsApp has emerged as a powerful platform, which is widely used by people across India. Leveraging this wide reach, HDFC ERGO has embedded an AI enabled inspection technology on its WhatsApp chatbot, which allows the customers instant motor claim settlement feature for minor damages such as dents, scratches, etc.; for up to Rs 20,000, so that they can remain operational. The move will bring significant relief to customers who heavily rely on their vehicle for transportation.

Speaking about this innovative initiative, Parthani Ghosh, Director and Chief Business Officer, HDFC ERGO General Insurance said, "As a customer experience focused organisation, we at HDFC ERGO are continuously disrupting technologies to deliver hyper personalised services. We have a host of AI enabled bots to offer quick and best-in-class services to our customers. Our collaboration with WhatsApp, for simplified vehicle self-inspections, allows

customers to renew their lapsed policies without downloading the app. Similarly, our WhatsApp bot 'MyRA' offers a plethora of services to customers, including access to policy copy, assistance with policy renewals, etc. in 12 languages, and our bot - AQUA empowers advisors an instant access to policy documents, commission statements, claim status updates, and more. Besides, as a part of our vision to reach the last mile, we have also introduced a unique award-winning WhatsApp bot for farmers named PIHU, to assist them with services such as policy and scheme information, claim registration, claims assessment, etc. The present breakthrough innovation of instant motor claim settlement on WhatsApp will not only offer convenience to our customers, but also save them from hassles of keeping the vehicle non-operational at the workshops for minor damages."

Ravi Garg, Director, Business Messaging, Meta in India, commented on the launch, "WhatsApp has become an integral part our lives, making it a preferred platform for both individuals and businesses across India to connect and get things done. We are thrilled that HDFC ERGO General Insurance has introduced another customer-friendly feature on WhatsApp to facilitate instant motor insurance claim settlements. This feature will not only provide HDFC ERGO General Insurance customers with a seamless experience but also pave the way for future inno-



ations in India's motor insurance sector" To register a claim, a customer can visit HDFC ERGO's website, connect on HDFC ERGO's Official WhatsApp no, self-help portal or contact customer care. Upon registration, they will get a link via WhatsApp for digital inspection photo upload and digital claim form to initiate their claim processing. If damages are accepted, the customer

will be offered a settlement amount. Once accepted, the claim amount will be transferred to the customers' account, and they can get their vehicle repaired as per their convenience.

Alternatively, customers can also visit to the nearest garage where cashless or reimbursement claim process will be followed.

## Daimler India Commercial Vehicles announces new Chief of Operations & Logistics



Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV), the wholly owned subsidiary of Daimler Truck AG ("Daimler Truck") names Mr. Muthumaruthachalam C as President and Chief of Operations & Logistics. His appointment will be effective August 15,

2024. He replaces the former Chief Operating Officer Mr. Anshum Jain who moved on from the organisation in April 2024. Mr. Muthumaruthachalam began his journey with DICV in 2009, during the early project phase as a specialist in heavy-duty truck

project management, playing a pivotal role in the market launch of BharatBenz products in 2012. Subsequently, he moved into a leadership position in quality management to oversee BharatBenz trucks' warranty analysis and product reliability. In 2015, he relocated to Mitsubishi Fuso Truck and Bus Corporation (MFTBC) where he was responsible for product reliability and warranty for FUSO Trucks and Buses, globally. He returned to DICV in March 2020 as Head of Supply Chain Management & Logistics. Since March 2023, he has been spearheading the newly-formed 'Procurement & Supply Chain Management' organization as President and Chief Supply Chain Officer. His extensive global experience and profound understanding of process management have driven his success within the Daimler Truck organization.

Mr. Satyakam Arya, Managing Director & CEO, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles said, "Muthu is a DICV veteran and has been with our organization since we set up our greenfield in Oragadam. I am pleased to see him assume his new role within our organisation. His proven experience and leadership within the Daimler Truck organization in India and overseas, in areas of procurement, supply chain management and quality make him the right

choice to drive our operations and logistics business functions, which comprise the largest portion of our workforce. His contributions towards skillfully managing our supply chain and procurement in the most challenging times is his greatest asset." In his new role, Mr. Muthumaruthachalam will be a member of DICV's core leadership team reporting to Mr. Satyakam Arya, the Managing Director & CEO of DICV. He will oversee Operations & Logistics, Manufacturing Engineering and Truck Operating System departments in DICV. He will be responsible for ensuring seamless operational workflows, enhancing manufacturing processes and driving the efficiency and effectiveness of truck operating systems. Commenting on his appointment, Mr. Muthumaruthachalam C, President and Chief of Operations & Logistics, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles said, "I feel honored as I assume my new role in DICV at a time when we are building the foundation for a new era of commercial mobility. My journey with Daimler Truck and DICV has been long, rich with learnings and incredibly fulfilling. I look forward to working closely with our talented teams, guiding them and giving them a conducive environment to thrive and succeed in our organisation."

# Ramky Infrastructure Wins FICCI's Smart Urban Innovation Award

**Hyderabad, 11 June 2024:** Ramky Infrastructure Limited (Ramky) has been awarded the prestigious FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry) Smart Urban Innovation Award 2024 in the "Sustainable Cities" category. This recognition honours their significant contribution to the treatment and disposal of legacy leachate in Jawahar Nagar, Hyderabad, Telangana. The award was presented during the 5th edition of the Smart Urban Innovation Awards, held alongside the 7th edition of FICCI's Cities Summit to foster dialogue and innovative solutions for critical urban infrastructure development issues. Ramky was among 10 organizations, including corporates, government agencies, and educational institutions, recognized from a record-breaking 98 entries, working towards the nation's smart cities mission.

Legacy leachate, a toxic by-product of waste decomposition, poses a serious environmental threat by contaminating nearby water bodies as well as groundwater. Ramky's innovative solution involved a 2,000 KLD leachate treatment plant, designed to address this issue. This project also included the restoration and stabilization of ponds located near the waste management facility. Notably, the project addressed a significant challenge, with the initial estimated volume of legacy leachate in Hyderabad exceeding 849,780.88 Kilolitres (KL).

"We are honoured to receive the Smart Urban Innovation Award 2024 under the Sustainable Cities category," said **Mr Y.R. Nagaraja, Managing Director, Ramky Infrastructure Limited.** "This recognition reflects Ramky's unwavering commitment to providing urban solutions that pave the way for a sustainable future for our cities. The Hyderabad leachate treatment plant the first of its kind in the country is a testament to this commitment, setting an industry benchmark for future projects. We remain dedicated to developing and delivering infrastructure solutions that contribute to a cleaner and healthier tomorrow for present and future generations."

Established in 1927, FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organization in India. It serves as a platform for networking and consensus building within and across sectors and is the first port of call for Indian industry, policymakers, and the international business community. About Ramky Infrastructure

Ramky Infrastructure Limited (Ramky) is a flagship company of Ramky Group, one of the leaders in the field of infrastructure development. Since the incorporation of its business in 1994, the Company has completed a wide range of construction and infrastructure projects focusing on Industrial Infrastructure development and EPC projects in the fields of Water, Waste Water Treatment, Roads, Bridges, and Urban Infrastructure Development. With a highly skilled team of over 2000 people, Headquartered in Hyderabad, Telangana, it manages its business operations in India. The pan-India presence has enabled the company to serve the growing infrastructure needs across the country.



Ramky Infrastructure Limited is an infrastructure development-centric, environment-concerned, and development-oriented company. Ramky is ISO 9001:2015

(QMS), ISO 14001:2015(EMS), and ISO 45001:2017 (OHS) certified for Quality Management Systems, Environment Management Systems, and Occupational

Health & Safety Management Systems which the Company applies to the design, development, engineering, procurement and construction of projects.

## Actor Chakrapani Ananda's journey of struggle and success

Hyderabad: In the recent release "Raju Yadav," actor Chakrapani Ananda won praise by film critics for his deeply emotive performance. The journey of this seasoned actor, from an enforced hiatus to a celebrated return, is as emotive and inspiring as the roles he plays on screen. Coming from humble origins in Nalgonda, Chakrapani's acting journey began in 1988 with B Narsing Rao's award-winning film 'Daasi'. Despite being a critical success and showcasing his potential as a formidable actor, financial constraints and the unpredictable nature of the film industry compelled the thespian to leave acting and seek stability in advertising.

Around 30 years later, the actor breathed life into the character of a father in the movie "Malleham." The role rekindled Chakrapani's acting career, leading to numerous offers in films such as "Love Story," "World Famous Lover," "Vakeel Saab", and others. Over the past few years, he has acted in around 45 films, each performance further cementing his status as a versatile actor. "All these years, the madness and passion for acting per-



sisted. I'm thankful that I'm getting wonderful roles now," Chakrapani says. "I feel I've developed as an individual."

Life imparts valuable lessons, and my experiences have enhanced my acting skills," he adds. Having an early fascina-

tion with parallel cinema to his childhood influences, including his father's involvement in stage productions, the actor believes in forming a genuine connection with the audience. "Most of my sad scenes, I tap into the melancholic parts of my life to bring that emotion," he shares.

# If growth has been dynamic, why have voters punished government?

India's electoral shock poses a stunning economic puzzle. How is it possible that the electorate chastised rather than handsomely rewarded a leader who has presided over an astonishing economic boom? This would seem to be an event unprecedented in world history. Consider the data. According to official data, in the three years leading up to the election, the economy posted real GDP growth rates of 9.7 per cent, 7 per cent, and 8.2 per cent. To be sure, the first of those numbers is the recovery from Covid. But even so, such consecutive numbers — increasing the size of the economy by more than one-quarter in just three years — would normally describe economic nirvana. So, what happened? Has the Indian electorate just demolished the adage attributed to former US President Bill Clinton's adviser: "It's the economy, stupid"?

Start with measurement. Within the economic community, it is no secret that there are many problems with Indian GDP measurement — faulty deflators, the failure to deflate inputs and outputs separately, outdated sectoral weights, poor measurement of the large informal sector. These problems haven't received much publicity, largely because the IMF, World Bank, investment banks, ratings agencies, and foreign governments have been remarkably silent about these issues. But the problems are severe and matter hugely for interpreting India's economy. Consider a recent example. In the past two years, the nominal and real GDP numbers have been telling two completely different stories. According to the nominal GDP numbers, growth has sharply decelerated from 14.2 per cent to 9.6 per cent. But the real GDP numbers show that growth has surged from 7 to 8.2 per cent. The only way to square these numbers is if broad inflation has completely collapsed, falling to just 1.4 per cent.

This seems highly implausible. It is true that the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation has decelerated. But WPI is not the correct deflator, since it measures input prices, whereas GDP is evaluated at producer prices, that is to say, output prices. And output prices have not collapsed; they continue to increase rapidly, as the 4.8 per cent Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation shows. That said, even if growth has not been quite as dazzling as the official statistics suggest, it has been reasonable. So, there remains an electoral puzzle to be explained.

Some analysts have argued that the electorate was dissatisfied because the fruits of growth have been shared unequally. In this K-shaped view, government policies enabled the very rich to gain at the expense of the poor. It is polemically appealing but not accurate to claim that only a few billionaires have benefitted from India's economic growth. Casual observation but also recent survey results confirm that the standard of living of virtually all Indians, including those at the bottom, has improved considerably over the past decade. What is true is that growth has been unbalanced, in the sense that some sectors have been growing much more rap-

idly than others. And this brings us to the second element of the explanation: India's economic model. India's development has always favoured export-oriented services and people with high skills at the expense of agriculture and manufacturing and those with fewer skills more generally.

Consider, for example, India's well-known global success: Its export-oriented services sector. After the pandemic, as the world economy recovered and globalisation in services resumed, stellar names such as Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, and Microsoft transferred large amounts of high-skilled analytical work to India. Employment in Global Capability Centres (GCC) surged to an astonishing three million people. And as these workers have needed offices and housing, the surge in GCC employment has set off a construction boom, benefitting the workers in that sector. On the other hand, consider agriculture. The woes of farmers have been a problem for Indian economic policy since independence. Governments have responded by providing subsidies, especially to the cereal-growing farmers in the North. But they have also repeatedly turned the terms of trade against the sector. Whenever food prices have risen and farmers scented opportunity, the government has imposed export restrictions and liberalised imports to bring down prices, thereby damaging farm incomes. The most recent example relates to onions. As prices rose, India imposed export restrictions and then released them slowly and partially which led to disaffection amongst onion farmers in Maharashtra, one factor in Modi's poor performance in that state.

This pattern of a rapidly growing export-oriented service sector and a lagging agricultural sector has been India's long-standing economic model. It cannot be attributed to the incumbent government. But there are some ways in which the Modi government's policies have made the imbalances worse — and this is the third element of the explanation. The informal sector has been devastated by a series of government actions. Data on informal enterprises is by nature scant, but proxies such as purchases of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and two-wheelers suggest that the triple shock of demonetisation, flawed implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and drastic lockdowns during the pandemic have destroyed profitability and employment. As for manufacturing, the Modi government has made efforts to encourage this sector, notably by providing subsidies through the Production-Linked Incentives (PLI) scheme. But this policy has had very limited success. A major reason is that it has been offset by other government policies such as protectionism. Another reason is that there has been no comparable push in labour-intensive sectors which would have expanded job opportunities for the poor and women. An even bigger reason is that the policy strategy has unbalanced the playing field. A few years ago, we coined the expression India's "2A stigmatised capitalism" to highlight the generous and extensive favours granted to big business houses



(especially Adani and Ambani) that allowed them to prosper at the expense of other investors, domestic and foreign. The resulting non-level playing field has extracted a toll, discouraging overall investment in the industrial sector. In sum, there are only two ways to reconcile the economy and the voting results. We would suggest that growth has not been as dynamic as the official numbers suggest, nor has it been very balanced. Put another way, the overall pie has not grown sufficiently rapidly and it has been shared unequally, but

in a different manner than believed. As a result, the unskilled people working in the agricultural, informal, and manufacturing sectors — the bulk of the workforce and voters — experienced the economy in a way that accords with ground-level reporting: that is, negatively. Alternatively, if we don't accept the explanations of faulty measurement and an inherently slanted development model, we will be left with the biggest puzzle in global democratic politics: That gangbuster growth led to electoral disaster.

## India Art Festival comes to Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Making a significant milestone in the city's burgeoning art scene, the India Art Festival, a leading contemporary art fair, made its debut in Hyderabad at the Kings Kohinoor Convention at Rethibowli on Friday.

The three-day event promises a multi-sensory celebration of art in its various forms and aims to bring together and provide a platform for seasoned artists and emerging talents, creating a melting pot of diverse artistic endeavours. With 85 stalls showcasing 3,500 artworks, including paintings, sculptures, and installations, visitors have an opportunity to explore a myriad of artistic expressions and creations from across the nation. The festival also features live music performances, art demonstrations, and film screenings.

Among the 290 participating artists, 60 hail from Hyderabad. Noticeably, the festival features the work of around 100 women artists. Galleries from Delhi, Mumbai, Noida, Gurgaon, Bengaluru and Gnani Arts from Singapore — which has been associated with the festival since its first edition in 2011, have also taken stalls.

Prominent Hyderabad artists include Satya Gannoju of the Hyderabad Art Society, National Award winner Sama Kantha Reddy, 3D artist Srinivasaram Makineedi and veteran artist Murali Prasad, aged 68. "Whenever we attended the India Art Fair in Mumbai and Delhi, we felt that Hyderabad deserved a similar platform.



The city's art scene is thriving economically and with talented artists, but it needs more visibility," said award-winning artist Shankar Pamarthy. The festival also serves as the launchpad for Hyd Art, a new gallery dedicated to digitising and democratising art to reach a global audience.

"A month back, the announcement of the festival was made, and we thought, what better platform to launch the gallery," said Hasan, the founder of Hyd Art. "When we started in 2011, Hyderabad was not a natural choice. However, the city has developed vastly over the last seven to eight years. Our market survey indicated that Hyderabad, with its nearly 11,000 corporates, is perfect for a mega art fair like this," noted Rajendra, Director of India Art Festival. The festival features 20 per cent up-and-coming artists fresh out of art schools and is open until June 9, from 11 am to 8 pm.

# The new Naidu: How the TDP chief scripted his comeback

In November last year, with six months left to go for the simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Andhra Pradesh, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief N Chandrababu Naidu appeared at a rally in Kurnool, where he made an emotional appeal to the people. "If you send me (and my party) to the Assembly, only then will Andhra Pradesh see development. Else, this will be my last election," he said. Many saw in the appeal, which came at the end of a tumultuous five years for Naidu and his party, the desperation of a man who was down and out and at 73, possibly starting at the end of his political career.

Naidu had been trounced by the Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) in the previous elections — the TDP had gone down to 23 seats in the Assembly and three in the Lok Sabha — and just when it seemed he was clawing his way back, Naidu was arrested in the AP Skill Development case. After the NCP and other opposition parties leaders press conference, Chandrababu Naidu, then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh at YB Chavan Centre in Mumbai. Yet, six months later, Naidu has managed to effect a stunning turnaround of fortunes, winning 136 of the 144 seats to come back as CM for the fourth time, while his allies — Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena Party (JSP) and BJP — have added 29 more seats, reducing the YSRCP to 12. In the Lok Sabha elections, the TDP ended up with 16 seats, elevating the party to the second largest in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and earning Naidu a key place in the coalition high table. The turnaround TDP leaders insist that even after the crushing defeat of 2019, Naidu was down, but never out. "Yes, the cadre was demotivated and it is only natural. But, we are emotionally connected with the cadre and even in our heaviest defeat, in 2019, we managed a vote share of 40%, which means around 1.5 crore people voted for us. We had to keep going for these 1.5 crore people. Mr Naidu ensured he and the party were emotionally connected with the cadre through regular meetings and assurances," TDP general secretary and Naidu's son Nara Lokesh said in an interview to The Indian Express. Just after the 2019 defeat, the leaders say, Naidu went into a huddle with his advisors and came up with a three-pronged fightback strategy that was "cadre-centric, party-centric and leader-centric". Lokesh said that soon after losing power, Naidu was presented with a "golden chance" when Jagan ordered the demolition of the Praja Vedika, a cluster of 50-odd buildings along the banks of the Krishna river in Guntur district, and scrapped the Amaravati capital development project.

"Our leader grabbed the opportunity and went to the people. The incident showed that if a former CM could be attacked, the common man would not be spared," said senior TDP leader Jyothsna Tirunagari. A TDP leader said the run-up to the February 2023 Legislative Council elections, which the TDP won 4-0, recharged the cadre. "The CM was instrumental in motivating the cadre. In one of the meet-



ings before these polls, he made it clear that a victory in the MLC polls is the best way to infuse energy into the cadre," the leader said. Months into the Jagan regime, the TDP joined hands with a political consultancy, ShowTime Consulting (STC), which would prove to be a vital cog in his comeback plan. "Under Naidu's guidance, STC got down to work and began restructuring the party by establishing communication channels with the cadre and the second-rung leadership. We also focussed on bringing back the 6,000-odd panchayat-level leaders who had defected or were forced to defect to the YSRCP during the 2019 elections," says STC Director Shantanu Singh. Chandrababu Naidu Then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Chandrababu Naidu along with a delegation called on the former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao in New Delhi on 31.10.1995. Naidu drew from his own experience — he was master strategist for TDP founder and his father-in-law Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao's (NTR) in the 1980s — to ideate and lead from the front. Until March 2023, he held daily review meetings with his leaders and the STC team, after which the frequency of these sessions went up. "We met twice or even thrice a day. Once the campaign began, his lunch break turned into a review meeting," says Singh. A senior TDP leader said Naidu's hands-on approach helped him sense the anger among people towards the YSRCP government. The 'Entra Mana Karma' (what's our fate) campaign, which targeted Jagan on his alleged atrocities, was reportedly Naidu's brainchild. "So was the selfie campaign, when he posted a picture of him taking a selfie at a long-pending, under-construction bridge," the leader said. The campaigns, Singh says, gave the party ammunition to attack the Jagan government over "unfulfilled promises, lack of

employment and lack of investments" in the state. "The battle for Andhra had transformed into a Jagan versus everybody, including the people of the state," said Robin Sharma, another Director at STC. The party took a page out of Jagan's textbook by setting off on yatras across the state — first, the 'Yuva Galam Yatra' or Voice of the Youth, a mass contact programme by Lokesh, and later Naidu's own Praja Galam Yatra. For the next few months, Naidu and the TDP seemed to be on the rise. The May 2023 Mahanadu at Rajahmundry, where Naidu unveiled his Super 6 schemes (six guarantees, including jobs for the youth and free bus travel for women), and the "Babu surety, bhavishyathuku guarantee (Babu's surety, future's guarantee)" campaign, further instilled confidence in the cadre. However, it all seemed to come crashing down for the former CM and the party when, on September 9 last year, Naidu was arrested in the alleged AP Skill Development scam. The TDP now stared at the prospect of going back to where it started in 2019. "Definitely, there was anger among the cadre, even disappointment, but people refused to believe Naidu was corrupt. I was stopped midway while I was going to meet him in Vijayawada. This only exposed Jagan's high-handedness," said Lokesh. While some believed it was the end of the road for the TDP, Naidu ran the party from jail. As Lokesh visited his father in jail and took his "guidance", Bhuvaneshwari held daily meetings and rallies to ensure that the TDP's campaign was not derailed. "He read every word of the papers related to the case filed against him and constantly gave us inputs and guidance on the party's next course of action. While it was initially challenging for my mother to be in the spotlight, she knew it was important... His time

in jail was tough for the family, but it built 'Brand Naidu'," said Lokesh. Days after Naidu's arrest, JSP's Pawan Kalyan, who was hoping to meet Naidu but was denied entry by Jagan into Andhra, announced a tie-up with the TDP. A highly placed source close to Naidu said talks with the JSP had been going on since early 2022. On October 31, 53-days after being arrested, Naidu walked out on bail but in a new avatar. "Jail time gave him the space to prepare a strategy. Not once did he try to gain sympathy by crying foul over his arrest. Instead, he continued to attack Jagan with renewed vigour over issues such as debt, welfare disbursement and other people-related issues. The message that went out was that Naidu was firmly behind the people while Jagan was using them for votes," the source says. Chandrababu Naidu Former Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu addressing a press conference at Andhra Bhawan on 5th Feb. 1996. (Express photo) By February 2024, sources said, the TDP had set up a central command centre in Hyderabad with a 200-strong workforce that worked round-the-clock. "Naidu used the command centre to communicate with the cadre, second-rung leadership and candidates. By early March, we had a 11-member war-room in each Assembly segment," the source said. In the last push before the May 13 polls, Naidu took it upon himself and addressed rallies, held roadshows and events in support of the TDP as well as JSP and BJP candidates. Four years after it started "rebuilding" the TDP, the STC, meanwhile, was left with the task of "promoting a good product". "Naidu's experience as a proven administrator and his knack of raising the right issues at the right time meant that by the final leg of campaigning, we were only left with the easy job of promoting him on social media," Singh said.

# 'You're no longer a private citizen in a public space': Women's Prize 2024 shortlisted writer Madhumita Murgia

Tech journalist Madhumita Murgia's *Code Dependent* (Rs 699, Pan Macmillan), recently shortlisted for the Women's Prize 2024, collects reportage from around the world about how machine learning and statistical software — today marketed as AI — are already impacting lives and livelihoods, and not always for the better. In this interview, she speaks of the power asymmetry in Artificial Intelligence (AI), its impact on relationships and why there's no such thing as being anonymous anymore. The word intelligence indicates something conscious, sentient, with some ability to reason. So far, we have none of that. This is essentially a very sophisticated statistical software. It does do some amazing things, like trawling through huge amounts of data and generating poetry and music. But it isn't intelligent enough to make human decisions. Human intelligence isn't just about pattern recognition. There's emotional intelligence, social intelligence, all these other things we use while writing or being a doctor or doing social work. It involves not just the individual but the collective. AI has biases because of the data it's trained on or because of decisions made while building. We would benefit from giving it a more direct, descriptive name that might be more boring but accurate.

I write about a tuberculosis diagnostic tool made by Qure.ai. They also rolled out a Covid AI diagnostic tool in Dharavi, Maharashtra when there was no other way to test. Google has worked to diagnose diabetic retinopathy using AI and patient data. They want to help us learn but it's a private enterprise and has to make money from it. So who's going to step up? Are governments going to fund this? Because the people who can't pay for regular healthcare can't pay for AI healthcare either. It has to be subsidised and rolled out at scale. Another challenge is: Will this create more equity? Or will there be a class system? Will you have a flawed AI system used on people who can't afford healthcare, with mistakes that could lead to lives lost or diagnoses missed? Will people pay for human care, which can turn out to be more sophisticated?

You write about data labellers in the Global South working for American companies far away, being small parts of a huge AI-training operation, underpaid and unaware of their role. Has Big Tech tried to improve that power asymmetry? There hasn't been enough pressure on Big Tech to change. If there's no pressure, why should they? If they need tens of thousands of people for this job, and it's cheaper to do it in Kenya, India or Bangladesh, why wouldn't they carry on doing that? Big Tech can say, we're giving people jobs they wouldn't have otherwise had, we're lifting people out of poverty, we're doing a net positive for society. Many individuals aren't able to speak up because it's a job supporting their families, and they don't want to rock the boat. But now we're seeing people who are brave enough to speak up. I mention Daniel Motong in my book, a South African migrant to Kenya, doing one of these jobs. He screened some of the worst content on social media — violence, terrorism, assault, just the worst of the



internet — that he had to watch and label and mark, leaving him with lasting PTSD. He's now suing both Meta and Sama for the impact of that job. With media coverage, change will come, particularly around working conditions like taking more breaks, having more support, not having to sign non-disclosure agreements. You write about public surveillance disproportionately harming marginalised communities and protestors against the state. In a country like India, how does this affect a layperson with little knowledge of AI?

Mass surveillance becomes a dragnet. You're identifying a whole bunch of people, some of whom are just regular people going about their job. The argument isn't so much that I have nothing to hide, so I have nothing to fear. What if, one day, you become what somebody defines as a persecuted minority? Those definitions change all the time. In the book, I look at a dictatorship in 1970s Latin America, where data collection became a weapon. The definition of an enemy of the state was extremely broad. It became anybody who was religious, educated, or who they felt could threaten the dictatorship. In another time, you would've had nothing to fear if you're just a university lecturer. Things change under different governments. As a citizen of any country, you're no longer a private citizen in a public space. There's no such thing as being anonymous in a crowd anymore. How do we advance conversations about creativity which usually begin and end with — we can generate texts so we don't need writers, we can generate designs so we don't need designers?

Much of the conversation is: Is this good enough for the job? That's how tech companies are selling it. It's good enough for your office work, to write emails, to pair programme and go play golf. It's about convenience. But the next step is, what if we don't want to just be good enough? What about being the best at something?

The joy of doing something? Do we want to read books written by an AI? We read books to find a connection to the author's voice, to see something of ourselves in there. AI doesn't have that. Science fiction has damning things to say about how we use technology to solve social problems like loneliness. How do you see the future of this? AI will change how we communicate. I've written about Renata Naira, former CEO of Tinder, and how she was disillusioned with the app changing human relationships. Now she's working on a lan-

guage-model bot offering relationship advice. She believes that it could help young people connect again by reducing the risks of putting yourself out there. But I also spoke to researcher Ron Ivy, who says technology will lock us into cycles of just wanting to talk to tech all the time, not trusting one another. It'll make things worse for people with extreme behaviours, like those who commit terror acts due to being lonely and shut off from the world. There will definitely be changes. I'm not fully convinced that it will be positive. I'm open to seeing where it goes.

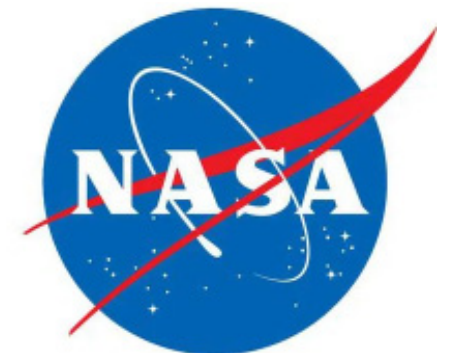
## NASA grants \$10 million to 7 firms for Mars Sample Return Mission

New Delhi: NASA on Saturday announced a grant of about \$1.5 million each to seven companies for studies exploring more affordable and faster methods for the Mars sample return mission. The companies, which include Lockheed Martin, SpaceX, Blue Origin, Quantum Space, and Northrop Grumman, will conduct ten three-month-long studies.

In addition, NASA centres, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California, and Johns Hopkins' Applied Physics Laboratory are also producing studies.

Once completed, NASA aims to assess all studies to consider alterations or enhancements to the Mars Sample Return architecture.

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said that the Mars sample return mission "will be one of the most complex" that the US space agency has undertaken. He said, "It is critical to carry it out more quickly, with less risk, and at a lower cost." "I'm excited



to see the vision that these companies, centres, and partners present as we look for fresh, exciting, and innovative ideas to uncover great cosmic secrets from the Red Planet," Nelson said. NASA has been engaging in several missions over the last century to determine the early history of Mars and to understand the formation and evolution of habitable worlds, including Earth.