

Rental price rise in Q2 of 2024 drops to 3 percent in Hyd

Hyderabad: Hyderabad's rental market, particularly in Hitec City and Gachibowli, saw an average rent rise of 3 per cent in the second quarter (Q2) of 2024, down from 5 per cent recorded in the Q1. The once-booming rental markets in India's top cities are now showing signs of stabilization due to a surge in housing supply. According to the latest Anarock data, average residential rental prices across the key markets in the cities saw a 2 per cent to 4 per cent quarterly increase in Q2 2024, a notable drop as against 4 per cent to 9 per cent quarterly hike observed in Q1 2024.

Hyderabad, a major focus of this trend, exemplifies this shift. In Q2 2024, the average rents in Hyderabad's Hitec City and Gachibowli rose by just 3 per cent. This rise falls sort of the 5 per cent increase that these areas witnessed in the previous quarter. The city is set to see around 34,770 units completed by the end of 2024, significantly up from the 20,500 units completed in 2023, Anarock report said. Santhosh Kumar, Vice

Chairman of Anarock Group, said, "In India, the second quarter typically sees higher rent increases due to the new academic year and employment trends. This year, declining rental value growth coincides with substantial new housing supply entering these markets." The top seven cities are expected to deliver approximately 5,31,000 new units in 2024, a 22 per cent increase from the 4,35,000 units completed in 2023. Other major cities also reflect this trend. In Noida's Sector 150, average rents rose by 4 per cent in Q2 2024, compared to a 9 per cent rise in Q1 2024. Mumbai's key markets of Chembur and Mulund experienced a 2 per cent rise in Q2 2024, down from over 4 per cent in Q1 2024. Overall, the increase in housing supply is evident across the top cities. MMR is set to lead with approximately 1,60,900 units completed in 2024, up from 1,43,500 in 2023. Bengaluru, despite being a rental hotspot, will witness a slight decrease with 51,685 units in 2024, down from 52,565 in



2023. Kolkata and Chennai will see moderate increases in completions, Anarock said in its report. This surge in supply is

playing a crucial role in moderating rental prices, providing much-needed relief to renters across these metropolitan areas.

Officials hold meeting with IT companies to tackle traffic in Hyd



Hyderabad: The Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC), in collaboration with the Cyberabad Traffic Police, organised a cluster meeting with IT and ITES companies in the Phoenix Infocity area of Gachibowli and Sattva Knowledge City in Raidurgam, on Friday. Chaired by D. Joel Davis, Joint Commissioner (Traffic) Cyberabad, the primary agenda of the meeting was to discuss effective strategies for traffic decongestion in the bustling IT corridor.

During the meeting, Joel Davis and IT firm representatives outlined their initiatives aimed at improving traffic flow in the IT hub. They emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts between law enforcement agencies and corporate entities to address the growing traffic challenges. Key points discussed during the meeting include staggered work timings, deployment of Traffic Marshals, car pooling, centralized transport system and

crisis management drill, among others. Officials highlighted the need for regular crisis management drills to ensure preparedness and effective response dur-

ing emergencies. By implementing these strategies, the goal is to enhance the overall commuting experience for employees and residents alike.

Health profile of Govt. employees to be compiled soon: Collector Khan

Khammam: A health camp for the government employees in the district would be organised soon to compile their health profile to monitor their health condition, informed district Collector Muzammil Khan. Maintaining health in a proper condition was very important; officials and staff have to balance their health and family affairs while performing duties in an effective manner. The government employees in the district would also be made aware of personal finance and investments, he said. At an introduction programme here on Friday the Collector interacted with the district officials and staff. He inquired about the basic facilities such as dining hall, toilets, drinking water in the IDOC complex and wanted to reduce the use of plastic by 100 per cent. Khan asked the district officials about the problems they were facing



and wanted a report submitted on the necessary supplies and measures to be taken to address the problems. Earlier in the day, the Collector conducted surprise inspections at seeds and fertiliser shops on Burma Shell Road and Gandhi Chowk in Khammam city.

Why India refused to back the Ukraine summit statement?

The two-day international peace summit on Ukraine, held at the Bürgenstock resort in Switzerland and wrapped up on June 16, exposed the fault lines in the way the world looks at the war rather than showing a united response. Switzerland, the host, called the conference, with backing from Ukraine and its Western allies, to chart out a framework for future peace in Ukraine, which was invaded by Russia on February 24, 2022. Delegations from more than 100 countries, including India, participated in the conference. But there was a catch. Russia, which launched the war, was not invited for the meet. China, a major strategic partner of Russia and the world's second largest economy, had shunned the conference. Brazil, the Chair of G20 this year, sent only observers, not participants. And India, the fifth largest economy which continued to maintain its trade and strategic ties with Russia despite the war and pressure from the West, chose to send a diplomatic delegation rather than a political one. At the summit, more than 80 countries signed a joint statement that backed "dialogue between all parties" to resolve the conflict. "The ongoing war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine continues to cause large-scale human suffering and destruction and to create risks and crises with global repercussions," according to the joint statement. But members also addressed, though indirectly, the main bottleneck—the absence of Russia in the room. "Further engagement of the representatives of all parties" was necessary to proceed, it said, vaguely referring to the need for Russian participation in future talks. While most members supported dialogue, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who spoke at the conference, set out the terms for talks with Russia. He said, drawing from the 10-point peace formula Kyiv had released earlier, that Ukraine would hold talks with Russia only if the latter withdrew from all of its territories, including Crimea, which Russia annexed through a referendum in 2014. His plan also included reparations from Russia and justice for alleged war crimes committed by Russian forces during the war.

India, which was represented by Pavan Kapoor, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, refused to sign the document, titled 'Joint Communiqué on a Peace Framework', along with other countries such as South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Mexico, Thailand and the UAE. "Our participation in the summit and continued engagement with all stakeholders is with a view to understanding different perspectives, approaches and options to find a way forward for a sustainable resolution of the conflict, in our view, only those options acceptable to both parties can lead to abiding peace," said Mr. Kapoor. Other countries who refused to sign the document also expressed similar concerns, saying lasting peace cannot be achieved if Russia sits outside the talks. South Africa, which has filed a genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, protested the Swiss authorities' decision to invite Israel to the summit.

Though there was no consensus at the Swiss summit, Ukraine's Western backers used it to express their support and solidarity with Kyiv, at a time when Ukrainian forces are struggling to arrest Russia's advances in the eastern battlefield. Russia has captured hundreds of square kilometres of Ukrainian territory this year. Earlier last week, in Italy, G7 advanced countries decided to leverage some \$260 billion Russian assets, which have been frozen mostly by European banks, to grant a \$50 billion loan to Ukraine. G7 countries also stated that they would stand by Ukraine "as long as it takes".

Meanwhile, President Vladimir Putin of Russia said he was ready for a ceasefire, but only if Ukraine withdraws full troops from all the four regions Russia has annexed—Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. Mr. Putin said his proposal is aimed at a "final resolution" of the conflict in Ukraine rather than "freezing it," and stressed that the Kremlin is "ready to start negotiations without delay". Ukraine has rejected Mr. Putin's offer at once. So basically, there is no consensus. Ukraine and its backers want Russia to withdraw from all territories it captured as a precondition to start negotiations. Russia wants Ukraine's complete surrender and withdrawal from the regions it claims as its own to cease fire and start talks. While the chasm between the two sides remains wide, the war is going on with Russia making incremental gains in the battlefield. India backs the idea of dialogue. And it wants



the war to be brought to an end. But it believes that for achieving this goal, both Russia and Ukraine have to hold talks. International peace summits on the Ukraine war that omits Russia may not help advance the agenda of talks between Moscow and Kyiv. The Top Five Stories this week. Rassemblement National: France's rally towards the right. The far-right party, whose neo-fascist predecessor was once on the margins of French politics, is aiming to win the coming parliamentary polls, after trouncing President Macron's centrists in the EU elections, writes Joan Sony Cherian in The Hindu Profiles. Britain's summer of discontent. Instead of looking forward with hope, Britain is looking back in anger, as it

gets ready to vote on July 4, writes Priyanjali Malik. From warp speed to reset, the state of India-U.S. ties. A close look at the 'good, the not-so-good, and what could-become ugly' in the relationship, writes Suhasini Haidar. Why India needs a third aircraft carrier. Building the IAC-2, albeit with upgrades, modifications and greater local content compared with IAC-1 Vikrant, is also intended to prevent CSLs carrier-building expertise from lapsing into disuse, writes Rahul Bedi.

One more chance: On Israel and the Biden three-phase ceasefire plan. Israel will have to accept the UN-backed ceasefire proposal or face isolation, write The Hindu in this editorial.

Google launches Gemini chatbot app in India, with Gemini 1.5 Pro supporting nine Indian languages

Google announced the launch of the Gemini chatbot app in India, with support for English as well as nine Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. Android device users can download the Gemini app through the Google Play Store, or opt-in through Google Assistant. iOS access is expected in the coming weeks. Gemini Advanced will support the same languages and is powered by Google's Gemini 1.5 Pro model, its most advanced one for now.

"With a massive 1 million token context window, Gemini Advanced now boasts the longest context of any widely available consumer chatbot worldwide. This allows it to process and understand vast amounts of information, from lengthy documents (up to 1,500 pages) and emails to even hours of video and extensive codebases in the near future," said Google's Amar Subramanya, Vice President, Engineering, Gemini Experiences, in a company blog post. With Gemini Advanced, users will be able to use AI to process multiple large documents; they can upload up to 1,500 pages, or they can summarise 100 emails. Gemini will also be coming to



Google messages, in English, on Android devices with 6GB of RAM or more. "Now, whether you need to plan a game night, create a recipe with specific ingredients, or craft a social media caption, Gemini is available on the go. The app allows you to type, talk, or even add an image to get the assistance you need. Take a picture of a flat tire for instructions on how to change it,

or get help writing that perfect thank you note – the possibilities are endless," said Google, adding that it was working towards a "truly conversational, multimodal, and helpful AI assistant." While Gemini can generate content in a matter of seconds, the technology powering it is still experimental and the chatbot is prone to making mistakes or throwing out non-existent material that is not backed up by research.

The 3 days 'IID Design Showcase Insider X 2024', to showcase awe inspiring & innovative design options from June 28th.

IIID - Hyderabad Regional Chapter, is hosting the Fifth Edition of its prestigious flagship event "IIID Showcase Insider X 2024", with the theme Design Intelligence, from the 28th to 30th June 2022 at Hitex Exhibition Centre. The Exhibition will be inaugurated by Chief Guest, Shri A.Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister, Government of Telangana, on June 28th 2024, at 11.00 am. Ar.Sarosh Wadia, National President, IIID will be the Guest of honour. At the Fellowship meet in the evening the keynote address would be by the eminent Architect Peter Rich from Johannesburg, South Africa, and Ar. Siddharth Talwar from Lotus Architects at HICC. A valedictory function would be held on 29th June.

Curated by Architects and Interior designers of the Institute of Indian Interior Designers, Hyderabad Chapter, the Expo has been specifically crafted for the interior design, architecture and construction industry. Aims to bring industry professionals and the common man on to a single platform. Spread over three days, the B2B Trade Expo will showcase emerging trends and contemporary design solutions. On June 21st, 2024, the members of IIID HRC organized a curtain raiser event and launched the poster for InsiderX 2024 at the National Academy of Construction (NAC), HITEK, in Hyderabad. The event was attended by Ar. Pallavi Anchuri (Chairperson), Ar. Rakesh Vasu C.S (Convener, InsiderX 2024 and Honorary Treasurer), Ar. Naveen Chalasani (Co-convener, InsiderX 2024 and Honorary Secretary), and Mr. Sandeep Jain (Vice Chairman, Trade), along with other IIID members.

On this occasion IIID-HRC Design Showcase Insider X, Convener and Hon.Treasurer IIID-HRC, Ar. Rakesh Vasu C S stated that, "The IIID Hyderabad Chapter hosts the Design Showcase event bi-annually to bring to the Hyderabad fraternity the latest trends, thoughts and innovations in the Design industry. It is a comprehensive forum covering every vertical, offering every element, from smart devices to turnkey solutions. We would like to be at the forefront of defining the aspirations of the common man on the one hand and helping with design solutions for our government departments on the other."

Ar. Rakesh Vasu C.S also stated that This time the showcase is based on a Theme- Design Intelligence. While encouraging the Artisans, weavers and craftsman of the Art & Crafts industry, IIID-HRC has uniquely conducted an educative workshop Sthapatya Utsav for the Students and mentored by senior Architects. Ar.Praveen Kumar Noone, Chairperson elect has mentioned that The Showcase has some of the best Display of Art & Craft installations designed and crafted by design Students under the able guidance of senior mentors. The Design street has been curated by Ar. Yeshwant Ramamurthy where top designers have collaborated with Artisans & Craftsman displaying the products. The Chairperson of IIID HRC Ar.Pallavi Anchuri observed that "we have had a great mix of architects, interior designers, design related trade professionals, builders, project managers, MEP consultants, as well as industry specifiers from defense, government and the corporate



sectors and serious homebuilders that will be visiting the Expo. Being at the cusp of development in the two sister States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, I think we are strategically placed to build a stronger industry presence through this medium."

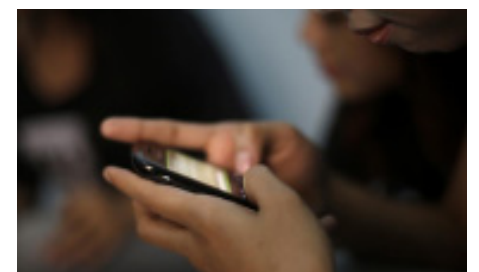
New York moves to limit 'addictive' social media feeds for kids

New York Governor Kathy Hochul on Thursday signed a bill that would allow parents to block their children from getting social media posts suggested by a platform's algorithm, a move to limit feeds critics argue are addictive. Under the legislation, feeds on apps like TikTok and Instagram would be limited for people under age 18 to posts from accounts they follow, rather than content suggested by an automated algorithm. It would also block platforms from sending minors notifications on suggested posts between midnight and 6 a.m. Both provisions could be turned off if a minor gets what the bill defines as "verifiable parental consent." The law does not take effect immediately. State Attorney General Letitia James is now tasked with crafting rules to determine mechanisms for verifying a user's age and parental consent. After the rules are finalised, social media companies will have 180 days to implement the regulations. "We can protect our kids. We can tell the companies that you are not allowed to do this, you don't have a right to do this, that parents should have say over their children's lives and their health, not you," Hochul, a Democrat, said at a bill signing ceremony in Manhattan. The signing is the first step in what is expected to be a drawn out process of rule making, and a probable lawsuit from social media companies to block the law. NetChoice, a tech industry trade

group that includes X and Meta, has criticised the legislation as unconstitutional.

"This is an assault on free speech and the open internet by the State of New York," Carl Szabo, vice president and general counsel of NetChoice, said in a statement. "New York has created a way for the government to track what sites people visit and their online activity by forcing websites to censor all content unless visitors provide an ID to verify their age." Most of the biggest social media platforms send users a steady stream of suggested videos, photographs and other content, using a computer to try and predict what will keep users entertained and engaged for as long as possible. The algorithms use a variety of factors to curate that content, including what a user has clicked on before and interests of other people with similar preferences.

The bill marks the latest attempt by a state to regulate social media as part of concerns over how children interact with the platforms. California Governor Gavin Newsom this week announced plans to work with the Legislature on a bill to restrict smartphone usage for students during the school day, though he didn't provide exact details on what the proposal would include. Newsom in 2019 signed a bill allowing school districts to limit or ban smartphones while at school. There hasn't been broad legislation on the subject at



the federal level but it is a common point of discussion in Washington. This week the U.S. surgeon general called on Congress to put warning labels on social media platforms similar to those on cigarettes, citing mental health dangers for children using the sites. Some tech companies, with pressure mounting, have decided to set up parental controls on their platforms. Last year, Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, created tools that allowed parents to set time limits on the apps for children.

The New York legislation, debuted last October, had faced major pushback in the Legislature from the tech industry. "Social media platforms manipulate what our children see online to keep them on the platforms as long as possible," said James, a Democrat who pushed for the bill. "The more time young people spend on social media, the more they are at risk of developing serious mental health concerns."

Nav Yoga Academy and 17th Battalion of Indian Army Collaborate for Impactful International Yoga Day Celebration



Nav Yoga Academy, a leading yoga institution in Hyderabad, recently collaborated with the Indian Army to organize a special International Yoga Day celebration at the Hanuman Mandir Football Ground in Narsingi, Hyderabad. The event, which was attended by over 500 army personnel and their families, aimed to promote physical and mental well-being through the transformative power of yoga.

The collaboration between Nav Yoga Academy and the Indian Army was initiated after the Army experienced positive results from the awareness programs conducted by Navyoga at their premises. Impressed with the impact of yoga on their personnel, the Army approached Nav Yoga to leverage their expertise in organizing a memorable International Yoga Day event for their community.

"We are honored to have partnered with the 17th Battalion of Indian Army for this meaningful celebration of International Yoga Day," said Mr. Naveen Kolli, Founder and Director of Nav Yoga Academy. "The event was designed to cater to the specific needs of army personnel and their families, with our experienced instructors guiding them through a series of yoga sessions focused on stress reduction, flexibility, and overall health." The event was graced by the presence of Smt. Hemanjali Badoni, Chairperson of the Family Welfare Organization (FWO) of the Golconda Battalion,

underscoring the importance of holistic well-being for the armed forces community. Nav Yoga Academy, known for its seven centers across Hyderabad, has been at the forefront of promoting yoga in

the city. The academy offers regular offline and online yoga classes, as well as teacher training programs for aspiring yoga instructors. The International Yoga Day celebration with the Indian Army and their fami-

lies proved to be a unique and enriching experience for all participants. The event was open to the public, and the organizers encouraged everyone to join in and embrace the transformative power of yoga.

Man gets 10-year jail, fine Rs 20,000 for attempting rape woman in Asifabad

Kumram Bheem Asifabad: A local court sentenced a man to 10 years of imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 20,000 in an attempt to rape case here on Friday. Asifabad Inspector G Sathish said that District Sessions Court principal judge convicted Chunarkar Mukund Rao of Babapur for attempting to rape a woman who was his relative on January 5, 2021. Superintendent of Police DV Srinivas commended Inspector Sathish, SI Rajeshwar and court liaising officer Ram Singh for getting the case convicted.

Maharashtra's woman had a fatal fall in Adilabad: A woman from Maharashtra was killed on the spot when she sustained fatal head injuries after falling off a motorbike in which she along with

another person were returning after visiting a Dargah at Shekuguda on Friday. Police said Dorkande Sunitha from Chandrapur district of Maharashtra was injured grievously when she fell down from the two-wheeler when one Ravi tried to avoid a pothole on the road, resulting in instantaneous death for her. The two were



heading back to Chandrapur at the time of the mishap.

DPS Nacharam Resonates with High Spirits on International Yoga Day



The sound of "OM" reverberated through the grounds of DPS Nacharam, emanating from the hearts of over 8,000 students as the school celebrated World Yoga Day on June 21. Clad in white and green—colors symbolizing purity and renewal—students were deeply immersed in their yoga practice, experiencing profound spiritual upliftment. It was a visual delight to witness the students moving in perfect harmony, performing each asana with exceptional precision and dedication. Chairman Malka Komaraiah illuminated the transformative power of yoga and its relevance in today's fast-paced world. "Yoga instills a sense of balance, peace, and resilience," he remarked, "qualities that are essential for our students' holistic development."

The presence of Swami Bodhamayananda as the chief guest was a fortuitous blessing. He imparted his wisdom on the true essence of life, emphasizing how meditation and yoga work wonders for both body and mind. He added, "Yoga is not just an exercise; it is a journey to the self, through the self, and by the self." Following the yoga practice, there was an impressive performance by the students, showcasing advanced asanas and synchronized movements that highlighted their dedication and skill. The audience was captivated by the grace and strength demonstrated by the performers. The chief guest for the celebrations, Shri Chandrashekhar Tiwari ji, Telangana State organisation secretary - BJP (General Sec-

retary), thanked the school for making him a part of the Yoga Day celebrations. He appreciated the yoga performance and encouraged everyone to take an oath to keep themselves healthy. CEO Yasasvi Malka expressed gratitude and thanked all participants. He said, "When the Prime Min-

ister works 18 hours a day and still finds time to do yoga for 30 minutes, we all should follow his example." The day's celebrations were further enriched by an essay writing competition on Yoga Day and a quiz, where students showcased their knowledge and insights about yoga's benefits and philosophy. A yoga asana competi-

tion was also conducted and students were observed excelling every asana.

The enthusiasm and participation of the students reflected their deep connection with the spirit of yoga, making the event not just a celebration but a journey towards inner peace and collective harmony.

Huawei says it has made huge strides, from operating systems to AI

China's Huawei Technologies said on Friday it had made breakthroughs in fields from operating systems to artificial intelligence, and that it had taken the company 10 years to do what the United States and Europe took 30 years to achieve. Richard Yu, chairman of Huawei's Consumer Business Group, was speaking at the opening of a three-day developer conference in the southern Chinese city of Dongguan, where he said the company's Harmony operating system was now available on more than 900 million devices.

"Harmony has made major breakthroughs. You can say in 10 years we've achieved what it took our European and American counterparts more than 30 years to do, in terms of building the core technology of an independent operating system,"

Yu said. HarmonyOS is Huawei's proprietary operating system which it launched in 2019, when U.S. technology restrictions cut it off from Google support for the Android operating system it used in smartphones.

The company's Ascend artificial intelligence infrastructure - the most powerful from a Chinese company - was now the second most popular after Nvidia, which dominates the market for AI chips, Yu added. Operating systems and other software has been dominated by Europe and the United States for a long time, although the era of internet of things has given Huawei an opportunity to overtake them, he said. Huawei's smartphone business has gone through a renaissance since the Mate 60 launched last year with a improved



China-made chip. Harmony-equipped smartphone sales have risen 68% in the first five months of the year, Yu said. In the first quarter of 2024,

Huawei's HarmonyOS surpassed Apple's iOS to become the second best-selling mobile operating system in China behind Android with a 17% market share, research firm Counterpoint said.

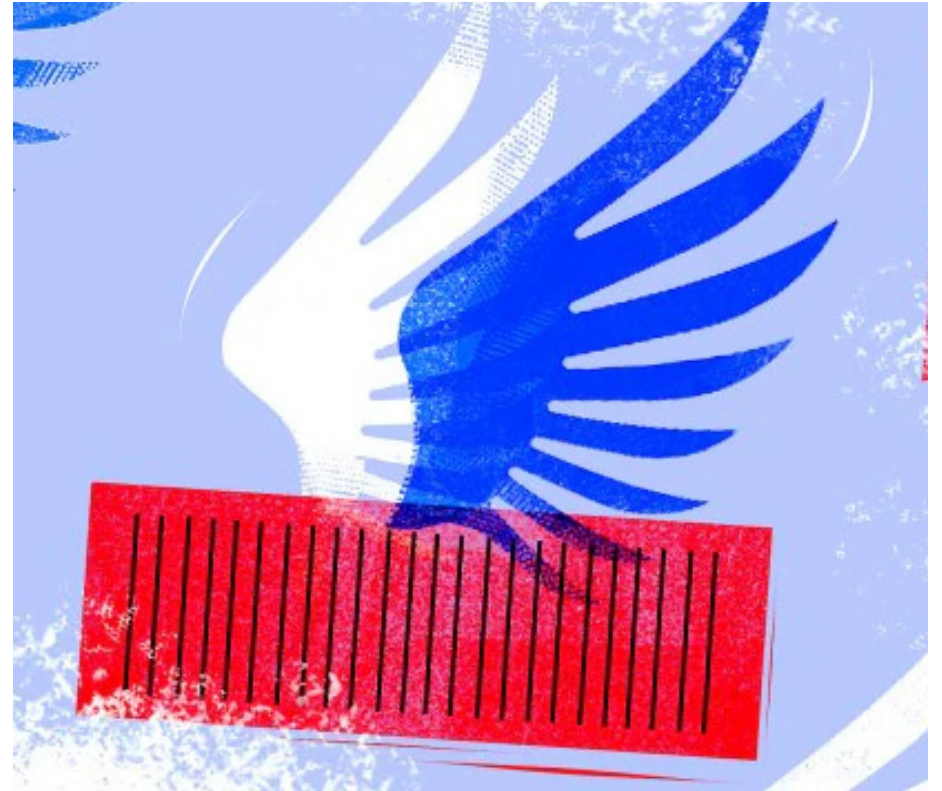
Why new government should embrace global markets

Even as the newly-elected government begins the quest for a Viksit Bharat, here is some trade policy counsel, entirely gratuitous, without provocation and with a dose of abundant humility. The period immediately after a General Election is good for breakthrough policy, and if there is an area that needs one, it is trade. For, without an increase in trade, India will be unable to emulate the successes of its East Asian neighbours and without heightened competitiveness, it will be unable to trade.

The Global Financial Crisis of 2008, the Euro Zone struggles of 2010 and the economic downturn as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic recently, all in close succession, have prompted many governments to rethink global engagements. Protectionism, industrial policy and self-reliance, once anathema for trade policy thinkers in developed countries, are now well and truly embedded in the mainstream discourse. India faces a two-pronged challenge in this regard. One is to promote its ambition of an Atmanirbhar Bharat, to make India self-reliant by being “vocal for local”, that is, prioritising domestic goods over imports. This narrative sits uneasily with India’s other ambition of attaining \$1 trillion worth of exports. India’s export ambition cannot be achieved without integrating with global value chains (GVC), which in turn requires a healthy prescription of openness, foreign direct investment (FDI) and import competition. An import tariff or rise in protection is akin to an export tax. India’s hard-earned lesson that export promotion and import substitution are conflicting policies looms large over its trade policy and economic agenda. The country needs to create a balance.

The pandemic showed the world the consequences of import disruptions. While diversifying GVCs is certainly a medium to long-term aim, it is not without costs in the short run. We are banking on the augmentation of local capacity through schemes such as production-linked incentives (PLIs) that provide performance-based financial incentives for local production. Until November 2023, PLI schemes have resulted in the production/sales of Rs 8.61 lakh crore and generated employment (direct and indirect) of over 6.78 lakh. Before that, the government exited negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Its existing trade deficit with China emerged as a key reason for this exit, along with the non-consideration of its key demand on cross-border movement of professionals and the influence of the cooperatives-intensive farm and dairy sector that feared competition from New Zealand and Australia among others. India’s journey towards free trade and multilateralism has been fraught with challenges. It pursued an aggressive import substitution policy during the 1980s but found import substitution and export promotion to be quite contradictory. So, during and beyond the 1991 crisis, it adopted a liberal trade policy but subsequently remained reluctant to embrace second- or third-generation trade reforms. This has been mainly due to India’s expe-

rience of trade deficit with countries with which it signed trade agreements. This strong policy narrative slowed down its liberalisation and participation in GVCs. India’s economic isolationism strategy has since changed for the better. We have signed several FTAs including four FTAs since 2021 after nine years of no agreements. These include the India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) in 2021, the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), and the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (CECTA) in 2022. The latest Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with EFTA countries (Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein) was signed on March 10 and secured commitments of \$100 billion and 1 million direct jobs over the next 15 years. Despite this, we are ambiguous about regional trade agreements (RTAs), mainly the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Globally, these are the two mega-regional trade agreements and India finds itself outside both. We have eternally supported multilateralism in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and elsewhere. At the same time, we stay away from discussions on services and e-commerce in the WTO, again revealing an ambivalence to more engagement. Even if India disagrees, it is better to be part of the negotiations or in other words “in the tent”, than outside it. Non-participation is often interpreted as a sign of weakness for which there is no reason whatsoever at this juncture. There is no doubt that we now recognise the importance of deepening penetration in global markets, as reflected in flagship programmes like Make in India. Such initiatives could be helped by bilateral trade agreements, but are likely to be adversely affected by India’s reluctance to join RTAs, underlining the enduring reluctance to embrace trade for its strategic advantage. The fear of China looms large, but we need to shrug off this mentality that is of no strategic advantage. Geopolitically, India has attempted to establish itself as an important global player, aided by its hosting of the G20 presidency. It is aiming to position itself as an alternate manufacturing destination to China and compete with other South Asian economies like Vietnam, Cambodia and Bangladesh. This is a descent — from being compared with China a decade or more ago, we now compete with lesser powers for investment. In April 2024, an RBI bulletin underscored strong investment demand and positive business and consumer sentiments as key drivers of economic growth. We urgently need to recognise that from an economic perspective, we need open global markets more than ever for exports and for creating efficiency and competition in domestic markets. But this is often couched in obscure language. Simply put, even after 25 years of the 1991 reforms, we are humouring protectionist tendencies. Counter to the domi-



nant narrative, openness will also aid labour-intensive manufacturing and speak to one of India’s stubborn problems of productive job creation or lack thereof. In recent years, the concept of digital public infrastructure (DPI) has gained significant attention. DPI is a potentially transformative process that utilises ubiquitous digital technologies to connect people and devices.

India has built public digital platforms that have transformed lives. Many countries have shown interest in them and this could be an important marker of India’s soft power. It has even been called a “low-cost,

software-based version of China’s infrastructure-led Belt and Road Initiative.” But India needs to tread this line with caution and not be dogmatic about its structure. What’s more, if we wish to situate ourselves as a “rule-shaper” as opposed to a “rule-taker”, we need to unequivocally demonstrate our embrace of global markets, and to use a colloquialism, “put our money where our mouth is”.

For a labour-abundant economy, it is far better to subsidise job creation rather than industry. Now is an opportunity to shed inhibitions and do a repeat of 1991— without waiting for a crisis to do so.

Hyderabad to host global music icons for Fête de la Musique 2024

Hyderabad: Hyderabad is set to resonate with global beats as Fête de la Musique 2024, an internationally celebrated music festival, brings global artists to the city. Founded 41 years ago, this vibrant festival, also known as World Music Day, has become a global phenomenon, celebrated in numerous countries to honour the universal language of music.

Taking place in India from June 14 to 30, the festival is organised by the Embassy of France in India, the French Institute in India (IFI), and the Alliance Française network. This multi-city festival aims to explore the diverse musical landscape and foster dialogue between France and India.

The city will host two performances. Known for his vibrant sets and affiliation with Boukan Records, Paris-based DJ and producer Greg will take the stage at Ext. by Moonshine on June 19. Following this, on

June 23, French pop sensation Brö will perform at Malibu in Hyderabad.

The festival will present a range of concerts, workshops, and panel discussions across different cities including Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Jaipur, Pune, Bhopal, Trivandrum, and Pondicherry. The 2024 edition will be held entirely offline, providing a fully immersive in-person experience. Attendees can anticipate engaging live performances and a captivating tour by the featured artists throughout India. Further, the festival will feature Akoda, led by Creole jazz pianist Valérie Chane Tef, performing in cities such as Delhi and Bangalore. Akoda’s music, a fusion of contemporary jazz and Creole heritage, has garnered international acclaim. An overview of the Fête de la Musique 2024 schedule can be checked at www.fetedelamusique.in.

What Modi 3.0 should do to make Bharat vishwa bandhu and vishwa guru



After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meetings with the beleaguered "steering committee of the free world" at the G7 outreach summit at Apulia on the Adriatic coast of Italy, it is clear that a fractured and fragile world needs India and its leadership, almost desperately so — much of the West seems to have run out of steam and ideas. In a precarious international system, the self-declared "enlightened world", including the Holy See, is looking East with trepidation and expectation. While Xi Jinping's China poses the greatest threat to the values, interests and the Western way of living and thinking, in India there is hope for the future. Clearly, this episodic Western romance with India is not new, but this time it is not another New Age Helena Blavatsky's search for spiritual masters. Instead, it is a fresh faith in the promise of India — in almost every sense of the word: As a vishwa mitra, a vishwa bandhu, a vishwa guru and even as a vishwa rakshak (friend, family, guru and protector).

Can India live up to these heightened expectations? Can India build the capacity to take on a new leadership role? Can Bharat draw from the vast reservoir of thinking that existed much before the West was constructed as an idea? Only if India learns to act with a combination of alacrity, audacity, and the flexibility required to deal with an uncertain world and rapidly changing circumstances. These strengths are needed to transform Bharat into a global mediator; a manager of the region; and act as a mobiliser against the looming threat

from China. And only if Bharat learns to value the huge pool of wisdom that continues to exist within the country, including in the sacred geographies of the land. Consider this: In the middle of March, at the height of the violence in Gaza, Israeli's mercurial Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who seemed to have little time for outside advice, made an exception. He agreed to meet, on March 11, with a special envoy from a trusted friend. The proposal that Ajit Doval, India's National Security Advisor, carried on behalf of Modi was audacious: The Israeli leader should announce a unilateral ceasefire during Ramadan, and to allow Indian humanitarian assistance to reach affected civilians. Contrary to expectations, Netanyahu was not dismissive and surprisingly well disposed, and the proposal almost translated into reality. But it finally broke down because the trust deficit among the principal stakeholders was far too wide to be bridged quickly. Only two weeks later, on March 25, did the United Nations Security Council adopt a resolution demanding a ceasefire to be respected by all parties during Ramadan.

The Gaza initiative is one of a series of extraordinary Indian attempts to intervene meaningfully in complicated international situations through a synergy of diplomacy, intelligence and the use or threat of use of force that have characterised some of the "shadowy efforts" during Modi 2.0. The breakthrough with Mohammed bin

Salman of Saudi Arabia, the proximity to Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the UAE, the LoC ceasefire through a back channel with Pakistan's ISI and the Army, the attempts at organising a meeting between Putin and Zelensky all exhibited unprecedented chutzpah. Today, India's strategic autonomy and its unwillingness to take sides — particularly in a knee-jerk manner — have given it, as the PM has put it, the space, influence and weight to suggest out-of-the-box ideas which have traction at the high table of international relations. Much, however, will depend now on Modi 3.0, on not just the Prime Minister and his team, but on Modi's ability to tap into thinking beyond Western ideas — particularly from Indian traditions and other voices in the Global South. Let us face it, the stilted bureaucracy is incapable of providing support by way of new ideas, neither are the fly-by-night operators who manage think tanks (with neither cerebral energy nor armoured gear), sponsored often by funders of dubious foreign provenance. Reaching out to homegrown talent and scholars with their deep knowledge of shrutis and smritis, and other ancient Indian texts should be on top of Modi 3.0's agenda. The Prime Minister's Office must tap into this ocean of wisdom, spread across Bharat, and in multiple institutions that are the natural repositories of Indian knowledge and fresh ideas. Throughout history, it has also been evident that no country ascends to great-power status without securing stability and influence in its

immediate neighbourhood. From the Roman Empire to the United States, from the Mauryan Empire to the Vijayanagara and Chola kingdoms, peace in the neighbourhood has been a critical component of their rise to prominence. India cannot afford to overlook the significance of its neighbourhood as it takes on a global role as a mediator. India's neighbourhood presents, as we know, with great challenges and opportunities, and this too requires fresh ideas and special envoys working in a mission mode, particularly to deal effectively with a troubled and troubling Pakistan, which seems to be resuscitating its terror machinery. Zero tolerance for external interference in South Asia — India's neighbourhood — must be the guiding maxim of Modi 3.0, as it seeks to swiftly and effectively integrate the region through a combination of carrots and sticks customised for each country. The China challenge is one for the entire international system; rarely has the world witnessed, almost helplessly, the rapid rise of a revisionist power determined to build a global empire to advance its narrow interests and increasingly with the means to do so. India's greatest strategic challenge is also from China. India must build its domestic capabilities to address this through an all-of-government approach. In addition, India must establish itself as a "mobiliser" — proactively mobilising regional and international partners to address China's challenge across geographies and addressing, in particular, security concerns.

The arrival of Azad in Kanshi Ram's land

Chandrashekhara Azad's emergence as the new Dalit leader in Uttar Pradesh following his resounding victory in Nagina in the just-concluded elections could be a death knell for Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party, which once again failed to win a single seat in the State. While Mr. Azad garnered over 51% of votes, BSP's Surendra Pal Singh barely topped 1%. The passing of the baton could not have been louder or clearer. It reminded many of the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests in December 2019. Back then, most political leaders, including Ms. Mayawati, were shy of being seen with the protestors in Delhi and elsewhere. Not so Mr. Azad. Barely a couple of days after Imam Ahmed Bukhari of Delhi's historic Jama Masjid had voiced support for the CAA, arguing it did not affect Indian Muslims, Mr. Azad showed up around the time of the Friday prayers at the mosque. Even as the imam peered from behind the window of his room at the mosque, Mr. Azad gave an impassioned call from the steps of the mosque, and thousands of Muslims turned their back on the cleric and rallied behind him. It presented one of the most abiding images of the anti-CAA struggle. Mr. Azad had arrived. Or so thought many who witnessed the huge support he received from the masses that day. Two years later, Time magazine featured him among the 100 Emerging Leaders. Destiny seemed to wait for him with arms outstretched.

Mr. Azad though had to wait for his moment for over four years. In between, there were cases registered against him, including detention by Delhi Police for the Jama Masjid event for which police permission had been denied. Soon after the CAA stir, he founded the Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram), and this June became the party's first Parliamentarian. His victory, while being heartwarming for Mr. Azad, could prove crucial in the days to come for politics in Uttar Pradesh. In the run-up to the general elections, representatives of the Samajwadi Party had held meetings with Mr. Azad, hoping to bring him into the fold of the INDIA bloc. The meetings did not bear the desired results. Meanwhile, Mr. Azad — while maintaining a public posture of respect for Ms. Mayawati as a senior Dalit leader — proved to be a good student of Kanshi Ram's book of politics. He realised the importance of being the voice of the Dalit community. Equally importantly, he realised its electoral limitations too. If he harboured any dreams of making a mark at the State or national level, he would have to bring together Dalits and Muslims. It was this perspicacity that drew him to Delhi's Jama Masjid in 2019. It was the same ability to look into the future that drew him to Nagina, a constituency with a 20% Dalit and 40% Muslim population.

With both Dalits and Muslims behind him, Mr. Azad's blueprint was ready. The masses nodded enthusiastically, propelling him to victory while consigning the BSP candidate to the fourth spot. The Samajwadi Party's Manoj Kumar had to be content with the third place and around 10% votes. The results showed just why the Samajwadi may have cause for concern despite its great comeback in the 18th Lok Sabha election. Historically, the party has been dependent on the support of



Muslims and Yadavs for success. This time, it added to the mix other OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits. The new confluence worked everywhere except Nagina. Mr. Azad's bid to bring Dalits and Muslims on the same page could provide the kind of challenge Ms. Mayawati, and before her, Kanshi Ram presented. With Nagina, Mr. Azad has announced the arrival of a new Dalit leader to take forward the legacy of Kanshi Ram. It could well mark the end of the Mayawati

saga in the State. For more than 40 years, the BSP was seen as the Dalit representative. Ms. Mayawati built the party on the support of the Dalit community but was smart enough to bring Muslims into the fold, followed briefly by Brahmins as she stitched a rainbow coalition ahead of the 2007 elections in the State. The success in 2007 fuelled hope and ambition. Whispers started about the possibility of Ms. Mayawati rising higher in political echelons. The lady once quipped, "I dream of

becoming the Prime Minister, not President." She spoke too soon. As her juggernaut ground to a halt in Uttar Pradesh, first by the Samajwadi Party in 2012, then the BJP for two consecutive terms under Yogi Adityanath, the BSP's fortunes sank abysmally. From 206 legislators in 2007 to merely 19 in 2017 and a solitary MLA in 2022, it was a steep fall. Add to that zero MPs in 2024. Even as Ms. Mayawati gropes for reasons for her defeat, Mr. Azad seems poised for a long flight.

Congress within striking distance, BJP govt in Haryana goes on a welfare overdrive

After its Lok Sabha election tally was halved and its 58% vote share came down to 46% in a massive reversal, the BJP in Haryana has started making attempts to placate voters and make up the lost ground before the Assembly elections in a few months. The BJP-led government of Nayab Singh Saini has already made a raft of announcements, from providing 50,000 jobs in the next two months and free 100-sq-yard plots to every family below the poverty line to free bus travel up to 1,000 km with the Haryana Antyodaya Parivar Parivahan Yojana (HAPPY) and approval for unauthorised residential colonies along with adequate infrastructure in each. The government has also admitted to flaws in its flagship portal-based ID scheme Parivar Pehchan Patra for property and family IDs. With its vote share down and the Congress closing the gap — it went from no seats and 28% vote share to five seats and a 43% vote share — the Haryana government is making new announcements almost every other day, while ministers dispatched across the state and the official machinery pressed into action to redress people's grievances on a priority basis.

The government started rolling out

welfare schemes immediately after the June 4 results. On June 6, Saini removed the age limit cap in Mukhyamantri Kisan Evam Khetihar Mazdoor Jeevan Suraksha Yojana, under which farmers, agriculture labourers, and market yard labourers are eligible for financial assistance of Rs 37,500 to Rs 5 lakh in case of death or disability while operating agricultural machinery. The scheme earlier had an age cap of 65 years. The following day, Saini relaunched HAPPY cards, enabling free bus travel up to 1,000 km for families with an annual income below Rs 1 lakh. This is expected to benefit approximately 90,000 people. Besides Saini, several of his Cabinet and colleagues in the state Assembly handed out these cards to beneficiaries in their respective constituencies. The same day, the government also released funds for the upgrade of water supply schemes in remote areas such as Bhiwani and Charkhi Dadri. Saini also approved over Rs 40 crore for projects under the state's Rural Augmentation Programme. Unemployment was one of the major points the Congress raised against the BJP in the Lok Sabha election campaign. On June 8, Saini announced that

his government would provide 50,000 jobs in the next two months. Following this, Chief Secretary T V S N Prasad also asked all government departments, boards and corporations, to submit requisitions for Group C and Group D posts in their departments. That same day, the government also reconstituted its District Public Relations and Grievance committees by giving the ministers charge of these committees and telling them to meet people and periodically hold meetings to redress their grievances. On June 9, Prasad issued a notification that "Samadhan Shivirs" will be held in each district and sub-division headquarters every working day, from 9 am to 11 am, in which Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police and other top district officials shall sit together to redress people's grievances, with the exercise monitored by the CMO. The next day — June 10 — Saini issued possession certificates of 100-square-yard plots each to over 7,500 BPL beneficiary families under the Mukhyamantri Gramin Awas Yojana. He also announced that the state government would give financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh to nearly 12,500 beneficiaries living in areas where vacant plots are not available,