

INDIA’S SPECTACULAR SELF-GOAL IN CRICKET

By the time you will be reading these lines, India and Pakistan will have played a cricket match in the Asia Cup. This is—to use a term from another sport—a self-goal by both the nation and the hyper-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that dominates it. By playing against Pakistan, India normalises the terrorist state. The excuses offered by BJP leaders are pathetic. Former Union minister and the former president of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Anurag Thakur said, “In a multilateral tournament organised by Asian Cricket Council (ACC) or the International Cricket Council (ICC), we must play as it is mandatory for all countries.

If we do not take part, we will be eliminated from the tournament as the opposition will get the points.” At best, this sounds like a technical explanation—and one that is hugely unsatisfactory. So, what if India is eliminated from a cricket tournament? Is that a big price for national pride? The questions cut even deeper when one recalls the BJP’s own rhetoric. Time and again, its leaders have thundered that “terror and talks cannot go together.” After the Uri and Pulwama attacks, they promised the nation that “blood and water cannot flow together,” referring to the Indus Waters Treaty. They suspended bilateral cricket ties with Pakistan years ago, citing terror as the rea-

son. Where, then, is the consistency? Where is the muscular nationalism that was supposedly the hallmark of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s India? The participation in the Asian Cup is especially hurtful because it is not some minnow in world cricket, forced to bow to tournament rules out of weakness (though even if that were the situation, non-participation would have been an honourable exit). India is the superpower of the cricketing world. The BCCI is the richest, most influential cricketing board on the planet. Without India’s participation, both the ICC and the ACC would collapse. Broadcasters, sponsors, and advertisers all know this. It is Indian eyeballs that drive

revenues, the country’s fans who turn games into global spectacles, and our money that sustains the cricketing economy. If India had taken a principled stand, refused to play Pakistan and demanded that the world isolate the terrorist state, the cricketing establishment would have had no option but to listen. Instead, India meekly played along, proving once again that when commercial interests clash with national honour, it is the latter that gets sacrificed. By participation in such tournaments, India lends Pakistan exactly what it craves for: legitimacy. Cricket is not just a sport in the subcontinent; it is a vehicle of soft power, a showcase of national

identity. For Pakistan, whose image in the world is scarred by extremism, political instability, and economic collapse, a match against India is more than a game—it is a statement that they remain part of the club, that despite their sponsorship of terror, they can still sit across the table from India on the cricket field. Why should we grant them this legitimacy? Why should we, of all nations, provide them with the oxygen of relevance? The Indian government and the BJP had a chance to demonstrate that they stand firm against terrorism in every sphere, even the glamorous world of cricket. Instead, both chose the easy way out, exposing the gap between rhetoric and reality.

LETTERS

Using pocket money for drugs

Seizure of drugs, including Ganja and high-grade OC weed, at Mahindra University in Suraram, by the Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau (TANA) has sent jitters among parents. The drug racket, with a Nigerian as the main peddler from Nigeria, reportedly involved 50 student peddlers from within the campus. Incidentally, the young addicts use their pocket money to procure the banned substances. The racket is presumed to be the tip of the iceberg, especially when it comes to drug consumption on campuses. The courier service is said to be the preferred route for such drug trafficking among customers, given the absence of any checks. It is time to form a joint action group involving parents to thwart the trend and wean away the next generation from drug abuse.

K V Raghuram, Wayanad

Don’t destroy careers of students

This is with reference to your article titled, “TG private colleges to shut indefinitely from September 15”. The day observed across India as Engineer’s Day will unfortunately take on a sombre note of protest in Telangana this year. The indefinite closure of private colleges, arising from the prolonged delay in release of fee reimbursement dues under the Reimbursement of Tuition Fee (RTF) scheme, has left students in a state of deep anxiety. For many from SC, ST, BC, minority and economically weaker sections, this strike is not a mere administrative standoff, as it directly derails their exams, placements, and academic schedules, creating uncertainty at the most crucial juncture of their careers. The financial burden is not the only fallout. Parents, already stretched to meet rising costs of education, are now forced to bear additional stress as their children’s futures hang in limbo. The mental toll on students ranging from fear of losing job opportunities to feelings of helplessness is immeasurable. If this deadlock continues, it will not be the management or the government that will bear the consequences, but thousands of young minds whose aspirations may be permanently scarred. One must remember that education cannot be reduced to a bargaining chip in institutional disputes. The concerned authorities must urgently address this issue to ensure that students do not suffer irreparable damage.

Sukruti Paturi, Hyderabad

GST slab revisions-festive cheer or illusion?

The revised Goods and Services Tax (GST) slabs that will come into effect on September 22 are being marketed as a festive bonanza for households, with prices of nearly 400 items expected to drop by up to 10 percent. On paper, this looks like a windfall for consumers. However, it risks becoming yet another mirage, an illusion as the benefits will be siphoned off by corporations. Despite legal provisions requiring companies to pass on lower rates, experiences reveal rampant profiteering. Traders often invoke inflated operational costs, sell old inventory at outdated rates, or quietly raise base prices while flaunting reduced tax incidence. As a result of these accounting tricks, consumers end up paying the same or more, while corporations pocket the gains. The government has issued stern warnings and threatened penal action, but enforcement remains weak. With thousands of companies involved and limited monitoring mechanisms, profiteering thrives unchecked. Without robust measures like mandatory pre-and post-GST price disclosures, real-time billing scrutiny, and consumer vigilance platforms, the exercise risks becoming a hollow reform. GST rationalisation should not be reduced to a corporate windfall masquerading as public relief.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru-56

Toughen stand against GST evaders

Not only TG, but all States and UTs should take up a special drive to identify GST evaders. GST 2.0 is bound to cause some revenue loss, but the traders would always try to evade payment of actual taxes by fudging accounts in connivance with corrupt officials from the commercial taxes department. These officials would never achieve set targets as there is a deep-rooted nexus between traders, officials and ruling party leaders. Unfortunately, even after 78 years of independence we don’t have a centralised system to monitor the entire trade transactions item-wise. This would have helped the government to estimate revenue to the nearest rupee on account of GST. It is not too late to start a mechanism to monitor the volume of trade taking place in each state to realise the estimated or targeted taxes. It is for the intelligence wing of the commercial taxes department to monitor everything related to trade, plug loopholes (corruption and nepotism) and collect the targeted taxes.

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BENGALURU ONLINE

4 arrested within a day for kidnapping baby

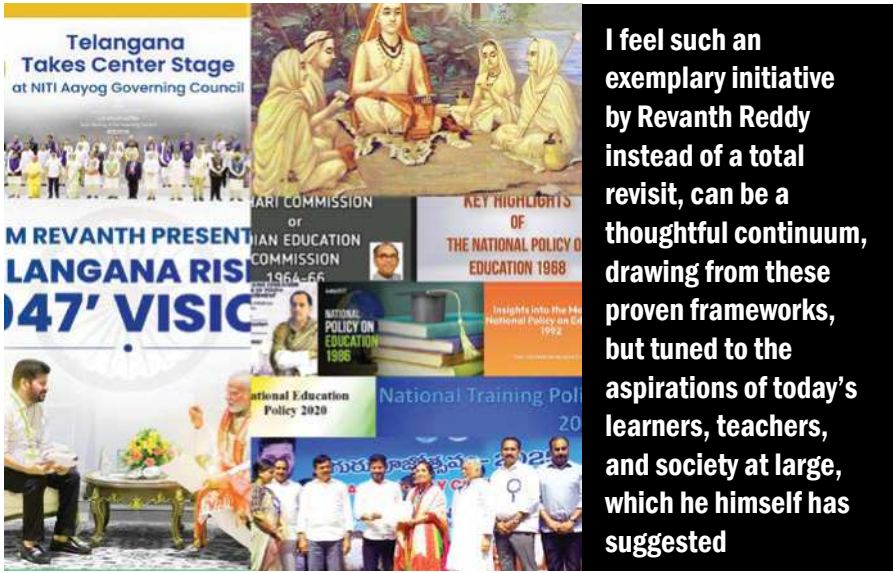
BALLARI: In a shocking incident, a one-and-half-month-old infant was kidnapped in Ballari under the pretext of helping the mother secure a birth certificate. The Ballari police acted swiftly and cracked the case within 24 hours, arresting four accused Shameem, Ismail, Basha, and Basavaraj. According to police, Sridevi of Benakal village in Ballari taluk had given birth to a baby boy on July 28. Last Friday, she visited the district hospital along with her mother to obtain the child’s birth certificate. At the hospital, she came into contact with Shameem, who introduced herself as someone familiar with the process and offered to take them to the municipal office. While at the municipal premises, Sridevi’s mother briefly left to use the restroom, leaving the baby in Shameem’s hands. Taking advantage of the situation, Shameem fled with the infant. Despite frantic searches by the family, the baby was not found, forcing them to lodge a complaint at the Brucepete police station.

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The way forward for Telangana’s new education policy

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NARASIMHA RAO

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had announced recently that the Telangana New Education Policy (TNEP), slated to be introduced soon will bring significant reforms and ensure quality education to all sections. Earlier, the State Government formed a committee head by K Keshava Rao for formulating this policy to serve as a guiding document for ‘Telangana Rising 2047’ keeping in view the ‘National Education Policy (NEP)-2020’ guidelines, the specific education needs, aspirations of the State, and then submit its report by October 30. The history of National and State educational policies has been a complex combination of achievements and failures, often associated with the whims and fancies of the incumbent political leadership. Yet, the system has come to stay as a challenge meeting the earlier and ever-changing needs. Dr DS Kothari, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, P V Narasimha Rao, and the recent initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi through Kasturirangan have brought many policies. The 1966 Kothari Commission, formally the Education Commission, under the leadership of Dr Kothari, in its ‘Education and National Development’ report, recommended the common school system, the 10+2+3 structure, a focus on equity and scientific temper. Based on its recommen-



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dations, Indira Gandhi’s NEP framed in 1968, emphasized compulsory education for children up to 14 years, the three-language formula, and focus on science and mathematics. Rajiv Gandhi’s ‘Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective’ (1985) with inputs from K C Pant set the tone for yet another policy. It was Narasimha Rao, as the then HRD Minister, who piloted the 1986 NPE focusing on universal access, adult literacy, Navodaya Schools, teacher training, and women’s empowerment. Subsequently, as the Prime Minister, Rao updated it in 1992 with support from the then HRD Minister Arjun Singh. The framework was reinforcing decentralization, curriculum renewal, and vocationalization, the process of integrating practical skills, technical knowledge, and career-focused subjects into a general education curriculum. It is worth noting that this 1992 policy, crafted

with foresight and political sensitivity, stood the test of time for nearly twenty-eight years without being replaced. Few education policies in the world have enjoyed such longevity. Its balanced approach, rooted in equity, relevance, and pragmatism, meant that successive governments across the political spectrum continued to adopt and implement it without questioning its fundamentals. This silent durability itself is an extraordinary tribute to the Congress leadership of that era and to the craftsmanship of Narasimha Rao both as a thinker and statesman. Since then, there was no new policy as such. However, initiatives like Prof Yash Pal’s National Curriculum Framework, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, Sam Pitroda’s National Knowledge Commission, and reform committees such as those chaired by Yashpal and

TSR Subramanian steadily prepared the ground from time to time. Dr Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, former ISRO chief, gave shape to the NEP 2020 with Modi’s touch, replacing 10+2 education system with 5+3+3+4 structure. The idea has been to promote flexible, multidisciplinary and learner-centric education with a focus on foundational literacy, vocational integration, multilingualism, and digital learning. Parallely, the DoPT, with support from ‘Professional Master Trainers’ like MP Sethy, who anchored successive National Training Policies (1996 and 2012), strengthened the training ecosystem to enable civil services move towards a competency-based model from mere capacity-building one. Against this rich bank of policies, Revanth Reddy desires to have a new Telangana education policy. Having served as a librarian for 15 years in a State

Government Junior College and in BHEL Higher Secondary School (KV model), and later as senior faculty for nine years at Dr MCR HRD Institute, I feel such an exemplary initiative by Revanth Reddy instead of a total revisit, can be a thoughtful continuum, drawing from these proven frameworks, but tuned to the aspirations of today’s learners, teachers, and society at large, which he himself has suggested. Each of these efforts carried the same spirit, broadening access, enriching quality, and reducing inequity. The real challenge, as experience shows, was never the articulation of vision but its faithful execution on the ground. Telangana now stands at a juncture where it can learn from triumphs and shortcomings of these national experiences. The state’s own education policy must ensure that every child, regardless of social or economic background, experiences the dignity of quality learning. It should connect school education seamlessly with vocational and higher learning, while simultaneously investing in teacher training. If this policy succeeds in bridging aspiration with delivery, vision with practice, it will not only stand as Telangana’s pride but also as a model for the nation. While shaping this policy, Keshava Rao may thoughtfully embrace the principle of ‘dynamic boundaries’ that allow growth and adaptation rather than static frameworks of temporary politics or narrow compulsions. The noble task ahead is to revive and rejuvenate the

education sector that was grievously neglected by the BRS regime. The four ingredients, for serious consideration before drafting a healthy policy are: Education, learning, training and or appropriate deschooling (A process for children and parents alike when transitioning from traditional school to home-schooling). If learning takes place without it leading to any worthwhile improvement, despite well meaningful policies on paper, it has no meaning. Only if learning from the primary stage itself is clubbed with contextual appropriate training by a professional teacher-cum-trainer, and later the methodology is shifted from ‘pedagogy to andragogy’ can the result be better and more complete. Learning only through teaching especially as the child grows, which is a critical factor for success, may take time to achieve success, or even may be wrongly directed. A thought may also be given for a ‘12-Year Comprehensive Education’ covering Vedic Studies, Upanishads, Shastras and Sanskrit, instilling values of compassion, service, modern education including communication, computer skills, and formal academics in tune with the Telangana State Open Board Society curriculum, before moving to degree or professional courses. If executed with foresight, Telangana’s new education policy’ can stand not only as a tribute to its ‘educational legacy’ but also as a cornerstone for Telangana Rising 2047.

From truth to tattle: How gossip overshadows political analysis

P V KONDAL RAO

In an epoch where information cascades like a torrential river, political analysis, once a bastion of reasoned discourse, has been seduced by the tawdry allure of gossip. The noble pursuit of truth—grounded in meticulous investigation, balanced perspectives, and steadfast impartiality—has been eclipsed by a clamour of scandal, innuendo, and sensationalism. This lamentable shift not only erodes the bedrock of public trust but also distorts the very essence of democratic dialogue, elevating drama above substance. As we traverse the turbulent landscape of the post-2024 election era in 2025, vivid examples illuminate how the media, ensnared by the pursuit of clicks and fleeting fame, has allowed whispered rumors to supplant sober analysis. In bygone days, journalism aspired to a lofty ideal of objectivity, a shield against the excesses of sensationalism that once fanned the flames of public fervor, even igniting conflicts like the Spanish-American War. Pioneers

of the craft, wielding pens as swords of truth, championed rigorous reporting and ethical clarity. Yet, that golden era has faded into shadow. The late 20th century saw the dismantling of mandates for balanced coverage, ushering in an age of partisan punditry. Certain networks, forsaking the costly labor of fact-checking, embraced opinion as their currency, often cloaking inconvenient truths to curry favor with audiences. The fallout was stark: astronomical settlements for peddling falsehoods about elections, a testament to how sensationalism can triumph over veracity. Even the venerated pillars of mainstream journalism have faltered, seduced by the siren call of activism. During recent political upheavals, prominent outlets positioned themselves as crusaders, their indignation drowning out neutrality. Ambitious endeavours, like reexamining historical narratives, stirred hearts but blurred the line between scholarship and advocacy. Internal strife within newsrooms—such as ousting editors for daring to



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publish dissenting voices revealed a troubling intolerance for diversity of thought. Public faith, once robust, has withered, with vast swaths of society now viewing the press with skepticism, if not outright

disdain. The tumult of the 2024 U.S. election laid bare this malaise. Whispers of outlandish tales-pet-eating conspiracies, tampered voting machines-swirled through the public square,

amplified not by evidence but by the media’s hunger for virality. A conservative policy blueprint, ripe for reasoned debate, was instead cast as a dystopian specter, its nuances lost in a maelstrom of fear mongering. Even now, in 2025, headlines weave tales of personal peccadilloes, sidelining substantive discussions of fiscal policy or governance. The media, once a lighthouse guiding the polity, now often stokes division with selective tales and omitted truths. Social media, the great amplifier of human impulse, has transformed political discourse into a carnival of gossip. Platforms reward fleeting rumours over measured scrutiny, with commentators lamenting how the chatter of elites overshadows policy’s weighty matters. The once-stalwart realm of television news now mirrors the frenetic energy of talk shows, peddling partisan quips rather than illuminating facts. Critics decry this addiction to drama, where hysteria is conjured from thin air, and substantive issues like the stewardship of national finances are re-

duced to mere spectacle. The consequences of this descent are profound. Sensationalism warps the public’s lens, sowing discord and eroding the shared foundation of truth. It fuels polarization, as half-told stories and cherry-picked facts deepen societal rifts. Younger generations, wise to the media’s foibles, approach news with a wary eye, often disengaging entirely—a loss not just for journalism but for democracy itself. To restore the soul of political analysis, the press must rediscover its reverence for truth. It must resist the glittering temptations of profit and popularity, creating anew the bulwarks of ethical rigour and embracing a chorus of diverse voices. Without such a renaissance, political journalism risks becoming a mere shadow play, entertaining but hollow, leaving citizens adrift in a sea of misinformation. In 2025, as the specter of disinformation looms ever larger, the media’s sacred duty to illuminate rather than obfuscate has never been more vital—nor more imperiled.