

WELCOME-2024

New Year symbolizes a new beginning and always teaches us to move forward. Whatever we have gained, lost, learned, succeeded or failed in the past year, we should learn from it and move forward with new hope.

On this day the good and bad events of the past year are remembered. How the entire year passed is assessed and a resolution is taken to make up for the shortcomings of that year in the next i.e. new year.

Just as we do not feel sad at the end of the old year but welcome the new year with great enthusiasm and happiness, in the same way we should not be sad about the past time in life. Instead of thinking about the past, one should try to make life better by welcoming the coming opportunities.

Bye Bye 2023 and welcome 2024

OMKAR DATTATRAY

At 12Pm of December 31st 2023, the universe stepped into 2024, and we bade good bye to eventful and beautiful year 2023 and at the same time welcome year 2024 and embrace it with happiness and pleasure with the resolve to be good and do good and continue our march towards development and progress.

Chandrayaan-3 moon landing to global recognition in the field of arts, India had a lot to be proud of in 2023. Every year, the list of milestone achievements by Indians is news longer but this time it really felt like an India was in the news for breaking a record almost every other week. Earlier this week, Chandrayaan-3's landing on the moon had entire world glued to their television screens. A few months prior, 'Naatu Naatu' brought home the Oscar For Best Original Song in addition to a live performance by the singers Rahul Sipligum and Kaala Bhairava, and a group of dancers. India's achievements have a way of bringing the whole nation together in celebration - and in 2023, we had a lot to be proud of. Here are 12 milestone achievements by Indians in 2023, from the nation being recognized on global scale to successes closer to home. Inevitably, the first thing that comes to the mind when we talk of milestone achievements by Indians in 2023 is a historic feat, ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 mission successfully landed a spacecraft in the South Pole region of the moon on 23rd August 2023. This not only marked a monumental leap for space exploration but also for women who have toiled for a seat in the male-dominated field of science. Notably over 100 women scientists and engineers contributed to this historic mission. Mumbai-based filmmaker Kartiki Gonslaves and producer Guneet Monga won the Academy Award for the Tamil documentary 'The Elephant Whisperers', making Gonslaves the first Indian Film director to secure a Academy Award. Telling the story of an indigenous couple entrusted with the care of an orphaned baby elephant, the film shines a light on animal and human co-existence and clinched the Oscar for Best Documentary Short Film. Telugu blockbuster RRR's 'Naatu Naatu' saw a historic win as the best Original Song at 2023 Oscars. Following 'Jai Ho' from Slumdog Millionaire, this win marked the first time in fourteen years that a song performed in a language other than English claimed this honour. 2023 was a year of milestones for J&K as well. J&K saw a peaceful completion of G20 summit. There was a record increase in number of tourists. The Muharram procession was taken after over three decades. There was a huge reduction in stone pelting incidents. There was also a decline in terrorist incidents. The flagging of second Vande Bharat Train for Katra is also an achievement of year 2023. However we can say that the year 2023 was a mixed bag of good and bad things. There was an increase in atrocities against women and there were cases of mob lynching in the country which shames all of us. There has been increase in the drug addiction in the country and many youth are falling prey to drugs. In various parts of the country there were cases of discrimination against SC, ST and other marginalized sections of the society. The reservation bill for giving 33% reservation of the women in the parliament and state legislatures is a welcome development and a big achievement of the year and also of the NDA government under Modi. It is a landmark legislation in the country. It really added a feather in the cap of Narendra Modi and his government. Another achievement and development of the year 2023 is the Supreme Court's unanimous judgment on abrogation of Article 370 and this landmark and historical decision of the top court put an end to all certainty on article 370 and it gave a stamp of approval on the fuller integration of the Jammu and Kashmir of the Modi government. The successful conduct of state assembly elections furthered and strengthened the democracy in the country and it showed the dynamism and strength of Indian democracy. Towards the end of the year, Modi government repealed the three British laws of Indian Penal Code, Criminal procedure code and Indian Evidence Act and replaced them with the Indian and indigenous laws by passing the new bills in both houses of parliament and the bills became laws after these have got assent of the president. The Modi government has also repealed and deleted more than 200 obsolete British era colonial laws and thus gave a goodbye to these laws and rules and hence erased the signs and symbols of the British laws and rules. This erasing of the British era rules and laws is really a historic achievement of 2023. India has become fifth largest economy of the world. While there are many laudable achievements of the bygone year 2023, we expect that new year 2024 will unfold good stories of development and we are embracing year 2024 with much expectations and we hope that the new year as well will land us in development trajectory. It is hoped that the tempo of development will continue in year 2024. The big tamasha of democracy - the general elections will take place in 2024 and a new government will be formed at the centre which will give rise to new ideas, innovations and development. After the Supreme Courts directions to the centre about holding of assembly elections, it is hoped that much due democratic exercise of holding assembly elections will take place and the people of the UT will elect a new democratic and popular government. It is also hoped that the status of the statehood will also be restored in year 2024 as the Modi government is committed to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir people. It is also expected that India will become a third largest economy in the third term of Modi. Thus our country will get the position of third largest economy during the third term of Modi government and the solid foundations for this will be laid in year 2024. Digitisation of all government schemes and government offices, institutions, banks and public sector companies is also the main achievements of year 2023 and it will broaden in its scope and include all services online. It will be seen in 2024 how will our country become a 5000 trillion dollar economy in year 2024. It is also hoped that the GDP of the economy will grow at a fast rate and per capita income of the people will increase in 2024. The tourist influx in 2023 has seen significant increase and it had increased in crores and it is hoped that in 2024 also the tempo of tourist footfall will also increase at a faster rate thus resulting into increase in the tourist economy of the country. The new ideas, new innovations and new decisions will be the fait accomplie of new year 2024. We look upon the coming year with foreboding as the current wars in Ukraine and Gaza spill over and escalate and new ones erupt in incipient fault lines across the world. Artificial intelligence poses the most global of challenges, flowing effortlessly across borders. It is hoped that in the new year there will be greater realization about global warming and climate change and there will be joint efforts of the international community to combat global warming. In the new year we should resolve to do good to the society and the country and resolve to weed out corruption, dowry system, communalism and casteism and above all drug addiction and environmental degradation. In short we should strive to build a country of the dreams of our freedom fighters.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist).

IndAus ECTA - a win-win deal

PIYUSH GOYAL



The India Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA), which came into effect one year ago, is a shining example of how major initiatives of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government are meticulously planned after extensive consultation with all stakeholders, and executed effectively to benefit the common man as well as small and medium industries.

The IndAus ECTA is a mutually beneficial agreement between the two cricket-loving nations, reflecting the worldview of the confident and aspirational New India in our Amrit Kaal. It reinforces the strategic partnership between two parliamentary democracies that support the rule of law and have similar legal systems. Both are part of the Quad along with Japan and the US. Both countries have joined the trilateral Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) along with Japan; and the 14-member Indo Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

The FTA, India's first trade agreement with a developed country in more than a decade, has a phenomenal potential. India primarily imports raw material and intermediate goods from Australia, while its exports are primarily finished products. Therefore, the FTA will reduce input costs of Indian entrepreneurs and make their goods more competitive in the domestic and international markets. This also gives Indian start-ups great opportunities to scale up.

Strong Growth in Exports
Data shows that IndAus ECTA has made a very promising beginning, reinforcing the Modi government's belief that it will help create lakhs of jobs in labour-intensive sectors, as Indian products get 100% duty-free access in the huge Australian market.

India's merchandise exports to Australia are up 14% in April-Nov 2023-24, a decisively superior perform-

ance compared with India's trade with the rest of the world in a challenging global environment. Demand in major developed economies has contracted. Australia's overall imports have fallen 4% but its purchases from India have risen strongly. India's imports from Australia have fallen 19%, reducing the trade deficit by 39%.

Exports to Australia under Preferential Lines grew strongly in job-creating sectors. Exports of engineering goods to Australia rose 24% in April-October 2023-24 against only 1% rise in total exports. In readymade garments, the shipments to Australia rose 27%, while overall exports declined. ECTA also helped shipments of electronics goods and plastic to Australia outperform overall exports in these sectors.

Further, India is exporting over 700 new items to Australia. These exports amount to US\$335 million in the first 10 months of 2023-24 including smartphones worth \$65 million. Other new products include several items in the gems and jewellery sector, light oils, non-industrial diamonds as well as skirts and dresses other than those made with silk.

Big Jump in FDI
Our trade partners recognize that the Prime Minister has steered the Indian economy admirably, making it a bright spot in the turbulent world. Under the PM's leadership, India is on track to become a developed country by 2047. Our trading partners recognize this strength and appreciate our concerns about protecting our sensitive sectors like agriculture and dairy.

IndAus ECTA along with the confidence in India's growth trajectory, investor friendly policies and game-changing reforms carried out by Prime Minister Modi has made India an even more attractive for Australian businesses.

Total Foreign Direct Investment from Australia from January to September this year jumped to US\$307.2, seven times the US\$42.43 received in the whole of 2022. FDI in consultancy services has jumped to US\$248 million from barely US\$0.15 million in 2022. The services sector has blossomed. India's exports of

IT and business services continued their robust trajectory. The momentum of ECTA, complemented with other bilateral agreements with Australia in the field of Education, Audio Visual Services and Mobility, provided perfect backdrop for strong growth of more than 50% in business mobility and almost 100% in post-study work visas for Indian students.

The Indian IT industry, relieved of double-taxation after the ECTA, is now competing on level playing field. As per some industry estimates, it has saved tens of millions of dollars in the past year. Buoyed by ECTA success, NASSCOM is putting in place a mechanism to facilitate SMEs in IT sector to expand their footprint in Australia.

NEW APPROACH TO TRADE DEALS
IndAus ECTA and a similar deal with the United Arab Emirates last year, were signed after extensive consultations with every segment of the industry, including national and regional chambers of commerce, exporters, industry-specific groups, economists, trade experts, as well as various ministries and departments. Both FTAs were widely applauded by industry leaders. This is a big step forward from previous trade agreements, which did not involve such extensive consultations.

PM Modi is very clear that every policy or agreement should be in national interest and must be beneficial for the country. In this spirit, we have signed trade deals with Mauritius, Australia and the UAE, and the same guiding principles are shaping the negotiations with other countries.

We aspire for fair, transparent and mutually beneficial agreements that make our businesses competitive, open new markets for them, and more importantly, these FTAs expand trade & commerce and accelerate economic growth, thus creating jobs and business opportunities. The FTA with Australia has demonstrated this in its first year.

(The author is the Minister of Commerce & Industry, Food & Public Distribution, Consumer Affairs, and Textiles).

Evolution of Public Relation

ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

Public relation is the management function which evaluates public attitude, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organisation with the public interest and executes a programme of action to learn public understanding and acceptance. According to Edward Barney's, "Public relation counsellor directs, advises upon and supervises activities of his clients which affect the interest of the public. He interprets his clients to the public and public to the clients." Engineering of concept is the attempt by information, persuasion and by adjustment to public support for an activity, cause, movement or institutions. Sam Black defines PR as "The fundamental purpose of public relations practice is to establish a two-way flow of mutual understanding based on truth, knowledge and full information." According to John E. Marston, "Public relations is planned, persuasive communications designed to influence significant publics."

The evolution of public relation took place in United States of America, when a mass agitation was done between 1860-65 to 1900 for the removal of a railway track. The slogan raised there was 'Public be informed', which later on became the principle of Public Relation.

Discussing the history of public relation some scholars recall the events of pre-historic days, such as 'The Sermon of Mounts' and other such historic happenings to prove that the tradition of public relation is very old. Inevitably, the manner in which public relation is defined today will not be appropriate to keep it in the category PR. It is true that earlier some ruling persons, Rajas, Samrats, Dharamgurus, poets & other scholars were anxious about the people verdict, but it will be appropriate to keep their effort in the category of public recreation. The system of PR evolved in the middle of 19th century when industrial revolution took place in the western countries. Before this during French revolution, the message of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity was spread over which created favourable environment for revolutionists. But this message was

just the product of prevailing situation and not of the scientific thinking or of any system. On the contrary, in 20th century, the campaign work by Bolshevik revolutionists was done in more organised ways. People attention were drawn upon their posters, pamphlets, and other printouts, but that to donot fall under the current definition of PR the committee for propaganda of the faith' of Roman Catholics or 'Institute of propaganda' (founded to train the priest for Dharam-prachar), which were constituted between 15th to 17th century, also not fall under the present day PR.

Actually the profession or activity of PR which we talk today has been originated in America in the middle of 19th century and was rapidly developed by the end of the century. On the statement 'public be dammed' of the industrialist William Henry Vanderbilt, people like Mark Twain reacted sharply as 'Public be informed'. As such the industrialist talks on Laissez Faire, so much the people reacted and went away from them. Now a day, not only in western countries, but also in Bharat, there are Public Relation units in most of the institutions, which are lashed with dedicated workers. In central government offices, the importance of PR had already been accepted during British Raj. During Second World War 'War Propaganda Departments' were opened at the centre as well as in states. After independence, its necessity was felt. In the country, a lot of works like economic development and social consciousness were done which could not have succeeded without the people co-operation. As a result, the work of PR was done in a systematic way. In various states a cadre of PR experts was constituted and they were engaged in press relations, publication and other like activities. Some government information agencies are playing important role as PR agents. At one hand development of electronic Medias like Akashwani, Doordarshan, & a large number of private channels took place rapidly, on the other hand audio-visual mediums like video-films are being used frequently. Not only on national but on international level UNESCO chapter

has been accepted which deals the need of independent, expanded and balanced propaganda of information to remove distinction and create harmonious environment all over the world. For fulfillment of these needs, the mass communication experts and PR worker have to play vital role. The seed, developed due to debarring of people from the right of information has now grown up in a large tree, which provides shadow of truth and discipline by removing suspicion and fear of the people. The Indians, too, are not bereft of this shadow which is appraisable for PR activities.

The objectives of PR are to inform the people with the main activities of the institutions, to highlight the special services available in the institutions, discussion of activities received by the nation and society, role of organisation in the field of research and development and to promote and propagate the human values in life.

There are four activities similar to public relation.

(1) Publicity: Publicity is often taken as synonymous with public relations. Publicity is just reporting day-to-day activity but that is not public relation. It is one-way process. For example- The government may talk of law and order today and next day the problem may concern the relief measures being provided to flood victims. On other occasion, the government may be reporting about the steps taken to improve agricultural yield. So all this is day to day reporting.

But public relation stands for complete and comprehensive range of activities for projecting the organisation as a whole and not in parts.

(2) Advertising: Advertising is paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor. It is resorted to for selling and buying both. It is not total public relation, but a tool of public relation.

Advertisement is a means by which information is dissimilated through the media print or electronic. It is used by all in general and by the business classes in particular to propagate and give

information about their products in the pipeline. The government uses advertisement for giving information to the people regarding its decisions, policies, employment in the government services etc. Earlier the print media played a great role in advertisement as the voice media (Akashwani) owned by the government had not opened much for advertisement till the launching of Vividh Bharati channel and the FM band.

(3) Propaganda: According to the dictionary, 'Propaganda means a committee of cardinals or an association for propagation of a doctrine.' It is on record that Pope Gregory, in 14th century, set up an institution for spreading the message of the Bible. Again in the 17th century, a college of propaganda was set up by the Roman Catholic Church for counteracting the activities of the Protestants and this organisation was called 'Institute of Propaganda'. So, propaganda initially was not considered a bad word. In fact, it was during the Second World War, only when the word 'Propaganda' assumed a bad connotation. Gobbles used to say that to change an environment to absorb whatever was said and one was free to distort facts or even falsify to achieve ends. So propaganda has come to mean publicity not necessarily related to realities. There is no place for such an activity in PR.

(4) Lobbying: Lobbying involves 'educating' selected groups of public more intensely to get their support. A lobbyist is more like an advocate holding brief for the organisation in states. In USA, lobbying is a legal activity which has been brought under the purview of a federal law. In the Senate and Congress of USA lobbyist have to register themselves under the federal law. In Russia (erstwhile USSR) lobbying is not resorted to for getting support of government functionaries. But, in different organisation, cells are created which are managed by an individual, who is designated as an 'agitator'. His job is to lobby among the people who work with forgetting their support to policies and programmes to parties and governments.

(The author is a technocrat and educationist).

YOUR COLUMN

A look at 2023

Dear Editor,

Curtain drops on 2023. Many events have taken place in 2023 also like in the previous years. China took high exceptions on many countries imposing curbs on passengers from China. China was indignant at Covid-19 testing requirements to be met by the Chinese passengers not realizing that it was responsible for the whole world to suffer from the deadly disease. The Allahabad High Court delivered a significant judgment according to which a Muslim woman is entitled to alimony in divorce cases setting aside the ruling of the family court that a Muslim woman was entitled for maintenance during iddat period only. The iddat period is 3 months and 13 days. Bihar Education Minister Chandrashekar cast slur on Ramacharithamanas and hurt the sentiments of the people who held the holy book in high esteem. The government and judiciary looked horn over appointment of judges again in 2023 after the National Judicial Appointments Commission proposal was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015. There was BBC documentary on Modi and there was made vain bid to keep the Godhra incident alive to tarnish the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveniently ignoring what triggered off the incident. The incident was the fall-out of burning of a train in which 58 kar sevaks were burnt alive on February 28, 2002. The Supreme Court rightly denied bail to Godhra train

burning convicts. The documentary called CAA unfair to Muslims and fuelled fire between the government and opposition parties in India. Disappointed at the clean chit given by the Supreme Court to Modi in the Godhra incident, the BBC documentary delighted the opposition parties. Congress leader Digvijay Singh again expressed suspicion on the surgical strike and Navjot Singh Sidhu had questioned the very purpose of strike. In Australia, some Hindu temples were vandalized. The Supreme Court advised that religious place to be left to the religious people. It is a veiled dig at the government laying its hands on the temples. The Supreme Court dismissed SC status for those who converted from Hinduism to Christianity. The court held that the moment a person changes faith Hinduism to other religion, he or she ceases to be Hindu. The Madras High Court held that the shariat court is not above judiciary. The Kargil villain Pervez Musharraf died in February 2023. Modi's popularity increased to the extent of Pakistan people demanding a person to rule their country like Modi.

Manish Sisodia was arrested and has still been languishing in jail for his alleged involvement in the liquor gate. BJP staged a come-back in Tripura Assembly election. The opposition parties moved a no-confidence motion against the NDA government in which 331 MPs voted against no-confidence motion with 141 favouring it.

The Allahabad High Court upheld the order of Uttara Pradesh government to sing national anthem in Madrasas. Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay of Calcutta High remarked "Hire bulldozers from Yogi government". Pleasant surprise was that Sharad Pawar con-

ferred Lokamanya Tilak award to Modi much to the discomfiture of other constituents of I.N.D.I.A. Bombay High Court rightly favoured reservation for abandoned children. Gyanvapi Survey was allowed by the Allahabad High Court. The Supreme Court advised the petitioners not to watch the channels which do not come to their liking. The Supreme Court was furious at the petitioners for taking the issue directly without moving the High Court. The Madras High Court upheld the right of employees to criticize the management. ISRO scripts lunar history. Tamil Nadu Sports Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin gave a call to the annihilation of Sanatan Dharma and became butt of criticism from the Hindu community. I.N.D.I.A. emerged in India. Supreme Court expressed its displeasure with lower courts refusing bail. New Parliament building was opened. AIADMK severed its ties with BJP. Former Chief Minister of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot's remark "corruption in judiciary" undermined the dignity of courts.

TMC MP Mahua Moitra has lost Lok Sabha membership for cash-for-query. For 2023, UCC has remained an unfulfilled promise. Karnataka High Court gave a ruling that family pension is not payable to second wife.

The threat of H9M2 and Covide has started looming large. The 5 state assembly elections brought some cheers to BJP which had lost Karnataka. Pranab Mukherjee's daughter Sharmishta Mukherjee revealed that her father had called Rahul Gandhi immature. The most significant judgment of the Supreme Court is upholding the abolition of Article 370.

K.V. Seetharamaiah