Farmers allege pilferage of paddy grains at procurement centre in Asifabad

Kumram Bheem Asifabad: Farmers staged dharna alleging that two to three kilograms of paddy grains were being pilfered from a bag of paddy containing 40 kilograms at a paddy procurement centre Oddugudem village in Dahegaon mandal on Tuesday.Rauthu Sattaiah, a farmer, alleged that the staffers at the centre were secretly stealing around three kilograms of grains per bag by tampering with the weighing machine. He stated that he realised it when he weighed the same bag on another machine of a trader. He added that he sold 200 quintals of paddy to the government at the centre on Monday.

Dandera Raju, another farmer alleged that he brought 224 quintals of paddy to the centre, but was recorded as 220 quintals in receipt given by the staffers. They alleged that the grains were weighing more than the weight shown in the machine of this centre at another weighing machine in district headquarters. They requested the officials to take steps to prevent the pilfering.When asked, Joint Collector (Revenue) Dasari Venu said that steps were being taken to address the issue being faced by the farmers. He stated that he had instructed officials to make inquiries into the allegations of farmers and to prevent deduction of the paddy grains.

Lack of awareness, subsidized power hit rooftop solar installations in Telangana

Hyderabad: Lack of awareness, high initial costs, subsidised power supply and lack of financing options are hindering rooftop solar installation program in the State.The rooftop solar adoption has been very slow, especially in the residential sector in the State as the installation of solar power is still an expensive option for many.Though the Centre is providing subsidies through various schemes, people are disinclined to go for it due to lack of awareness.

In addition, consumers are getting subsidized electricity from State run electricity distribution companies, hence they do not feel the need to switch over to solar mode. According to Telangana State Renewable Energy Development corporation Limited (TSREDCO) Vice-Chairman and Managing Director N Janaiah lack of awareness was detering people from going solar. "Rooftop solar is important for affordable power.It reduces dependence on the grid and saves a lot of money in the long run. If Rs 1.50 lakh is invested for installing a 3 KW system, individual households can reap 25 years of free power," he pointed out.Through the new rooftop solar scheme 'PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijliee Yojana (PSGMBY)', the State government was aiming to address the issues with rooftop solar capacity addition, including the high costs, he said.Under this initiative, a 40 per cent extra system cost was subsidised for systems between 2 KW and 3 KW capacity, while 60 per cent of the cost of the solar unit was covered for systems up to 2 KW in capacity. There was a 3 KW capacity cap on the subsidy, he added.

According to the current benchmark rates, a 1 KW system will receive a subsidy of Rs 30,000, a 2 KW system of Rs 60,000, and a 3 KW system or more of Rs 78,000, he said, adding that the increase in sub-sidy for the modules to 60 percent from earlier 40 percent and provision of loan to households at a minimum rate of interest of 7 per cent were expected to boost household ability to opt for a rooftop solar units." Rooftop solar installations in residential spaces have tremendous potential in the State,"he said.

On consumers facing challenges while registering on the National Portal for PMSGMBY, he said, there were some issues with related to software, hence people were finding it difficult to upload their applications.The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) had started streamlining the entire process and soon all the issues would be resolved."After general elections all the issues related to rooftop solar programs will be resolved. The centre is very keen in promoting rooftop solar installations across the country to generate solar power,"he said.Installation of rooftop solar panels on residential households offers huge economic benefits to power distribution companies, including reduced cross-subsidy burden, improved transmission and distribution losses, and lower average cost to serve consumers, power officials said.

No, Pakistan's employment picture isn't better than India

Recent rhetoric that Pakistan's unemployment is lower than India's, 300 million people have withdrawn from India's labour force, and youth unemployment is at 45 per cent validates Nobel laureate Angus Deaton's suggestion that "the pronouncements of economists can now be predicted by their politics". The only real data in labour markets — everything else is a model — are prices and votes. Both suggest that a massive transformation of India's labour market is underway.The noise around unemployment arises from the CMIE Consumer Pyramids Household survey. Thankfully, rigour filters are kicking in, with Ashoka University — now India's largest economics department — pausing research using this survey because of consistent and fundamental problems. The "is India broken" worldview of Ashoka Mody, that 300 million workers have withdrawn in frustration, ignores high-wage employers' inability to fill open roles despite lower hiring standards. Finally, for somebody born in J&K like me, the notion that Pakistan's labour market is more attractive to the youth than India's is unhelpful at best and illiterate at worst.

Countries are a work in progress, and India's labour market transformation is far from over. Too many people live on farms, too few work in factories, and too many employers are informal. However, our low 4-8 per cent unemployment rate since 1947 is not a fudge; the poor cannot afford to be unemployed, so they self-exploit in subsistence agriculture, marginal self-employment and informal wage employment. This suggests our problem isn't unemployment but wages.

This diagnosis matters because fiscal and monetary policy is the three-pronged world of emergency medicine; it treats the patient, not the disease. Needing recurring triage prompts ICU doctors to prescribe losing weight, lowering stress or quitting smoking. Election promises to infinitely grow public sector employment, confiscate wealth, and indefinitely fiscally funded job guarantees' reflect misdiagnoses the problem, pursues unsustainable solutions, and mocks the ambitions of young Indians who want more from work than money. Pursuing "redistributive" over "contributive" justice does what Kashmiris describe as Moolan droth ta patran sag (watering the leaves while cutting the roots).

Thankfully, the last decade found the policy Madhyam Marg between the 1956 Avadi Resolution to private sector hostility and the 1980s "government is best when absent" notions of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. This balance has three vectors: First, an efficiency, effectiveness, and technology revamp of India's welfare state targeting our bhooka, beghar and beemar (poverty of hunger, shelter and health) financed by higher tax collections so public debt and inflation stayed under control. Second, the non-profit digital public infrastructure that harnessed private innovation for identity, financial inclusion, and e-commerce. Third, raising private employer productivity through formalisation (moving from deals to rules), PLI, NEP, GST, IBC, MPC, FDI, roads, airports, apprentices, decriminalisation, etc.

The Madhyam Marg is working on supply and demand. The latest ASER report and GERs suggest more kids are in school and college and have more years of education than ever before. Investor confidence — 50 per cent of India's foreign direct investment and 90 per cent of our foreign equity investments since 1947 have come in the last five and 10 years — suggests traditional job creation constraints like infrastructure, skills and regulatory cholesterol are shifting from being a dagger in the heart to a thorn in the flesh. Reform is the work of decades and hardly done; bureaucracy, judiciary, and cities are the new government's agenda, and the new book Accelerating India's Development by Karthik Muralidharan offers an excellent roadmap. Nonetheless, thinking about jobs without prices and votes across time is misleading.In 1890, our thinking about prices — demand and supply — improved when economist Alfred Marshall added time. He suggested four periods: The market period, where demand determines price because there is insufficient time to alter supply; the short-run period, when supply increases in response to demand by spending more money; the long run, during which supply develops new efficiencies; and secular time where generational shifts in demographics, technology, and organisations reconfigure supply and demand dynamics. Marshall's periods help frame India's labour markets. The short-run period is suspect because employers can't manufacture their employees. The long run and secular periods are harder to model because manufacturing employment intensity is declining, artificial intelligence may raise the poorly skilled to average or make the highly skilled unbeatable, ageing prosperous countries may welcome guest workers, high-wage services export employment may explode, and secular global growth that drives exports may return.However, Marshall's market period — demand raising the price of labour — has played out despite defying Nobel Laureate Arthur Lewis's thesis that non-farm wages won't rise until you run out of farm labour to transition. Over the last 10 years, our annual salary primer details how Rs 18,000 and 28,000 per month have become the base and average for the fastest-growing segment of bottom-of-pyramid jobs in 5,000 plus pin codes: Sales, customer service and logistics. We may be a sampling error for India, but we represent Corporate India. More importantly, we clear the market at market prices and force informal employers, house help, drivers, gig workers, and security guards to benchmark these prices. Finally, elections provide the most critical information about labour markets because it is patronising to believe that massive national unemployment will not manifest itself in our fearless voting and fair counting.Whenever there is a light at the end of the tunnel for India, somebody intelligent, articulate, and offshore feels obliged to "buy more tunnel". This competitive negativity about India's rise is understandable from The Economist, which supported colonial rule in India. But offshore Indian economists dismissing our progress as fluff, hype, and nonsense is baffling. I request they give us more time. Better yet, give us help by moving back. Perhaps they are too far, rationalising their exit or trading a different currency. Or maybe they just haven't read Nobel Laureate Fredrick Von Hayek's warning about the "pretence of knowledge" that implies all models are incomplete. Let's be open but careful about labour market models that ignore prices and votes across time.

Handhelds, Tablets, and in-flight entertainment: Gaming on the move

Hyderabad: Long flights and train journeys that can span days are easy for those of us for whom sleep comes easy. However, for the rest of us who aren't gifted with such superhuman abilities, the challenges of getting through an inter-continental 8-hour flight surrounded by the ubiquitous crying toddler can be daunting.

At such times I have often found respite in the distraction and immersion of a favorite game — I have found the system so effective that I now often spend a couple of weeks in advance deciding what games to play on my trusty Nintendo Switch when I am getting ready for large amounts of travel.

For example, I spent a fair bit of 2022 playing Pokémon Brilliant Diamond and Scarlet. Similarly, travel in 2023 was reserved for the spectacular Tears of the Kingdom as I hopped conferences and countries solving one puzzle after another in Link and Zelda's unending saga.
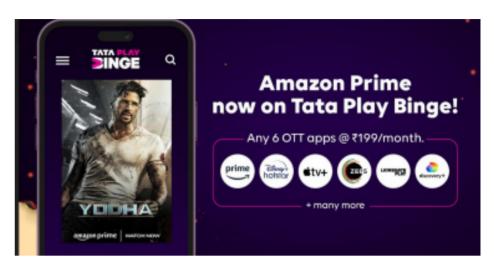
The freedom a device like the Switch offers on an inter-continental flight or a cross-country train ride is unparalleled and increasingly I have found that I am not the only one playing games on handhelds during long journeys. In the last couple of years, I have seen the number of inquisitive looks and questions from fellow passengers and airport security personnel transition from "What is this device?" and "What do you do?" to polite conversation about my gaming choices and preferences.

Tata Play and Amazon Prime Collaborate to Offer Prime Benefits to Viewers Across TV and OTT

Leading content distribution platform, Tata Play, has joined hands with Amazon Prime to offer Tata Play DTH and Tata Play Binge customers multiple ways to access Prime Video's blockbuster content. Tata Play DTH subscribers can now choose from multiple packs starting from INR 199 per month, that offer a variety of their favourite TV channels along with Prime Lite on Tata Play. In addition, Tata Play Binge subscribers can enjoy Prime Lite along with 30+ other popular apps at various price points. At INR 199 per month, users can subscribe to 6 OTT apps, including Prime Lite, from a list of 33 apps, or can subscribe to all 33, including Prime Lite at INR 349 per month.

The new price plans from Tata Play Binge put the freedom of choice in the hands of its audience to make their own OTT packs. Prime Video's addition to the league of 30+ national, international, and regional apps on Tata Play Binge aims to further elevate content bingeing into an even more indulgent experience, all in one convenient location across languages, genres, and devices. This extensive collaboration between Tata Play and Prime Video is dedicated to offering comprehensive entertainment to the viewers, ensuring consumers enjoy the full selection of amazing shows and movies on Prime Video including highly popular Original series like Panchayat, Mirzapur, The Family Man,

Dhootha, Inspector Rishi, Farzi, Dahaad, Made in Heaven, Indian Police Force, Suzhal – The Vortex, Dil Dosti Dilemma, Poacher, among others, blockbuster movies like Pathaan, Jailer, Ponniyin Selvan I & II, Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani, Tiger 3, Kantara, Mast Mein Rehne Ka, Maja Ma, Bawaal, Pippa, Captain Miller, Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya, and many more, along with international series and movies like Fallout, Citadel, The Lord of The Rings: The Rings of Power, The Idea of You, The Boys, Jack Ryan, Reacher, to name a few. This is in addition to Prime exclusive deals and free shipping on eligible products on Amazon.

"While on the one hand, Tata Play's robust content distribution network will help in expanding Amazon Prime's outreach to newer audience segments, on the other, addition of Prime Video will make Tata Play Binge a more compelling proposition," said Harit Nagpal, Managing Director and CEO, Tata Play, on this first-of-its-kind partnership. "At Prime Video, our mission is to super-serve our customers with the best of entertainment, and we are constantly looking at ways to strengthen our distribution to ensure wider availability of our much-loved movies and series," said Gaurav Gandhi, vice president, APAC & MENA, Prime Video. "The collaboration with Tata Play provides its DTH and digital custom-

ers seamless access to Prime Video's full selection of content, as well as Prime's shopping and shipping benefits. We look forward to working with Tata Play to make premium entertainment even more accessible to customers in India."

Amazon Prime and Tata Play – Plans & Benefits

DTH Packs and Prime Lite with Tata Play

Access Prime Video content on any 2 screens (mobile or TV)

Access to exclusive deals and free shipping on Amazon

Available as a bundle with linear TV packs

Price – Starting at INR 199 per month

Prime Lite with Tata Play Binge

Access Prime Video content on any 2 screens (mobile or TV)

Access to exclusive deals and free shipping on Amazon

Select 6 OTT apps, including Prime Lite at INR 199 per month, or enjoy all 33 apps, including Prime Lite, at INR 349 per month

POCO Reveals Irresistible Deals on Bestselling Smartphones for the upcoming May Sale

POCO, one of the fastest-growing consumer technology brands in India, unveils compelling offers for its top-selling smartphones during the May sale, running from May 1 to May 10, 2024, exclusively on e-commerce giants Flipkart and Amazon. Customers will have the opportunity to purchase their preferred products at unprecedented prices during this sale event, coupled with exciting offers.

POCO X6 Pro

The POCO X6 Pro, powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 8300-Ultra SoC, is priced at INR 22,999*. Boasting a 5000mm² VC Cooling system and Wildboost 2.0, it ensures optimal gaming performance. Its impressive 6.67-inch AMOLED display offers a smooth 120Hz refresh rate and supports Dolby Vision®, enhancing color and contrast for an immersive viewing experience. With a 64MP OIS triple rear camera and HDR video recording support, it captures stunning visuals with precision.

POCO X6

Available starting at INR 17,999*, POCO X6 offers an immersive viewing experience with its 6.67" AMOLED display with a resolution of 1.5K ensuring sharp and vibrant visuals and is the only device under INR 20K to offer these features. The smartphone is powered by the Snap-

dragon® 7s Gen 2 Mobile Platform. It is protected by Corning® Gorilla® Glass Victus®, providing durability and scratch resistance. The POCO X6 boasts a 64MP triple rear camera system with a 5100mAh battery, ensuring long-lasting usage.

POCO X6 Neo

POCO X6 Neo represents a pinnacle of slim design in the brand's smartphone lineup and is available starting at just INR 13,999*. The smartphone boasts a 6.67-inch 120Hz AMOLED FHD+ Display, delivering vivid colors and sharp visuals, perfect for immersive video streaming and gaming experiences. X6 Neo redefines the boundaries of photography with its 108MP Dual AI Camera and a 16MP Selfie Camera. It is also powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 6080 Processor.

POCO M6 Pro 5G

POCO M6 Pro 5G is powered by Qualcomm® Snapdragon® 4 Gen 2 on a 4nm process and is on offer at INR 8,999*. With a premium glass back design and a large 6.79-inch display, it offers an immersive viewing experience. IP53 splash and dust resistance along with Corning® Gorilla® Glass protection ensure durability. The 50MP primary camera captures high-resolution images with sharp details.

POCO M6 5G

POCO M6 powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 6100+ for seamless and efficient performance is priced at INR 7,749*. The POCO M6 5G offers an immersive 6.74" 90Hz display, ensuring an enhanced viewing and gaming experience, protected by Corning Gorilla Glass. This feature-packed entry-level 5G smartphone aims to solidify POCO's position as a leader in the 5G smartphone segment, offering consumers a device that combines innovation, reliability, and affordability.

POCO C65

Meticulously crafted, POCO C65 fea-

tures a sleek and ergonomic design. POCO C65 presents robust storage choices with 4+128GB, 6+128GB, and even 8+256GB, marking the first phone in its segment to feature this configuration. The device boasts a MediaTek Helio G85 chipset and boasts a gorgeous 6.74-inch HD+ 90Hz display that offers an immersive viewing experience. Priced at INR 6,799, POCO C65 also features a massive 5000mAh battery, providing all-day connectivity.

POCO C61

POCO C61 features a premium design with a glass back and fast-side fingerprint sensor and is priced at INR 6,499.

Raja warring emphasises Congress' commitment to justice, welfare, and inclusive growth

Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), May 14: Addressing large and enthusiastic gatherings in various villages, Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) chief and a candidate for the Ludhiana Lok Sabha seat, Amarinder Singh Raja Warring outlined the "Five Nyayas" from the Congress manifesto, emphasising the party's commitment to justice, welfare, and inclusive growth.During his speech, Warring sharply criticised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for its failure to deliver on electoral promises made during the last elections. He highlighted the unfulfilled commitments that have left many citizens disillusioned and reiterated Congress's dedication to transparency and accountability in governance.

Warring also took a strong stance against the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing it of engaging in divisive politics that threaten the unity and harmony of the nation. He called for a return to policies that prioritise the welfare of all citizens, regardless of their background."The people of Punjab deserve a government that truly works for their benefit, not one that makes empty promises or divides them," Warring declared. "The Congress party's 'Five Nyayas' are designed to ensure justice and prosperity for every individual in our state. It's time for real change, and together, we can achieve it."Warring elaborated on the "Five Nyays" from the congress manifesto, emphasising social and economic justice. He detailed Kisan Nyay, promising fair prices and support for farmers, and Yuva Nyay, aiming to create sustainable employment for youth. He also focused on Shramik

Nyay, ensuring labourers' rights and welfare, and Hissedari Nyay, promoting social justice for marginalised communities. Lastly, he highlighted Naari Nyay, dedicated to empowering women and promoting gender equality. Confronting his opponents, Raja Warring asked them to spell out what they had to offer to people except the 'jumlas' (fake promises).Addressing a series of public meetings in various assembly segments of the Ludhiana parliamentary constituency Tuesday, Warring said, Congress had a clear and unambiguous mission which was aimed at 100 percent welfare of people be they farmers, the youth, women or the ordinary workers and labourers. He said, party had promised 25 guarantees, which were all welfare oriented and would be fulfilled immediately after the formation of the government.He announced that the Congress party has guaranteed to waive off loans of all farmers. Besides, he added, there will be legal guarantee for the MSP. He said the loan waiver will not just be a one time affair, but there will be a permanent "Loan Relief Commission", which will keep on examining from time to time the need for loan waiver for farmers.

Warring asked the BJP, the Aam Aadmi Party and the Shiromani Akali Dal to list one single such commitment to farmers. He observed that, while the farmers did not expect anything from the BJP as its "anti-farmer agenda" was too well known, he asked the Akalis what they had to offer.Similarly, he added, the AAP leaders had made tall claims before forming the government in Punjab, but have already

run away from their promises and commitments and pushed the entire blame on the centre. He said, while the central government indeed is to be blamed, what stopped the AAP from fulfilling its own commitments during the last two and a half years.The PCC president claimed that the free power scheme was started during the Congress government headed by Charanjit Singh Channi, much before the AAP came to power in Punjab. He pointed out, the Channi government had waived off all the pending arrears of people pending for years. "If the AAP government can take loans for publishing and broadcasting advertisements across the country with hardly any benefit to Punjab, why can't it take simi-

lar loans for providing relief to farmers?" he asked, while remarking, whether it is AAP, the BJP or the Akalis, they have been doling out only 'jumlas' (fake promises).He said, people can cross check that the states like Karnataka and Telangana, where Congress has formed the government, all the guarantees like Rs 2000 cash assistance to women have been fulfilled within months of the government formation.

In contrast, the AAP has been in power for two and a half years now, it has simply forgotten to pay Rs 1000 each to every woman. He said, the Congress delivers what it promises as it does not believe in fake and false promises.

Delhi Public School Nacharam makes it to the Top Once Again in class 10 Board Exams! (2023-24)

"The harder you work for something, the greater you'll feel when you achieve it " The School Management heartily congratulates the Principal, Vice Principal, Sr. Academic Coordinator, and the class 10 students and teachers who have put in untiring efforts in achieving an exemplary performance in the AISSE (2023-24) Board Exams. DPS Nacharam takes a lot of pride in declaring a 100% pass percentage! The school toppers are Abhinav Chitturi 98.7, Yuugank Mantri 98.5, Allamaneni Anushruth 98.3 and Gadapa Nipun 98.3The far-reaching vision of Chairman Shri M. Komaraiah, Director Ms. Pallavi, COO Mr. M. Yashasvi, Principal Ms. Sunitha Rao, Vice Principal Ms Ankita Bose, Sr Academic Coordinator Ms. Radha Masapeta, and teachers which has seen fruition this year through outstanding results.The other highlights of the school results –208 students have scored 90% and above, 244 Students have scored 80-89% 163 Students have scored 70-79% 97 Students have scored 60%-69% 43 students have scored centum in English, French, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, Telugu, IT and Hindi
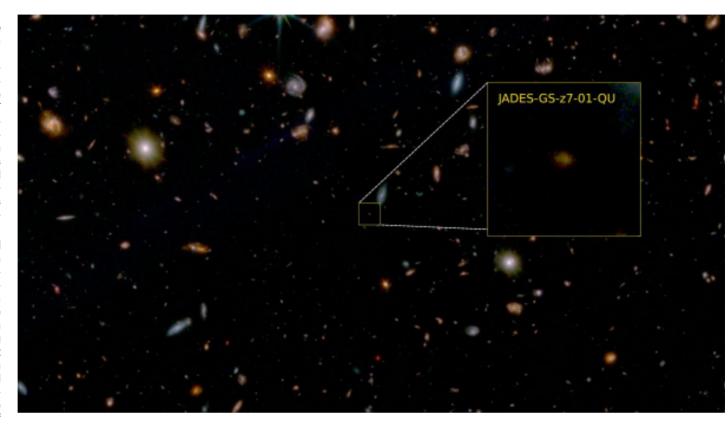
Could a telescope ever see the beginning of time?

A false-color image obtained by the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) shows the galaxy JADES-GS-z7-01-QU, the universeÕs earliest-known "dead" galaxy, a galaxy that has stopped star formation, in this undated handout picture The James Webb Space Telescope, or JWST for short, is one of the most advanced telescopes ever built. Planning for JWST began over 25 years ago, and construction efforts spanned over a decade. It was launched into space on Dec. 25, 2021, and within a month arrived at its final destination: 930,000 miles away from Earth. Its location in space allows it a relatively unobstructed view of the universe.

The telescope design was a global effort, led by NASA, and intended to push the boundaries of astronomical observation with revolutionary engineering. Its mirror is massive – about 21 feet (6.5 meters) in diameter. That's nearly three times the size of the Hubble Space Telescope, which launched in 1990 and is still working today.It's a telescope's mirror that allows it to collect light. JWST's is so big that it can "see" the faintest and farthest galaxies and stars in the universe. Its state-of-the-art instruments can reveal information about the composition, temperature and motion of these distant cosmic objects.As an astrophysicist, I'm continually looking back in time to see what stars, galaxies and supermassive black holes looked like when their light began its journey toward Earth, and I'm using that information to better understand their growth and evolution. For me, and for thousands of space scientists, the James Webb Space Telescope is a window to that unknown universe.Just how far back can JWST peer into the cosmos and into the past? About 13.5 billion years.A telescope does not show stars, galaxies and exoplanets as they are right now. Instead, astronomers are catching a glimpse of how they were in the past. It takes time for light to travel across space and reach our telescopes. In essence, that means a look into space is also a trip back in time.This is even true for objects that are quite close to us. The light you see from the Sun left it about 8 minutes, 20 seconds earlier. That's how long it takes for the Sun's light to travel to Earth.

You can easily do the math on this. All light – whether sunlight, a flashlight or a light bulb in your house – travels at 186,000 miles (almost 300,000 kilometers) per second. That's just over 11 million miles (about 18 million kilometers) per minute. The Sun is about 93 million miles (150 million kilometers) from Earth. That comes out to about 8 minutes, 20 seconds.But the farther away something is, the longer its light takes to reach us. That's why the light we see from Proxima Centauri, the closest star to us aside from our Sun, is 4 years old; that is, it's about 25 trillion miles (approximately 40 trillion kilometers) away from Earth, so that light takes just over four years to reach us. Or, as scientists like to say, four light years.Most recently, JWST observed Earendel, one of the farthest stars ever detected. The light that JWST sees from

Earendel is about 12.9 billion years old.The James Webb Space Telescope is looking much farther back in time than previously possible with other telescopes, such as the Hubble Space Telescope. For example, although Hubble can see objects 60,000 times fainter than the human eye is able, the JWST can see objects almost nine times fainter than even Hubble can.The Big Bang

But is it possible to see back to the beginning of time?

The Big Bang is a term used to define the beginning of our universe as we know it. Scientists believe it occurred about 13.8 billion years ago. It is the most widely accepted theory among physicists to explain the history of our universe.The name is a bit misleading, however, because it suggests that some sort of explosion, like fireworks, created the universe. The Big Bang more closely represents the appearance of rapidly expanding space everywhere in the universe. The environment immediately after the Big Bang was similar to a cosmic fog that covered the universe, making it hard for light to travel beyond it. Eventually, galaxies, stars and planets started to grow.That's why this era in the universe is called the "cosmic dark ages." As the universe continued to expand, the cosmic fog began to rise, and light was eventually able to travel freely through space. In fact, a few satellites have observed the light left by the Big Bang, about 380,000 years after it occurred. These telescopes were built to detect the splotchy leftover glow from the Big Bang, whose light can be tracked in the microwave band.However, even 380,000 years after the Big Bang, there were no stars and galaxies. The universe was still a very dark place. The cosmic dark ages wouldn't end until a few hundred mil-

lion years later, when the first stars and galaxies began to form.The James Webb Space Telescope was not designed to observe as far back as the Big Bang, but instead to see the period when the first objects in the universe began to formand emit light. Before this time period, there is little light for the James Webb Space Telescope to observe, given the conditions of the early universe and the lack of galaxies and stars.Peering back to the time period close to the Big Bang is not simply a matter of having a larger mirror – astronomers have already done it using other satellites that observe microwave emission from very soon after the Big Bang. So, the James Webb Space Telescope observing the uni-

verse a few hundred million years after the Big Bang isn't a limitation of the telescope. Rather, that's actually the telescope's mission. It's a reflection of where in the universe we expect the first light from stars and galaxies to emerge.By studying ancient galaxies, scientists hope to understand the unique conditions of the early universe and gain insight into the processes that helped them flourish. That includes the evolution of supermassive black holes, the life cycle of stars, and what exoplanets – worlds beyond our solar system – are made of.This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article.

UoH alumna Vasanthi Peddireddy selected for IFS with All India 50th Rank

Hyderabad: Vasanthi Peddireddy, an alumna of the University of Hyderabad (UoH) who completed her MBA in Healthcare and Hospital Management (Batch 2015-17), has been selected for the Indian Forest Service (IFS), by securing an All India Rank 50.

Since its inception in 2008, the MBA Healthcare and Hospital Management program has consistently produced outstanding individuals, ranging from healthcare and hospital managers to civil servants.

Notable alumni like Dr. Rani Susmita, who secured the 1st Rank in Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission Group 1 examination and became a Deputy Collector, exemplify the program's success.
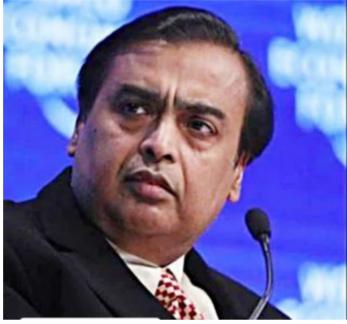
No 'sudden' silence, Adani-Ambani a Rahul refrain, in this campaign too

May 7, Jharkhand: Flagging the need for greater representation for tribals, Rahul said: "The BJP says you are vanvasi and they will give all the forest land to Adani. He gives forest land to Adani (all) 24 hours…Whatever he does is for billionaires. He has 22-25 friends like Adani and Ambani and whatever work is being done is for them only. The land is for them, the forest is for them, the media is theirs, infrastructure is theirs, flyovers are theirs, petrol is theirs…everything is for them. Dalits, tribals, those from the backward communities used to get reservation in the public sector…now they are privatizing everything…He gives everything to (Adani)… People from the media are here…they are not yours….they are of the billionaires, they work for them…they will show Ambani's wedding 24 hours."

May 6, Khargone (Madhya Pradesh): "The whole public sector will disappear, and the country will be ruled by 22-25 people. Who are these people? They are the billionaires of India, and people like Adani whose eyes are on your land, forest and water. They want these things to be snatched from you and be handed over to them. And they are Narendra Modi's special friends. Have you heard the name of Adani? The PM wants to give Adani your land, water and forest… All the airports, power stations, ports, infrastructure has been given by PM Modi to these 22-25 people. He has never waived off your loans, but he has waived off loans of 22 richest people for Rs 16 lakh crore. Imagine that Rs 16 lakh crore has been waived off for people like Adani." May 6, Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh): "The press never talks about the adivasis. It will show the marriage of Ambani, Bollywood, dancing. But when atrocities happen on adivasis, and your land is taken away, they don't show it… Narendra Modi has waived off loans of 22 people who are billionaires. If they can give money to the rich, we can to Dalits, Backwards, Tribals and poor from general category." May 5, Nagakurnool (Telangana): "BJP is a party of 2-3 percent. Whatever Modi has done in the last ten years was for 22 people. He waived off the loans worth lakhs and crores of people like Adani. The country's airports, ports, infrastructure, defence industry…he handed over all that to one person." May 4, Delhi: "There are no Dalits, Adivasis, backwards and poor people belonging to the general category in the media…..See corporate India. The biggest 200 companies… You will not find anyone from SC, ST, backward communities and poor in the general category…Has your or any relatives' loan been waived Loans worth Rs 16 lakh crore of Adani ji and 22 billionaires have been waived. (This) is money for MGNREGA for 24 years" May 2, Shivamogga (Karnataka): "In the last ten years, he has worked for 22 people. He put India's wealth in the pockets of 22 people…in the pockets of Adani, Ambani and such people…We are going to make crores of lakhpatis."

The argument that the Government patronises a small group of the super-rich and the recurring naming of Adani-Ambani have been pet themes of Gandhi's counter

since 2015. In fact, the frequent mention of the two business groups has drawn criticism, even from within the party, as many have argued that the Congress — which ushered in liberalisation in the 1990s — should not send a message that it was anti-business or anti-corporate.Way back in April 2015, nearly a year after the Congress was decimated in the Lok Sabha elections and returning from his 56-day sabbatical, Gandhi, during an intervention in Lok Sabha, termed the Narendra Modi govern-

ment a "suit-boot ki sarkar". It became a recurring theme of his Parliament speeches since 2018. In the run-up to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, he picked on the Rafale fighter jet deal to raise allegations of corruption even after the Supreme Court, in December 2018, dismissed pleas asking for a probe into it and said it was satisfied that "there was no occasion to doubt the process."Slogans and campaigns like "suit-boot ki sarkar", "chowkidaar chor hai" and the "hum do

hamare do", however, were not seen as being electorally beneficial to the Congress but Rahul has persisted with his line of attack.

So much so that, he displayed a photograph of Modi with Adani together during a speech in Lok Sabha in February last year to claim proximity between them and listed out the business deals the Adani Group has got since 2014 accusing the government of flouting rules and facilitating the group's meteoric rise.

X's fact checking feature falters in India during polls, amid automation and polarisation

Even as news organisations and fact checking outlets pushed back on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party's claims that the Congress's manifesto promised to divert resources from Other Backward Classes and Scheduled Castes to Muslims, one fact checking mechanism notably failed: Community Notes on X.The feature was launched in India on April 4, and allows users to flag misleading posts by adding additional context, with users voting for whether other users' 'notes' are useful or not. No posts on X by PM Modi or the BJP on the subject have been successfully flagged by the feature, a review by The Hindu found. The feature appears to not be displaying fact checking notes at all for polarising content from the BJP over the past few weeks. That does not mean that people are not writing draft community notes on such content — rather, notes in total disagreement to any given post are being submitted but these community notes are not actually being approved and shown to X users.

Users who have been approved to suggest Notes on X have flagged some posts by PM Modi featuring the rhetoric that he and his party have pushed in recent days. One video posted on May 7 features

Mr. Modi urging voters to "choose between Ram Rajya and Vote Jihad". One note submitted by a user under this post said Mr. Modi appeared "to target groups, inciting divisions," and that doing so was a model code of conduct violation, while another argued that since the term was coined by a Samajwadi Party leader (something Mr. Modi does not mention in the video), he was actually "calling the opposition out for [a] communal electoral conspiracy."A key problem may be the automation that Community Notes relies on: for a note to be visible, distinct groups of users who have disagreed in the past on other content must have consensus on a note. In a polarised political environment, Community Notes suggestions often show dueling points of view soon after an initial note has been suggested.Why Community Notes didn't workFormer Twitter executives in India and in the U.S. told The Hindu that X rolling out the Community Notes feature in India just weeks before the election without any human moderators was expected to have major flaws and could be perceived as an action to simply boost their brand."Content moderation is quite clearly against [the firm's owner, billionaire] Elon Musk's political philosophy and fiscal plans for the

company and this feature Community Notes allows the company to claim that it is doing something to counter false narratives while not actually removing content or investing at the levels it did before regarding human trust and safety personnel," said a former senior Twitter official in the U.S. who used to head up the platforms news, government and elections team. Mr. Musk, who acquired X in 2022, has largely pushed out trust and safety executives from the firm, and is a vocal proponent of no-holds-barred freedom of expression."To make Community Notes work X has to want to make it work, I think it's pretty clear that's not really a priority for X. The company just wants to check a box, so that's exactly what it's doing," the former senior Twitter official in the U.S. said.Kalim Ahmed, a disinformation researcher who is a registered Community Notes contributor (only those who are registered can view suggested notes; final notes are visible to all users), said that there were "clear attempts at manipulating" notes that were being written after Mr. Modi made the first of his controversial remarks in Rajasthan. "If Community Notes is meant to make two people who disagree on politics or the election agree on something like facts and context,

Roti, kapda, makaan: Why not good air?

It is heartening that environmental, climate change, and air pollution issues have featured in the 2024 Lok Sabha manifestos of most top political parties. But is it among the top priorities or guarantees for parties or candidates? This brings us to another question: Will we ever witness actual improvement in air quality without it becoming a people's movement or a political issue?Manifestos have long been shaped by what people truly want — and, in turn, the issues that would turn into votes. The roti-kapda-makaan from a few decades ago became bijli-paani-sadak, which in the recent past turned to job opportunities and anti-corruption. Whatever the issues may be — local, regional, or national — they are mostly rooted in one thing: A sustainable society for a sustainable nation.

But air quality has not made it to the list of people's priorities, and, by extension, to the top-priority lists of parties. At least, not yet. Inadequate information and poor efforts by the local government bodies in disseminating knowledge on the effects of air pollution, among others, have made air pollution the most incurious and unconcerned issue in our country. This could have serious repercussions in years to come.To most people, poor air quality has become an "obvious environmental status". A section of the intellectuals see it as a manifestation of a growing, developing nation. They believe that economic progress cannot be compromised, no matter the quality of air we breathe or the environment we leave for the next generation. Even this line of thinking shows that air pollution should be taken more seriously than it is right now. According to a 2019 study, the yearly deaths attributable to air pollution translate to an economic loss of Rs 2.7 lakh crore, that is, around 1.36 per cent of the country's GDP. Another recent survey has revealed that the Indian GDP would have been 4.5 per cent higher if air pollution had grown 50 per cent slower each year.To give more context, American economist and Nobel Prize recipient Simon Smith Kuznets made a graphical representation in 1971 of the relationship between economic development and environmental degradation. He showed that as economic development proceeds, environmental degradation keeps increasing and reaches a maximum. After a "level" of economic development (per capita income), economic growth leads to environmental improvement.

Here, one may argue that by following Kuznets, state and central governments are heading in the right direction and taking the right approach. A day will come when further economic development and associated activities will not harm our environment; rather, they will help improve it, as people may perceive. But the issue is, how do we identify this "level" or threshold of economic development? How far would we have to go? And most importantly, how late is too late?For air pollution to become a mainstream issue, it has to become a political agenda. For it to become a political agenda, it has to find its place in page-one news and prime-time discussions regularly. But for that to happen, people will have to truly start caring about air pollution and the danger it poses to our lives

and the lives of those who will inhabit this planet after us.It is a strenuous task, but not an impossible one. What it needs is public awareness in its true sense. It is the job of academicians, scientific communities, experts, scholars, and bureaucrats alongside local governmental bodies to make common Indians realise that clean air is also a fundamental right like clean water, health, food, shelter, etc.

Since it's launch in 2019, the government has released over Rs 1,000 crore for the effective implementation of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) — a commendable step in achieving better air quality. Even with its loopholes, NCAP still has ample scope for ameliorating air quality.One of the most effective ways would be to recognise that, in addition to core research and scientific activities, a significant portion of the fund should be allocated for on-ground activities aimed at pollution reduction. These activities should further be rooted in the air pollution programme having a federal structure, where policies and strategies need to be decentralised and diffused into microenvironments through district and local bodies.

Second, every ward under the municipalities or municipal corporations and every village under the blocks should be thoroughly scrutinised by the respective local bodies to find out the pollution source in the vicinity as well as the scope for air quality improvement. This information should then be disseminated to the people who are residents of the area. They should be made to understand the importance of iden-

tifying micro-level hotspots, which is of utmost importance in order to mitigate macro-level pollution.Third, there should be specific plans to identify open areas favourable for the ventilation of air — and hence the pollutants — open water bodies, green cover for every ward in a city, and all of them should immediately be marked as green zones and restored. These measures will ensure that air pollution, as an issue, directly connec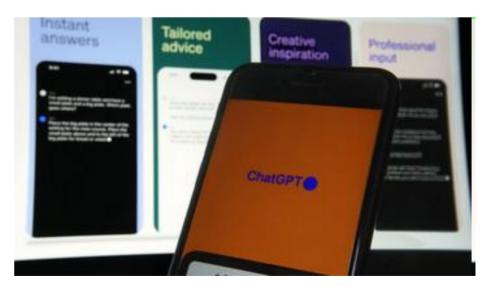ts to every single individual in these microenvironments.Regular outreach or public awareness programmes should be conducted at the municipality or block level, and facilitated by local experts, aca-

demicians, and teachers. These initiatives must aim to disseminate knowledge about environmental pollution and provide guidance on both actions to take and actions to avoid.The demand for clean air needs to be spread to far-flung corners of the country through mass movements. If prolonged power cuts, disruptions in water supply, unpaved and damaged roadways can unite us to protest and remonstrate against local governmental bodies and before the political leaders seeking votes, then why not for clean air?The writer is a professor at the Department of Chemical Sciences, Bose Institute (Dept. of Science and Technology, Govt. of India), Kolkata

OpenAI plans to announce Google search competitor on Monday, sources say

OpenAI plans to announce its artificial intelligence-powered search product on Monday, according to two sources familiar with the matter, raising the stakes in its competition with search king Google.The announcement date, though subject to change, has not been previously reported. Bloomberg and the Information have reported that Microsoft-backed OpenAI is working on a search product to potentially compete with Alphabet's Google and with Perplexity, a well-funded AI search startup.The announcement could be timed a day before the Tuesday start of Google's annual I/O conference, where the tech giant is expected to unveil a slew of AI-related products.

OpenAI's search product is an extension of its flagship ChatGPT product, and enables ChatGPT to pull in direct information from the Web and include citations, according to Bloomberg. ChatGPT is OpenAI's chatbot product that uses the company's cutting-edge AI models to generate human-like responses to text prompts.Industry observers have long called ChatGPT an alternative for gathering online information, though it has struggled with providing accurate and real-time information from the Web. OpenAI

earlier gave it an integration with Microsoft's Bing for paid subscribers. Meanwhile, Google has announced generative AI features for its own namesake engine.Startup Perplexity, which has a valuation of $1 billion, was founded by a former OpenAI researcher, and has gained traction through providing an AI-native search interface that shows citations in results and images as well as text in its responses. It has 10 million monthly active users, according to a

January blog post from the startup.At the time, OpenAI's ChatGPT product was called the fastest application to ever reach 100 million monthly active users after it launched in late 2022. However, worldwide traffic to ChatGPT's website has been on a roller-coaster ride in the past year and is only now returning to its May 2023 peak, according to analytics firm Similarweb, and the AI company is under pressure to expand its user base.

How several species of predators, and prey, know there is safety in numbers

Because we have brains that work evilly, we have, over time, evolved hunting strategies (and made weapons) that make it impossible for our prey to escape. We've been so successful that we've wiped out most of our big cats, and large herbivores and we now need to actively protect them. And typically, how did our evil minds work? Want to bag a tiger? Find a potential victim, organise a beat: hundreds of men hammering tin cans marching through the jungle, towards the animal, and ahead position a battalion of elephants in semi-circle formation atop, which intrepid hunters with rifles wait for the traumatised big cat to break through. Neat, eh? Thankfully this is all now a thing of the past, though 'canned hunting' in Africa is now its ignoble successor. But it got me thinking.Animals, like wild dogs too, adopt cooperative hunting strategies. First, they'll assess a herd of say, antelope, and pick a target and split it from its companions. The pursuit begins and as the animal flees, the dogs fan out flanking it from either side to prevent it from darting hither or tither, while some chase it from behind. The chase can go on for miles and if there's one thing the dogs have, it's stamina. One or more animals will race ahead and then hide in the high grass and wait — just like those elephant-borne riflemen. As the tiring victim bumbles into it, well it's game over. Bounding through the high grass, the dogs keep track of each other by whistles. They have a success rate of 60 per cent, the highest amongst the carnivores.

What boggles the mind is how this astute hunting strategy evolved. How did the dogs first realise they had a better chance of success if they hunted together? Did this happen by accident? A solitary hunter, on the chase, is followed by pack mates. The prey jinks one way and another and some of the followers dart after splitting up. Another bright spark gets way ahead, say by accident, and then finds it is in the ideal position to take down the victim — as the chasers close in. This procedure is repeated in subsequent hunts with equal success and is taught to the cubs in the pack. And becomes an established hunting strategy…Other cooperative hunters, like lionesses, too hunt together, especially when the prey is large and dangerous (like buffalo or elephant). When the risks involved are worth the rewards — a meal for the pride for several days. Lionesses will typically attack from the rear, attempting to hamstring the victim before the lead huntress tackles the dangerous front end, clamping down on the throat and asphyxiating the animal. In cases where the victim refuses to go down easily, his royal highness, the lion, might even join in — his greater weight helping to bring down the prey. Again, it's amazing to think how all this evolved into a template — a typical strategy — with enough room for manoeuvre, depending on the terrain and circumstances. Alas, regardless of whether he has helped or (most often) not, his lordship will take possession of the kill and all the choice cuts and snarl and swipe at even his cubs wanting to get a taste of their first chuck steak.

Chimpanzees, notoriously quarrelsome among each other, will bury their differences when out on a hunt for monkeys. As they move through the forest, their keen eyes scanning the canopy, they'll maintain radio silence. Once they spot a prospect, they'll assess the escape routes and various members of the pack will climb up the trees and seal these off. At a signal, the screaming begins, and the panicked victim is chased up, hurtling through the branches in desperation — chased by a chimp — straight into a waiting hunter in the treetops.

Now chimps are fairly large in comparison to the size of their prey — say a colobus monkey — yet, the successful hunter is careful to share the spoils among the pack. Which chimp in the pack is the first to be invited to the table is a matter of social hierarchy but the reasoning behind sharing is sound: Share with the others, and you can be sure that they'll cooperate in the next hunt. Hunting solo is probably not an option unless it's fishing for termites! because chimps are large and noisy and their lithe victims can easily escape. They must have figured this out pretty quickly because they're almost as evilly intelligent as we are!The victims of predators too have realised that there's relative safety in numbers. If you're a lone zebra standing in the plains with lions approaching, you're a goner. But if you are one, in a herd of 1000, then the chances of you being picked off are one in a thousand. Birds and fish too adopt this strategy: starlings have their astonishing 'murmurations' to confuse rap-

tors and sardines and mackerels swim tightly together in shoals, making it difficult for their predators to pick a target. Ironically, some whales counter this by also hunting together, corralling the shoals and blowing rings of bubbles around them to 'cage' them and then just swimming into them with their cave-like mouths wide open. Or they simply whack the water so hard with their tails, they knock the fish unconscious, which is rather like using dynamite while fishing!But again, it is amazing to think just how all these strategies involving cooperation started and evolved.

And how these species realised there was more survival value in working together than in going solo…

Dell discloses data breach of some customers' names, physical addresses

New Delhi: Tech giant Dell Technologies on Thursday admitted that it experienced a data breach that exposed some customers' names and physical addresses.

In an email sent to customers which went viral on social media, the tech giant said it was investigating "an incident involving a Dell portal, which contains a database with limited types of customer information related to purchases from Dell."

"We believe there is not a significant risk to our customers given the type of information involved. At this time, our investigation indicates limited types of customer information was accessed, including name and physical address," the message from Dell read.

The exposed data did not include

email addresses, telephone numbers, financial or payment information, or "any highly sensitive customer information".

A Dell spokesperson, when asked how many customers were impacted in the data breach, told TechCrunch that "We are not disclosing this specific information from our ongoing investigation".