

GHMC, where's his family?



Hyderabad: One day, he is surrounded by his family, happy and content. The next, he is all alone. His loving wife, daughter, and son are nowhere to be seen.

What happened to them? No one knows. Not even the GHMC officers who permitted to put them there in the first place. As fate, and apathy of the civic officials would have it, a statue man has lost

his family for at least four days now. Let alone search operations for these missing beings, authorities don't seem to be paying any heed to this man's sorrow. An art installation depicting a family in sculptures which was positioned on a pavement at Narne Road in the upscale Jubilee Hills locality is the latest example of GHMC's attitude toward beautification – do it but

don't maintain it. These were installed as part of street art around 2021 to beautify the city thoroughfares. Like other sculptures, this happy family which adorned the road near Whisper Valley now stands as a symbol of the city's failure to uphold its commitment to urban beautification. Irrespective of the work undertaken by the GHMC or any other orga-

nization under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the onus of maintenance falls on the civic body. Repeated efforts to reach the concerned GHMC engineering officer were met with no response. With that, the questions remain, where is his family? Were they removed for some renovation? Or were the sculptures stolen?

Postgraduate studies portray dismal picture



Hyderabad: The allure of postgraduate education seems to be diminishing among students. Admissions to the postgraduate courses depict a concerning trend with more than 56 per cent of the seats remaining unclaimed during the present academic year i.e., 2023-24. The statistics of the Common Post Graduate Entrance Tests (CPGET) 2023 show that 20,519 seats (43.46 per cent) were filled out of a total intake of 47,211 in 51 programmes offered by eight universities, including Osmania, Kakatiya and Telangana Universities. A large number of students not only

from Telangana but also from other States registered, appeared and qualified in exams.

However, several of them shied away from taking admission in the higher educational institutions. The CPGET 2023 had 59,665 candidates appearing and 56,852 qualifying. But when it came to admissions, only 34,954 candidates took part in certificate verification and 20,519 students finally got admissions. Except for a few programmes in sciences, other courses have enrolment less than 50 per cent. For MCom, which usually has high demand

among students, a mere 26.18 per cent seats were filled out while only 29.24 per cent seats were claimed by students in MSc mathematics. The statistics paint a grim picture of the postgraduate education in the State universities. This despite universities like Osmania opening up its PG programmes for students from various educational backgrounds. Unlike earlier, the universities have rolled out admissions to social sciences and arts programmes — Telugu and English for any undergraduate degree holder via the CPGET. The higher education department officials attributed low PG admissions to dwindling interest among students to pursue academics in the affiliated colleges. They said

most students want to study in the campus and constituent colleges particularly of the Osmania University only. "Some students enrol in PG programmes such as political science, public administration and journalism just to avail facilities in the campus for their competitive examination preparation," an OU official said. According to officials, students were keen on pursuing MBA and MCA programmes rather than taking up conventional PG programmes in the universities. Those students who completed BCom were opting for jobs rather than going for higher education. "Nearly 25 colleges have been dropped from the admission process as they recorded less than 10 enrolments, which is not viable for colleges," a senior official said.

Swimming championship to be held at GHMC swimming complex on May 19

Hyderabad: The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Swimming Complex in Secunderabad is all set to host a swimming championship on May 19, supported by the Telangana Swimming Association.

Organized by 7H Sports Foundation, this initiative aims to promote swimming at the school level, provide a fun summer activity, and ease academic pressures. The competition is divided into three age categories: Under-10, Under-14, and Under-17.

Participants can compete in four strokes – Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Butterfly, with each event covering 50 meters. The championship is exclusively for non-medalist swimmers, with a limit of two events per participant.

Why the multiverse is possible according to physics, but not definitely

If a theory about the physical world is experimentally testable and then verifiable, it will stop existing in the realm of meta-physics and become a part of physics. No matter how weird or vague a theory may seem to be, it only needs to be workable in this sense for it to be a theory of reality. Some examples of theories whose predictions the human sense may not be equipped to understand fully or are altogether counter-intuitive include the bending of light, gravitational waves, black holes, and quantum physics. Scientists noticed the first three possibilities in the theories of Albert Einstein. They were intriguing but at the same time were also unsubstantiated. It took scientists many decades of work to figure out how and why they exist in the universe and how to test them. Cosmic inflation

There are also some theories that we currently don't have the methods to test. These theories may be logically consistent and may even arise straightforwardly from the inferences of well-established physical laws. Such ideas are better called 'speculative science'. Some of them are quite famous. One is string theory, which uses advanced mathematics to explain some of the mysteries of the universe today, such as why the force of gravity is much weaker than the other fundamental forces.

Another example of a speculative theory is the multiverse, which physicists also call 'bubble universes'. We have a lot of evidence to indicate that an event called the Big Bang created many aspects of our universe as we know it. But there is no reason for us to think that a Big-Bang-like event happened only once or that it won't happen again in future. Instead, it may have happened many times before and might even be happening still, yielding multiple copies of universes. The expanse of space – which contains everything both accessible and inaccessible – is infinite. Shortly after the Big Bang, scientists believe our own universe rapidly expanded in volume in a very short time. This phenomenon is called cosmic inflation. It is a popular (but currently unverified) explanation for the fact that some distant parts of the universe have very similar physical characteristics, which would have been possible if they had once been very close together before being suddenly separated. And there are hardly any models of cosmic inflation that don't also predict the possibility of other universes out there. Possibility of 'Big Bangs'

Another (unverified) idea that supports the possibility of a multiverse is primordial gravitational waves. It posits that when our universe went through cosmic inflation, some parts of the spacetime fabric could have expanded more quickly than others, creating spacetime 'bubbles' that developed into 'pocket' universes. From the point of view of cosmology – the study of the universe's past, present, and future – we don't know what there was before the Big Bang, what caused the Big Bang, the sequence of events in the moments preced-

ing it or in fact what went 'bang'. When physicists discuss our universe, they are effectively discussing things that happened right after the Big Bang. This limitation obviously means we lack a great deal of information. Even so, scientists have overwhelming evidence that an event like the 'hot' Big Bang happened. Fundamentally, the possibility of there being multiple universes arises when we add to this substrate the idea of an eternally inflating spacetime fabric that sets up and gives rise to Big Bangs. Room at the frontiers of physics

Physicists are also interested in knowing whether such universes – if they exist – have any internal structure or complexity. This is to say whether each universe has any internal composition and unevenness. Our own universe emerged from a small, hot, and dense soup of particles but today matter is distributed through space in a more uneven way, giving rise to interesting differences between one part of the universe and the next. If other universes also have such internal unevenness, it could be the difference between them being lifeless and boring versus thriving with life. Over time, the frontiers of physics have been able to make room for many abstract and rarified ideas, like quantum entanglement and dark matter, using a combination of advances in theory and clever experiments and observations. It is similarly possible the concept of the multiverse will become grounded some day in the tenets of modern physics after scientists find a way to test the theories that predict it. For example, Brian Greene and Max Tegmark are two well-known physicists (both from the U.S.) who have been championing the idea of the multiverse. Dr. Greene is a theoretical physicist and mathematician and Dr. Tegmark teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Tegmark has proposed four levels, or types, of multiverses that are possible while Dr. Greene has proposed nine. They are differentiated on the basis of their resemblance to our universe. Is the universe alone?

To make sure we have testable theories, we need to improve them in a way that they make falsifiable predictions. (In the philosophy of science, falsifiability means that if a particular hypothesis is invalid, it should be possible to prove conclusively that it is so. A hypothesis being unfalsifiable is one of the markers of pseudoscience.) These improvements can be supplemented with better observations of the radiation leftover in our universe from the Big Bang, acquiring a better sense of curvature of and variations in spacetime, and data from experiments with subatomic particles that yield more precise values of the universe's fundamental constants. We won't be able to achieve all of these goals in a single lifetime – but the ball has been set rolling to check whether our universe, like ourselves, is alone. Qudsia Gani is an assistant professor in the Department of Physics, Government Degree College Pattan, Baramulla. Scientists noticed the



first three possibilities in the theories of Albert Einstein. There are also some theories that we currently don't have the meth-

ods to test. Physicists are also interested in knowing whether such universes – if they exist – have any internal structure or complexity.

Indian Medical Association seeks investment in public sector hospitals

Investment in health has stagnated and hospitals in the government sector and their human resources must be strengthened, according to President of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), said Dr R.V. Asokan. Speaking to ANI ahead of the interim budget, Dr. Asokan said that investment in the health space has stagnated even as disease burdens have risen.

"Our health investment has stagnated at 1.1% of the GDP for many years. This underfunding is a reason for poor infrastructure and lack of human resources. So we feel without including the budget of drinking water sanitation, which we call health determinants, the core health budget should be at least 2.5 per cent..." he told ANI over an online video interview. "We would want that the public sector [hospitals] be strengthened and human resources increase," he said. Further, noting that the flagship Ayushman Bharat scheme was a very important initiative of the central government, Dr. Asokan, however, feels it needs restructuring so that the private hospitals can also benefit.

"Two-third of the funding for Ayushman Bharat goes to government hospitals. I think that's not a great idea because the people are not feeling the relief. Because already it is free. So, it is another way of funding the government hospitals, rather through insurance companies, where they take a share of service provision for 10 to 15 per cent, which is a poor way of funding our government hospitals," Dr. Asokan said. "We feel the Ayushman Bharat should be restructured for strategic purchases from the private sector and the government has its own channels to fund public sector hospitals through direct sources," President of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) said. Speaking about the ad-hoc appoint-

ments of doctors, he said such appointments lack sense of belongingness. "The very concern in government sector is there has been ad-hoc appointment of doctors across the country for eight to nine months, so they don't have a sense of belonging. It has to be through regular Public Service Commission's on a permanent basis with all those accompanying benefits then only the government sector could be run properly," he asserted.

He was also asked about the affordability in medical education in private institutions, to which he said that the national medical commission was of the view that around 50% of the seats should be left free for the private medical colleges to determine. "We fought against the introduction of the national medical commission on one of these very important factors, because there was an inbuilt mechanism in every state where even the fees of the private medical college was fixed by a committee appointed by the government. The national medical commission had said that around 50 per cent of the seats will be left free for the private medical colleges to determine," he explained. The Budget session of Parliament, the last session before the general elections expected in April-May, will begin on January 31 and is likely to continue till February 9. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the interim budget on February 1. The session will begin with President Droupadi Murmu's address to the joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament. The interim Budget typically takes care of the fiscal needs of the intervening period till a government is formed after the Lok Sabha polls. A meeting of the floor leaders of various political parties in both Houses of Parliament will be convened on Tuesday by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Pralhad Joshi.

BJP thinks by arresting me they will finish Aam Aadmi Party, but every worker here is Kejriwal



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), May 17: Launching an attack on the BJP, Delhi Chief Minister and AAP supremo, Kejriwal said that the BJP thought that by arresting me, they will finish the Aam Aadmi Party. But my arrest is not going to make any difference to the party because the Aam Aadmi Party is a family and when trouble comes in the family, everyone comes together. You also did the same, you all came together. This sent a message to them that arresting one Kejriwal will not work. Every worker of the Aam Aadmi Party is Kejriwal. Here every worker will stand up and take charge and will not let Punjab and the country down in any situation. On Friday, AAP National Convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann held a meeting with party leaders and workers in Amritsar. In the meeting, Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann praised the party workers for their hard work and discussed the election strategies.

Addressing the workers, Arvind Kejriwal said that I had no special agenda to come to Punjab this time. I have come here this time to meet the people of Punjab and my workers. I used to miss you all a lot in jail. Whenever I met Bhagwant Mann in jail, I used to ask about you. Kejriwal said that the jail authorities deliberately did not

allow me and Bhagwant Mann to meet in the room, whereas according to the jail manual, they could have allowed a meeting of us in a single room as Chief Ministers. All this is written in the jail manual, this is the provision. From here, the Punjab Police and Chief Minister's Office used to write that the CM of Punjab is coming to meet the CM of Delhi, but they did not arrange a meeting with me in the room. I used to stand on one side of the jail's bars and Bhagwant Mann on the other side and talk. They thought that by doing this they are insulting Kejriwal, but Kejriwal is not insulted by these small things. As long as Bharat Mata's head is high, Kejriwal's head is high.

He said that there were two CCTV cameras installed outside my barrack in the jail to monitor me. 13 jail officers kept an eye on me 24 hours a day, the footage of cameras was also shared with the PMO. These people kept an eye on my every activity, but they did not find anything. I have nothing to hide. Even in jail, I used to do my work and read books.

He said that the BJP people tried everything to break me in the jail. I have been suffering from diabetes for 20 years. For the last ten years, I have been taking 52 units of insulin every day, knowing this, they stopped my insulin in the jail. Due to which

my sugar level increased a lot. If a person's sugar level remains high for a long time, then his liver and kidney can also get damaged. But the Supreme Court showed mercy on me and granted me bail for 21 days. Now, in these 21 days, I will work every moment to eliminate this dictatorial government from our country. Kejriwal appealed to AAP workers that there are still 10-12 days left for the election campaign. Work so hard in these 10-12 days that the party wins all 13 seats in Punjab. On June 4, the day of election results, I will be in jail but I will watch the election results on TV. I am fully confident that you will not disappoint me.

Addressing the workers, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said that I thank all of you for your support in this hour of crisis. I salute you for the kind of unity and mutual brotherhood you have shown. Mann said that the next 12-13 days are very important. In these 12-13 days, we have to work hard and contribute to saving the constitution and democracy of the country. He told the workers to devote these 12-13 days to Punjab. He said that when the history of the country will be written, it will also be written that when the fight to save the country was going on, Punjab and the Aam Aadmi Party made the biggest contribution. He said that when I used to go

to meet Arvind Kejriwal in jail, he used to ask me about Punjab and Delhi before anything else. Mann said that by the grace of God, the Supreme Court has granted bail to Arvind Kejriwal for 21 days. These 21 days will prove to be very dangerous for dictators because Arvind Kejriwal is a tireless and brave leader. The BJP cannot intimidate him by putting him in jail. God gives thinking like Arvind Kejriwal to very few people.

We are very lucky that Arvind Kejriwal is the head of our party. Arvind Kejriwal is not afraid of any crisis. Whenever any crisis came upon him, he came out stronger. Mann praised AAP workers and said that due to your hard work, the Aam Aadmi Party is number 1 in the election campaign across the country. He said that according to a report, BJP is losing in all four phases. He said that it has become absolutely clear that the BJP government is not being formed at the centre. This time the INDIA Alliance government will be formed and the biggest contribution in it will be the Aam Aadmi Party. He said that we are asking for votes based on the work done in two years in Punjab and eight years in Delhi. At the same time, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP talk about Mangalsutra and Muslims even after 10 years.



SBI, Hyderabad Circle today launched Cyber Security Awareness Drive by flagging of publicity vehicle from Local Head Office Building at Koti, Hyderabad. The vehicle was flagged off by Smt Manju Sharma, General Manager (NW-1), Shri Debashish Mitra General Manager (NW-2), Sri A K Sarathy (GM),

The campaign objective is to create awareness amongst the public on Large number of Cybercrimes being reported and the use of Cyber Crime Helpline Number: 1930, Cyber Crime reporting portal www.cybercrime.gov.in and Social media Handles of I-4C (Indian- Cyber -Crime - Coordination - Centre) i.e. Cyberdost on Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, X,

YouTube, Telegram, LinkedIn, Koo, ShareChat and Public. The vehicle would go around the city promoting the awareness on cyber security and the use of helpline 1930.

Speaking on the occasion, Smt. Manju Sharma, General Manager emphasized the need for creating the awareness to avert the financial cyber frauds. Cybercrime poses a burgeoning threat, impacting many individuals and organizations. As we increasingly rely on technology for various aspects of our lives, the risk of cyber threats also rises. She said that Cybersecurity awareness educates individuals and organizations about the potential risks and threats in the digital world. Understanding



the importance of cybersecurity can help prevent data breaches, identity theft, and other cybercrimes. It's not just about protecting sensitive information, but also about safeguarding our digital infrastructure. Cyber threats can disrupt businesses, compromise national security, and even impact the economy.

Manju Sharma also said everyone who uses digital technology should update and understand the basics of cybersecurity. In conclusion she said that cybersecurity awareness is a vital aspect of our digital lives and our collective effort will create a safer digital environment for all. Speaking on the occasion, Shri A K Sarathy, General Manager, said that awareness programs

equip individuals with the knowledge to recognize and avoid cyber threats. They teach safe online habits, like creating strong passwords, recognizing phishing attempts, and keeping software updated.

These practices can significantly reduce the risk of falling victim to cyber-attacks and empowers us to protect ourselves and our communities from cyber threats, contributing to a safer and more secure digital world.

The event was attended by Sri Jitendra Kumar Sharma (DGM - CDO), Smt Malathi Nambiar (DGM - CM&CS), Sri Sunil Kumar Goel (DGM - Fin & Ops) along with other DGMs, Customers & Staff of the Bank.

Vysya Limelight Awards Shine a Spotlight on Extraordinary Vysya Men in 2024

South India Shopping Mall to Host the Prestigious Awards Ceremony Powered by Manepally Jewellers



Prepare to be captivated by the dazzling spectacle of the Vysya Limelight Awards 2024, a coveted celebration of excellence within the esteemed Vysya community. Hosted by the renowned South India Shopping Mall and powered by the prestigious Manepally Jewellers initiative, this prestigious event is set to honor the remarkable achievements of Vysya men across India and beyond.

The Vysya Limelight Awards,

founded by the visionary Emmadi Shiva Kumar, have established themselves as the epitome of distinction and recognition within the Vysya community. With a steadfast commitment to meritocracy and transparency, these awards shine a spotlight on individuals who have not only attained immense popularity but have also scaled the heights of excellence in their respective fields. The awards ceremony, scheduled to take place in June 2024 at the JRC

Conventions in Film Nagar, Hyderabad, will be a grand affair, celebrating the Vysya community's triumphs and fostering a sense of unity and pride. The event will feature a meticulously curated selection of categories, with both jury-based and vote-based awards, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive platform for recognition.

Nominations for the "Most Popular Vysya Men - 2024" category are now open, and the last date to submit entries is May 25th, 2024. Individuals can visit the official website at <https://www.vysyalimelightawards.com> or <https://vysyalimelightawards.com/jury-based-nominations.php> to nominate their deserving candidates. Few of the dignitaries that who honoured with Vysya Limelight Awards previously:

Mr. Vijay Gupta Modadugu a Padma

Shri Awardee, Mr. Anup Kumar Yama 2021 Sportsman of the year a Arjuna Awardee, Mr. Nischal Narayanam 2021 Edu of the year a Gunnies Book of Year, Mrs. Vummaji Padma Priya 2021 Women a Edu of the year and honoured by President of India, Mrs. Tellakula Anusha 2021 CA of the year and the only IRS, Mrs. Grandhi Spandana a Indigo women professional pilot, Mr. Sarish Irukulla an IRS, COL Santosh Babu (Posthumous) Maha Vir Chakra, Baby Chaitra Peddi-Baby Film Artists. The Vysya Limelight Awards have established themselves as a beacon of excellence, showcasing the remarkable achievements of Vysya men and inspiring others to strive for greatness. Join us in this captivating celebration of success and honor the exemplary individuals who are shaping the future of the Vysya community.

Hyderabad man arrested for cheating overseas students

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Cybercrime Police arrested a 28 year-old suspect who was found to be cheating Indian students studying in US universities on the pretext of offering 10 per cent discount on university semester fee. The Cybercrime police was approached by a complainant from Trimulgherry stating that fraudsters cheating him to the tune of Rs.4.38 lakh on the pretext of 10 per cent discount on semester fee for his son who is studying in University of West Florida, US.

Budget accounted for free power promise, it's BJP promising freebies, says Pandian

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader and chairman of 5T, V K Pandian said that his party's election promise of free power to 90% households in the State had sound financial reasoning backing it, provisions for which were available in the State budget. Speaking exclusively to The Hindu he said that what had shocked him was the BJP's polls promise of a ₹50,000 "voucher" for two crore women in the state.

"Odisha government has the financial cushion to promise free power, for me, its shocking the way BJP has promised freebies, despite declaring they are against freebie culture. They have announced a funny scheme for Odisha in their manifesto, that they will come up with a ₹50,000 "voucher" for two crore women. First of all, what is a voucher? We are not running a shopping mall, plus, the outlay for this would be ₹1 lakh crore when your total budget is ₹2 lakh crore! It's a mockery of developmental economics, BJP's plans will push back Odisha by 25 years," he said. He said that Odisha being a revenue surplus state could afford the free electricity promise made by the BJD. "Looking at our revenue surplus of ₹25,000 crores, Odisha being one of the few states with a revenue surplus, we will take a hit of only ₹2,000 crores on this scheme. To look at it in another way, our target is to make Odisha's per capita income the highest in the country, the way to do it is to cut down the costs to individual households, chief minister Patnaik has already done that via free health coverage, free education and power is the next thing," he said.

He added that the other side of the equation was increasing income generation for which the state was receiving investments in the sectors of power, clean energy, green ammonia, textiles, semi conductors and IT. "Investors are attracted not just by trust in the governance, but the fact that we have a huge buffer to avail credit and back up whatever capital incentive we give to industry. This is the way we are looking to do poverty alleviation and social security, not by doling out freebies," he said. Odisha is electing its State Assembly simultaneously with the Lok Sabha poll. Nistula Hebbar caught up with BJD leader and former bureaucrat V.K. Pandian on the contest in the State and how he deals with the 'outsider' tag. The BJP is making much of their plank of Odia Asmita, or Odia pride, with references to the fact that you are not Odia.

It's the people who have to decide who is an outsider. I heard my inner call and took the plunge. Also, a State or region's pride is decided upon four or five things, number one being language. In March 2014, the then-UPA government, after persuasion by Naveen Babu [Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik], declared Odia as a classical language just before the polls. But 10 years of NDA government hasn't seen anything in terms of promotion of the Odia language, whereas they have done it for Telugu, Sanskrit, Tamil, etc. Second, CM Naveen Patnaik had moved a proposal requesting that Odissi music, which is very



popular, be given the tag of classical music, the Central government did not respond. Thirdly, a region's identity is also reflected in how you honour the leaders of that State. Biju Babu [late Chief Minister Biju Patnaik] is one of the tallest leaders not just in the country but internationally as well. When he passed away, flags of four countries were laid on his body, including from Indonesia, where he had rescued freedom fighters in his plane in 1947. His contribution to India as a country is huge, whether it be preventing Indonesia from deploying their Naval units during the Bangladesh war, or instituting an international award for the popularisation of science. He is the father of modern Odisha, making it one of India's most progressive States. BJP has given Bharat Ratna to many people, and without going into those who have been awarded, they couldn't find anyone from Odisha? Just before elections, after 10 years of somnolence, you wake up and talk of these things?

The fourth aspect of regional pride is seen in how you also treat a State. From 2004, we are fighting for coal royalty revisions; that hasn't been done. The MCL [Mahanadi Coalfields], which is a CPSU [Central public sector unit] earns about ₹27,000 crore from Odisha and contributes only ₹4,000 crore to the [State] exchequer. Only pollution stays in Odisha. What have you done for that? We have asked that, just for disaster management, Odisha, due to its geographical location, needs to be given special status, but there has only been silence. The BJP and the BJD were in talks for an electoral alliance. What happened?

To be honest, it is a talk between two leaders, to do something substantial for the State and country. It had no political implications. Naveen Babu does not need BJP to form a government and perhaps BJP also does not need Naveen Babu's sup-

port.

What is the Guru Mantra that Mr. Patnaik has imparted to you in terms of public life?

Keep your ears close to the ground, and keep your heart in the right place, with the interests of the people.

The BJP believes it has a surge in Odisha in these polls; how then do you express confidence of a win?

They think they have a surge everywhere in the country. They thought that they had a surge in Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh. It's part of their political strategy. With regard to Odisha especially, they are trying to create a narrative of surge, because in the last symbol elections, i.e., the zilla parishad elections, they lost in all 30 districts, with less than 50 seats. So they try to create what are called CBMs [confidence building measures] in international parlance. The only problem is they [BJP leaders] give such huge numbers to themselves, their own cadre do not believe them.

You are made out to be this Machiavellian character behind Mr. Patnaik, guiding his hand. How do you deal with such characterisation?

I am used to it. That is something the Opposition has been doing for a long time against the Chief Minister. From 2000 to 2004, they did against someone else; from 2004 to 2011 they hit Pyari Babu [Pyari Mohan Mohapatra], but they miss out on the larger point of Naveen Babu's presence. This helps Naveen Babu also, and I am happy to be the fall guy if that is the case.

Your party has maintained equidistance from the BJP and the Congress-led Opposition. After the polls, would you be open to support either formation if called to?

Right now we are in the middle of the

elections, engaged in triangular fights in many constituencies, and these are hypothetical questions that need not be answered.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made a sharp attack against Chief Minister Patnaik in the past week. That seems unusual. Prime Minister Modi said that his party would take oath on June 10. We found the actual auspicious date and have announced June 9 as the date for the swearing-in of Naveen Babu. In 2019, PM Modi had used the word "farewell", and this time he used the word "expiry date"; Naveen Babu won then and he will be taking oath again this time.

The Prime Minister has also spoken about reservations for Muslims, and the redistribution of wealth. What is your view?

Whenever somebody is using religion, casteism, regionalism, it is not good for a progressive, democratic country like India. I am saying this with regard to the Congress too, why get into the interstices of caste? Empower vulnerable sections like Naveen Babu has done. Focus should be on core issues which touch 80% population of India. There have been accusations that the BJD is also going the freebie way with the free electricity promise. Odisha government has the financial cushion to promise free power. For me, its shocking the way BJP has promised freebies, despite declaring they are against freebie culture. They have announced a funny scheme for Odisha in their manifesto, that they will come up with a 50,000 "voucher" for two crore women. First of all, what is a voucher?

We are not running a shopping mall. Plus, the outlay for this would be ₹1 lakh crore when your total budget is ₹2 lakh crore! It's a mockery of developmental economics.

The blind spots in India's 'missing women' calculations

The story so far: There are far fewer women than men in India, an ill-kept secret which reveals itself time and again through the numbers. More than 13.13 lakh girls and women went missing in the country in the three years between 2019 and 2021, per Union Home Ministry data tabled in the Parliament recently. The figures compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) found that Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra contributed to the bulk of the cases. Madhya Pradesh held the most damning record: it failed to trace 36,104 women, per NCRB's 2021 report. Experts, however, note that India's calculation of women reported missing is not wholly representative of ground realities. "Women could be eloping for inter-caste or inter-faith marriage or they might be leaving an abusive situation at home. Some families also abandon women who are disabled," explains Professor Juhi Sidharth, an Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Gender Studies at Flame University, Pune. But NCRB's aggregate data currently doesn't reflect these complexities.

'Missing women' vs 'women reported missing' Economist Amartya Sen in the early nineties devised the concept of "missing women" to articulate the gender bias in mortality, particularly in middle- and low-income nations like India and China. Women's ratio to men was low due to two factors: skewed sex ratio at birth (due to sex-selective abortions and male preference), and excess female mortality (when women are deliberately denied adequate healthcare, education, nutrition, etc.) Mr. Sen argued more than 100 million women are simply not there as "social inequality outweighs women's survival advantage". The number of missing women globally has more than doubled over the past 50 years, a 2020 UNFPA report showed. Women reported missing, however, is a different computation. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) defines a missing person as: "Anyone whose whereabouts is unknown whatever the circumstances of disappearance. They will be considered missing until located and their well-being or otherwise established."

NCRB in its report enumerates reasons for women going missing: "mental illness, miscommunication, misadventure, domestic violence and being a victim of a crime", such as homicide, trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labour, and domestic work. Some of them "return soon after their disappearance without any harm having befallen them," in cases where people are lost or leave out of their own volition. Others, who "run away from home due to unbearable conditions of abuse and maltreatment... [may] become vulnerable to trafficking, violence, drug addiction, prostitution and other risks of exploitation and involvement in crime." Women made up more than 68% of all persons reported missing in 2020 and 2021, per the NCRB data.

What has India done to protect women?

The government informed the Parliament of the following measures to protect women reported missing: Enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment), Act, 2013 and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 to deter sexual violence. The latter prescribes stringent penal provisions, including the death penalty, for the rape of girls below the age of 12 years. The 2018 Act mandates that a chargesheet be filed and an investigation conducted within two months, and trials are completed in another two months. A pan-India Emergency Response Support System with a recognised number (112) for all emergencies, with computer-aided dispatch of field resources to the location of distress. 112 replaced earlier emergency numbers: 100 for police, 108 for health (ambulance) services, 101 (fire) and women's grievances (1090.) A National Database on Sexual Offenders was launched to facilitate the investigation and tracking of sexual offenders across the country by law enforcement agencies. The Ministry of Women & Child Development set up 733 One Stop Centres to aid women affected by violence and in distress. While OSCs assisted more than 6 lakh women between 2015 and 2022 (per data from the Ministry of Women and Child Development), many note that a lack of awareness and infrastructural deficiencies plague the system.

How are women reported missing in India?

NCRB, as the official measure of women who go missing, uses data from police station First Information Reports (FIRs). "While recording missing persons in the system, real motive is normally not known and becomes clear later during the investigation stage when the person is recovered. Motive is therefore not factored in the present analysis," the NCRB states in its report. The Supreme Court guidelines mandate that a missing adult's report is filed under section 154 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973. Once a woman is traced, police officials take a statement and in cases of family dispute, women are likely to be left alone if they refuse to return to families. All cases of missing minors are treated as kidnappings and an FIR is filed under section 363 of the Indian Penal Code.

The data gap In her book *Whole Numbers and Half-Truths*, Rukmini Sen illustrates the Achilles heel of data collection: "Official statistics often misreport non-criminal activity as crime, intentionally use wrong sections of the law to book some crimes, and significantly undercount a vast range of typically non-violent crime." The data around women reported missing suffers from this fallibility. A missing woman or girl is not necessarily kidnapped or abducted, for natal families file missing person reports in cases where women elope or flee from violent situations, as Prof. Sidharth and other experts pointed out. "We live in a patriarchal society", says Prof. Sidharth, highlighting that it is rife with restrictions around women's agency and



choice. Gujarat, which per the 2020 National Crime Records Bureau data has 41,621 missing women, registers more cases due to "family disputes, elopement, failure in examination" etc., the Gujarat Police said in a tweet. There are media reports citing data sources of National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), New Delhi that 40,000 women have gone missing in Gujarat in 5-years. However, out of 41,621 women gone missing during the period 2016-20 as per the data published in Crime in India-2020 Ms. Sen gave an example of how families use criminal law to thwart women's choices: "To prove that their daughter or sister did not choose to elope with the accused man, the complainant's father or brother must demonstrate that she was taken against her will. Cops step in to create moving cars that abduct young women or sedative-laced cold drinks that render the 'victim' unconscious and unable to consent to her own escape." Studies by Partners for Law in Development have found that the FIRs mentioning the element of intoxication did not hold up in court. Many young women who were later traced and deposed attested to facing beatings, confinements, threats and even abortions. "There are undoubtedly crimes taking place against women here, but not the ones that are being prosecuted by the State," Ms. Sen argued. Secondly, NCRB uses something called the 'principal offence rule,' where the more severe crime is recorded to avoid duplication. If a woman is abducted/raped and murdered, the FIR will record the crime as a 'murder' only. Prof. Sidharth says the aggregate data, without a breakdown of the nature of violence, is a "big disadvantage" and a "big flaw in the data collection process." "That doesn't paint a true picture of how many women have been raped in the country. How many crimes, and the variety of crimes faced by women have to be systematically recorded," he says. This practice also risks ignoring and underestimating certain violent crimes against women— such as dowry deaths, which may be bundled with murders. Moreover, evidence shows women very rarely report crimes that happen to them due to complex social factors: accessibility of police stations, fear of

stigma, or lack of awareness. Only 9% of women who experienced gender-based violence sought help from the police, the National Family Health Survey-5 showed. Who files FIRs, and under what conditions, may mean some data about women missing and found may never be collected, experts point out. Prof. Sidharth suggests expanding the source to include hospitals that treat women who have faced violence. Some States, including Karnataka and Maharashtra, have launched government programmes that train health professionals to recognise signs of gender-based violence. The other reality is of people missing but never reported or inquired about, mostly among women abandoned by families due to disabilities. Families abandoned women with mental illness due to social stigma, and lack of caregivers and resources, per a 2016 report by the National Commission for Women. This section of women are not accounted for in the NCRB data. There is also the fear of data inflation around "found" women or women who were traced. NCRB data for Gujarat shows more women were found (10,608) in 2021 than those who went missing (9,812), but it is unclear if they initially went missing during this period or in the preceding years. This paucity of data makes it harder to create support systems for recovered women who may still be in a vulnerable position, says Prof. Sidharth. She acknowledges the need for thorough investigation and details from both, people reporting the crime and from women who are found. "Why had they left their family, what happened?... Asking these questions post-recovery [of women] will give us a more accurate picture of how many women are missing and why," she says.

Why is this a problem?

When we say 13 lakh women went missing during three years, an immediate thought would be to think of women kidnapped, molested, raped, and murdered, Prof. Sidharth says. But "there is a need to explain those figures," and in the absence of disaggregate numbers, we can never comprehend the full picture. For example, a lot of women who are reported missing by their families could have voluntarily left their homes.

Panjab University Student's council elections: 'Bachon ko CM, PM banane ki baat baad mein karo, pehle hostels mein paani or light to dedo'

Ahead of Panjab University Campus Students Council (PUCSC) polls on September 6, The Indian Express Monday caught up with presidential candidates of student outfits. The student leaders listed their priorities and election strategy. In photo: Yuvraj Garg. was born and raised in Punjab's Bathinda. He came to Chandigarh to pursue a degree in law at the University Institute of Legal Studies in 2019. Apart from the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, he has stayed at the hostel throughout the duration of his course. The SOI presidential candidate said he aspires to join the judiciary. "I do not have any political aspirations and I am fighting the election for student welfare and nothing else," he added. Providing basic amenities like water, and power in hostels, and ensuring better connectivity between the north and the south campuses are key issues concerning student welfare, said Garg. "I am a boarder myself and so I know well what problems the students are facing. Student welfare is my sole priority. Students do not even get basic amenities here," Garg stated. "On the south campus, there is no power for three to four hours every day. Connectivity is another key issue. No autorickshaw driver wants to go to the south campus from the north," he added.

If elected, Garg said he would make sure that the authorities work for student welfare. Garg took a potshot at AAP leaders and alleged that the latter have been campaigning for the party's student wing candidates in the Panjab University polls. "Would it look wise if (Sukhbir) Badal ji comes here with his Z-plus security to convince the students... The AAP leaders from Punjab have left their constituencies to campaign for their candidates here," he added. The SOI is the student wing of the Shiromani Akali Dal and it has an alliance with the INSO (Indian National Students Organisation) and the HPSU (Himachal Pradesh Students Union) for the Panjab University polls. MPs, MLAs from outside should not decide fate of students: SFS presidential candidate MPs and MLAs from outside should not decide the fate of university students, according to Prateek Kumar, Students For Society (SFS) presidential candidate for the September 6 Panjab University Campus Student Council (PUCSC) polls. He said it is the election for students' welfare, and only students not affiliated with any political party know the real issues they face. He stated that many field dummy candidates to ensure their political party's edge. Here's a look at Kumar's promises, the solutions he aims to provide and his poll pitch. About him: Kumar was born in Charkhi Dadri district of Haryana but was raised in Rajasthan. He took admission to the university's Institute of Engineering and Technology, and came to Chandigarh four years ago. What ails PU: "Educational courses have become out of bounds for middle-class students due to the high fees. Initially, these courses used to be out of pocket for the lower-middle class, but every year, the way they are hiking the fee for all the courses, it

has become difficult for a middle-class student," he said, adding that turning self-financed courses into regular courses is what he is looking forward to. Solutions: Prateek said he would ensure the authorities have a fixed fee structure that does not increase yearly. "Education should not be made out of access. Through proper coordination with the authorities, I will ensure a fixed fee structure in place," Prateek said. Poll pitch: Prateek stated, "MPs and MLAs from outside should not be deciding the fate of university students." "I would say this student election should have student participation entirely. Bahar ke MPs, MLAs decide na karen... They pitch in dummy candidates who are not concerned with students' issues... It is a student-related election, and these outsiders should not be deciding the fate of the university students," he said. Prateek added that some political parties are getting their MPs and MLAs "who are coming with their security and VIP culture is being promoted (on the campus)". I'm not a dummy candidate, says NSUI contender Name: Jatinder Singh Party: National Students' Union of India (student wing of the Congress) Qualification: Research scholar About him: Jatinder is from Punjab. He was born and raised in Bathinda but has settled in Chandigarh for 10 years. He says he enjoys listening to podcasts and interviews, and works for his new startup. What ails PU: Jatinder said fake promises by other parties and no proper platform to help students are what ails the university. Solutions: Jatinder looks forward to getting a system of having menstrual leave for girls. He also aims to introduce a unique chance for final-year students with a fee of just Rs 2,500, and create a PUCSC website with immediate effect. He said he would ensure that offering research scholars a stipend would be made easier. Poll pitch: "I am not a dummy candidate. I've pursued BTech, a Masters and now PhD from this university. I've been with different student groups for years. I'm here with a plan and to stand for justice. I'm here to take students' voices forward," Jatinder said. Parties aati jaati rahengi, university rehni chaeye: Independent candidate: Saksham Singh Saksham Singh, an Independent presidential candidate for Panjab University Campus Students Council (PUCSC) polls told The Indian Express that he would like to introduce weekly counselling sessions for students if he gets elected. In photo: Saksham Singh. Candidate profile A fourth-year student, Singh said the university is in dire need of a "combined placement cell". Born and raised in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, Saksham moved to Chandigarh for higher studies. He is currently pursuing a dual degree (chemical engineering with MBA) at the Chandigarh-based university. Singh said he has marketing, communication, and managerial skills. The bright student had earlier launched a small start-up firm but closed it down to focus on his studies. "I wanted to contest to show that student leaders should not be inclined towards the ideology of any political party. Student politics



should be for the students, by the students and of the students," he said. Problems at PU "Various departments have their own placement cells and they keep contacting different companies for placement opportunities. Sometimes they hear back from the companies, and sometimes they do not. I want to start a combined placement cell," said Singh. The Independent candidate wants to start counselling sessions for students as "there are issues concerning the mental health of students". What are the solutions: For Saksham, mental health of students — both men and women — is equally important. He aims to have a counsellor so as to deal with providing good guidance to students who have stress taking a toll on their lives. "I would say men's section is the worst and If I win, I will aim that there is a separate counsellor's specific class every week for all the classes. I will try if I can get that incorporated." Poll pitch: "Vote for the candidate, not the party," he said. "Like Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji once said, 'Political parties will come and go... But the country must remain.' Similarly, the university must remain irrespective of parties," the contestant signed off. PUSU leader pitches for making students job-ready "I am not a puppet in the hands of other political leaders. Their interference in the Panjab University has increased manifold," said Davinder Pal Singh, who is contesting for the presidential post from his party Panjab University Students' Union (PUSU). Here's more about Davinder Pal Singh, his poll promises and the solutions he has in mind: About him: Davinder Pal Singh who was born in Chandigarh itself took admission in the Panjab University in 2019 in the BPharma course. After completing the course, he has now taken admission in the MPharma course in 2023. Davinder has keen interest in journalism and has also contributed for the PU Pulse, the youth run platform. What ails PU: For Davinder, there are multiple issues ailing Panjab University. He stated that ensuring proper placements of students, making students' job ready, getting a skill development centre, discouraging the increasing VIP culture is what he feels should require immediate action. While speaking on condition in hostels, he said, "Bachon ko CM PM banane ki baat baad mein karo, pehle hostels mein

paani or light to dedo." "Our education system is outdated. We should make all the students job-ready. This would help them bridge the gap between the job requirements and the education they are obtaining," Davinder added. Solutions: Davinder says that he will make sure that the classes to make students ready for jobs, proper placements be started. "Through proper coordination with the authorities, this is one thing I will certainly do, apart from discouraging this culture of VIP passes even for the star night," he stated. Poll Pitch: "I am not a puppet in the hands of other political leaders. Rather there should be no interference of political leaders. What is their work at PU? This election is for students' welfare. Instead of focusing on their constituency, they are putting in money and muscle power all in PU. Students should vote for me on the basis of my vision for them, not on national issues, religion, race the others are discussing," he says. Kisan ka beta hun mehnat se kaam karunga aapke liye A national karate player Rakesh Deshwal who is contesting for the presidential post says "Kisan ka beta hun, mehnat se kaam karunga aapke liye. Aapke beech reh ke kaam kiya hai 24X7". About him: Rakesh Deshwal hails from Panipat in Haryana. It was in 2019 that he took admission in the law course of the Panjab University, Chandigarh, that is University Institute of Legal Studies. A national karate player, state football player and state cricket player, Rakesh says that he has been with the students 24X7. A hosteller, Rakesh says that sports is his hobby and he has been the sports secretary for the last three years. What ails PU: Rakesh says that the campus has been facing issues for the last 10 years. "Interestingly, there have been just hollow promises. For the last 10 years, no one has worked diligently for the students. Nothing has been done for women safety. There is no 24/7 pharmacy for the students. So much so even the central students placement cell is closed. The teacher strength is such that scholars are teaching the students in the absence of actual teachers and all this needs to be addressed," he said. Solutions: Rakesh says that he aims to get "heritage status for PU" as that way "it would help them get funds and grants for the institution".

EV Batteries: Under the hood

Last year was a good year for Electric Vehicles (EV) in India with sales recording a 50% growth compared to 2022. While actual volumes remain small (6% of vehicles registered in 2023), the industry is poised for phenomenal growth with the Indian EV market expected to reach \$100 billion by 2030. The heart of an EV is its battery — with the battery system accounting for 40% of the vehicle cost. The projected growth of the EV market is dependent on advances in battery technology translating to better economics and enhanced user experience (longer range, faster charging and improved safety).

The lithium batteryAlmost all EVs on the road today are powered by lithium-ion batteries. It consists of two electrodes (an anode and a cathode) separated by a liquid electrolyte. Lithium atoms in the anode give up electrons which travel to the cathode through an external wire — this stream of electrons provide the current which powers the motor of the vehicle. Simultaneously, lithium ions (now positively charged from loss of an electron) travel through the electrolyte to reach the cathode. During charging, the process is reversed with lithium ions being forced to travel back through the electrolyte to the anode.

There is a good reason why lithium is the material of choice for EV batteries. Lithium, the lightest solid element known to man, has a high propensity to give up its electron. Its small size enables the lithium ion to efficiently travel between electrodes through the electrolyte. This translates to lighter and smaller batteries with an ability to store large amounts of energy. However, today's Li-ion batteries still leave a lot to be desired. Its energy density while high compared to earlier battery technologies, pales in comparison to petrol. Batteries are still slow to charge (compared to the few minutes it takes to fill petrol at a pump). There is a need to make batteries more affordable and increase their life-span. And then there are environmental concerns primarily related to the mining of lithium and other elements (such as cobalt, nickel).

On improving the battery

The efforts toward improving the EV battery can be broadly classified into three approaches. The first approach retains the basic structure of the lithium-ion battery while making tweaks to the electrodes. An ideal electrode should be light weight; store a lot of lithium; provide sufficient pathways for lithium to easily enter and exit the electrode (translating to higher voltages and faster charging); and be made of materials that are cheap, non-toxic and easily available. But invariably there are trade-offs involved. For example, Tesla uses cathodes based on Nickel-Manganese-Cobalt (NMC) and Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) in their batteries. While NMC batteries have high energy density and thus provide longer range, LFP batteries have longer life, better stability, are less toxic and have faster charging times.

Battery Management Systems (BMS)

Another approach to improving battery performance involves deploying sens-

ing and control infrastructure around the battery to increase safety, extend battery life and speed-up charging. For instance, a temperature sensor can be installed to detect dangerous conditions and shut down the battery, preventing a fire. Monitoring parameters such as internal temperature, voltage and current and appropriately modulating the charging current and voltage can result in faster charging while maintaining battery life.

This can be understood using a simple analogy. Charging a battery involves moving lithium ions from the cathode to the anode. This is akin to moving a bunch of kids from one classroom to another through a common door. Left to themselves the kids are likely to jump across benches and rush to the door — potentially damaging furniture, resulting in crowding around the door and slowing down movement. A couple of monitors to control the kids can result in faster movement with lesser damage. A Battery Management System (BMS) consists of sensors to measure parameters such as temperature, voltage and current; electronic circuitry to control the battery; and a compute engine to process the sensor data and issue appropriate control commands. Advances in battery management and charging algorithms are generally easier to deploy since they do not involve any fundamental changes to the battery chemistry.

Paradigm shifts

There is considerable effort being invested in approaches that promise quantum jumps in battery performance. One such approach is the Solid-State Lithium Battery (SSB), which seeks to fix two common drawbacks in prevalent batteries. The liquid electrolyte used in EV batteries is highly flammable. The SSB replaces this with a heat resistant lightweight solid electrolyte. Further, the anode of an EV battery consists of a carbon based porous/layered scaffolding (typically graphite) — which houses lithium atoms (a crude analogy is water stored in a sponge). The carbon scaffolding provides the required stability during charging and discharging, as lithium is highly reactive.

However, the solid electrolyte in an SSB provides sufficient structural stability and good separation between the anode and the cathode, that the carbon scaffolding is no longer needed at the anode. This can significantly reduce the weight of battery and also improve charging speed. If SSB's live up to their promise, consumers can expect EVs that travel further with a single charge, are faster to charge and are safer across a wider range of temperatures, sometime before the end of this decade.

India has a good eco-system that can support further progress in EV batteries — an expanding market, an environment that supports start-ups, friendly government policies, and successful home-grown EV companies (Ather, Ola Electric). Further, fundamental research in material science at India's premier universities (IIT- Madras and Mumbai) and government research labs promotes innovation. The semiconductor industry in India (Texas instruments



included) is also contributing advanced sensors and processors that will power the next generation of BMS.

So, if you are an entrepreneur look-

ing for a next start-up idea, or a student/researcher looking for an area of specialisation, battery technology is something that you could consider.

Rolls-Royce inks pact with Azad Engineering for making complex defence aero-engine components in India



New Delhi: Rolls-Royce has announced the signing of a long-term agreement with Azad Engineering to manufacture and supply complex components for defence aircraft engines. Through this strategic partnership, Hyderabad-based Azad Engineering will join the global supply chain for complex category components for Rolls-Royce's technologically advanced aero engines. Alex Zino, Executive Vice President — Business Development and Future Programmes and Head of Global Networks, Rolls-Royce, said: "Strong collaboration has been at the heart of Rolls-Royce's journey of success in India. As we work towards strengthening the defence ecosystem, we are happy to expand our supply chain in India in partnership with Azad Engineering. The sourcing of complex components from India for aero engine programmes further advances the

goal of capability creation in the country." Abhishek Singh, Senior Vice President — Defence, India and South-East Asia, Rolls-Royce, said: "The agreement with Azad Engineering is another significant step for Rolls-Royce towards harnessing the potential of Indian companies to contribute to the defence manufacturing ecosystem. This reiterates our commitment to building our presence in India through local partnerships, furthering the vision of an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'." Rakesh Chopdar, Founder and CEO, Azad Engineering, said: "We are honoured to be chosen as a strategic partner by Rolls-Royce to make critical and complex components for defence aircraft engines. Bringing these critical components to India not only showcases the capabilities of Azad Engineering, but also represents a pivotal moment for India's aerospace and defence industry."