

Techie quits job, turns successful food entrepreneur

Mancherla: In narrow bylanes of non-descript Nennal mandal centre, while her villagers and contemporaries are taking up farm operations, a girl is busy in preparing various authentic snacks, pickles, sweets, powders, fryums, masalas, millet products and instant mixes in two rooms of their house by engaging 10 women workers in different tasks. She taps her mobile phone and responds to her clients from far off places when possible. Meet Chiluveru Sahithi, an engineering graduate who is drawing the attention of many for succeeding in her entrepreneurial venture by receiving orders from customers belonging to not only several parts of Telangana, but Non-Resident of India (NRI) in America, Canada, UK and Australia. She is able to tickle taste buds of foodies across the globe by cooking delicious yet authentic 40 types of snacks, 15 varieties of pickles, various sweets, powders, fryums, masalas, millet products and instant mixes and by posting videos of eatables on Instagram page titled 'Flavours of Telugu.'

"I merged my passion for cooking with my dream of becoming an entrepreneur, giving birth to this business idea, which also enabled me to create employment opportunities for 10 others directly and 10 indirectly. This venture is generating an income equivalent to the salary of a software engineer with 15 years of experience," Sahithi told 'Telangana Today.' It was dur-

ing Covid-19 lockdown, the 26-year old mulled the idea of entering the sector of food business. She used to post videos of delicacies cooked by her mother on the popular photo and video sharing networking service.

The videos evoked a great response from NRIs and foodies present on the site, inspiring Sahithi to enter into her favourite field. The younger daughter of groceries trader Satyanarayana quit a job at TCS after working for four years and started the page on Instagram and began sharing videos of the delicacies on it in 2022. She dedicated herself completely to the venture in 2023. She stated that she was now accepting orders from foodies residing in US, Australia, Germany and some other countries, Hyderabad, Warangal and Karimnagar.

The inspiring girl shared that she was initially registering one or two orders per day, but now seeing around 30 to 40 orders a day, reflecting phenomenal growth of her business. "I am very happy and proud that I could help the society in some way and create jobs for others. I am able to achieve this from a small village with very limited resources, including tacky public transportation," she beamed. She disclosed that customers compare the taste and quality with that of eatables prepared by their grandparents. She stated that she was aiming to make the flavours of Telugu



a top brand and to expand services in Hyderabad soon. She opined that consis-

tency in offering the quality was her success formula.

Telangana Govt to take up repairs on State roads



Hyderabad: The State government has reportedly decided to take up repair works on 436 kilometres of State roads. Roads and Buildings officials are working on the modalities to complete the tender process to take up the repairs. According to officials, usually road repairs are taken up before the onset of the monsoon, however, since the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) was in force due to the Lok Sabha polls, the State government could not finalise tenders to take up repairs.

Under the Central Road Infrastructure Fund (CRIF), the Central government has allocated Rs.850 crore to the State in the last financial year. However, due to the assembly elections in the State last year, there was no opportunity to finalise the work even though funds were received from the Centre. After the assembly polls, the Lok Sabha election process started and the officials could not finalise the tender process due to the Model Code of

Conduct. Now that the Lok Sabha elections are over, the authorities have prepared proposals to take up the road repairs across the State. Sources informed that the officials were planning to complete the tender process by the end of this month.

The tenders received in the past have been finalised and the work is likely to begin in the first week of July, the officials said. Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has reportedly asked the officials to complete the process of the tenders at the earliest. He reportedly directed the officials to take up maintenance and repair work of State roads on a priority basis. The government has decided to spend the CRIF funds to repair roads in all the districts of the State, the sources said. Meanwhile, in the absence of regular repair and maintenance work, several roads in the State have developed pot-holes and uneven patches.

Supreme Court ruling on no immunity for bribe-taking lawmakers

New Delhi: The seven-judge bench verdict on Monday that said bribe-taking lawmakers have no immunity strikes a much-needed balance between parliamentary privilege and corruption charges. The verdict defines parliamentary privilege and its boundaries, especially in relation to freedom of speech, the right to participate in proceedings of the House, and immunity from legal proceedings. Understanding the landmark judgement by the Constitution bench on Monday requires navigating the intriguing journey of the case and the contentious judgment that led the top court establish a judicial precedent that served as guidelines for future cases involving lawmakers. This was the ruling overturned on Monday by the larger bench. The tenth Lok Sabha election, which took place in 1991, provided the case's context. PV Narasimha Rao was appointed prime minister and the Congress emerged as the single largest party. In July 1993, a no confidence motion was brought against the government. In a house of 528 MPs, the Congress was short by 14 from a simple majority. On July 26, 1993, the motion was put to vote, and the Narasimha Rao government sailed through by garnering 265 votes. Several MPs that voted against the motion of no-confidence were those who belonged to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and the Janata Dal (Ajit) JD (A). Interestingly, Ajit Singh, a JD (A) MP, chose not to cast a vote. A complaint was filed before the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) alleging that the Narasimha Rao government distributed over 3 crore as bribe to MPs of different political parties. CBI took up the investigation under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 against JMM chief Shibu Soren and three other party MPs for receiving bribes and voting against the no confidence motion. The investigating agency also filed a separate case against Rao and others for hatching a criminal conspiracy and paying bribes to MPs. Charge sheets were filed before a CBI court in Delhi where the accused MPs took the defence that the action by the court is barred by Article 105(2). Article 105(2) states: "No member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in Parliament or any committee thereof and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of either House of Parliament of any report, paper, votes or proceedings." The identical provision in respect of members of state legislatures is provided in Article 194(2). The CBI judge rejected the argument and even the Delhi high court put a stamp of approval on it by saying that the illegal acts of demanding and accepting bribe took place outside Parliament. The appeal was brought to the Supreme Court where a Constitution bench of five judges determined two issues: One, does Article 105 confer any immunity on an MP from

being prosecuted in an offence involving offer or acceptance of bribe and two, can MPs be regarded as "public servant" to bring them within the ambit of the 1988 Act because there is no authority competent to grant sanction for their prosecution? The verdict that came on July 17, 1998, was not unanimous. While the judges agreed on the second issue that MPs are public servants, there was difference of opinion on whether Article 105 immunity is to be a shield for members of Parliament against criminal proceedings for bribery. The majority decision was given by justices SP Bharucha and S Rajendra Babu, and supported by a separate view by justice GN Ray. They held that the alleged bribe takers are entitled to immunity conferred by Article 105(2), holding that the words "in respect of" used in Article 105 should be given a broad meaning and the alleged conspiracy were "in respect of" votes cast. Applying this rationale, the court curiously directed trial to proceed against Ajit Singh since he did not cast his vote on the no-confidence motion. The majority said: "Protection under Article 105(2) is available only to those accused, who as members of Parliament cast their votes in Parliament." The minority view comprised justices SC Agrawal and AS Anand. Years later, in March 2012, the Election Commission of India (ECI) notified election to two vacant seats of the Rajya Sabha from Jharkhand. Sita Soren, the daughter-in-law of JMM patriarch Shibu Soren, was then a member of the Jharkhand legislative assembly. She was accused of accepting a bribe from an independent candidate in exchange for supporting him. However, it was clear from the open voting for the Rajya Sabha seat that she voted for a candidate from her own party rather than the alleged bribe-giver. A PIL came to be filed before the Jharkhand high court, which directed the CBI to probe into the alleged exchange of money. Before the trial court and the high court, Sita Soren claimed immunity against prosecution under Article 194(2), but to no avail. On being denied the protection, she approached the Supreme Court in 2014, banking on the 1998 ruling in the Narasimha Rao case. In March 2019, a three-judge bench referred the matter to a five-judge bench, which in turn referred the issue to a seven-judge bench in September last year. The seven-judge bench ruling: Noting precedents, historical development and international jurisprudence on parliamentary privileges, the top court on Monday declared that legislators cannot claim immunity in cases of corruption and bribery since they are not fundamentally related to their ability to perform their duties. The court highlighted that the freedom of speech and the right to vote as an extension of it is a privilege essential to every legislative body because such privileges are not only essential to the ability of Parliament and its members to carry out their duties, but it is also at the core of



A complaint was filed before the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) alleging that the Narasimha Rao government distributed over 3 crore as bribe to MPs of different political parties

the function of a democratic legislative institution. "Freedom of speech in Parliament and the legislatures is an arm of the same aspiration so that members may express the grievances of their constituents, express diverse perspectives and ventilate the perspectives of their constituents. Freedom of speech in Parliament ensures that the government is held accountable by the House," it said. At the same time, the court was categorical that the privileges to MPs and MLAs are not absolute or unqualified. "The privilege of an individual member only extends insofar as it aids the House to function and without which the House may not be able to carry out its functions collectively... We may understand parliamentary privileges as those rights and immunities which allow the orderly, democratic, and smooth functioning of Parliament and without which the essential functioning of the House would be violated," it noted. According to the court, parliamentary privileges are not a mark of status which makes legislators stand on an unequal pedestal but are guaranteed freedoms necessary to be in furtherance of fertilising a deliberative, critical, and responsive democracy, adding it is for the legislator claiming a privilege against an action to satisfy that the privilege exists. The bench then went on to declare that an act of bribery cannot be immune under the doctrine of parliamentary privilege because a member engaging in bribery commits a crime which is not essential to the casting of the vote or the ability to decide on how the vote should be cast. Holding that courts and the House exercise parallel jurisdiction over

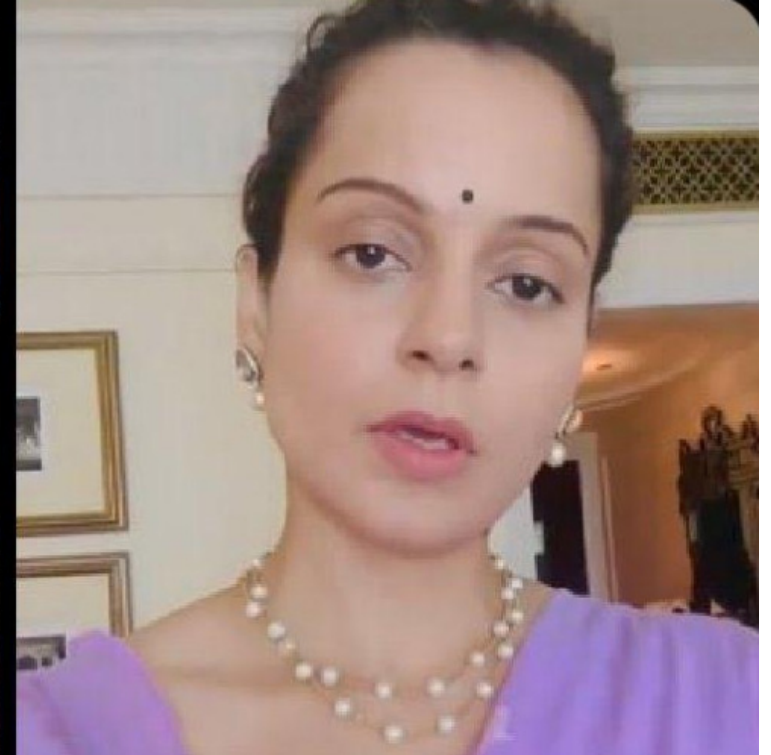
allegations of bribery, the Constitution bench said that a member engaging in bribery commits a crime which is unrelated to their ability to vote or to make a decision on their vote. "This action may bring indignity to the House of Parliament or Legislature and may also attract prosecution. What it does not attract is the immunity given to the essential and necessary functions of a member of Parliament or legislature," it added. The bench further clarified that the offence of bribery is complete on the acceptance of the money or on the agreement to accept money being concluded, adding it is not contingent on the performance of the promise for which money is given or is agreed to be given. Notably, the seven-judge bench ruling on Monday also displaced observations by another five-judge bench in the Kuldip Nayar case (2006), which said that elections to fill seats in the Rajya Sabha are not proceedings of the legislature but a mere exercise of franchise, which falls outside the net of parliamentary privilege under Article 194. In the 2006 judgment, the court was dealing with the use of open ballots in elections to the Rajya Sabha. The larger bench held that parliamentary privilege cannot be restricted to only law-making on the floor of the House but extends to other powers and responsibilities of elected members, which take place in the legislature or Parliament, even when the House is not sitting. "The court should adopt a construction which strengthens the foundational features and the basic structure of the Constitution... it is clarified that voting for elections to the Rajya Sabha falls within the ambit of Article 194(2).

Slapping Kangana: Reflection of farmers' anger or a sign of rising terrorism?

Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), June 9: From Chandigarh Airport an echo of slapping waived in a lightning speed not only across the country, but also thundered worldwide, when the news of alleged slapping to Kangana Ranaut, an actress-turned-politician and newly elected Lok Sabha member from Himachal Pradesh as a BJP candidate, by a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) women soldier, was flashed. Now the question arises- Why the women soldier, Kulwinder Kaur, despite a member of disciplined Indian force, reportedly slapped the actress? As per media reports and reason sounded in the public, the cause of slapping is linked to the statements of Kangana Ranaut floated during the farmers' movement against three agricultural laws, which were later on repealed under the farmers' pressure.

Referring the farmers' agitation during 2020 and pointing towards Kangana, heartedly hurt Kulwinder Kaur herself was reported as saying, "Isne bayaan diya tha na 100-100 rupye ke liye baithi hain vahan pe. Ye baithi thi vahan pe? Meri maa baithi thi vahan pe jab isne bayaan diya tha. (She (Kangana) stated that the farmers are sitting there for ?100. Had she a sit in there? My mother was sitting there and protesting when she gave this statement)". Samyukta Kisan Morcha leader Dr. Inderjeet Singh, National Vice-President of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), says, "It is still in the memory of people that Kangana Ranaut had once said that women on borders were a hired lot. Kangana had never apologised for her remarks against farmers movement as such and attempting to tarnish the dignity of women farmers in particular. So, acrimony will persist against her among the peasantry for the insinuations uttered by her." While sharing his version to this author, Dr. Singh adds, "We know so many BJP and RSS leaders had made unacceptable and outrageous remarks against the movement and farmers. Some of them had to apologise on being boycotted by farmers bodies under SKM. The anger was obviously more visible during just concluded Lok Sabha elections, especially in Punjab and Haryana." The SKM leader also puts forward another reason for the conflict. "Some people say that there was an issue over phone to be placed in the tray during security checks which Kangana perhaps was avoiding which seems plausible as per her temperament." Alleging Kangana of habitually indulging in making stupid remarks on various subjects and often doing loose talks, Dr. Inderjeet says, "Kangana had later made an even more inflammatory and sensitive remark about trends emerging in Punjab of terrorism and separatism which surprises no one as she has been habitually indulging in making stupid remarks on various subjects and often doing loose talks."

Why Kangana Ranaut is trying to divert the reason of incident inclining towards terrorism angle? Why she is bent upon proving its linkage to terrorism? Indian Express in an update on June 7, on its web portal, writes - "Kangana claimed that the CISF constable 'strategically waited' for her to cross the security check, and 'in a signa-



ture Khalistani style', quietly came from behind and hit (her) face without saying a word." "As soon as I came out after the security check, a woman in another cabin, a CISF security staff, she waited for me to cross her and hit my face from the side. She started abusing me. When I asked her why, she said that she supports the farmers' protest." Kangana shows her concern, "I am safe but my concern is how we handle the terrorism and extremism that is increasing in Punjab." In an update on June 7, 2024, NDTV News Desk reminded -- Ms Ranaut also made headlines in February 2021 after international pop star Rihanna seemed to criticise the BJP government over the farmers' protest and said, "Why aren't we talking about this?" To this, Ms Ranaut had responded, "No one is talking about it because they are not farmers, they are terrorists who are trying to divide India, so that China can take over our vulnerable broken nation and make it a Chinese colony much like the USA... Sit down you fool, we are not selling our nation like you dummies." One thing, which seems to be very disturbing, is the instigating bundle of statements of Kangana Ranaut. Why Kangana is every time linking the incidents with terrorism? "They are not farmers; they are terrorists who are trying to divide India" or "I am safe but my concern is how we handle the terrorism and extremism that is increasing in Punjab." Describing the incident, Kangana also says, "And 'in a signature Khalistani style', she quietly came from behind and hit (her) face without saying a word." Is the action of the CISF constable has any linkage with the terrorism? Has terrorism actually rising in Punjab? How so confidently Kangana is alleging that the terrorism and extremism is increasing in Punjab? If Kangana is seeing, noticing, sensing and feeling that terrorism and extremism is increasing in Punjab, and has proofs, then why she has not warned and informed the central government run by her own party since last 10 years? Should such

a charge be levelled on the basis of no ground. Whether other political parties or the inhabitants of the state and the country also smell the bad odour of the terrorism? Is there any substance in what Kangana seeing terrorism in every incident, and especially during farmers' agitation or present airport incident? Harsimrat Kaur Badal, wife of Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) President Sukhbir Badal and an MP from Punjab, commenting in her X account, says, "I urge union govt to focus on farmer grievances & fulfil the promises made. No one should be allowed to label Punjabis as Atankwadi or Ugarwadi. Punjabis are foremost patriots, serving the nation on the borders and as food providers. We deserve better." Sukhpal Singh Khaira, @SukhpalKhaira, MLA Bholath, Former Leader of Opposition, Punjab and Chairman All India Kisan Congress condemns Kangana Ranaut's statements, "I vehemently condemn the hate mongering of fascist @KanganaTeam. Kangana Ranaut spreading hatred against farmers & Punjab. I never support any kind of violence but she was slapped by CISF personnel Kulwinder Kaur due to her own nefarious divisive agenda and her hate for farmers. The CISF personnel hit her bcoz she felt bad when Kangana taunted protesting farmers to be paid daily wages as her mother was part of the same protest. It appears she has learnt no lesson and is once again spitting venom against farmers & Punjab. She's trying to portray her slap with revival of terrorism in Punjab not realizing it was a SLAP and not a bullet fired. She should now realise she's an MP and must control her tongue." Punjab based senior journalist, Jai Singh Chhibber suggests both sides to mend their ways. Sharing his views with this author, Chhibber says, "What happened with the newly elected Member of Parliament Kangana Ranaut should not have happened. This has sent a wrong message to the whole world. Especially a lady con-

stable deployed for security carried out such an incident, which is even more dangerous, this will lead to loss of trust in the people deployed for security. India is a democratic country. In this, everyone has the right to express their views." Chhibber further adds, "Kangana Ranaut had made harsh comments about the people sitting on dharna, especially the farmers, demanding the repeal of the three agricultural bills, but this does not mean that she should be treated rudely. She should be slapped. No one can tolerate this. Now she has been elected to the Parliament. One should respond with dialogue and slogans; slapping is not the right way." Showing a middle path, Chhibber suggests, "One more thing, everyone should control his/her language. One should not use such language and words which spread hatred in the society." Countering and outrightly rejecting Kangana's statements of linking every incident with terrorism and alleging that the terrorism is rising its head in Punjab, Journalist Chhibber says, "The second thing is that Kangana Ranaut has again talked about terrorism in Punjab yesterday. She has again spoken about hatred. She should avoid such language, especially now that she has been elected to the Parliament of the country. No one from Punjab wants Khalistan. There may be a handful of people who support it, but those who have seen the old days of Punjab want peace, brotherhood, living together with everyone in Punjab and want to make Punjab a developed Punjab. Gurus, saints and prophets have also taught us to live together with love." It seems crystal clear that alleged slapping incident at Chandigarh airport has nothing to do with the terrorism and it is just a momentary reaction of Kulwinder Kaur generated out of rage against Kangana's statements for the farmers sitting on Dharna for getting the three black agricultural laws repealed. Actual facts will come out during the course of investigation.

Lok Sabha Poll results not to deflect SAD from Panthic and pro farmer agenda: Sukhbir Badal

Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), June 10 - Shiromani Akali Dal president Sardar Sukhbir Singh Badal said here today that the results of the Lok Sabha poll in Punjab will not deflect him and his party from their agenda of commitment to the cause of Panth, Punjab, farmers and other aggrieved and poorer sections of society. "Our commitment to Panth and Punjab, especially farmers and the other poorer sections, is not subject to election results, good or bad. We will work even harder to fulfil our commitment to the aggrieved and downtrodden sections of society." "We have said it before also and I reiterate that the party is guided by the eternal inclusive vision set before us by the great Guru Sahiban, saints and seers. This vision and our commitment to it is not a slave to whether we sweep an election or suffer reverses. We have seen massive glory and faced great challenges. But neither affects our commitment to principles. For us, principles will continue to remain above politics, and beyond victory or defeat", he said. Mr Badal however said that as president of the party, he not only fully and humbly accepts the people's mandate but also wholeheartedly respects it. "As a person, I keep an open mind and a humble attitude to the people's mandate and always remain sensitive to their wishes," said the Akali chief adding that "the process of introspection is natural to any responsible political party such as ours. This is an ongoing process and we keep trying to look and relook at ourselves through the people's mind and keep trying to improve ourselves and be worthy of their love and respect". In a statement, Sukhbir Badal today felicitated Chandrababu Naidu, Nitish Kumar, Ms Manta Banerjee, Udhav Thakre and other leaders of the regional parties on their creditable performance in the just concluded Lok Sabha elections. In his separate communications to them, Badal also said that his party will support any initiative towards strengthening the federal structure of the country with emphasis of greater fiscal autonomy to states. "As a regional and Panthic party, we are very happy over the people's mandate given to the federal impulse in the country. In Punjab, we will work to strengthen this impulse further", he said. Mr Badal has also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his very moving words of homage to the Akali stalwart Sardar Parkash Singh Badal. "I and my party are truly thankful to you for the kind words you have used for our great statesman. "SAD also demanded Ravneet Singh Bittu, newly inducted as MOS in central ministry, to interject and ensure Punjab's rights.

Former minister and senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Bikram Singh Majithia today asked newly appointed union minister of state Ravneet Singh Bittu to interject and ensure Punjab's rights vis a vis Chandigarh were respected and implemented in the letter and spirit of decisions taken by the union government while reorganising the State and creating the union territory. In a statement here, Mr Bikram Majithia said "Punjabis are perturbed by the insidious attempts to dilute Punjab's inalienable right to its capital city



of Chandigarh which was designated as a UT as a temporary measure. Since Mr Bittu will be the sole representative of Punjabis in the union cabinet, he should ensure that all decisions taken by the centre are implemented". The SAD leader said as per the ministry of home affairs (MHA) memorandum of November 4, 1966 it was clearly stated that all posts in the UT should be filled from the Punjab and Haryana State cadres. He said the MHA had also stipulated that a committee including representatives of the Punjab and Haryana governments as well as from the UT administration and the MHA should be constituted to absorb personnel against all posts in the UT on a permanent basis. Mr Majithia said much water had flown since this order with the union government systematically diluting Punjab's role in the UT administration even as the slide was most prominent in the last ten years. "Now the time has come to correct this situation and Mr Bittu should not be found wanting in this task. As a first step he should ask the MHA to respect its order of November, 1966 in letter and spirit. All means of appointments based on central cadres including the DANIPS cadre for appointment of police personnel should be done away with. All Punjab and Haryana employees working on deputation should be regularised and all posts falling vacant after weeding out the UT administration of central cadre employees should be filled with employees from Punjab and Haryana". Asserting that this would be the first step towards addressing the discriminations done to Punjab, Mr Majithia said he had made this suggestion first as a clear-cut order with regard to appointment of employees in the UT existed. "This should be implemented", he added. Asserting that a lot more needed to be done, the Akali

leader said "Bittu should also ensure reversal of all other anti- Punjab decisions in the UT including giving central grades to employees and ignoring and discriminating against Punjabi language in official work". He said Bittu should also request the home ministry to reverse its decision to grant land in Chandigarh to Haryana for establishment of a separate Vidhan Sabha. Asserting that he was confident that Bittu would work to safeguard Punjab's in-

terests, Mr Majithia said, "If this is done it will pave the way for the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab as stated in the Rajiv - Longowal accord which was acknowledged by both houses of the Parliament as well as by successive governments at the centre. Even Haryana is committed through the Punjab Accord to the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab which Bittu should pursue earnestly", Mr Majithia added.

Child with cancer becomes police inspector for a day

Hyderabad: In a heart-warming gesture, a child who is diagnosed with cancer was made a police inspector for a day at Nampally police station on Monday.

The boy K Venkata Subash, studying in seventh standard at a school in the city was diagnosed with Acute Myelogenous Leukaemia (AML) disease last year and is currently going treatment at MNJ Cancer Hospital at Red Hills. During an interaction with the volunteers of Make - A Wish Foundation of India, Hyderabad Chapter, the boy shared with them that he wants to become a police officer. The volunteers informed about it to their superiors who wrote to the Hyderabad Commissioner of Police and sought his help. The Hyderabad CP office asked the Inspector Nampally, B Abhilash to speak to the NGO. After interacting with the police officials, the NGO took the boy dressed in a police uniform to the Nampally police station.



9 Students of Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) from Hyderabad Achieve Top Ranks in JEE Advanced 2024



Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), the national leader in test preparatory services, proudly announces the outstanding achievement of 9 of its students from Hyderabad who became top scorers in the prestigious JEE Advanced 2024 examination. This remarkable feat is a testament to their hard work, dedication, and the high-quality coaching provided by AESL. The results were released today by IIT Madras. Notable students are Rishi Shekher Shukla who secured AIR 25, Ujjwal Singh secured AIR 95, Murikinati Sai Divya Teja Reddy secured AIR 174, Surya Prakash Pingali secured AIR 245, Viswanath K S secured AIR 247, Rithvik Perumalla secured AIR 434, Mannem Naga Sanjay secured AIR 741, Kotha Pratheek Reddy secured AIR 819, and Aryan Bhojwani secured AIR 951.

The students enrolled in AESL's classroom program to prepare for JEE Advanced, widely regarded as one of the toughest entrance exams globally. They attribute their remarkable success to their rigorous understanding of concepts and strict adherence to a disciplined study schedule. "We are grateful that Aakash has helped us with both. But for the content and coaching from AESL, we would not have grasped many concepts in different subjects in a short period of time," the students expressed.

Congratulating the students on their extraordinary achievement, Mr. Dheeraj Misra, Chief Academic & Business Head, Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), said, "We congratulate the students for their exemplary feat. Their achievement speaks volumes of their hard work and dedication as well as the support of their

parents. We wish our students all the best in their future endeavors." JEE Advanced is conducted annually for students who have qualified JEE Mains organized by one of the IITs yearly. While JEE Main is for admission to several National Institute of Technologies (NITs) and other center-aided engineering colleges in India, JEE Advanced is considered as the sole prerequisite for admission to the Indian Insti-

As expected, the RBI kept its policy rate and stance unchanged. Although, the MPC decision saw two dissents instead of the one seen in the previous policy.

The one positive out of the policy was the upward revision in the GDP growth forecast to 7.2% from 7% earlier for FY25. On the other hand, inflation forecasts were kept unchanged.

The RBI remains in a wait and watch mode to assess domestic developments like the monsoon performance, food inflation, and the new fiscal strategy before moving on rates. We continue to see the possibility of a rate cut in Q4 2024.

Despite the governors' emphasis that monetary policy decisions are driven primarily by domestic considerations, we think that any rate cut action could end up

tute of Technology (IIT). However, Students must appear for JEE Main to sit for JEE Advanced. A total number of 180,200 candidates appeared in both papers 1 and 2 in JEE (Advanced) 2024. A total of 48,248 candidates have qualified JEE (Advanced) 2024. Aakash offers comprehensive IIT-JEE coaching through various course formats tailored for high school and higher secondary school students. Recently,

Aakash has intensified its focus on developing Computer-Based Training. Its innovative iTutor platform delivers recorded video lectures, enabling students to engage in self-paced learning and catch up on missed sessions. Moreover, mock tests simulate real exam conditions, equipping students with the necessary familiarity and confidence to tackle the examination effectively.



being aligned with the timing of the Fed's rate cut cycle to limit financial market volatility.

On the regulatory front, the increase

in bulk deposit limit to INR 3 crore from INR 2 crore, signals the RBI's intention to encourage banks to garner greater retail deposits to fund credit growth.

| Demand for Ahir Regiment: Military history of Ahirs and their evolution in Indian Army

Like previous Lok Sabha elections, this time, too, the demand for an Ahir Regiment has once again found echo in many states in the country. Politicians cutting across party lines have supported the demand for a separate regiment for the Ahirs in the Indian Army pointing to the Jat, Rajput, and Mahar Regiments. The Government has maintained a steady stance on the issue of raising new regiments on the lines of the so-called martial races theory propounded and implemented by the British during their rule in India. Over the last many decades, successive ministers of defence have said there is no proposal to raise any new regiment on caste and class lines and that the focus is on providing a national character to the Army and not restricting the regiments to regional or religious identities. In January 2023, replying to a question by MP Giridhari Yadav in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt denied that various caste-based regiments exist in the Indian Army.

Regarding the raising of an Ahir Regiment, the MoS said, "Proposal for the raising of Ahir Regiment is not under consideration. As per Government Policy on the subject, all citizens irrespective of their class, creed, region or religion are eligible for recruitment in the Indian Army. After Independence, it has been the policy of the Government not to raise any new Regiment for a particular class/community/religion or region. Adequate vacancies are being provided to all classes to ensure equitable opportunity for recruitment into the Indian Army". While that is strictly not true as caste and class-based regiments are a reality, nonetheless this has been the official stand for at least the past 60 years in Parliament.

The Yaduvanshi Ahirs of Ahirwal along with Jats, Gujars, and Rajputs were initially identified as a 'martial race' by the British. However, the military history of the Ahirs goes beyond the British era. In her seminal work, *The Vernacularisation of Democracy: Politics, Caste and Religion in India*, Lucia Michelutti, a professor of anthropology, University College London, has traced the military lineage of the Ahirs. According to the research cited by her, the Rewari kingdom was established by an Ahir military chief, Rao Nandaram at the beginning of the 18th century. Nandaram is said to have received a jagir of 360 villages around Rewari. Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar (1713-19) conferred on him the title of 'Chaudhary'. Michelutti says the Mughals constantly acknowledged the distinctiveness of the clans which claimed to be Rajput by birth and blood and that the Aphariya, the Kausaliya, and the Kosa were the major Ahir aristocratic clans who had direct contact with the Mughal state representatives. With the advent of the British in India, the martial lineage of the Ahirs was reshaped. The famous Cavalry officer James Skinner, who raised the Skinner's Horse (now 1 Horse), is said to have granted Jagirs to groups of Jats, Gujars, and Ahirs.



Michelutti quotes British writer A H Bingley, who wrote a recruitment handbook on Jats, Gujars, and Ahirs in 1937. Bingley often stressed that distinctions amongst the Ahirs were social and historical rather than ethnic and described some of the subdivisions within the Ahirs as 'martial'. "Ahirs make excellent soldiers. They are manly, without false pride, independent without insolence, with reserved manners but good nature, light-hearted and industrious. They are always cheerful and are the sort of people who habitually make the best of things. They are reliable, steady and of uniformly excellent character. After ten years of experience with them, I emphatically endorse the opinion that Ahirs are eminently fitted for the profession of arms... When you come over the names of the martial races of India and think of the Gorkha, Rajput, Sikh, Brahmans, Dogra, Jat, Pathan, Punjabi Muhammadan, do not forget the Jadubansi Ahirs," writes Bingley.

Thus, it is clear that Bingley considered the Yaduvanshi Ahirs of Ahirwal as suitable for recruitment but not the Nandavanshi Ahirs and the Goallavanshi Ahirs of other localities in the Gangetic plains. However, this perception changed over the years. Michelutti says the Nandavanshi Ahirs of the Central Doab and the Goallavanshi Ahirs of Oudh (Awadh) were not recruited by the British at the time. She adds the British recruitment officers regarded the Yaduvanshi Ahirs as the authentic 'martial' Ahirs both based on their socio-economic status and their presumed Rajput ancestry, whereas the Nandavanshi and Goallavanshi Ahirs were hardly enlisted in the army, except as bullock-drivers in the artillery. "This recruitment policy, which aimed at keeping a relation between clan status and army rank, remained popular up until the First World War," says Michelutti. Ahirs gain importance in Indian Army

However, the formation of a united all-India Yadav community was cemented by

the demand to the British Indian army for an increase in the quota of Ahirs recruited. In this, the Rewari royal family played an important role in representing the interests of Ahirs in the Army. Michelutti notes that in 1898, Rao Yudhister Singh (the head of the former Rewari royal family) sent a petition to the viceroy requesting an increment in the quota of Ahirs in the Hyderabad Regiment (present Kumaon Regiment).

Before the Afghan War (1878-80), the Ahirs were enlisted in the Bengal and Bombay armies. However, by the late 19th century, their military history had been strictly linked with that of the Hyderabad Regiment (renamed Kumaon Regiment). The recruitment of the Ahirs increased after 1904 and during the First World War. During the first decade of the 20th century, Ahir recruitment was further increased by Rao Balbir Singh, son of Rao Yudhishter Singh. He was an Honourary Captain in the army and was granted the title of Rao Bahadur for his services as a recruitment agent. With time, the British recruited Nandavanshi Ahirs too in the Army and Michelutti says this change in recruitment policy acknowledged that the Ahirs of the Gangetic plains shared the same martial essence and it indirectly contributed to the formation of a Yadav community. "This transformation can be viewed as a perfect example of a response to colonial essentialising practices and shows how state policies can refashion social groupings," writes Michelutti.

Genesis of the demand for an Ahir Regiment The bravery of the Ahir troops of Haryana, of the 13th Battalion of Kumaon Regiment, in the 1962 war, where the majority of the troops fighting the Chinese onslaught perished but did not budge from their positions, brought the demand into the national limelight. The community members argued that the Ahirs deserved a full-fledged Infantry Regiment named after them and not a few battalions in the Kumaon Regiment and a fixed percentage

in other regiments. The 50th anniversary of the 1962 War in 2012 gave a boost to this demand when the saga of Ahir troops of 13 Kumaon was recounted widely, and with the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Rezangla in 2022, the demand became more vocal. History of Ahirs in Indian Army and Kumaon Regiment Ahirs are recruited in the Indian Army in various regiments including fixed class regiments (one or more caste in fixed numbers) like Kumaon, Jat, and Rajput and mixed class regiments (of all castes) like the Brigade of the Guards or The Parachute Regiment in the Infantry and various other regiments and Corps like Artillery, Engineers, Signals, Army Service Corps etc. In the modern Indian Army, in the 20th century, Ahirs were initially recruited in sizable numbers in the 19th Hyderabad Regiment. This regiment had earlier mainly recruited Rajputs from Uttar Pradesh and Muslims from the Deccan plateau among other castes. In 1902, the regiment's links with the Nizam of Hyderabad were severed with Berar being converted into a permanent base for the British. In 1922, in another reorganisation of The Indian Army, the class composition of the 19th Hyderabad Regiment was changed and Deccan Muslims were removed from it. In 1930, the class composition was changed to one company each of Kumaonis, Jats, Ahirs, and Mixed Class. It was on October 27, 1945, that the permission to change the name of the regiment was given when it became the 19th Kumaon Regiment. After Independence, it was named the Kumaon Regiment. The 13th Battalion of the Kumaon Regiment, which gained fame in the 1962 Battle of Rezang La against the Chinese, has the distinction of being the first battalion of the regiment to have been raised after Independence in 1947. It was raised in October 1948 with Kumaonis and Ahirs in equal proportion. Later, with the transfer of Ahirs from 2 Kumaon and 6 Kumaon, 13 Kumaon became the first pure Ahir battalion in the Kumaon Regiment in 1960.

What we owe each other, and ourselves: Life Hacks by Charles Assisi



There was a time when I imagined myself a vociferous rebel, the kind who might perhaps take to the streets to mobilise people, and voice collective anger at the immoralities of those in power.

Time has its way of taming the naïve. Today, I am an altogether different person; examining, questing, questioning, but with the lens often turned within. Lately I have been fascinated by how even the smallest questions inform the ethical landscapes of our world. Consider the act of brewing the tea I start my day with every morning. It is a simple daily ritual replicated across millions of homes. The younger me didn't think much about it. The older me has come to acknowledge that the tea leaves arrive through a long supply chain, with all the ethical considerations that this implies. When I zero in on a brand to drink, the choice is a silent but potent statement of my stand on fair pay, working conditions, environmental impact.

I submit that these seemingly trivial decisions hold profound ethical weight at the personal and societal levels. They shape our individual character and, as decisions coalesce into systems, they alter the fabric of the societies we inhabit. It is thus incumbent upon us to examine the ethical dimensions of our most mundane actions, whether when using the internet, planning a vacation, or picking a fitness regimen. There is no such thing, at least not any more, as the purely personal. Consider the simple act of buying a shirt. This object again tells a story of global interconnectedness. Most garments are designed in one part of the world, woven together in another, the dyes sourced

from someplace else, and the final sewing done perhaps on a different continent. Each step comes with labour and environmental implications. Opting for a garment made under fair working conditions over one produced in a sweatshop turns clothing into an endorsement of a philosophy of fairness and equity. Such an approach may shrink the list of available choices. The higher price points of fair-trade goods may narrow one's other options too, starting with how much one may now consume. But imagine the collective impact if millions made similar choices. Such actions have the power to transform industries, uplift communities, promote sustainable practices. Set purchases aside and consider our interactions with those who offer us services. The disrespect extended to waiters, taxi drivers and housekeeping staff goes unnoticed, by us. But these are acts of profound ethical significance too. They reflect a lack of acknowledgment for the dignity of labour and a lack of respect for the service provider's humanity. In a country like India, where economic disparities are stark, such interactions create vast divides within communities. Reflect on our interactions with telemarketers. These are often characterised, on our part, by extreme impatience and even outright hostility. What if we were to view each call as a moral opportunity, and remind ourselves that there is a human being on the other end of the line, whose workday tragically involves being rejected over and over? Declining the offer being made by a telemarketer does not require us to decline our humanity. A simple "No, thank you" can uphold our ethical standards while accomplishing

the objective of ending the call swiftly.

To illustrate the impact of how our ethical choices multiply, consider the Kudumbashree women's empowerment initiative of the Kerala government. Now a little over 25 years old, it used the cooperative model to offer microcredit to women members. Each of the women contributed to the fund, borrowed from it, repaid their debt, contributed again, and so on. The body has evolved into an entity that gives back to more than its immediate community of members. The Kudumbashree co-

operative society contributed to the Kerala chief minister's relief fund, in the aftermath of the 2018 floods. It ran community kitchens during the pandemic, to feed migrant workers who had been rendered jobless overnight. The point here is that by choosing empathy, respect and integrity, whether in larger systemic contexts or in actions that may appear inconsequential, we forge a path towards a kinder, more ethical and more sustainable world. Our choices do more than define us. They also define our reality.

Microsoft posts \$21.9 billion in net income, bets big on AI

New Delhi: Microsoft has posted a revenue of \$61.9 billion in its third quarter (Q3) — up 17 per cent — with \$21.9 billion in net income which increased 20 per cent. According to Satya Nadella, Chairman and CEO of Microsoft, Copilot and Copilot stack are orchestrating a new era of AI transformation, driving better business outcomes across every role and industry. "Our AI innovation continues to build on our strategic partnership with OpenAI as more than 65 per cent of the Fortune 500 now use Azure OpenAI service," he told analysts during the earnings call. Microsoft Cloud revenue was \$35.1 billion, up 23 per cent year-over-year, in the quarter that ended March 31. "Overall, we are seeing an acceleration in the number of large Azure deals from leaders across industries, including billion-dollar-plus, multiyear com-



mitments announced this month from Cloud Software Group and the Coca-Cola Company," said Nadella. Microsoft now have over 350,000 paid customers. On GitHub Copilot, there are 1.8 million paid subscribers with growth accelerating to over 35 per cent quarter over quarter.

ASEAN, a persistence with dialogue, on a trodden path

If Southeast Asia is the heart of the Indo-Pacific, the 56th Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), the post-ministerial conferences and other related regional meetings, held in Jakarta, Indonesia in mid-July, 2023, are the best barometer to check on the region's latest dynamics. An elaborate institutional architecture created by ASEAN has become an inclusive platform that draws nations from near and far, as also all major players (the United States, China, India, Japan and Russia) engaged in shaping the strategic contestation in a vast region stretching from east Africa to the South Pacific.

Vision and challenges An in-depth study of various outcome documents, particularly the joint communiqué of the FMM, is indicative of ASEAN's brave attempts to navigate through transformative changes in the present decade: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic slowdown, the Ukraine war, climate change, and, above all, the Cold War-type confrontation between the United States and China. As the current chair, Indonesia has portrayed ASEAN as "the Epicentrum of Growth". It is a well-chiselled vision with three inter-related dimensions: creating a political community that ensures regional peace and a just, democratic and harmonious environment; an economic community focused on achieving a well-integrated and connected regional economy within the global economic system; and a socio-cultural community to enhance the quality of life of ASEAN's citizens as well as sustainable development of the region.

Addressing fellow Foreign Ministers on July 11, Retno Marsudi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and chair, argued that ASEAN's ability to manage regional and global dynamics depended on two critical ingredients that promote its unity and centrality. First, it should maintain its credibility by adhering to the ASEAN Charter, and second, it should stay in the driver's seat while navigating regional dynamics. Laudable as these goals are, they are becoming less achievable. ASEAN's internal differences on issues such as Myanmar keep surfacing in public. Its desire to lead the region and shape its agenda stands jeopardised by the strained relationship between the U.S. and China.

China enjoys close political and economic relations with the ASEAN states, and at least three of them, i.e., Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, are its virtual dependencies. While the Philippines has become more assertive of late in its claims in the South China Sea, the central players, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, are all favourably disposed towards Beijing. This explains why none of them raises its voice against China's delaying tactics in negotiating an enforceable code of conduct concerning the South China Sea. For many years, ASEAN and China have called for "an early conclusion of an effective and substantive" code of conduct;

they did it this year too, but are content to leave the matter there. No indication of a timeline is given. It is hard to find a similar example of diplomatic doublespeak.

ASEAN also watches helplessly the acrimonious debate between the U.S. and Chinese governments, despite Washington's recent attempts to revive constructive discussions through high-level visits. The Chinese argument is that the U.S. is solely responsible for poor relations because it steadily refuses to accept and accommodate itself to China's 'peaceful rise.' The U.S., on the other hand, is no longer willing to turn a blind eye to Chinese aggressiveness and coercion in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The latest manifestation of this thinking appeared in North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Vilnius summit communiqué which stated, "The People's Republic of China's stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values." Anxious over "the intensifying geopolitical tensions in the region," ASEAN prefers to promote the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). Its four identified areas (maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and economic cooperation) make much sense to the region. Predictably though, despite ASEAN partners reaffirming support for the AOIP, its actual implementation remains a worry.

ASEAN reiterated its centrality, but it appears vulnerable when the grouping is unable to forge unity on a most sensitive issue, the Myanmar situation, which has led ASEAN to bar a member-state (Myanmar) from all its political-level dis-



cussions. In the run-up to the FMM, Thailand, defying ASEAN's official policy, ran its own dialogue with the military government which permitted the Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to have a meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, much to the discomfiture of Indonesia, the ASEAN chair. The split in ranks was acknowledged in the joint communiqué. This disunity could not be concealed by a routine reaffirmation of the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) forged in April 2021. Without unity, ASEAN centrality loses much of its credibility. India's role The significance of the ASEAN meetings to India is apparent when viewed in the context of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar preferring to represent India at the post-ministerial conference and other regional dialogues, instead of accompanying the Prime Minister on his visits to France and the United Arab Emirates earlier in July. He pointedly re-

ferred to the importance of a "strong and unified" ASEAN in the emerging dynamic of the Indo-Pacific, and highlighted the convergence between the AOIP and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative. To build on the comprehensive strategic partnership between India and ASEAN, he suggested that the two sides work in "newer areas such as cyber, financial and maritime security domains. Though it appeared that ASEAN did not make much progress, and no new ground was broken, its persistence with dialogue, internally and externally, prevents geopolitical temperatures from rising. The next ASEAN summit will be held in Jakarta in September 2023. Hopefully, this will bring greater clarity on the way to tackle challenges confronting the region. Rajiv Bhatia is Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House. A former Ambassador and author, he is a commentator on developments in the Indo-Pacific

The ultra-careful quest to find the shape of the electron's charge

Studies that test some physical property to an extreme precision are gaining in popularity these days because many physicists are intently looking for small chinks – too small for them to have noticed without a closer look – in a theory that is both powerful yet incomplete. This is the Standard Model of particle physics. It predicts the existence of different particles; the last of them to be found was the Higgs boson, in 2012. But while the Model is incomplete, its zoo of particles and their combined interactions haven't been able to explain many things about nature and the universe. For example, the Model doesn't say what dark matter is and can't explain dark energy. It doesn't know why the Higgs boson is so heavy or why gravity is so much weaker than the other fundamental forces.

Where did the antimatter go?

The Model also predicts that when the universe was created, it should have had equal quantities of matter and antimatter –

which is clearly not the case. The equal quantities of the two substances would have annihilated each other, releasing energy in the form of light, so the universe should have been full of light. Yet today, the universe has large amounts of matter and no antimatter. This is one important line of inquiry in the quest to find a flaw in the Standard Model, an edge that is incomplete and could lead the way to a 'new physics' to resolve some or all of these mysteries. In a new study published in Science, researchers from the University of Colorado, Boulder, have reported that they couldn't find evidence of certain kinds of such 'new physics' in an experiment with electrons. This experiment looked for the evidence at the highest precision to date. The negative result is important because it will tell physicists which alternative theories are feasible. For example, if a theory predicts that an electron would do X in the presence of a very strong electric field, but the new study's results disagree,

then physicists now know to modify their theory to prevent this possibility. The previous such result from a different experiment told physicists that the evidence they were looking for wouldn't be found at the Large Hadron Collider in Europe.

The Sakharov conditions In 1967, the Soviet physicist (and Nobel Peace Prize laureate) Andrei Sakharov considered the matter-antimatter asymmetry problem and came up with a set of conditions that, if they're met, would allow the universe to produce more matter and antimatter. These are (i) baryon number violation, (ii) C- and CP-symmetry violation, and (iii) baryon production rate must be slower than the universe's expansion rate. One of the fundamental particles that makes up matter is the quark. A baryon is a particle made up of three quarks. Examples include the proton and the neutron. Every baryon is assigned a baryon number: the number of quarks minus the number of anti-quarks, divided by 3.