

BJP wants govt to remove all symbols of Muslim rulers from Telangana

Hyderabad: While opposing the decision of the State government to remove Kakatiya Arch from the State's emblem, BJPLP leader A Maheshwar Reddy demanded that the government remove all the symbols of Muslim rulers, including Charminar from the State .

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Maheshwar Reddy said since the Muslim rulers had done injustice to the native population and destroyed their culture and heritage, and that their symbols be erased from the State. "If Chief Minister really has the intention to remove the signs of monarchy, then he should remove the monuments of the Muslim rulers from Telangana who are the aggressors, but it is not right to remove the marks of the Hindu rulers like the Kakatiyas who are popular with the people,"he said.He wanted the government to rename Adilabad as Edulapuram, Nizamabad as Indur,

Zaheerabad as Peddekkili, Karimnagar as Elagandala, Secunderabad as Lashkar or Ulvulu, Mahbubnagar as Palamuru and Mahabubabad as Manukota. "These names are still used by locals. I urge the Congress government to officially recognise them and pave the way for the cultural revival of Telangana,"he said.

Welcoming the State government's decision to include martyrs stupam in the State's emblem, the BJPLP leader demanded that the government fulfill the promises made to the families of the martyrs and implement Hyderabad Youth Declaration.Expressing displeasure over the Chief Minister not inviting BJP national leaders to take part in the State formation day, Maheshwar Reddy reminded that it was due to the support of BJP that Telangana could become a reality. "CM has invited Sonia Gandhi for the formation day but not BJP. You should not forget that the



late BJP leader Sushma Swaraj played a vital role in the formation of Telangana. You

cannot ignore BJP's role in the formation of Telangana," he said.

Singareni CMD Balram awarded Performance Excellence Award 2024



Hyderabad: Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) Chairman and Managing Director N Balram has been awarded the prestigious National Level Triple IE (Indian Institution of Industrial Engineering) Performance Excellence Award 2024. The award was presented at the 24th National Level Chief Executive Officers Conference held in Mussoorie on Friday night. Director (Operations, Personnel) NVK Srinivas received the award on behalf of Balram. Singareni was also presented the Performance Excellent Award

for excellent performance in the companies category. After assuming the charge of CMD, Balram took various measures to increase production and productivity and set a new record by achieving the highest coal production and transportation of 700 lakh tonnes in the financial year 2023-24. Moreover, a turnover of Rs. 35,700 crore was achieved under his leadership. Balram said the goals were achieved only because of the collective efforts of the employees and officers of the company and that the awards received by the Singareni belong to the employees of the organization.



MG India registers M-o-M growth of 6% over April 2024;

MG India has announced that it has achieved M-o-M growth of 6% over April 2024.

Despite the challenging market environment, the carmaker sold 4769 vehicles in May 2024. MG received positive

traction for its Electric vehicles (EVs). With 36 percent of its overall monthly sales, the EV portfolio of the company remained a major contributor in May 2024. The ZS EV achieved its highest-ever monthly sales since its launch.

Cops foil rowdy sheeters' bid to kill rival, arrested

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Commissioner's Task Force team apprehended five rowdy sheeters who were planning to kill their rival. The police seized a pistol with five live rounds and other weapons from their possession.

According to the police, the suspect, Shaik Irfan Ahmed (27) of Rajendranagar, Mohd Arif (27) of Kali Mandir Langer Houz, Mohd Akbar Pasha (28) of Madannapet, Syed Abdul Raheem (23) of Dabeerpura Darwaza and Shaik Ismail (27) of Langer Houz had planned to kill their rival Shaik Ismail of Langer Houz due to previous enmity.

The Constitution, a surprise entrant in poll battlefield

The Chakkipat neighbourhood of Agra in Uttar Pradesh was adorned with flags of B.R. Ambedkar with the tagline *kalam ka badshah* (master of the pen), an allusion to the seminal role of Ambedkar in drafting the Constitution of India. We spoke to a group of young Jatav men, once a core vote bank of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). As the BSP's graph has trended downward, these men had voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2019 general election, but they will not support the BJP this time. The reason, the Constitution — "Dr. Ambedkar means everything to us. We don't think it's too easy to change the Constitution, but we believe the BJP wants to change the Constitution." The rhetoric of electoral dominance

Why has the Constitution emerged as an explicit site of contestation in this election? The proximate trigger was the BJP's declaration of "400 paar" (a reference to its assertion of winning 400 seats) and remarks, by some leaders, early in the campaign, that total electoral domination in this election would empower the BJP to change the Constitution. Opposition leaders were quick to mobilise. BSP leader Mayawati's nephew and former BSP national coordinator Akash Anand gave rousing speeches. Indeed, days after Ms. Mayawati sacked Akash Anand, the Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav took to X (formerly Twitter) to publicly remark that even traditional voters of the BSP are voting for the INDIA bloc to save the Constitution. The Congress's Rahul Gandhi has taken to symbolically waving a copy of the Constitution at his campaign rallies. The Opposition has declared this election to be a battle for "saving the constitution" and it is having resonance on the ground.

Scholars make an important distinction between constitutional principles and ordinary laws. Constitutional principles frame fundamental rights and are of a "higher order" that every citizen must obey. Ordinary laws, on the other hand, are rules, often guided by constitutional principles, that govern society. Ordinary laws, in India, regularly police our spaces. They discriminate and are used coercively by the state in ways that undermine freedoms and disempower citizens. Laws that police who you can marry, whether you can use the Internet and what you can eat are some illustrations of this. However, these laws can also be challenged and changed. Constitutional values provide the basis for challenging discriminatory law. Historian Rohit De's book, *A People's Constitution*, offers a powerful account of how ordinary citizens have mobilised around constitutional principles throughout independent India's history to secure rights. Challenging social and economic deprivation and preserving equality of status are at the heart of India's constitutional project. As former Chief Justice of India Y.V. Chandrachud powerfully notes, in the *Minerva Mills* case, the Constitution provides us "the obligation of securing to the people liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity

and the assurance that the dignity of the individual will at all costs be preserved". It is when these very constitutional values are challenged that the Constitution rather than law enters the domain of mass politics.

A young BJP supporter from the Pasi community makes this clear. "I am happy with Narendra Modi..... But I absolutely don't want a Hindu rashtra." When we ask him what Hindu rashtra means, he responds in one word: *bhedbhav* (discrimination). A young Yadav farmer on the outskirts of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh concurs, "The constitution matters because it protects us... it gave us reservations. Humein Samvidhaan bachana hai (the Constitution must be protected)." An interplay in north India

The interplay between the Constitution and political mobilisation has fundamentally shaped the trajectory of democratic politics in North India. Reservations found place in the Constitution primarily as compensatory provisions to redress historical disadvantage emerging in the 1990s as the primary mobilisational tool for asserting representational claims of lower caste groups in the 1990s. The Modi juggernaut, with its ability to forge a cross-caste coalition, appeared to have shifted the arc by forging a cross-caste, Hindu coalition. For much of this decade, the logic of caste-based mobilisation seemed to have receded in the background, allowing the BJP, to introduce and pass the 103rd Amendment to the Constitution mandating 10% reservations for economically weaker sections (EWS) amongst unreserved (read upper caste) categories, to muted opposition. The reemergence of the grammar of the Constitution, rights and reservation in the 2024 election must not be misread as harking back to the Mandal politics of yore. There is something far more significant at play here. The rhetoric of "changing the Constitution" challenges the very principles upon which this country was founded. And it is this that is causing dissonance among voters with the BJP's logic of cross-caste political mobilisation. The Yadav voter we spoke to articulated this clearly: "The Constitution protects our fundamental rights. It ensures equality between castes and communities." The fact that the ordinary Indian is worried about the Constitution is of far greater political significance than the question of who wins the election. Against the backdrop of total dominance that the BJP projected at the start of the electoral campaign, the concerns over the Constitution, expressed by the ordinary voters, are constitutive of growing anxieties over democratic erosion. And it constrains the democratic legitimacy of the government even if the BJP comes to power again, as projected.

A mirror to contradictions But the constitutional discourse, as it is emerging, also mirrors the deep contradictions that have shaped contemporary politics in India. It is instructive that even as Dalit voters speak of the Constitution and rights, the constitutional principle of "secularism" and reli-



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gious equality was a concern expressed primarily by Muslim voters, who spoke repeatedly against "Hindu-Muslim" politics. Secularism, via the Constitution, found voice during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act back in early 2020, but only among Muslims. Arguably, the heightened polarised rhetoric adopted by the Prime Minister in recent weeks is a response to the re-emergence of caste coalitions with the Constitution as the centre-piece. Hindu voters are not blind to the communal nature of this rhetoric. However,

this is not their primary concern. Their preoccupation is primarily with caste-based discrimination and reservations. The silence around the constitutional aspiration of secularism remains conspicuous against the backdrop of the deeply poisonous and divisive Hindu-Muslim rhetoric that has dominated this election. If the 2024 election is indeed a battle for the Constitution, then the silences tell us as much about the critical fault lines that our polity has to confront, as it does of the possibilities of a more substantive politics of rights and equality.

Top EVs under 15 lakhs Paving the Road to a Greener Planet This Environment Day in India

In celebration of Environment Day, rising awareness about environmental sustainability is driving more eco-conscious audiences to seek greener transportation alternatives. This shift in customer preferences has led to a noticeable increase in the availability of affordable electric vehicles (EVs) designed specifically for city driving. To mark this significant day, here's a handpicked selection of five great EVs that are perfect for manoeuvring through the busy streets of Indian cities, all priced below 15 lakhs.

MG Comet:

The MG Comet, available at the starting price of Rs 6.99 lakhs offers a certified range of up to 230 kms* in a single charge. MG Comet EV has 5 variants — Executive, Excite, Excite FC, Exclusive and Exclusive FC specially designed for urban driving. Comet EV's practical and smart design is 'Big Inside and Compact Outside', it is easy to drive, manoeuvre, and park in congested areas, making it a perfect city car. Moreover, it also features a futuristic aesthetic and an array of tech features like Wireless Android and Apple CarPlay compatibility. Based on the versatile GSEV (Global Smart Electric Vehicle) Pure Electric platform, Comet boasts a sleek and roomy design with natural agility attributed to 55+ i-

SMART tech features. These features facilitate effortless and hassle-free urban travel, offering smooth manoeuvrability even amidst congested city streets.

Tata Tiago EV:

The Tata Tiago, with its prices starting at Rs 7.99 lakhs, has the range up to 315kms and has been a popular choice in the Indian car market, and now it comes in an electric avatar! The Tata Tiago EV is a compact and stylish hatchback with a practical design with front grille, plush leatherette upholstery, etc. and additionally goes from 0 to 60 km/hr within just 5.7 secs. With its zippy performance, you can easily navigate through city traffic to reach your favourite destinations.

Tata Punch EV:

For the multi-hyphenated in all of us, there's nothing alike Tata Punch EV available at the starting price of Rs 10.99 Lakhs. Tata Punch EV has the range up to 421 kms in a single charge. The Tata Punch comes with voice assisted electric sunroof and mood lights that seamlessly match with the rhythm of your favourite track along with many other aesthetic features. It also has multiple colour options and different driving modes – eco, city and sport - to meet sustainability needs without compromising on quality.



Citroen eC3:

The Citroen eC3 with a starting price of Rs 12.69 lakhs has a range of up to 320 kms in a single charge. It combines the iconic style of Citroen with the advantages of an electric drivetrain. It has a battery capacity of 29.2KW and is ideal for those who want a stylish and comfortable ride. Its impressive range and quick-charging capability i.e. it can charge from 10% to 80% in

just 57 minutes, will keep you going all day long. As the Indian automotive market embraces electric mobility, these five affordable electric vehicles present enticing options for city dwellers seeking eco-friendly and cost-effective transportation solutions. With their impressive range, features, and competitive pricing, they make a compelling case for those transitioning towards sustainable urban mobility.

Major General Chhibber takes over as Commandant of CDM



Hyderabad: Major General Harsh Chhibber, VSM, PhD, took over as the Commandant, College of Defence Management (CDM) on Friday. An alumnus of the prestigious National Defence Academy, Major General Harsh Chhibber was commissioned into the Army Service Corps in December 1988. His distinguished career is marked by academic excellence, steering technology absorption and a passion for adventure.

The Commandant of CDM holds a

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on Public Policy along with two M.Phil degrees in Business Management and Public Administration. The Commandant also has pursued Technical Staff Officers Course (TSOC), Higher Defence Management Course (HDMC), and the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration (APPPA). Major General Chhibber's military experience is vast and encompasses various important assignments in

Eastern, Northern and Western Sectors including command of the Para ASC company, an ASC Battalion and the ASC training Centre. He has been Brigadier General Staff (Information System) in the Eastern Sector and Major General (Operational Logistics) in the Northern Sector. He has also served as an instructor at the Army Service Corps Centre and College and as the Directing Staff and Head of the Financial Management Department at the College of Defence Management. A prolific writer he has written many papers on technology absorption in the Indian Army and presented same at National Seminars.

Software applications developed and implemented by him are in use in a large number of units. Beyond his academic and military achievements, General Officer is a passionate adventurer. A skilled skydiver, mountaineer and car rally driver, he exemplifies the spirit of courage and determination that defines the Indian Army. His distinguished service has been recognized through numerous awards, including the coveted Vishist Seva Medal (VSM) on Republic Day, 2022, the Chief of Army Staff Commendation Card, and the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Commendation Cards (twice).

Cancer survivors, caretakers felicitated at Apollo Cancer Center in Hyd

Hyderabad: Apollo Cancer Center, Hyderabad and Cure Foundation India on Saturday, marking World Cancer Survivors' Day, which is celebrated worldwide on the first Sunday of June, felicitated cancer survivors and their caretakers on Saturday.

The highlight of the event was the unveiling of the 'Victory Bell', symbolizing triumph over cancer and hope for those still undergoing treatment, in the hospital lobby by caretakers and survivors. To honour their journey, all participants were felicitated with gifts and souvenirs, adding a special touch to the celebration. The event also featured inspiring interactions between cancer survivors and patients, fostering a sense of community and shared strength.

IIID-HRC Design Excellence Awards 2024 Honors Outstanding Talent in Interior Design



The 15th edition of the IIID-HRC Design Excellence Awards 2024, the annual flagship event of the Indian Institute of Interior Designers Hyderabad Regional Chapter (IIID-HRC), was held amidst great fanfare on Friday night, May 31st, 2024, at the Park Hyatt. The event celebrated and recognized the outstanding talent and achievements in the field of interior design in the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The Chief Guest for the occasion was Dr. B. Bhaskar Rao, Chairman and Managing Director of KIMS Hospitals. The event saw the participation of Hyderabad's famous celebrities, eminent architects, and designers, who gathered to honor the exceptional work of their peers.

During the well-attended and glitzy awards ceremony, awards were pre-

sented 42 designers in 14 different categories, highlighting the creativity, innovation, and excellence displayed by interior designers across the region. Two distinguished professionals, Ar. Aparna Bidarkar and Ms. Supraja Rao, were also felicitated for their tremendous contributions to the field of interior design. On this occasion, Dr. Bhaskar Rao stated that because of the interior designers, the great city of Hyderabad has gained a great reputation worldwide. He said that, architects and interior designers have played an important role in changing the face of Hyderabad in the last two decades, and the role of interior designers has become crucial for the happiness of people for a pleasant environment at home or in offices. "The IIID-HRC Design Excellence Awards 2024 was a tes-

tament to the immense talent and dedication of the interior design community in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh," said Ar. Pallavi Anchuri, Chairperson of IIID-HRC. "This annual event has become a launch pad for many eminent designers and continues to be a trailblazer in the region." Ar. Naveen Kumar Chalasani, the Honorary Secretary of IIID-HRC, added, "We are proud to have hosted this prestigious event for the 15th consecutive year, showcasing the creativity and success of our designers. It is a true celebration of the design excellence that thrives in our region." Ar. Ravi Anchuri, the Awards Convener, and Ar. N Praveen Kumar, the Awards Co-Convener, played pivotal roles in organizing the event and ensuring its success.

Few of the Main Awardees.

Meghana Nimmagadda -Designtales, Alluri Kasi Raju -Prelab Design Studio, Kalpana Ramesh & Sanjay Gupta -The Rainwater Project & Sd Designs, Geethu Gangadharan -Fellow Yellow Design Studio, Shashank Rao -Urban Narratives, Priyanka Narula -The Wicker Story, Alluri Kasi Raju -Prelab Design Studio, Meghana Nimmagadda -Designtales, Mitali Aharam -Crafted Spaces, Shashank Rao -Urban Narratives, Anmisha Reddy -Urban Narratives. The IIID-HRC, founded in 1996, has been at the forefront of the interior design industry in Hyderabad and its surrounding regions. With a growing membership of over 630 professionals, the organization continues to set benchmarks in conceptualizing and conducting events that promote and recognize the best in the field.

Dear parents, get your child to quit smoking; expert shares top tips

A concerning revelation by the World Health Organisation (WHO) stated, "E-cigarettes target children through social media and influencers, with at least 16,000 attractive flavours. Some of these products use cartoon characters and have sleek designs, which appeal to the younger generation." Indianexpress.com tried to understand the reasons that tip over youngsters into the dark and dangerous world of smoking, along with actionable steps to combat this addiction.

Why do children get addicted to vapes and e-cigarettes?

"Teenagers mainly take up smoking due to peer pressure," shared Srishti Vatsa, counseling psychologist. "Indian parents are often emotionally unavailable, and children turn to smoking as a coping mechanism for this stress." "Films and television series promote the misconception that smoking is cool, which pushes teenagers to take up this vice. Many children vape or smoke e-cigarettes believing it's less harmful than cigarettes. Environmen-

tal factors, exam stress, and competitive pressures add to their burdens," Vatsa said. She also noted the lack of awareness surrounding e-cigarettes and vapes, making children easy prey for addiction. Vapes have a distinct sweet and fruity smell and cause dry mouth and dehydration. If your child is drinking more water than usual, they may be vaping. Nicotine can also disrupt sleep cycles, so changes in sleeping patterns might indicate vaping. "Children often feel guilty about hiding this activity, leading to behavioral changes such as defensiveness and aggression," said Vatsa. She emphasised the importance of parents understanding their children's friend circles and being emotionally available. Vaping Many children vape or smoke e-cigarettes believing it's less harmful than cigarettes. "Parents need to create a safe space at home that encourages open dialogue and discussion with their children. Patience and understanding are crucial to helping them quit smoking," Vatsa said. She recommended physical exercise and sports as



healthier outlets for stress and anxiety. "Encourage activities like running, yoga, or meditation to divert smoking urges. It's nec-

essary to keep the hands busy, so indulging in a hobby can fulfil creative pursuits as well as prevent smoking."

Telangana statehood: A raging battle over statehood history being scrubbed clean



A decade after the formation of Telangana, there is a new battle around the history of the State. At the heart of it is the role of civil society and students during the movement (udyamamu) that led to the birth of Telangana. A few days ago, the history page on the government's portal (telangana.gov.in) was pulled down by the current Congress regime. The page cannot be found now and has led to comments on social media about the erasure of Telangana's history. But what part of history has been erased? The emblem of the State is set to be changed. Registration initials of TS is being changed to TG, the State song is being changed as is the figure representing Telangana Talli.

"What happened in the past will not change by the way it is written about it in the present. The history of Telangana will be what it is. There are no flaws in the emblem that was adopted by the earlier government. If need be, it should be debated in the State Assembly and put to vote," says historian Sriramaju Haragopal. "Individual antagonism should not affect people. Making so many changes is not a good practice. Ande Sri's anthem, which we used to play on CDs and cassettes at the height of the movement, is too long for classrooms. A shorter version would have been fine but the poet did not agree to it," says Mr. Haragopal who lost 1.5 years of academic life due to the 1969 movement for separate Telangana.

The 1969 movement was triggered by hunger strike by Ravindranath, a job aspirant, at the Kothegudem Thermal Power Station, which started functioning in 1966. It spiralled out of control and continued till 1973, claiming 369 lives. The academic life of thousands of other students was disrupted, wrecking their careers. The page that has disappeared after the Congress came to power in the State had 694 words for 'Final Telangana Movement'. It lists the sequence of events from 1997 resolution of the Bharatiya Janata Party for creation of Telangana till June 2, 2014, when the State was formed. But it leaves out any reference to the groundswell of opinion and without any reference to the efforts of the civil society, the protests, the deaths, and the role of students of Osmania University in the formation of the new State. Erased from history was the role of government employees, APSRTC employees, advocates, and others.

"The agitation was brought to the streets by people who cooked food on the roads, who danced to Bathukamma songs on street squares, advocates who boycotted work, RTC employees who risked losing their jobs if they took part in the agitation but still went ahead. They are the real people who made Telangana possible. It was the students of Osmania University who stood like a wall and pushed ahead with the agitation," says a State government employee unwilling to go on record. One of the key moments of history in the formation of the State was the 'Mil-

lion March' called by the Joint Action Committee under the leadership of M. Kodandaram who was chosen as the leader at Kalinga Bhavan. The students of Osmania University, who broke the gates of the campus and pushed the concertina-wire, braved the police and converged at the Tank Bund promenade. A side-drama that led to the event was the mock marriage planned on the day at Ambedkar Bhavan, Lower Tank Bund Road. The 300-400 odd guests at the 'wedding' clambered down the stairs on the eastern side of the Tank Bund and ran through the road with red flags raising slogans. These were the students and leaders affiliated to CPI-ML (New Democracy) who breached the barricades. After that, chaos ensued with the police battling students, employees, and citizens on multiple fronts.

By the end of the day, the statues that were installed during the time of Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao were vandalised and pulled down. Some were dumped in the lake and others dragged onto the road. "What we are seeing now is revenge politics. It is a reaction to what happened in the past 10 years. The Secretariat building was functional but was pulled down. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is doing the same thing. K. Chandrasekhar Rao wanted to erase the history of Nizams, and the history of Andhras by taking the help from Andhra Pradesh contractors. There was resentment among the intelligentsia about the state of affairs and that is coming out," says N. Venugopal, author of Telangana: State of Affairs.

Pune Porsche Accident: A speeding car, two deaths, and a cover-up

When Rajeshwari Lakhani, 66, woke up to a loud sound in the early hours of May 19 in Pune, she thought a metro wagon had fallen from the bridge outside. It was between 2.30 and 3.00 a.m. when Lakhani staggered out. "People were crowded around a car," she recalls. "The car had hit five people as well as a couple of cars parked on the street." The side of the luxury car was bent and damaged and the windshield was smashed. Lakhani learned later that the car had rammed into a motorbike, killing two people — Anish Awadhiya, the rider, and his friend, Ashwini Koshta. The two Information Technology professionals, both 24 years old, were on their way home after an impromptu dinner with some friends. While Koshta died on the spot, Awadhiya died on the way to the hospital, say residents of Kalyani Nagar, an affluent, residential neighbourhood in Pune, where the crash occurred.

The scene on the street, which is usually full of partygoers, was chaotic. Lakhani says the crowd pulled out four people from the car — a boy who was allegedly at the wheel, a man who she later learned works for his family as a driver, and his two friends

— and began beating up the teenager. The police arrived within a few minutes and took the boy to the Yerawada police station. Many witnesses described him as "drunk". Awadhiya's friend, Akib Ramzan Mulla, 24, a resident of Pune, lodged a First Information Report (FIR). More than a week after the incident, the spot outside Lakhani's apartment is full of flowers, candles, and posters demanding justice. If the law had taken its course, the case would have not hit the headlines every day since. Instead, what followed the incident shocked the country. An uproar on social media and protests on the streets of Pune forced the authorities to probe the case. The investigations have revealed elaborate attempts by the family, the police, and doctors to cover-up the crime involving a minor who belongs to a wealthy and influential family in Pune. The elaborate cover-up On May 18, the 17-year-old teenager, who is the son of a realtor, Vishal Agarwal, 50, threw a party for his friends to celebrate his performance in the Class 12 examination, say the police. The group went drinking at various resto-bars in the upscale neighbourhoods of Pune, including Blak

and Cosie. Based on CCTV footage, the Pune police say the car, which had no numberplates, was being driven at a speed of 150-200 km per hour from Cosie when it hit the motorbike. Following his detention, the minor was produced before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB). Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar said later that the Pune police sought custody of the accused and also permission to try him as an adult. According to the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, people between the age of 16 and 18 years who have committed grave crimes can be tried as adults. However, the JJB denied these applications. Just 15 hours after the incident, the JJB granted the minor bail with certain conditions: that he work with the Yerawada traffic police for 15 days, write a 300-word essay on the accident, get treatment to quit drinking, and seek psychiatric counselling. Two days later, following a public outcry over these conditions, the JJB cancelled the bail and remanded the boy to an observation home until June 5. Kumar said the police have moved a sessions court again with the plea to try the boy as an adult. Amid the outrage, various Opposition leaders alleged that the

accused was fed pizza and burgers at the police station. Kumar denied these allegations. "Assistant Police Inspector Vishwanath Todkari arrived at the scene and informed Inspector Rahul Jagdale about the incident. Despite the severity of the accident, the officers failed to report the details to the police control room or higher officials," Kumar said. In fatal accident cases, it is mandatory to inform the Deputy Commissioner of Police, but the officers did not follow protocol, Kumar said. On May 24, the Police Commissioner suspended both the officers. Fabian Samson, who served as a police inspector for 36 years in Pune and is now retired, believes that the suspension of the officers was unjust. "It is impossible for junior officers to take certain decisions, especially in a serious accident like this where two people died. I do not believe that the DCP was not informed. The call details records should be checked," says Fabian, who raises awareness about alcohol and drug addition in Pune. Investigations show that there were efforts made to prove that the accused was not drunk. On May 19, at 11 a.m., the minor's blood sample was taken to Sassoon General Hospital.

The question of Palestine's UN membership

Israel's war on Gaza has raised several ethical, political, and diplomatic questions. One diplomatic development that has attracted a lot of interest is Palestine's renewed application for membership of the United Nations (U.N.). Ironically, its quest is stuck at the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) due mainly to the geopolitical calculations of the U.S., which argued that membership should follow and not precede a negotiated solution to the long-standing conflict. This is not the first time that Palestine has attempted to obtain U.N. membership. In 2011 too, its request was opposed by the veto-bearing U.S. in the UNSC. Since then, Palestine enjoys only non-member observer status.

This year, in April, after the UNSC failed to agree on Palestine's request because of the lone veto cast by the U.S. in its capacity as a permanent member, the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) stepped in to voice support to the Palestinian application. On May 10, the UNGA overwhelmingly adopted a resolution affirming Palestine's eligibility to assume full membership in the U.N. It also urged the UNSC to favourably consider Palestine's request.

The U.N. requires membership seekers to be "peace loving" states and to be able and willing, in its judgment, to carry out the obligations of the Charter. While the criteria were liberally interpreted, the procedural threshold laid down for admission turned out to be decisive and difficult, and was dictated by the political exigencies of the five permanent members (P5) in the UNSC at any given time. As such, membership applications require recommendation without the express opposition of any of the P5 before the UNGA accepts the admission request. In other words, the UNSC's recommendation is ruled out if any of the P5 casts a negative vote by exercising their veto power, whereas no such veto power applies in the UNGA except that the decision should be cleared by a two-thirds majority. When Cold War politics stalled numerous admission requests in the UNSC in early years, the UNGA sought the World Court's opinion on whether the UNGA had the power to admit states in the absence of the UNSC's recommendation. The Court ruled in 1948 that the UNSC's recommendation is a prerequisite for the UNGA to exercise its power. Subsequently, the deadlock in the UNSC was broken to recommend all pending applications. This marked successive decades of steady increase of the total membership from the 51 founding members to 193 today. It would not be off the mark to note that membership of the U.N. is invariably viewed as a sought-after confirmation of sovereign statehood of the countries which gained independence from foreign rule or occupation. The example of Mongolia is comparable to Palestine's plea. When Mongolia's membership application was stuck in the UNSC, the UNGA intervened with a resolution similar to what was done in the Palestine case, suggesting that Mongolia deserves a favourable recom-

mendation by the UNSC. Eventually Mongolia became a member in 1961. India's approach

India joined 142 member countries in supporting the UNGA in the May 2024 resolution favouring Palestine's case for membership. India opined that membership status could enhance the prospect of a two-state solution to the protracted Israel-Palestine conflict. Notably, India's position to the membership question is now entirely in line with the approach articulated during the Nehruvian era — that U.N. membership should be open to all state applicants without discrimination. In fact, there is not a single instance of India opposing any country's membership so far. India supported Pakistan's admission to the U.N. in 1947 and also representation of the People's Republic of China's in 1971, despite a prolonged border conflicts with the latter. While it is true that the U.S. or the former USSR/Russian Federation stood in the way of many applicants' prospects of becoming U.N. members, China is not free from blame either. After being seated in the UNSC in 1971, the People's Republic of China vetoed newly liberated Bangladesh's membership application.

What is the way forward?

Clearly Palestine cannot assume full membership bypassing the UNSC and the U.S. China and Russia are apprehensive that such bypassing could become a pre-



cedent for the admission of Taiwan or Kosovo later. In a less likely scenario, the U.S. might refrain from casting yet again its veto or abstain from voting, as an expression of displeasure with Israel for ignoring its advice to cease attacks against Gazan civilians, thereby paving the way for the UNGA's approval of Palestine's membership. Israel might protest and quit the UN. If the UNSC stalemate continues, the UNGA could possibly consider keeping Israel out of its deliberations. Such a bold tactical move, which is short of Israel's suspension

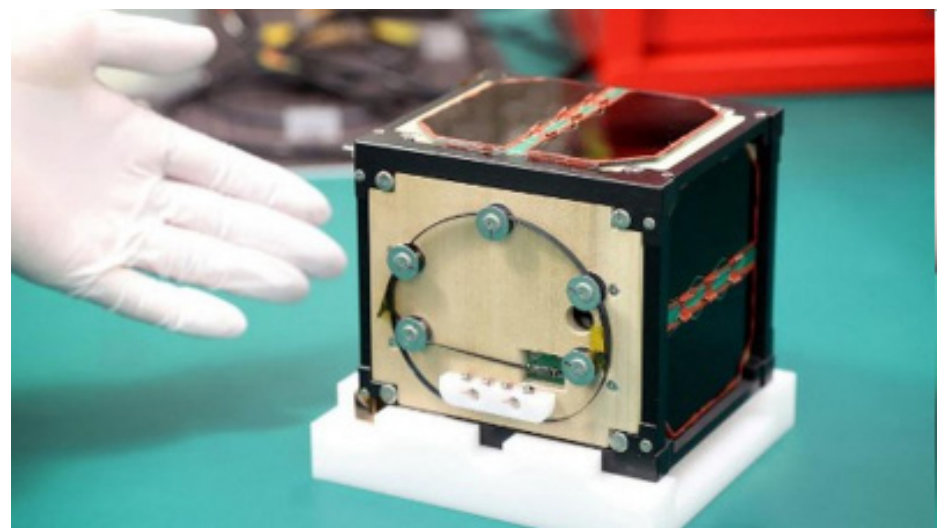
or expulsion that would be impractical without the UNSC's recommendation, has precedents. South Africa in the apartheid era and the Serb Republic of Yugoslavia during the brutal ethnic cleansing era were barred from participating in the UNGA. Apart from these theoretical options, accretion of participatory privileges to Palestine, just short of the power to vote in the UNGA and eligibility to be elected to other major principal organs of the UN, from September would signal that might cannot become right in this age.

World's first wooden satellite built by Japan researchers

The world's first wooden satellite has been built by Japanese researchers who said their tiny cuboid craft will be blasted off on a SpaceX rocket in September. Each side of the experimental satellite developed by scientists at Kyoto University and logging company Sumitomo Forestry measures just 10 centimetres (four inches).

The creators expect the wooden material will burn up completely when the device re-enters the atmosphere -- potentially providing a way to avoid the generation of metal particles when a retired satellite returns to Earth.

These metal particles could have a negative impact on the environment and telecommunications, the developers said as they announced the satellite's completion on Tuesday. "Satellites that are not made of metal should become mainstream," Takao Doi, an astronaut and special professor at Kyoto University, told a press conference. The developers plan to hand the satellite, made from magnolia wood and named LignoSat, to space agency JAXA next week. It will be sent into space on a SpaceX rocket from the



Kennedy Space Center in September, bound for the International Space Station (ISS), they said. From there, the satellite will be released from the Japanese ISS experiment module to test its strength and durability. "Data will be sent from the satellite to researchers who can check for signs of strain and whether the satellite can with-

stand huge changes in temperature," a Sumitomo Forestry spokeswoman told AFP on Wednesday. Also on Tuesday, a rocket carrying a separate sophisticated satellite -- a collaboration between the European Space Agency (ESA) and JAXA -- blasted off from California on a mission to investigate what role clouds could play in the fight against climate change.

How an altered protein and fussy neurons conspire to cause microcephaly

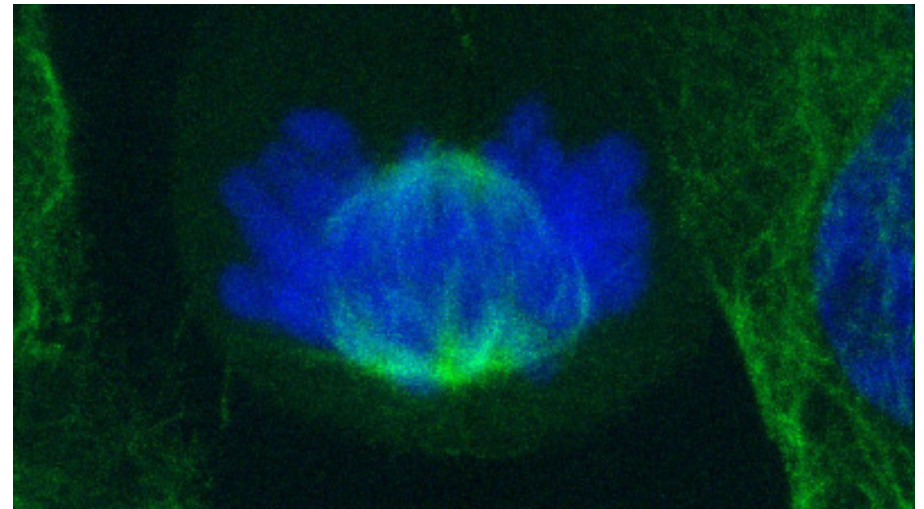
Microcephaly is a condition in which a baby's head is much smaller than normal. Most children with microcephaly also have a small brain, poor motor function, poor speech, and abnormal facial features, and are intellectually disabled. Researchers believe the roots of the condition lie in the peak phase of brain development in the embryo — when the cells that eventually become neurons fail to divide normally. Clinicians can diagnose microcephaly before the baby is born using foetal ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging. The SASS6 gene in particular, since 2014, a gene called SASS6 and its variants have been implicated in this developmental process. On March 19, researchers at the Affiliated Maternity and Child Health Care Hospital of Nantong University, China, presented “the genetic findings of members of a nonconsanguineous Chinese couple with a history of microcephaly and foetal growth restriction during their first pregnancy”. The team's findings reinforced the SASS6 gene's role in causing microcephaly. But more importantly, the team also found that if one copy of the SASS6 gene was non-functional, the other retained at least some function. The implication was that if both copies are non-functional, the human embryo dies before it becomes a foetus.

“[Our] findings confirm the pivotal role of SASS6 in microcephaly pathogenesis and reveal an expanded view of the phenotype and mutation spectrum associated with this gene,” the researchers wrote in their paper, published in the *American Journal of Medical Genetics*. Similarly, in a February 2024 study, researchers at the University of Cologne, Germany, reported that they modified mouse embryo-derived cells to remove all functional SASS6 genes. These genes contain instructions for cells to make structures called centrioles. But even after the genes were removed, the cells were able to make passable, if also abnormal, centrioles. The problem arose when the cells were nudged to develop into neurons: at this point, all the centrioles made without using the gene's recipe disappeared, and the cells couldn't differentiate into neurons. Consanguinity and genetic risk

According to Ashwin Dalal, a paediatrician turned medical geneticist at the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad, 70% or more of cases of congenital microcephaly seen in the clinic come from consanguineous marriages. These are marriages between closely related individuals, such as between uncle and niece or between first cousins. Consanguinity increases the risk of an individual inheriting a mutated copy of a gene from both parents. The risk is greater if the mutated gene is rarer in the general population. Microcephaly is caused by mutations in 30 genes. Cells use 10 of these genes to encode proteins that are required to assemble and the subsequent function of the centrioles. When a cell divides, its centrioles help form another structure called the spindle. During cell division, the old and new cells need to take a

series of careful steps. The spindle is like the handrail along this staircase, helping the cells form and maintain their structure. For example, once the old cell makes two copies of its chromosomes, each copy sticks to the centre of the spindle, which is an elongated structure. From there, the spindle moves each copy to its two ends. Each of these ends then becomes the nucleus of a new cell. If a cell creates centriole proteins from mutated genes, however, cell division is affected as well.

In 2004, researchers discovered the SASS6 gene in the roundworm *Caenorhabditis elegans*. They also found that the protein that cells made using this gene was conserved across animals, meaning natural selection allowed this protein to exist in all members of the animal kingdom. When the researchers suppressed the SASS6 gene in *C. elegans* embryos, they found that the cells failed to assemble new centrioles, resulting in arrested development. In 2014, other researchers studied a consanguineous Pakistani family of which four members had microcephaly. All the affected individuals were found to carry a mutated version of the human SASS6 gene on both their copies of chromosome 1: one inherited from the father and the other from the mother. The SASS6 gene encodes a protein that has 657 amino acids. This protein assembles new centrioles during the cell division pro-



cess. In the study of the Pakistani family, the researchers were able to describe the mutation correlated with microcephaly: the amino acid isoleucine at position 62 had been replaced by threonine. Thus its name: Ile62Thr. Last year, researchers at the University of Tulsa, in the U.S., introduced the Ile62Thr mutation into the *C. elegans* SASS6 gene. Their experiment, reported in the journal *Genetics*, revealed that this change didn't detectably impair centriole assembly and function in *C. elegans*. But when the worm's genome had another mutation that affected a different centriolar protein, the Ile62Thr mutation significantly increased centriole replication failure and

embryo death.

Evidently, a protein made using a SASS6 gene with the Ile62Thr mutation is functional enough to allow individuals with other unaffected organs to be born and grow into adulthood. In *C. elegans*, it becomes deadlier when the second mutation is also present. At the same time, humans with just the Ile62Thr mutation don't escape unscathed: the mutation's mild impairment of centriole function still dysregulates cell division enough to cause microcephaly. Scientists conducted three studies since then, including the March study, and found six more SASS6 gene variants.

What are colours and how do people understand them? | Explained

Colour plays an outsized role in the human experience of modern life. It invests both natural and synthetic worlds with beauty and meaning. Colours don't deny universalism — a red sign will make you stop anywhere on the planet — yet they also make room for human cultures to appropriate them in unique, even discordant, ways. As the human understanding of colour has improved, and continues to do so, this knowledge has also broadened our sense of our place in this world, and the other life-forms with which we share it.

What is colour?

Colour is a type of information our eyes receive and process based on electromagnetic radiation. An object by itself can't be said to have a colour — but based on which frequencies of visible-light radiation it absorbs, reflects, and/or scatters, we can perceive the object to have a particular colour. In the human eye, the rod and the cone cells receive information in the light that strikes the eye: the rod cells record brightness while the cone cells record the wavelengths, which the human brain interprets as colour. Human beings have three types of cone cells. Each type is sensitive to light of a different wavelength, and they work together to input colour information to the brain. The possession of three

types of cone cells is why humans are called trichromats. Many birds and reptiles, on the other hand, are tetrachromats (four types of cone cells). Similarly, while human vision is restricted to wavelengths from 400 nm to 700 nm (a.k.a. visible light), honeybees can also 'see' ultraviolet light and mosquitoes and some beetles can access information in some wavelengths of infrared radiation. (Humans sense the latter as heat.) This limitation, such as it is, is why those spectacular images captured by space telescopes of celestial wonders like nebulae need to be false-coloured: to highlight the information secreted in radio waves, X-rays, gamma rays, ultraviolet light, etc. Seen in visible light alone, many of these images will have much less visual detail. A composite image of the M82 galaxy with X-ray data recorded by the Chandra telescope (blue); infrared light recorded by the Spitzer telescope (red); hydrogen emissions recorded by the Hubble space telescope (orange), and the bluest visible light (yellow-green). Rendered in 2006. | Photo Credit: NASA

There are many ways to produce specific colours. The art of mixing some colours to produce others is rooted in colour theory. Until the late 19th century, traditional colour theory specified the different ways in which dyes, pigments, and inks could be mixed to make other colours. In this paradigm, there were three primary colours — e.g. red, yellow, and blue — that when combined in different ways could produce all the colours the human eye is capable of seeing. But modern colour theory, more accurately colour science, rejected the idea of there being three fixed colours. Instead, according to colour science, all the colours that could be produced by combining any three colours in different ways is called the gamut of those three colours. Each colour in a gamut populates a given colour space, and all colour spaces are smaller than the full range of colours the eye can see.

How are colours rendered?

There are two broad ways to render colours: additive and subtractive colouring. In additive colouring, light of different wavelengths is 'mixed' to yield light of one combined colour. The colours on your smartphone screens and television sets are produced in this way.

In Maharashtra, 2 civil servants for whom cinema is a passion

Summers in the hamlet of Kharatwadi came with an annual fair. This was in the late 1990s when TV was still a luxury in this small village in Maharashtra's Nanded. Avinash Shembatwad eagerly waited for the fair, his one chance to watch 'masala Bollywood' movies. With video cassettes, a VCR player and a TV, it was a community affair. Around 50 to 100 people would gather to experience cinema on a small screen. After Class 4, Shembatwad secured admission at a school in the nearby taluka of Selu in Parbhani. The taluka had its own movie theatre and in Class 5, Shembatwad's school took the students for a screening of The Legend of Bhagat Singh. It was his first experience of watching a movie on the big screen – and the beginning of a dream.

"I started going to the theatre regularly. There wasn't a single Friday release that I missed. I decided what I wanted to do in this life and someone told me I should go to Mumbai, where all the films are made," said Shembatwad. After securing admission to an engineering college, he came to Mumbai in 2010. Two years into the course, he dropped out wanting to purely focus on performing arts. He started dabbling in magic with a small circle of young magicians and also began writing and directing plays for different college events. Shembatwad's life took a turn when he moved to Pune eyeing an admission at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII). In the company of friends who were all Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) aspirants, he too started preparing for the civil services. "My friends suggested that since I was in Pune, I could prepare for MPSC with them. I studied for two or three years and got caught in the cycle. I cleared the exam in 2019 but there was a sense of loss about the dream of filmmaking, so I felt like I should keep it alive in some way," he said. During the pandemic, when the MPSC exam got postponed, Shembatwad lost some of his friends to suicide. That was the trigger. He started writing a script in 2021. "It was time to listen to the pain of all those preparing for MPSC and it was only fitting they tell this story themselves," said Shembatwad.

With a cast and crew made up of 90 per cent civil service aspirants, Shembatwad took on his first filmmaking project. Everyone in the cast was a first-time actor, a student living in Sadashiv Peth, preparing for the MPSC. "The pre-production took six to eight months. I had to teach the basics of filmmaking to the entire team from scratch. Plus, they were all studying throughout the day in the library. At night, they gave time for the film," he said.

That is how in eight months of preparations and only six days of shoot, first-time producers and first-time actors and technicians made the first Marathi film commenting on the sufferings, struggles, successes and failures of students trying to crack



Marathi competitive examinations. Shembatwad released Yathavkash on YouTube in January 2023 and on May 17, 2024, it found a place on a free-for-all OTT platform. Chunaav, a film on the will to vote "I have a passion for film, the routine job goes on, so I bank on my weekly and festive offs to search for stories at the local level and I avoid getting a large production team on board to avoid a longer duration for the project to complete," said Shembatwad. It helps that he got posted in a place whose stories have rarely been told. Shembatwad is currently posted in Jiwati in Chandrapur, on the Telangana border. "There is no network anywhere except for the headquarters. When I get bored, I go to the village and spend time with people, a habit I am fond of. It is through conversations with locals that I got an idea to write my short film Chunaav," he said. It was a film Shembatwad made for the Election Commission of India (ECI) to increase voting percentage in remote parts of Maharashtra. Set during the 10th Lok Sabha elections in a Naxalite area, its theme is the will of a common man to keep the democratic process alive amidst the threat of boycotting elections. The short film gives a nod to the "people of Chandrapur" and gives special thanks to the people of Kanhalgaon and Kolamguda. Even the tribal folk songs and musical instruments are contributions of the locals. In the film, an ailing old man, with no hope for recovery, wakes up at the sound of the radio

announcing polling day. As he gets dressed to step out for voting and wears his white topi while looking in the mirror, a reflection of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar can be seen in the mirror. He also cleans a dusty picture of freedom fighters placed on the wall. Through symbolic scenes like these and a symbolic ending, Chunaav is a call for voter participation. The old man walks through a long forest stretch braving the sounds of wild animals, removes a boycott election poster from the tree and casts his vote, following which the entire village shows up to vote.

During the current Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra, Chunaav was screened in all the tribal villages with a voter turnout of less than 60 per cent historically. Shembatwad was the assistant electoral registration officer for Jiwati Taluka. He said in some polling booths the percentage reached 80 per cent. While at the Yermi Yesapur polling booth, the voting percentage was 80.70 per cent, in Maharajguda, the voting percentage increased from 50.14 to 73.09 per cent. The film has been screened at numerous film festivals and bagged the Best Social Film award at the Mumbai International Film Festival and Filmfare International Film Festival. It has also officially been selected for the Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival. On June 1, it is set to be screened at the New York Indian Film Festival. Shembatwad, who strongly believes that cinema is a medium of change,

is now in the process of releasing his third film The Lost Paradise, shedding light on tribal history, culture and the problems faced by the Adivasis in Jiwati. Another civil servant walks the same path. Like Shembatwad, another civil servant, Indian Revenue Service (IRS) official Anwesh too holds a passion for performing arts and filmmaking. "I cleared UPSC in 2013 and got selected for IPS. But I wanted to be in a position where I could perform my duties as a civil servant and also have time to make films," he said. A trained vocalist with a degree in music, Anwesh has stayed true to his dream. In the middle of tax theft prevention, anti-narcotics and anti-smuggling raids, he has found time to produce a two-hour feature film. The film, as Anwesh describes it, is "of the people, by the people, for the people". Extensively shot in Pune and Mumbai with the help of locals, Anwesh aims to empower the common man. The film revolves around five characters. The narrator, a cancer patient, aspires to be a filmmaker. Then, there is a child and its relationship with a working mother, a transwoman from Pune, a character from the North East who teaches sports to Adivasi kids in Odisha, and a musician stuck in an artistic block. Shot on a shoestring budget with technicians from FTII, the film features colonies and locals from Pimpri. "Everyone has something of their own going on. Through this movie I wanted to highlight the factor of perseverance that is inherent in people," said Anwesh.