

Special photo exhibition on International Day of Yoga at Salar Jung Museum

Hyderabad: In celebration of International Yoga Day, a special photo exhibition was inaugurated at the Salar Jung Museum. The event was marked by presence of Nageshwar Rao, Account Officer, and Mir Firasath Ali Baqri, BJP Telangana Former State Spokesperson. Ghanashyam Kusum and R B Naik, the curators of the Eastern block of the museum were also present at the event.

Highlighting the importance of Yoga, Mir Firasath Ali Baqri said, "Yoga is a practice that connects the body, breath, and mind. It uses physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation to improve overall health. Yoga was developed as a spiritual practice thousands of years ago. Today, most Westerners who do yoga practice it for exercise or to reduce stress." The exhibition features a collection of photographs that illustrate various Yoga postures and the history of Yoga. It aims to educate visitors about Yoga's ancient origins, its contemporary benefits, and its evolution into a global health practice, promoting cultural heritage and wellness practices.

Industrial Machinery and Engineering Exhibition 'INDOMACH' kicks off at Hyderabad's Hitex Hyderabad is hosting the three-day B2B Industrial Machinery & Engineering Exhibition, IndoMach, is being held here at Hall No.3, HITEX Exhibition Center in the city. T Kumagai, COO & Director, Koike Cutting and Welding India, inaugurated the exclusive industrial exhibition on machine tools, automation, robot-



ics, welding, electrical and industrial and engineering products, and showcasing engineering products and services, heavy and light machines, a press release said. This year's IndoMach exhibition is

having over 200 exhibitors from across India and abroad and is showcasing over 750 live machinery and has over 900 reputed national and international brands. During the three days of the weekend, the exhibition is likely to have a foot-

fall exceeding 18,000 visitors from pan India, especially from South India and parts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa states. Over 12,000 visitors have pre-registered for the event. The entry to the expo is free.

Destination USA: Maintaining status on F and M Visa category



Hyderabad: Your status is directly related to the purpose for which you came to

the United States, and it is determined by the U.S. Department of State when they

issue your visa. If you have been issued an F or M student visa, it means that you are coming to the United States to study, and you should not take any actions that detract from that purpose. Maintaining your status involves fulfilling the purpose for which the Department of State issued your visa and following the regulations associated with that purpose. F-1 and M-1 students share the same primary purpose for coming to the United States; however, F-1 students enrol in more traditional academic programs, while M-1 students enrol in vocational programs. As the nature of these programs differs, the types of benefits an international student may be eligible for and the duration they may remain in the country depend on whether they are an F-1 or M-1 student. Here are the actions you need to take to properly maintain your status:

Arrival: Enter the United States no more than 30 days before your program of

study begins. • Immediately contact your designated school official (DSO) upon entering the United States. • When you arrive at school, you need to contact your DSO again, no later than the program start date listed on your Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Non-immigrant Student Status." Education: • Attend all your classes and maintain normal academic progress. If school is too difficult, speak with your DSO immediately. • Maintain a full course of study each term. If you cannot study full time, contact your DSO immediately. You may be eligible for a reduced course load in limited circumstances. • Speak to your DSO before dropping a class. • Discuss with your DSO about requesting a possible program extension if you do not think you will complete your program of study by the end date listed on your Form I-20. An extension must be requested before your program end date. Annual Vacation for F-1 Students:

Urban Agenda | In car-choked Indian cities, parking regulations remain a non-starter

Unregulated on-street parking obstructing pedestrian movement or narrowing the motorable carriageway is common in car-choked Indian cities. So is the sight of emergency vehicles getting stuck in the web of haphazardly parked cars and drivers breaking into street fights over that elusive vacant spot. While encroachment of public land for parking cars for free or a small charge is most preferred, authorities continue to build multilevel car parking facilities that remain underutilised. Mobility experts say this is because implementing a comprehensive parking policy is missing. "Most cities have engaged private operators only in busy commercial zones where users pay a flat fee, and there is enforcement by the traffic police," said Parin Visariya, deputy manager - Inclusive Compact Cities at The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP)-India. The rest, he said, is largely unregulated with often instances of vehicles taking up footpaths and forcing pedestrians to walk on roads. Policies remain on paper. Parking policies in Indian cities are largely framed by states or cities only after being pulled up by courts or other autonomous authorities.

For instance, the Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Agency informed the Madras High Court while hearing a public interest litigation on the matter on April 21 that a parking policy has been drafted and will be notified once the model code of conduct is put in place for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections is lifted. Similarly, in Mumbai, the city's civic body formed the Mumbai Parking Authority (MPA) to form a draft policy after being pulled up by the Bombay High Court. However, even when policies are formed, implementation often remains on paper.

In the Delhi-NCR region, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) issued an advisory to all urban local bodies (ULBs) in the last week of April to implement ward-wise parking management area plans (PMAPs) by the end of August. While the Delhi government notified the Delhi Maintenance and Management of Parking Rules, 2019, following the Supreme Court's directive, their implementation has been missing and limited to pilots, which were subsequently discontinued. Multiple source apportionment studies have held that vehicles are a major contributor (as much as 50% at times) to Delhi's infamous air pollution. Even though Delhi has one of the world's largest metro networks and a growing public bus fleet, measures have failed to arrest the growth of private vehicle ownership. The case is similar in Mumbai where pilots of the new parking policy for three wards have failed to take off. Focus on revenue, not regulation

In the absence of full-fledged policies and implementation, ad hoc parking regulations are, at best, seen by civic authorities as a revenue generation tool and not as a means to disincentivise personal vehicle usage, as advised by the CAQM and the national transport policy. However, even then, due to the lack of a thorough approach, civic bodies underperform in

their collections. Centre for Sustainable and Equitable Cities (C-SEC), which prepared a parking area management plan for South Delhi's Green Park Metro Station in 2022 found that the potential revenue from managing on-street parking in the area is ₹10-19 crore annually while the civic body was only earning ₹13 lakh a year. Their study found that while it was possible to park cars for free or to pay a day fee of ₹200, the average rent of 1 sqft of commercial space in the area is ₹650. Sonal Shah, executive director at C-SEC study found that within a five-minute walking distance of Green Park Metro Station, only four of the 12 roads were priced for on-street parking.

Shah said they chose to pilot with a metro station area to demonstrate implementation of the Delhi Parking Rules 2019 because the authorities should prioritise improving access to metro stations. This could enable a modal shift to public transport, reduce the use of personal vehicles and contribute towards improving air quality in Delhi. While rampant on-street parking exists, a multi-level car park in the vicinity remains underutilised, as seen in other parts of the city.

Dynamic parking fee is the way forward. Experts like Visariya and Shah have advocated introducing dynamic pricing as a demand management measure for on-street parking. They say that in its absence, users are not motivated to use multi-level facilities or other non-street parking options. Visariya said that other reasons for underutilising multi-level parking are a general lack of poor user experience due to inadequate lighting and the lack of functioning lifts. Ranchi, in 2016, first introduced differential pricing based on demand in the Main Road, with the city designating four-colour-code zones after assessing the demand and road space. Visariya said, "While the system worked to make traffic movement efficient by optimising the available on-street parking spots and voluntary off-street parking or in parking less busier spots wherever feasible, it was discontinued due to political pressure."

He further said that due to the marginal increase in on-street parking pricing, a private parking market naturally developed, which unlocked private parking for public use. Variable pricing like that implemented in Ranchi has been proposed in Delhi, Mumbai, Surat, and Pune in their respective policies, but their implementation has been stalled for years. Policy observers said that every state government in power tries to avoid or reverse stringent parking policies or fee hikes fearing political backlash irrespective of the state and political party. The issue of equity

Jagan Shah, CEO of Infravision Foundation and former director of the National Institute of Urban Affairs, an autonomous think tank under the Housing and Urban Affairs ministry (MoHUA), said this trend reflects the inequality embedded in the contemporary Indian city. "Public interest is served when there is equitable allocation of public land. There is a trade-off between



allocating increasing amounts of space for parking private vehicles, a large part of its unpaid use, and allocating the same land for housing units. A single parking space of 18 square metres could house a car, a habitable room, or wider footpaths. "The allocation of land is at heart a policy decision. It is therefore a good reflection of power. It is not insignificant that power today has become clearly equated with wealth, access, and privilege. The choice between parking spaces, affordable houses and wider footpaths is made by those in power."

Incidentally, a 2012 study by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on the assessment of multi-level parking facilities in Sarojini Nagar in Delhi found that public money spent to create one parking space was nearly equal to one low-cost housing unit. Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director of research and advocacy

at CSE and author of the report, said: "We found the space allotted for a single car parking slot was more than that of a housing unit under Jhuggi Jhopdi Awas Yojana. Parking was taking up a huge portion of the scarce urban land resource which had other competing demands such as housing." "At that time, it was found that nearly one-third of all of Delhi's land was utilised either for driving vehicles or parking vehicles without recovering the true cost of using vehicles due to free or low parking fees," she added. However, there is a contrasting tide among developed countries.

Across the United States, there have been multiple instances of old, underutilised parking lots being converted into affordable housing structures in at least eight cities. In Canada, Toronto's city council is currently considering a similar project.

Donald Trump says he 'had heard' about Donald Trump Jr and Aubrey O'Day's affair

Former US President Donald Trump has admitted that he "had heard" Donald Trump Jr.'s affair with Aubrey O'Day.

While talking with Ramin Setoodeh, author of *Apprentice in Wonderland: How Donald Trump and Mark Burnett Took America Through the Looking Glass*, Trump acknowledged his knowledge of the affair. The excerpt goes like this: "When I ask Trump about O'Day's affair with Don Jr., he takes a long pause. 'I had heard that, actually,' he says, blinking. 'No, I had heard that.' Did he know that O'Day had written a song about Don Jr.? 'I hadn't heard the song. But I had heard that,' Trump says." The author pointed out the fact that Trump was "aware of the story about Don Jr. sleeping with one of the contestants on *The Celebrity Apprentice*." On a podcast episode of 'Mea Culpa,' featuring Aubrey O'Day, Michael Cohen, former "fixer" of Donald Trump, recalled, "Your father is really fu***** pissed."

"This is way beyond even what I am supposed to be doing. I sat down with Don, and I said, 'I understand the attraction [to

O'Day]," Cohen expressed. The former Trump attorney then said "it's got to stop and you have to figure out how to make this right with [wife] Vanessa."

"You know I am a fan of Vanessa's, you've got to make it right with her because if you don't, your father is going to throw you're a** out of here. And I said, 'Don, I don't know what the f**k you're capable of doing,' to which Don went crazy."

Trump's former "fixer" also recalled the heated moment where Don Jr. expressed frustration about being held to a different standard compared to his siblings. "Only me! It's always me!"

"He goes, 'I am always held to a different standard. Eric had s** with some Miss Universe that was on *Celebrity Apprentice* on the table and Ivanka has her own issues regarding sexuality and so on..."

Ok reported it earlier that Trump was notably displeased upon learning about his son's extramarital involvement with O'Day, especially given that Don Jr. was still married to Vanessa Trump at the time.

Kumar Showcases Shooting Skills at Telangana State Competition



The X Telangana State Shooting Competitions commenced today at the SATS Shooting Range in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, with an overwhelming response from over 200 competitors across various disciplines. The event was graciously inaugurated by Mr. Amit Sanghi, President of the Telangana Rifle Association. The competitions included 10M Rifle/ Open Sight Rifle, 25M Pistol, 50M Pistol, and 10M Pistol events, showcasing the exceptional shooting skills of the partici-

pants.

The atmosphere was charged with anticipation and excitement as the skilled marksmen and markswomen gathered to demonstrate their precision and accuracy. The shooting range reverberated with palpable energy, as the participants vied to outperform one another. Noteworthy among the participants was Mr. Anjani Kumar, I.P.S, former Director General of Police, Telangana and current Chairman of Road

Safety Authority, who actively took part in the 25 M Std. Pistol event. His involvement served as an encouragement to the young shooters and added to the event's spirit. "It is truly heartening to see the enthusiastic participation of our shooters in the X Telangana State Shooting Competitions," said Mr. Amit Sanghi. "Their dedication and passion for the sport are commendable, and we look forward to witnessing even more exciting events in the days to

come. The results of the competitions are currently being compiled and verified by the event officials and will be announced at a later time, providing insights into the performance and standings of each participant. The X Telangana State Shooting Competitions are an important event in the shooting sports calendar, and the organizers are committed to fostering the growth and development of the sport in the state.

No change in Tirumala special entry darshan and laddu prices: TTD

Hyderabad: The Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams (TTD) has clarified that there was no change in the price of Rs 300 special entry darshan and Rs 50 Laddu prasadam of Tirumala Sri Venkateswara temple and urged the devotees not to believe in reports doing rounds on social media platforms. In a statement here on Saturday, the TTD spokesman disputed messages being shared on WhatsApp groups about some people mentioning their

telephone numbers would could get special entry darshan at a higher price in Tirumala. The TTD urged the devotees to book their slots for darshan on the official website <https://ttdevasthanams.ap.gov.in> He also disclosed that some tickets have also been allotted to the tourism departments of various states. Devotees who want to come through tourism departments have the opportunity to get darshan package tickets

directly through their state tourism websites. It had also come to the notice of the TTD vigilance wing that some brokers were charging huge amounts from innocent people for booking tickets through the tourism website. The TTD warned of stringent action against such brokers appealed to the devotees to book their slots only through the official websites of TTD and Tourism only.



On Kannada actor Darshan arrest, fan-culture, and brutal violence that caused death

A food delivery executive out for a Sunday-morning-breakfast parcel on June 9, was headed to one of the residences in Sattva Anugraha, an upmarket apartment complex on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) in Bengaluru's western suburbs. On his way, he saw street dogs pull at what looked like the body of a man in a storm water drain. He alerted the security guards, who in turn called the police. Based on the complaint of Kevalram Dorji, the security officer of the apartment complex, the police recovered the body riddled with injuries. It was stuck on a bushy slope off the road and had not fallen into the running water. There was no identification on him. The CCTV footage from the apartment complex gave leads on two suspicious vehicles. As is routine, the police secured the body in a morgue and put out an advertisement with photographs in newspapers that evening, seeking information. It might have ended up as one of the many unidentified bodies in a metropolis like Bengaluru, but the police were in for a surprise on the evening of June 10. At about 7 p.m. that day, four men walked into the Kamakshipalya police station and confessed to the murder of the man they said was K.S. Renukaswamy, 33. A resident of Chitradurga, a district headquarters in central Karnataka, around 200 kilometres away from Bengaluru, Renukaswamy worked at a retail pharmacy chain. Raghavendra, 43, also from Chitradurga; Karthik, 27; Keshavamurthy, 27; and Nikhil Naik, 21, all from Bengaluru, claimed they had a financial dispute with the deceased, had abducted and brought him to the city, beat him up, and he had died. The police were sceptical: "The victim did not have a profile which could have led to his murder due to a financial dispute. Such surrenders usually happen only in underworld cases," said a senior police official, who has been leading the investigation.

Following sustained interrogation, the four told a different story. "What they revealed came as a shocker to us," the official said. They said Darshan Thoogudeepa, one of the most popular Kannada cinema actors, had got the victim abducted from Chitradurga, brought him to a shed in Rajarajeshwari Nagar in Bengaluru, and beat him up with his associates, leading to his death. They said the victim had sent obscene messages to his alleged partner Pavithra Gowda on social media. The actor had sent the four to surrender, paying them to keep his name out, police say. One of the four, Raghavendra, was the president of the Chitradurga District Darshan Fans' Club. In the next few hours, the police had arrested seven more people: Vinay V., 38, owner of Stonny Brook resto-bar in Bengaluru, where the actor had been partying on that Saturday afternoon. Vinay's uncle owns the shed where the victim was allegedly tortured and killed. Deepak, 39, is a partner in the company running the shed and a nephew of a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) city MLA. Pavan K., 29, is an employee of Darshan, working as Gowda's helper. Pradosh, 40, is a corporate executive and has been Darshan's friend for about two decades. Nandeesh, 28; Lakshman, 54; and



Nagaraju, 41, were allegedly present at the shed and had assaulted the victim. The next morning, even as Gowda was arrested in Bengaluru, a team of city police arrested Darshan, who was at a hotel in Mysuru for a film shoot. Darshan is among one of the highest paid actors in the Kannada film industry, called Sandalwood informally. "He did at least two or three movies a year earlier, and was considered a 'dependable' hero. Producers invested money in him; exhibitors felt the need for such a hero so that theatres would be busy most of the year. Both the industry and the audience admired him for different reasons," said Shashidhar Chitradurga, author and film journalist. Darshan's most recent action film Kaaterais the industry's biggest hit this year so far. At election time, politicians flocked to get the D-Boss, as he is popularly known, to campaign for them, especially in southern Karnataka. At about 2.30 p.m on June 8, Renukaswamy had called his mother Rathnaprabha, 62, over the phone to tell her that he would not come home for lunch, and would return late in the evening. That was their last conversation. His body was brought to Chitradurga three days later. Renukaswamy had left home around 9 a.m. on Saturday and parked his two-wheeler near Balaji Bar, close to the circle where the roads connecting Chitradurga with Bengaluru and Challakere taluka meet. As per the CCTV camera footage, he got into an autorickshaw, and the vehicle took the Bengaluru route. After a couple of kilometres, the passengers in the autorickshaw and the driver shifted to a taxi.

They have now been identified as Raghavendra, the driver Ravi Shankar, and two of his associates Anu Kumar, 25, and Jagadeesh, 36, all from Chitradurga. Raghavendra had allegedly lured them into the plot promising them a meeting with their idol, Darshan. Back home, his mother; father, Kashinath S. Shivanagowdru, 75; and wife, Sahana K.S, 26, waited, even as

the evening turned to the next day, and there was no sign of him. "We called his friends and the pharmacy, but no one knew anything," says Shivanagowdru. As they contemplated lodging a complaint with the police on Monday, Shivanagowdru, who retired as a senior assistant in Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) 17 years ago, got information of his son's death from the police. "I felt the ground beneath me cave in," recalled the father, still shaken by what has happened. Renukaswamy, who was actively involved in the activities of a few Hindutva groups, according to people in the locality, had dropped out of college, where he was studying Commerce. He secured a job in the sales section of a pharmacy company and worked at its outlets in Chitradurga, after undergoing training. "Last year, we got him married to Sahana. June 28 is his wedding anniversary, and we were planning an event to mark the occasion," said Shivanagowdru.

Instead, on June 17, the family held a ritual in memory of Renukaswamy. "Sorry, the moment I start to speak about my son, I cannot hold back my tears," Shivanagowdru said. What haunts him most are the reports of torture. "The moment I remember him, I start to imagine how he must have suffered. I imagine him pleading with folded hands, wailing in pain. He must have cried for help; he must have begged them not to torture him." Then, "His wife is five months pregnant." Where it all happened The now infamous shed, about 300 metres away from the road, is situated on a four-acre plot owned by Pattanagere Jayanna, who has significant land holdings in the Pattanagere village, now subsumed within Rajarajeshwari Nagar, a suburb in west Bengaluru. Intact Autoparc India Pvt Ltd had rented the land parcel. About 400 seized vehicles, including some trucks and buses, allegedly of loan defaulters, are parked in the space. It has a two-

storey building at one end and the area is covered by at least eight CCTV cameras. Raghavendra was allegedly instructed to take Renukaswamy to the shed, where at least one movie of Darshan had been shot. Darshan was partying at Stonny Brooks. Gowda, who runs a boutique, had on January 24, this year, posted pictures with Darshan on social media with the caption, "One decade down; forever to go. #10year. It's been 10 years of our relationship. Thank you." A sprinkling of hearts and stars were added. Gowda became a target of trolls. This upset many Darshan fans who sided with his wife, Vijayalakshmi, and wrote messages against Gowda. Renukaswamy was one of them. Allegedly operating under multiple fake Instagram identities, he had persistently trolled Gowda publicly. Police say he used the account @goutham_ks_1990 to send her obscene messages and pictures. Police have now found that Renukaswamy was a habitual offender and had employed a similar modus operandi with many women. One of them had brought it to the notice of a police official in March 2024, but no action was taken. These messages enraged Gowda, who allegedly informed her help Pavan. Posing as Gowda, he had chatted with Renukaswamy, managing to extract his mobile number and details of his whereabouts. With this information, Darshan allegedly contacted Raghavendra, seeking his help. Using the photo and the phone number, Raghavendra tracked down Renukaswamy and brought him to the shed, allegedly on the instructions of Darshan. Darshan then allegedly landed up at the shed with Gowda and several of his associates, including Pavan, the pub owner Vinay, and his friend Pradosh. Police investigations have now revealed that Darshan got Gowda to beat up Renukaswamy and made him apologise. Renukaswamy was later tortured for several hours.

Dutch building in Srikakulam drawing tourists in droves

An ancient Dutch building located near the Srikakulam collectorate is gaining popularity, thanks to joint initiatives of the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Department and Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). The elegant structure constructed 300 years ago on the banks of Nagavali river is attracting many tourists although a major portion of the building has collapsed. The building is said to have served as a shelter for traders and others who used to visit Srikakulam for business purposes. "The Dutch building is a classic example of the strong connection between Europeans and rulers of Kalingandhra region. The structure was later used as Taluk office by Bobbili Rajas," said INTACH former convener K.V.J. Radhaprasad. The previous collectors such as Saurabh Gaur, Paturu Lakshmi Narasimham and former INTACH convener Dusi Dharma Rao were instrumental in the protection of the structure which turned into a dais for cultural activities organised by the district administration on important occasions such as Independence Day and Republic Day. Srikakulam Tourism officer K.Narayana Rao told The Hindu that the department was taking necessary steps to protect the structure in association with the Archeological department.



According to him, the Tourism department has sent a detailed note to the government for the promotion of various tourist sites. Historic temples such as Srikurmantheswara Swamy temple of Srikurmam, Lord Sri Suryanarayana Swamy temple at Arasavilli, Madhukeswara Someswara temples of

Srimukhalingam, Umarudra Koteswara Alayam of Srikakulam, Sangameswara Swamy temple of Vangara, and Vasudeva Swamy's temple at Mandasa, and Radha Govinda Swamy temple of Meliaputti have been identified for the promotion of temple tourism in the district. The department has also identified several forts and other heri-

tage structures for the promotion of tourism. Mandasa fort, Surangi Raja's Itchapuram fort, Tarlakota, Urlam Samsthanam and residential buildings of Bonthala Koduru Jamindars are grabbing the attention of the tourists. It has also been promoting natural heritage sites such as Sunnapugedda waterfalls, Mettuguda wa-

terfalls, Telikunchi Syberian sanctuary at Telineelapuram of Tekkali division and others. "Many people come for the darshan of the Sun god at Arasavalli. We are trying to make them visit the best tourist spots in the district. A dedicated bus service for the visit of those sites is under the consideration of the government," said Mr. Narayana Rao.

McLaren's quest to reclaim its glory days is well on track

Ferrari has been Formula One's pre-eminent force. A competitive Ferrari has always helped the health of motorsport's most prestigious category, with a passionate, worldwide fanbase tuning in. But every sport needs a fierce rivalry to get the buzz going. Ferrari's closest historical competitor is McLaren, F1's second-most-successful outfit in terms of wins and championships. The eponymous team, founded by Bruce McLaren, has powered the likes of Niki Lauda, Alain Prost, Mika Hakkinen and Lewis Hamilton to titles. More importantly, it is best known as the outfit with which Ayrton Senna, one of F1's greatest-ever drivers, won his three championships. A part of F1 folklore. The Ferrari-McLaren battles — Senna vs. Prost, Schumacher vs. Hakkinen, and later Raikkonen/Massa/Alonso vs. Hamilton — are part of F1 folklore.

However, the eight-time constructors' champion, which also has 12 drivers' titles, has endured a decade of underperformance since 2013. In 2024, though, things are finally looking up for the

British team, as it fights for wins and podiums consistently, raising the fans' excitement level. "It is important for F1 to have a competitive McLaren. After Ferrari, it is the team with the most loyal fanbase, and these are the two teams where the fanbase for them is bigger than their drivers," says Karun Chandhok, India's second F1 driver, now a TV pundit. The team's decline started when it adopted a new car concept in 2013, after fighting for the title in 2012. Its ill-fated switch in 2015 to Honda power units, which were uncompetitive and unreliable, exacerbated the problem. From 2015 to 2018, the team was in the bottom half of the standings. There was also turmoil off the track due to management and ownership changes. "When they went to the Honda engine, they struggled. There was a cultural clash between McLaren and the Japanese side. There was a lot of blame on the engine front, but they also took their eyes off the chassis. So when they went to Renault [2018-2020], it was a shock and an eye-opener for them that it wasn't all the [fault of the] Honda engine, but there

were deficiencies on the chassis side, which had to be addressed," says Chandhok. It was only in 2019 that McLaren started laying down the building blocks for its recovery under former team principal Andreas Seidl. Since then, the team has been bouncing around to be the best of the rest behind Mercedes, Red Bull and Ferrari. The highlight was the 2021 Italian GP, where Daniel Ricciardo led Lando Norris to a 1-2 finish, McLaren's first win since 2012. Closing the gap. Over the last two years, there has been a growing belief that good days are on the horizon, as the Woking-based team has started to close the gap to the top. After starting the 2022 rules cycle on the back foot, the team missed the initial targets for 2023 and struggled even to score points in the early part of last year. In the background, there was another management shake-up, with Andrea Stella becoming team principal, and changes to the technical structure, including the departure of technical director James Key. Fortunately, the team has methodically put the pieces together under

Stella. McLaren fashioned a sensational turnaround last year, becoming the second-fastest car at some weekends during the season's second half. The progress has continued this year, with Norris registering his maiden victory in Miami and the team notching up five other podium finishes. In the recent Canadian GP, Norris finished second and teammate Oscar Piastri came home fifth. A year ago, McLaren would have taken the result gladly, but now, the race will go down as a missed opportunity, showing how far the team has come. Key men: CEO Zak Brown and team principal Andrea Stella deserve a lot of credit for McLaren's revival. | Photo credit: Getty Images. Key men: CEO Zak Brown and team principal Andrea Stella deserve a lot of credit for McLaren's revival. | Photo credit: Getty Images. Chandhok credits Stella and CEO Zak Brown with getting the team back on track. "He [Stella] is a pragmatic leader. His core belief is about engineering success and being honest about things when they are not working.

'Credit for split' in Shiv Sena and NCP should be given to Uddhav Thackeray, Sharad Pawar, says Fadnavis

When asked about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claims in his speeches that businessmen Adani and Ambani are funding the Congress, the BJP leader said: "Perhaps they might have given them (money), which is what he is saying..." Here are the excerpts from the interview. The BJP claims they have a panna pramukh (representative for all voters mentioned on each page of the electoral list) in each ward, but why was there a low voter turnout? An unnecessary narrative has been circulating suggesting a low voter turnout. However, in the majority of constituencies, the turnout matches or exceeds that of the 2019 General Election. The high temperatures this time have led to people voting primarily in the morning and after 4 p.m., resulting in deserted polling stations during the afternoon. The final voting percentage will be announced the next day, so claims of low turnout are unfounded. Furthermore, there is no discrepancy in the final figures provided by the Election Commission of India. Each political party receives a certificate on the same day, enabling them to verify the numbers.

How do you interpret PM Modi's claims in his speeches that Adani and Ambani are funding Congress, especially considering the reported closeness between them and your party leader?

Perhaps they might have given them (money), which is what he is saying... All businessmen in this country are regarded equally by the BJP. There is no question of personal relationships. Our goal is to foster a conducive business environment and uphold good practices. If any wrongdoing occurs, we must speak out. Interestingly, Rahul Gandhi ceased his criticisms of Adani and Ambani until Modiji challenged his silence, prompting him to renew his attacks. His mouth was shut. No Adani or Ambani. What was the deal? This has led to public speculation about his motives.

If they have indeed begun funding the Congress, do you believe the political landscape is shifting in favour of the Congress?

Businessmen often support various parties. This was evident from the substantial amount of money routed through electoral bonds to other political parties.

More than half of the State had already voted. Has the public response changed now compared to the 2014 and 2019 elections?

So far, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has addressed 13 poll rallies, and he will address two more in the coming days. All the rallies have been frenzied and are receiving immense responses compared to 2014 and 2019. However, simultaneously, the voices of voters, which were clearly heard before, are not as audible this time because many have become our traditional voters and are remaining silent.

The number of rallies PM Modi is addressing in Maharashtra is unprecedented. What does it indicate?

Last time there were 12 rallies, and now there are 15. We've requested him to

address rallies in constituencies where our alliance candidates are also contesting. Essentially, it's a straightforward political strategy: we're maintaining unity as a party and transferring our voter base. However, if candidates are from Shiv Sena and Shiv Sena (UBT) or NCP and NCP (SP), there might be a split in votes, so it wouldn't be accurate to claim a 100% vote transfer to us. Hence, if there's any gap, it needs to be addressed, and that's why he's campaigning. We've ramped up our campaign efforts for our alliance partners.

Do Muslims attend your rallies even though you start and end them with 'Jai Shri Ram' chants?

Absolutely, they come wearing skull caps and burqas. What's the issue with saying 'Jai Shri Ram'? Lord Ram is a cultural icon in this country. He is a deity for us, but even for those who may not see him as a divine figure, the principles he embodies as Maryada Purushottam are universally admirable. If Muslims in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand can appreciate Lord Rama, why should it be any different in India?

Ten years is a long period for the build-up of the anti-incumbency. You changed several candidates. Do you feel that anti-incumbency factor when you're campaigning or interacting with people?

As far as the government is concerned, there's not an anti-incumbency sentiment; rather, it's pro-incumbency. While there might be exceptions with a few candidates, overall, there's support for Mr. Modi. However, we encountered instances where people expressed support for Mr. Modi but had reservations about specific candidates due to anti-incumbency. We've encountered and learned from such situations, it could happen. Even prominent leaders faced anti-incumbency challenges.

What about candidates from your alliance partner?

We cannot dictate to them who their candidate should be, just as they cannot dictate to us. While there is always room for friendly advice, they cannot determine our candidate, nor can I for theirs. They have finalised their candidates, and the correctness of their decisions can only be assessed after the results are out. We have extended our full support to them. It's natural that no one is entirely content with seat-sharing arrangements. We too felt we should have received 30 seats, but we settled for 28. While we are not entirely satisfied, we are also not disheartened.

Do you think the split in Shiv Sena and NCP is impacting the polls, as voters are widely discussing it and blaming the BJP for the split? On the ground, your party is under fire.

Only interested parties— supporters of the erstwhile Shiv Sena or Sharad Pawar loyalists— are creating this narrative. Common people understand that we did not initiate it. It was started by Uddhav Thackeray. He won the polls in alliance with us and later betrayed us. The truth is,



if credit is due to anyone, it should be given to the leaders (Mr. Thackeray and Mr. Pawar) of the respective parties. Knowing him personally, I can say Mr. Shinde would never have rebelled. When you're pushed to the wall, you're left with no other option, and that is what happened with him. Mr. Shinde played a key role in the 2019 Assembly elections, and legislators started approaching him since the CM (Mr. Thackeray) was not accessible. Uddhav ji feared that another Narayan Rane (Union Minister) was emerging within his ranks, so he wanted to nip it in the bud. The same happened with Ajit Pawar, who was made out to be the villain because the hero (Supriya Sule) needed to be visible. Pawar saab wanted to hand the party over to Supriya tai, so unless Ajit Pawar was portrayed as the villain, Supriya tai would not emerge as the hero. We simply aligned with them, and taking Mr. Shinde was unquestioned because we share the same ideology. We won the elections together as allies. Our vote share and mandate were unified.

PM Modi suggested the Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) join hands with Mr. Shinde and Mr. Ajit Pawar after the Lok Sabha polls instead of merging with the Congress...It was not an offer, but absolute sarcasm citing that Congress is a shrinking ship, and instead of going with them, join hands with Mr. Shinde and Ajit dada.

You're facing criticism for aligning yourself with two influential communities, OBCs and Marathas at the same time, based on your caste background as a member of a micro-minority community. Do you believe it was appropriate for you to assume this role?

Presently, both OBCs and Marathas are supporting us. Certain leaders, aiming to sustain themselves politically by stoking communal tensions, are resorting to this tactic. Only the election results will provide clarity on this matter. In some constituencies, there exists a significant rift between Marathas and OBCs. While elections will come and go, the scars of such divisions will linger, posing a threat to the social fabric of Maharashtra. Whenever there's a division between OBCs and Marathas, the

ruling party often receives blame. Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil has specifically mentioned your name in this context and holds you responsible...Mr. Jarange-Patil has publicly stated that he will not campaign for any political party and asserts that he has no political affiliations. We are watching the situation closely, and it will become clear whether he remains unaligned or truly neutral.

You say Kunbi and Marathas strongly with you as they are nationalists and believe in Lord Ram. What about Muslims and Dalits, as a narrative has been set that the BJP will change the Constitution?

Fortunately, now the Dalit community has a high level of education, making them well-informed about the Constitution's basic structure, which cannot be amended. They understand that this is an outdated narrative and no longer holds any appeal. The overall population of Muslims is around 14% in the country and about 11% in Maharashtra. Don't the BJP feel the need for them?

I have a question. Congress needs them, right? Then why didn't they allocate a single seat to Muslim candidates in major states? What does that signify? It seems they want to use Muslims merely as a vote bank without offering them actual representation. We object to this. Some argue that Muslims should have the first claim on the country's resources. We disagree with that perspective. We believe that the first claim should belong to the poor, regardless of their caste, religion, or language. For example, under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and other government schemes, the Muslim community has benefited significantly. This isn't about exclusion; it's about inclusion and breaking the myth of appeasement. Our guiding principle is 'Justice for All - Appeasement of None.' Regarding the issue of reservations, they are intended for those facing discrimination. Islam teaches that 'We are all one,' indicating that there isn't social backwardness within the community. If there are educational or economic challenges, the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) category is available to them. The Prime Minister is addressing these issues head-on,

Investment tips for beginners

Investing in stocks is a way to multiply your money over time. By regularly putting aside some amount to invest, you can see it multiply over the long term. That's why it's important to begin investing as soon as you start earning. The earlier you start and the longer your time horizon, the better it is. According to experts, the minimum time horizon for any investment should be at least five years. Begin by setting your goals about what you want to achieve financially. You might have short-term goals such as saving for a home or a vacation, or long-term objectives like securing a comfortable retirement life or funding your children's higher education and their wedding, etc. Young investors need to focus more on growth and long-term wealth accumulation, while those closer to retirement should prefer income generation and capital preservation.

Your objectives should depend on your life stage and ambitions. The more precise you can be about your goals, the easier it will be to sort out the best means to get you there. Determine how much time you have to achieve each goal. You will have longer and shorter timelines for different purposes. In general, the longer you can give yourself, the less risk you'll need to take on, and the more viable your objectives will be. Be realistic about how much you can allocate toward your investment goals. This includes looking at your savings, regular income and any other financial resources you can put to work as you begin. Most of us have several goals like saving for buying a car, down payment for purchasing a house, for wedding and long-term planning for retirement. Always prioritise your goals and work on them according to their urgency and importance. The first step in any venture is the biggest. To know how much you can afford to invest is the first priority. Assess your financial situation carefully. Don't worry if your funds are less than what you would wish, because it's just the beginning. Remember, this is a marathon, not a sprint and you've got a long way to go. Start with your income. If you have a specific skill set or interest, you can use it for earning additional income by freelancing and consulting. Asset allocation It is the most important factor responsible for wealth creation. The reason why majority of the people are unsuccessful in building wealth over time is not because they didn't have enough money to invest, but because they didn't invest their money in the right asset. "The decision of asset allocation has over 90 per cent weightage in the successful journey of wealth creation. If your portfolio is strategically designed with the right mix of asset class, your dreams can turn into reality much sooner than expected," says Saksham Diwan, assistant vice-president (wealth management), Anand Rath Financial Services Ltd.

Optimise risk Every individual has a different risk appetite. Some may be risk-averse, some risk-neutral and a few might have no risk at all. Risk optimisation is nothing but making sure that for generating a certain amount of return, the risk associated with the portfolio is the least possible. This can be achieved only when you have

the right mix of assets in a portfolio. Mutual funds, ETFs Investors in mutual funds and exchange-traded funds (ETFs) have access to a diverse array of stocks, bonds and other assets. Since these instruments are managed by experienced fund managers, these are ideal for beginners and those who lack the knowledge to manage their wealth. Since investing is a long-term process, it is vital to conduct research and select mutual funds and ETFs that gel with your goals and risk appetite. Pay off debt Don't take more loans when you are still paying EMIs. Try to pre-pay the debt as early as possible by increasing the amount of your EMI as your income increases. In this way, the tenure of your loan will automatically come down. Budgeting If you don't have a monthly budget, you can't have control over your finances. With the right budget, you can keep a tab on your spending and ensure that you never land yourself in debt again. Contingency fund Creating an emergency fund is also very important. Ideally, there should be an emergency fund that can meet your regular expenses for at least six months. Better money management such as regular savings, systematic investment plan and cutting down on unnecessary expenses will definitely help in improving your personal finance. Budget for investing Based on your financial assessment thus far, decide how much money you can comfortably put into stocks. This shouldn't dip into any funds you need for expenses now or down the road. Investing in stocks carries risk, and it's important to only invest money you can afford to lose. Never put yourself in a financially vulnerable position for the sake of investing. Rule of 72 It is a simple formula that helps you estimate the time it takes for your investment to double. Divide 72 by the expected rate of return on your invest-



ment. The result is the number of years it will take for your investment to double. For example, if you invest Rs 1 lakh with an expected rate of return of 8 per cent per annum, your investment will double in approximately nine years (i.e. $72/8=9$). Minimum 10% investment This rule suggests that you should invest at least 10 per cent of your income every month towards long-term investment, while increasing your investment by 10 per cent each year or in proportion to the increase in your income. 100-minus-age rule This offers a framework for determining the appropriate equity and debt allocation in your investment portfolio. It suggests subtracting your age from 100 to find the suitable percent-

age of equity or stocks exposure. The remainder can then be allocated to debt instruments. Remember, investing involves risks, and there are no shortcuts to accumulating wealth. It's crucial to tailor your investment approach as per your needs, goals and circumstances. Stock-taking Stocks can be organised by the risk they involve. For instance, large-capitalisation (large-cap) stocks are generally more stable since they are well-established, major companies in the market. Small-cap stocks usually offer more growth potential but come with increased risk. Similarly, growth stocks are sought for rapid gains, with higher risks, while value stocks focus on long-term, steady growth, usually with lower risks.

Israel raids Gaza hospital as Rafah concerns deepen



Israeli forces said on Thursday they had raided the biggest functioning hospital in Gaza as footage showed chaos, shouting and gunfire in dark corridors filled with dust and smoke. Israel's military called the raid on Nasser Hospital "precise and

limited" and said it was based on information that Hamas militants were hiding and had kept hostages in the facility, with some bodies of captives possibly there. Hamas called that lies.

Health authorities in the Hamas-run

Palestinian enclave said Israel had forced out displaced people and families of medical staff sheltering in Nasser Hospital. Some 2,000 Palestinians arrived in the southern border city of Rafah overnight while others pushed north to Deir Al-Balah in central Gaza, they said. Israel's air and ground offensive since October 7 has since devastated tiny, crowded Gaza, killing 28,663 people and forcing nearly all its more than 2 million inhabitants from their homes. Fighting at the hospital comes as Israel faces growing international pressure to show restraint, after vowing to press its offensive into Rafah, the last relatively safe place in Gaza. Israel has also claimed that its air strike in the Lebanese city of Nabatieh on Wednesday night had killed a senior commander of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force, his deputy and a third fighter. Meanwhile, Hezbollah said Israel would "pay the price" for killing 10 civilians, including five children, in southern Lebanon.

What we need is a farmer-friendly agri-export policy

Agricultural exports touched \$48.9 billion in 2023-24, registering a 8 per cent decline from \$53.2 billion in 2022-23. This is significantly short of the ambitious target of \$60 billion set by the Narendra Modi government for 2022. Not only this, the growth momentum in agri-exports during the 10 years of Modi government seems to have lost steam, dropping from an annual average growth rate of 20 per cent during the UPA government (2004-05 to 2013-14) to a meagre 1.9 per cent during 2014-15 to 2023-24.

In absolute terms, while India's agri-exports surged from \$8.7 billion in 2004-05 to a whopping \$43.3 billion in 2013-14, a vault jump of almost 500 per cent, they only lurched thereafter, reaching \$48.9 billion by 2023-24. This indicates a decline in trade surplus, from a peak of \$27.7 billion in 2013-14 to \$16 billion in 2023-24. Had the growth momentum of the UPA period been sustained during the NDA period, agricultural exports could have reached the \$200 billion mark today. Since agri-exports have strong implications for incomes of the farming community, there is an urgent need to chalk out a new strategy to revive them. This requires a deeper dive into the structure of exports and the reasons behind their sluggish growth during the NDA period.

It is important to note that rice holds the top position in India's agri-exports basket, valued at \$10.4 billion from 16.3 million tonnes (MT). This represents roughly 21 per cent of the total value of agri-exports in 2023-24. Following rice are marine products (\$7.3 billion), constituting a 15 per cent share, spices (\$4.25 billion) with a 9 per cent share, bovine meat (\$3.7 billion) with an 8 per cent share, and sugar (\$2.8 billion) accounting for 6 per cent of the total share. Indian agri-exports are influenced by two main factors: One, how global prices of agri-produce are behaving; and two, how liberal is our agri-export policy. When global prices are on the upswing, India's agri-exports also surge, as was the case in the UPA period. But when global prices fall, our price-competitiveness also gets blunted, and agri-exports suffer, as was the case in the first five years of the Modi government.

Besides global price dynamics, export restrictions and outright bans on sensitive agricultural commodities like wheat, rice, sugar, and onions lately have significantly impacted agri-exports, driven primarily by the concerns of domestic food inflation. This began with the ban on wheat exports on May 13, 2022, followed by restrictions on sugar exports in June 2022. On July 20, 2023, exports of non-basmati white rice and broken rice were prohibited. Additionally, on August 25, 2023, a 20 per cent duty was imposed on parboiled non-basmati rice exports, along with minimum export price (MEP) on basmati rice, initially at \$1200/tonne, but later reduced to \$950/tonne in October

2023. Recently, while the export ban on onions was lifted, it was replaced with a 40 per cent duty, in addition to a MEP of \$550/tonne. Export restrictions on rice offer valuable policy lessons. As India announced its rice export restrictions, the international price of rice surged by approximately 25 per cent, escalating from \$494/tonne during April-June 2023 to \$620/tonne in January 2024. This helped exporters of basmati rice and parboiled rice get better price realisation. Despite a 27 per cent drop in rice exports from 22.3MT in 2022-23 to 16.3MT in 2023-24, the export value realisation only decreased by 6 per cent, from \$11.1 billion to \$10.4 billion during the same period. Here is a policy lesson: In a global market of around 53 MT, if India exports say 22 MT or more rice, it will bring down the global price to Indian levels. Trade theory suggests an optimal export tax to ensure that marginal revenue from additional exports should not fall. Our research indicates India's optimal rice export quantity should be around 15-16 MT. Beyond this, additional exports will yield diminishing marginal revenues. In other words, India will have to export more quantity to get the same export revenue. That is not a wise policy. A prudent policy option would be to impose a 15 per cent export duty on common and parboiled rice, alongside lifting the outright export ban. In the case of rice, which is 65 per cent irrigated, there are also concerns related to depleting groundwater, especially in the Punjab-Haryana belt. Free power and highly subsidised fertilisers are leading to an ecological di-



saster. It is widely recognised that producing one kilogram of rice requires between 3,000-5,000 litres of water for irrigation. Assuming an average water usage of approximately 4,000 litres per kilogram of rice, with roughly half of this water seeping back to groundwater, exporting 16.3 MT of rice effectively means exporting 32.6 billion cubic meters of water. We must recognise that high subsidies on power and fertilisers confer artificial competitive advantage. Essentially, true export competitiveness hinges on boosting productivity and achieving more with fewer resources. This goal demands significant investments across agriculture, including research and development, seeds, irrigation, fertilisers and adopting resource-efficient farming practices like precision agriculture, fertigation etc. These strategic in-

vestments can drive down per-unit costs, enhance global competitiveness, increase agricultural exports, improve farmers' profitability, as well as protect the environment. The case of onion is unique. The government announced opening up its exports just before polling in Maharashtra but put a very high MEP with 40 per cent export duty, making the effective export price of Rs 65/kg. This is when farmers are currently selling onions at Rs 13 to Rs 15/kg in Lasalgaon, not enough to recover their costs. However, they are deprived of the export opportunity that could have lifted their domestic price. All this shows that government policy has a consumer bias, which implicitly discriminates against the farmer. This needs to change if we want to augment farmers' incomes.

mRNA vaccine tech can be harnessed to prevent deadly diseases: Report

New Delhi: The success of mRNA vaccine technology as seen during the recent Covid-19 pandemic offers hope for using the platform to reduce preventable illness across multiple disease areas, according to a report on Wednesday. The report by GlobalData, a data and analytics company, as part of World Immunization Week, shows that there are about 507 prophylactic or preventive vaccines currently in late-stage development, of which 88 are being developed using the mRNA technology to prevent diseases ranging from tuberculosis, malaria, to influenza, Covid-19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and Lyme disease, amongst others.

Unlike other vaccine technologies, mRNA enables rapid production and adaptability for evolving targets. While these vaccines require ultra-cold storage, modifying this would make it even more desirable. World Immunization Week is observed every year during the last week of April to raise awareness about the poten-

tial of vaccines to prevent disease and protect life. "Vaccinations have heavily reduced the burden of disease in our society. We have already seen the eradication of smallpox and are very close to achieving the same with polio. Promoting immunisation, improving vaccination schedules, and developing new vaccines are all methods that will contribute towards a decrease in morbidity mortality," said Anaelle Tannen, Infectious Disease Analyst at GlobalData. Currently, over 20-life threatening diseases are preventable with vaccines. In addition, novel mechanisms are expected to broaden the scope of available preventable vaccines in the coming years. Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that vaccines prevent about 3.5-5 million deaths annually from diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza, and measles. "The recent Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the need for effective vaccines, improving vaccination access and acceptance, in order to protect the health, wellness, and secu-



rity of the world population," Tannen said. "Whilst immunisation is one of the cheapest and most effective public health interventions, enabling the eradication of disease, vaccine hesitancy is still very much present, and especially with the mRNA approach. Therefore, more work is needed to encourage acceptance of this immunisation strategy among the public," Tannen added.