

## Commuters irked as lower, main Tank Bund stretches remained shut on Monday morning

Hyderabad: A day after the Telangana Formation Day fete, scores of motorists on Monday found themselves struggling to navigate the traffic congestion along lower and main Tank Bund roads. The entire stretch of lower and main Tank Bund stretches remained shut even after the Formation Day celebrations of Sunday. While the traffic restrictions were notified only for June 1 and 2, barricades were not removed on Monday morning as well.

Office-goers and commuters were stranded in the traffic jam, with many getting delayed in reaching their destinations. The Tank Bund and lower Tank Bund are vital links that many commuters use to reach the west side of the city. Motorists coming from Ranigunj and Secunderabad who were already having trouble with the Lower Tank Bund Road closure were forced to take the long way around. Those coming from Khairatabad also met with a similar scenario. This resulted in heavy traffic on the Telugu Thalli Flyover.



## Haritha Haram to be pruned, to get new name



Hyderabad: Telangana ku Haritha Haram, one of the flagship programmes of the previous BRS government, which won plaudits nationally and internationally, is also set to undergo changes, including a slash in the number of saplings being planted and more importantly, a change in name as well. According to official sources, the Congress government, which has been making design changes and effecting name changes apart from making cosmetic changes giving a Congress touch to multiple initiatives of the previous BRS government, is planning to change the name of the highly successful social afforestation programme. The rechristening and formal launch of the Congress tweaked version of Haritha Haram is likely to happen

in a fortnight. Sources said the Forest department had already suggested a few names for the new avatar of Haritha Haram after they were asked to do so, with the State government expected to make a formal announcement shortly. Meanwhile, deviating from the annual practice of planting 19 crore to 20 crore saplings under the programme, this year the State government will be planting only 13 crore saplings, citing different reasons, including availability of sites. Last year, 30.29 crore saplings were raised to achieve the targeted planting of 19.29 crore saplings. Defending the decision to plant 13 crore saplings, a senior Forest official said availability of sites to plant new saplings was a challenge. The district level committees gave their indent for this year's edition and accordingly, it

was planned to plant 13 crore saplings. Further, there was no restriction on the number of plantations. If there was scope for planting more saplings, it can be done, the official said. Unlike previous editions, this time the department is focusing on plantation of large saplings rather than of home-stead and ornamental saplings. Emphasis was being laid on fruit bearing saplings, peepal, neem and others and of the State tree "Jammi Chettu" (*Prosopis cineraria* Linn) extensively. The department has already identified forest blocks for taking up extensive block plantations. In urban areas, HMDA, GHMC and respective urban local bodies will be taking up the plantations and in rural areas, the plantations have to be done within the gram panchayat limits. To save the biodiversity and increase green

cover in the State, the previous BRS government had launched the Haritha Haram programme on July 3, 2015. Apart from government departments, elected public representatives, people had actively participated in the programme all these years. With an expenditure of Rs.10,822 crore so far, over 273 crore saplings were planted across the State. Globally, Haritha Haram has been recognized as the third-largest environmental conservation effort made by mankind to safeguard the environment. The initiative yielded good results and the Centre had said the green cover in the State had increased by 7.7 percent. To cater to regional and climatic diversities, as well as the demand for various types of saplings, a total of 14,864 nurseries were established across the State.

## Training program for police inaugurated at Mahindra University

Hyderabad: The importance of comprehending the recent three criminal laws was highlighted by Nitika Pant, IPS, DCP Medchal during the inaugural 4-Day Training Program for the Police Officers at School of Law, Mahindra University. The laws are namely Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, which aim to update outdated laws, modernize the criminal justice system and bring innovations in trials. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. (Dr.) Balakista Reddy, Dean-School of Law underlined the saying that "ignorance of the law is no excuse" for the citizens in general and the police officers in particular, highlighting the significance of Academic Social Responsibility (ASR). Advocate AP Suresh, a practicing criminal lawyer from Telangana High Court asserted the complexity of the CrPC in comparison to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) while also, concerning about delays in filing First Information Reports (FIRs).

# Why does instability and chaos persist in Haiti? | Explained

The story so far: Following a three-month forced shutdown, Haiti's main international airport in Port-au-Prince reopened, sparking hopes for shipment of essential products. However, gang violence persists in the capital, though most of the gangs' demands have been addressed. Meanwhile, after months of delay due to legal obstacles and violence, an advance team of the Kenyan special forces police landed in Haiti to combat the instability.

What is being done for stability?

After Prime Minister Ariel Henry's resignation on April 24, the formation of a Council with seven members was the first major development. The Council has been tasked with restoring order in Haiti, setting the agenda of a new Cabinet, forming a national security council, and appointing an electoral commission to help conduct polls. It enjoys the backing of the Caribbean countries and the U.S. Caricom, a Caribbean trade bloc which helped form the council, said that the installation of the "politically inclusive council signals the possibility of a new beginning for Haiti." While Finance Minister Michel Patrick Boisvert was appointed as interim Prime Minister, on April 30, former Minister Fritz Bélizaire was chosen for the post by the Council.

What is the situation at present?

Though there is a Council, there is also a divide. During its first task of choosing a Prime Minister, four of the seven voting members chose Mr. Bélizaire. This decision to appoint the little-known official was taken without consulting the rest of the council or holding a formal vote. This divide has reportedly strengthened worries of the Council using its position to further its own corrupt needs, following a pattern consistent with previous political officials in Haiti.

Moreover, gang violence continues. The insufficiently armed national police are still unable to counter the violence. Gang violence has become a part of daily life in Haiti over the last two decades, enabled by a weakened security apparatus, lack of effective law enforcement and widespread impunity. In the first three months of 2024, as per UN estimates, more than one person was killed due to gang violence every hour.

Why does gang violence continue?

One of the driving forces behind gang violence was the continued control exercised by Mr. Henry, and it was expected that his resignation would allow for a semblance of peace and stability. However, not only has the violence continued (though there has been a reduction), there are new concerns. In May, UNICEF's Representative in Haiti, Bruno Maes, noted that the "health system is on the verge of collapse" as it is faced with "violence, mass displacement, dangerous epidemic and increasing malnutrition." Six out of 10 hospitals that are operational in the country are barely managing to function, and the biggest prob-



lem currently is the "strangling of supply chains." About 1.6 million of the 4.4 million in Haiti face emergency levels of food insecurity, and the expected arrival of the monsoons will bring with it waterborne diseases such as cholera. What is next for Haiti?

There are three specific challenges for Haiti. First, the divide within the transitional Council underscores the inherently fragile political landscape of the country. A

rocky start may set the tone for the rest of its decisions and the country's faith in it. Second, the persistent threat posed by armed gangs continues to loom large over Haiti, perpetuating a cycle of violence and insecurity that hampers efforts to restore law and order. Gangs have warned of more violence if they are not given a seat at the table with the Council, and if their demand for amnesty for their crimes is not

granted. Third, the deployment of a UN-backed security mission, comprised of Kenyan police forces, has sparked controversy and raised concerns about potential violation of human rights. While the mission aims to bolster efforts to combat gang violence and restore stability, there are fears that it may inadvertently exacerbate tensions and contribute to human rights abuses.

## Company willing to pay Rs 1.5 crore to people who donate their poop; claims it can alleviate gastrointestinal, mental health issues

In a bizarre promotional YouTube video, a middle-aged woman from Human Microbes — a US-based company — invites young, athletic individuals in excellent health to apply as stool donors. In a video titled 'We want your poop', that was posted on its website, a woman says, "We want your poop, no, we need your poop! Let me explain, I'm with humanmicrobes.org and your poop could change someone's life. Recent research has shown that the microbiome, the microbes that live in our gut, help us to digest food and play a major role in our overall health and modifying and restoring our gut microbiome, has become a major investigative avenue for treating numerous illnesses." Half of the mass of our stool, she says, is microbes. A procedure called Fecal Microbiota Transplant or FMT for short, involves transferring these microbes from a healthy donor to a sick person through this process. FMTs offer a potential new treatment option for a long list of conditions

many of which may surprise you including irritable bowel syndrome, obesity, and even mental disorders, she tells viewers. In the video, they also feature a real-life success story of a woman named Jane, who "successfully cured her bipolar disorder after receiving an FMT." The company is offering a whopping \$500 (INR 41,500) for one stool sample or up to \$180,000 (INR 1.5 crore) a year for daily donations from the public who are deemed a good fit. "Working to find fewer than 0.1% of people with healthy, unperturbed, disease-resistant microbiomes," the website mentions. Is there any validity to the claim that (FMT) can cure or alleviate symptoms of mental health conditions? Dr. Sreehari Deshmukh, consultant endoscopist, medical gastroenterologist and hepatologist, Sparsh Hospital, RR Nagar, Bengaluru, elaborates, "Recent scientific inquiries have sparked a fervent debate over the potential therapeutic benefits of fecal microbiota transplant (FMT) in addressing the symptoms of mental

health conditions, including bipolar disorder. While the concept may seem unconventional, a growing body of evidence suggests that the trillions of microorganisms residing in the gut could hold the key to unlocking new treatment avenues for this complex disorder." A 2020 review article published in *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, she states, examined the bidirectional communication between the gut microbiota and the central nervous system, highlighting the role of gut dysbiosis in the pathogenesis of mood disorders such as bipolar disorder. The authors noted that restoring microbial balance through interventions like FMT could potentially alleviate psychiatric symptoms. She adds, "A randomised controlled trial published in *Translational Psychiatry* in 2019 investigated the effects of FMT in patients with major depressive disorder, a condition that often co-occurs with bipolar disorder. The study found that FMT led to significant improvements in depressive symptoms, suggesting a potential benefit in mood regulation."

# Expressing apprehension on free and fair vote counting, SKM writes letter to ECI

Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), June 2: Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), National Coordination Committee, in its letter to Rajiv Kumar, Chief Election Commissioner of India has expressed its apprehension on free and fair vote counting to just held Lok Sabha elections for which counting is going to be done on June 4. Sharing the gist of the letter SKM through its release on June 2, wrote, "On behalf of the farmers across India, we wish to bring to your kind attention our apprehension on any eventuality of tampering with the counting process - scheduled for June 4, 2024, to subvert the people's verdict to help the present regime to cling on power."

SKM further added that unlike the past elections, the farmers of India had directly opposed the election campaign of the BJP against the gross betrayal in implementing the written agreement with SKM especially regarding MSP and loan waiver and to expose its corporate policies. The massive and peaceful protest helped to rally the farmers, workers and all poor sections mainly around their burning livelihood issues as well as protection of the Constitutional principles of democracy, secularism and federalism. Thus, the electoral fight got abridged between the BJP and the people at large. Reminding its year-long agitation, SKM stated, "The 13 month long massive farmers struggle against the 3 corporate farm acts - with the active support of the trade unions and other sections - witnessed the sacrifice of more than 750 farmers' lives as well as the heinous murder of 4 farmers and a journalist by and at the behest of the current regime. The BJP had spewed venom abusing the farmers as anti-nationals, funded by foreign terrorists and Khalistanis."

SKM has alleged that during the election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top BJP leaders continuously violated the Model Code of Conduct and the Constitution of India by consistently dared to make hate speeches against the principal minority community. They deliberately used indecent language with the aim to destroy the harmonious social life of our great people and divide the farmers, workers and the people at large along communal lines, biting at minorities. The onslaught was on the Constitutional principle of secularism - the foundation of pluralism and unity of the people that cemented the true existence of the Republic for the last 77 years since independence as a model to the entire world nations. The letter stated that SKM had twice publicly requested the ECI to take punitive action and put a six years ban to contest elections on those including Narendra Modi, whoever violated the law. Unfortunately, the ECI adhered to the reticent way of inaction, delaying action and finally concluded it with 'giving advice' to the law breakers. Thus, the failure of ECI in upholding constitutional responsibility allowed BJP's divisive ideology to prevail and influence the people at large during the election.

Sharing the contents of SKM's letter with our representative, SKM leader and National Vice-President of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), Dr. Inderjeet Singh quotes, "The soft handling and resultant failure to

restrain the Prime Minister has lent serious doubts in the minds of the people at large about the entire election process as a 'favour' to the BJP in its efforts to hang on power." AIKS leader adds that it is worth mentioning that the people, particularly those belonging to minority communities and the political parties in the opposition have maintained highest serenity and accountability to preserve peace and harmonious milieu across the country even in the context of such extreme provocation. SKM also alleged that the ECI did not ensure transparency in conducting press briefing, providing poll data and there were serious discrepancies in the provided data. Later, the ECI released constituency wise data of vote polled after the entire issue had been brought to the attention of the Supreme Court. This was never the conduct of the ECI in the past.

SKM, continuing its allegation, wrote, "The caretaker government, without prior permission of the ECI, had arrested the elected Chief Minister of Delhi to incapacitate the opposition pre-poll alliance. Later, the Supreme Court of India provided interim bail to the Delhi CM. The bank accounts of the political parties in the opposition were suspended. In both the incidents, the ECI was silent. The police and Intelligence Bureau also targeted the farmer leaders of Punjab for protesting peacefully against BJP."

The release further added that the removal of the Chief Justice of India from the committee to appoint the members of the election commission of India had been morally incorrect. Such a series of omissions have created distrust among the public on the neutrality of the ECI and created serious apprehensions on the potential of the present regime to tamper the people's verdict during the counting of



votes. Through its letter, SKM appealed to the ECI to address the issues raised by it; and requested to ensure free and transparent counting as per the procedure, share the exact details of the votes periodically with the public as warranted by rules in order to dispense any doubts on manipulation, check all violations with strict and strong action against those in-

involved and notify all Election Returning officers about these concerns of the farmers of India. Concluding its letter, SKM stated, "We wish to state once again that we do not want the Election Commission of India to give the farmers and the people of the country any reason to believe that their popular mandate has been undermined by any element of unfair conduct in any constituency."

## Evening showers bring respite to sweltering city



Hyderabad: Despite enduring sweltering temperatures and high humidity throughout the afternoon, city residents experienced much needed respite as tem-

peratures dropped in the evening, thanks to cloudy skies and moderate rain at isolated parts in late evening. Areas including Quthubullapur, ECIL, Malkajgiri,

Secunderabad, Kukatpally, Musheerabad, Maredpally, Attapur, Balanagar, Borbanda, and Miyapur saw moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and winds. According to data from the Telangana State Planning and Development Society, Quthubullapur recorded 44.8 mm of rainfall by 8 pm on Sunday.

Meanwhile, intense rain impacted several districts in Telangana. Medak, Sangareddy, Kamareddy, Warangal, Siddipet, Jangaon, Hanmakonda, and other districts experienced significant rainfall, with some regions crossing the 50 mm mark. Notably, Shankarapatnam in Karimnagar recorded 62.8 mm, Lingapur in Kumaram Bheem Asifabad measured 56.3 mm, and Harmal in Hanumakonda reported 53.3 mm of rain. According to India Meteorological Department - Hyderabad, the city's maximum temperature on Sunday was recorded at 40.6 degrees Celsius at 5.45 pm, with relative humidity at 74 percent.

## Tilaknagar Industries Launches Green Apple Flavoured Brandy Under Mansion House Flandy Range

Tilaknagar Industries Limited (TI) (BSE: 507205) (NSE: TI), a leading Indian-Made Foreign Liquor Manufacturer (IMFL), today announced the unveiling of a new flavour innovation under its Flandy (premium flavoured Brandy) range. Mansion House Flandy has now been launched in an all-new Green Apple flavour in the state of Telangana, to begin with.

Mr Amit Dahanukar, Chairman and Managing Director, Tilaknagar Industries said, "Our Mansion House Premium Flavoured Brandy is a category-first innovation. It has been well-received across markets and its saliency, as a percentage of Mansion House Brandy in relevant states, has grown significantly. The launch of the all-new Green Apple flavour is a testimony to Flandy's strong performance since its introduction in FY23, and is in line with our plans to further enhance our premium Brandy portfolio while strengthening our regional foothold." TI has seen very encouraging response to its Flandy range in the state, aiding the Company's jump to become the fourth-largest IMFL player and the third-largest IMFL Prestige & Above ("P&A") player, in Telangana, in FY24.

Tilaknagar Industries, which is one of India's largest manufacturers of premium Brandy, had earlier rolled out its Mansion House Flandy range in Orange, Cherry and Peach flavours. Telangana is one of the prominent IMFL markets and has one of the highest Prestige & Above ("P&A") segment with over 50 per cent saliencies across IMFL industry in India. It is estimated that the Brandy P&A segment in the state has grown by 18 per cent in FY24, as compared to almost 8 per cent growth in IMFL P&A segment over the same period. Additionally, in terms of flavours, Green Apple is the largest selling flavour in the flavoured spirits category in the state, providing a large canvas to the brand to gain market share. Mr Ahmed Rahimtoola, Chief Marketing Officer, Tilaknagar Industries said, "We are first-movers in the premium flavoured Brandy category in India. In addition to this, an elevated demand for flavoured drinks and the predominant cocktail culture trend gives Tilaknagar Industries a competitive advantage across markets. The new Green Apple variant of Mansion House Flandy is another step by TI to enrich consumer experience and drive growth."

The Mansion House Flandy range has a unique blend of natural fruit flavours. The latest offering has been infused with sweet green apple essence which is complemented by the nuanced richness of oaky undertones, delivering a truly palate-enriching experience to consumers. In the financial year ended March 2024, Tilaknagar Industries volumes grew 16 per cent, year-on-year, in comparison to the overall IMFL industry growth of 2-3 per cent for the same period, making it fastest growing IMFL company in India for the 2nd year running.



# The message from the Andhra Pradesh bifurcation

The vitriol that dominated the bifurcation discourse for almost half a decade prior to the actual bifurcation has now vanished without trace. The two successor states, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, are moving on. Telugu society today on both sides of the political division carries on with very little nostalgia for the nearly five and a half decades of living together in one political entity. For people from the shrunken Andhra Pradesh part, only Hyderabad from the new state of Telangana remains in their imagination. The rest of the geography of Telangana hardly figures in their consciousness. And, for the people of Telangana, no area or aspect of life from across the Andhra Pradesh side of the divide animates their political, social, cultural, or economic imagination. This is puzzling for two reasons. These two regions were under different political authorities for only about 150 years. Before the Nizam gave away the coastal districts and the 'ceded' districts that came to be called Rayalaseema to the European powers, historically, they were ruled from Golconda and Hyderabad for a long time. And, they

were together again since 1956. However, these long years of living under one political authority could not foster enough of a sense of togetherness to prevent the resumption of their separate journeys. That parting of ways has not yet happened with the Kannada-speaking area of the Nizam's Hyderabad State, nor did it happen as yet with its Marathi-speaking area. They both joined Karnataka and Maharashtra States, respectively, after the linguistic reorganisation of States. The question arises, therefore, whether the shared vision of the Telugu elites from both the regions — Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State — for unity on the basis of language is frailer compared to those of the shared visions of Kannada and Marathi elites. Or, does a similar fate await them too in the not too distant future? For, regional economic disparities, linguistic divergences, lifestyle differences, and variations in political culture are more or less the same in all the three linguistic groups across the geographies of the Presidencies and Hyderabad State.

As of now, it is only the unity of the

Telugus based on language that has come unstuck. Are the other linguistic States likely to meet the same fate in the years or decades to come? Does the fate of Andhra Pradesh which has pioneered the reconfiguration of the Indian Republic's political architecture along linguistic lines also foreshadow its eventual unravelling? Does the Indian Republic eventually have to look for an organising principle other than language? That is the larger question that the division of Andhra Pradesh pelts at the Republic of India. It is often not fully appreciated that except a few States in the geographical centre of our Republic, all other States (from Assam in the east, going along the east coast to the southeast and continuing towards the west coast and up to the Punjab and Haryana in the north-west) of our Republic are organised on a linguistic basis. If the underlying organising principle of language is unlikely to hold them together as units, giving greater force to economic, political, historical and other fault lines, an alternative principle will have to be formulated sooner rather than later. Could that be the size of territory or popu-

lation? Or, should it be something else? If the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh suggested anything at all, it is that the Indian Republic cannot avoid this question for long. Size, when translated into the number of seats in the central legislature, might eventually be a point of friction among the units of our Republic, because representation in the form of numbers determines the distribution of political power. And, the distribution of political power has the potential to exert decisive influence on the distribution of economic resources within the federal structure. There are already faint noises of unease among the political elites in some States, especially in the south, regarding speculation about future delimitation in which some northern States could gain abnormal numbers in the central legislature. The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh can give us some idea as to how reconfiguration can radically alter the pecking order of States. In the united State for example, Andhra Pradesh had 42 Lok Sabha seats and was the largest State in the south India. It was as big as today's West Bengal and slightly smaller than Maharashtra.

# The House of Abhinandan Lodha spreads the light of Ayodhya across the world: Historic events at New York, Dubai, Delhi NCR

With a series of grand events at iconic locations in Dubai, New York, and Delhi NCR, HoABL showcased the immense potential of Ayodhya – the symbol of national pride, inviting global participation in Ayodhya's promising future. The events highlighted the importance of connecting the Indian diaspora with their heritage and cementing Ayodhya's rise as the global spiritual capital.

This global activation is in line with the Central and State Government's plan to transform Ayodhya into a Global spiritual and cultural hub. By presenting Ayodhya's rich legacy at iconic locations, HoABL underscored the city's significance and growth potential.

The event highlights included an immersive display at the largest frame in the world, Dubai Frame, standing tall at 150 meters. Dubai Frame is one of Dubai's most iconic structures and it signifies a bridge between the past and the present, so it was a fitting destination to honour Ayodhya's tradition while heralding its future through an immersive augmented reality display. In Times Square, New York City, a video display and on-ground activation brought Ayodhya's heritage to the heart of NYC,

connecting a global audience to the splendor of Ayodhya. Additionally, a spectacular drone-show illuminated the skies of Delhi NCR, celebrating Ayodhya's historical and spiritual significance, showcasing progress innovation and tradition.

Mr. Abhinandan Lodha, Chairman of The House of Abhinandan Lodha, said, "It is our honor to be able to showcase the glory of Ayodhya on a world stage. By showcasing Ayodhya's heritage and spiritual significance at global landmarks we are connecting the Indian diaspora with their roots. This global launch is another opportunity for the Indian Diaspora to buy as a lot of them missed the previous opportunity in January 2024 as the 1.6 million sq ft of plotted land offered was snapped up by customers within 48 hours. We invite Indians worldwide to invest in land at Ayodhya, creating a legacy that honors our past and builds a promising future. Our mission is to elevate Ayodhya to its rightful place as a global spiritual capital, and today, we have taken a significant step in that direction."

In Jan 2024 this year Shri.Amitabh Bachchan bought land at The Sarayu™, a 7-star branded land development project by The House of Abhinandan Lodha.



Speaking about his investment in The Sarayu™, Mr. Amitabh Bachchan said, "I am looking forward to embark on this journey with The House of Abhinandan Lodha for The Sarayu in Ayodhya, a city that holds a special place in my heart. The timeless spirituality and cultural richness of Ayodhya have forged an emotional connection that transcends geographical boundaries. I am

looking forward to building my home in the global spiritual capital." This event was HoABL's small contribution in the transformation and renaissance of Ayodhya. HoABL is committed to creating a legacy, ensuring Ayodhya's place as a global spiritual capital is celebrated and preserved. For more information on investment opportunities and to be part of Ayodhya's growth, visit [www.hoabl.com](http://www.hoabl.com).

## Fracspace Revolutionizes Real Estate Ownership with the Launch of Groundbreaking Mobile App

Fracspace, a pioneer in fractional investment and ownership within the real estate sector, proudly announced the successful launch of its cutting-edge mobile application. This milestone event, held at the renowned T-Hub in Hyderabad's Hitech City, marked a significant step in revolutionizing the accessibility and affordability of real estate ownership. The launch of Fracspace's app was spearheaded by Mr. Unnath Reddy, the Managing Director of Fracspace, and attracted a gathering of distinguished dignitaries and industry leaders. The event underscored the profound impact of this innovative venture, which aims to democratize real estate ownership and empower individuals to fulfill their dreams of owning a slice of premium properties.

Fracspace's app is set to redefine the real estate landscape by offering a seamless and transparent platform for fractional ownership. Users can now embark on an exclusive journey towards their dream properties, accompanied by a dedicated house-keeping team and round-the-clock concierge services. Every proud Frac-owner enjoys integration and earning rights, including rental earnings, asset appreciation, and assistance in reselling individual fractions directly through the app. The app empowers users to actively engage in the management of their properties, from marketing units for rent to overseeing maintenance and handling financial transactions with ease. Fracspace has streamlined processes such as collecting rent, managing escrow services, and ensuring property



insurance, offering a hassle-free experience tailored to the modern investor." Fracspace's app launch signifies a bold step towards democratizing real estate ownership, making it accessible to a wider audience while upholding the high-

est standards of transparency and innovation," said Mr. Unnath Reddy, the Managing Director of Fracspace. "We are excited to embark on this journey, where everyone can own a piece of their dream property, one fraction at a time." Fracspace's

groundbreaking app is poised to transform the real estate industry, offering a new paradigm of ownership and investment opportunities for individuals aspiring to build a diversified portfolio across the world.

# Bitcoin's price is surging. What happens next?

For a brief moment, everyone who owned Bitcoin had made money from it. On March 5th the crypto token rose to an all-time high of just above \$69,000—a level sure to delight the meme-loving crypto-crowd—before slipping back a little. The record capped a remarkable comeback from the dark days of November 2022, when interest-rate rises were crushing risk appetite and FTX, a crypto exchange, had just gone bust. Buying Bitcoin on such exchanges seemed like little more than a fun and novel way to get robbed.

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Bitcoin is hardly rallying in isolation: everything is going up. Stock markets all over the world are near record highs. So are gold prices. Even bond prices are climbing after a miserable two-year stretch. The catalyst is a combination of hype about artificial intelligence, joy at the state of the global economy and expectations of looser monetary policy to come.

Still, bitcoin is doing better than most assets. On January 10th the Securities and Exchange Commission, an American regulator, approved applications by 11 investment firms, including BlackRock and Fidelity, to create bitcoin exchange-traded funds (ETFs). These make it easier for everyday investors to buy the cryptocurrency. Rather than setting up an account with a specialist exchange, creating a crypto wallet, making a bank transfer and then finally buying bitcoin, people can now simply log on to their brokerage accounts and purchase an ETF. Assets in the ten largest bitcoin ETFs now come to around \$50bn. And the activity appears to be self-reinforcing: the more money is poured in, the higher the price goes, the more people chatter about bitcoin ETFs, the more money pours in and so on and so on. Bitcoin has been in existence for 14 years. The elegant mechanism by which it validates itself and supply grows has never been hacked, meaning that the token is not going anywhere. Yet it is now obvious that it is of pretty limited use for payments, as it is restricted by both the high costs and slow speed of transactions. Those trying to build applications on top of blockchains are not doing so using Bitcoin either. With the creation of ETFs, bitcoin's future looks to be as an investment asset and nothing more. So after this initial surge of interest, what will its returns look like?

It would be foolish to extrapolate from Bitcoin's entire history. Over the past 14 years, the cryptocurrency has morphed from a niche cyberpunk idea into something approaching a mainstream financial asset. Its more recent price movements might provide some clues, however. There

are two explanations for them. One is that purchases are basically a broad bet on technological progress, with variations that reflect prospects for crypto itself. For instance, even as tech stocks soared in the middle of 2021, bitcoin slumped after Elon Musk posted negative tweets about crypto payments. Prices were depressed in late 2022, too, even as stock markets were rallying, owing to FTX's failure.

The other theory is that Bitcoin is a kind of digital gold. After all, supply is inherently limited, just as gold supply is restricted by the amount of the metal in the ground. Neither asset pays a yield nor earns profits. This theory fell out of favour in 2021 and 2022, as inflation soared and bitcoin collapsed, but last year the cryptocurrency once again moved in line with gold. Perhaps both theories contain elements of truth. A hybrid tech-stock-crypto-vibes-gold-bet asset could be useful in even pedestrian portfolios, especially if it is only somewhat correlated with other assets an investor might hold. Diversification among uncorrelated assets is the foundational principle of portfolio management. Reallocating, say, 1% of a fund to Bitcoin would be a low-stakes hedge. If investors



buy this argument, bitcoin's price is likely to rise for a while yet. What happens, then, when the cryptocurrency's transition into a standard financial asset is complete? Assume that bitcoin has been added to most investor portfolios. Also, assume that crypto tech does not really catch on. In this world, bitcoin's returns probably do come to re-

semble those of gold: there is a fixed amount of it, and its price would rise over the long term roughly in line with the stock of money. That implies steady single-digit returns. The creation of a Bitcoin ETF may have set off a frenzy of eye-popping gains—but the future it portends could be slower and steadier.

## Small steps towards a gender-equal world

The fight for women's rights over the past 50 years is a story of progress. Women and girls have demolished barriers, dismantled stereotypes and driven progress towards a more just and equal world. Women's rights were finally recognised as fundamental human rights. Millions more girls are in classrooms around the world. And pioneering leaders have smashed glass ceilings across the globe.

But the progress is under threat. And full equality remains light years away.

Billions of women and girls face marginalisation, injustice and discrimination, as millennia of male domination continue to shape societies. The persistent epidemic of gender-based violence disgraces humanity. Over four million girls are estimated to be at risk of female genital mutilation each year. Discrimination against women and girls remains perfectly legal in much of the world. In some places, that makes it difficult for women to own property, in others, it allows men to rape their wives with impunity. Meanwhile, global crises are hitting women and girls hardest. Wherever there's conflict, climate disaster, or poverty, women and girls suffer the most. In every region of the world, more women than men go hungry. In both developed and developing countries, a backlash against women's rights is stalling and even reversing progress.

New technologies — which have such potential to dismantle inequalities — too often make matters worse. That can be because of unequal access, algorithms with

baked-in bias, or misogynistic violence — from deep fakes to targeted harassment of specific women. At our current speed, full legal equality for women is some 300 years away; so is the end of child marriage. This rate of change is frankly insulting. Half of humanity can't wait centuries for their rights. We need equality now. That means accelerating the pace of progress. And that relies on political ambition, and investment — the theme of this year's International Women's Day. We need public and private investment in programmes to end violence against women, ensure decent work, and drive women's leadership in digital technologies, peacebuilding, and across all sectors of the economy. We must also urgently support women's rights organisations fighting against stereotypes, battling to make women's and girls' voices heard, and challenging cultural norms. Currently, they receive a paltry 0.1% of international development spending. That must change.

Investment may sound far removed from women's everyday lives. But it takes investment to give schoolgirls the same opportunities as schoolboys. It takes investment to provide digital education and develop skills. It takes investment to provide the childcare that enables caregivers, who are mainly mothers, to do paid work outside the home. And it takes investment to build inclusive communities with the full participation of women and girls of all backgrounds. Putting money behind equality is the right thing to do, but it also makes financial sense. Supporting women to enter

formal labour markets grows economies, boosts tax revenues and expands opportunities for all.

Securing the investment we need in women and girls requires three things. First, increasing the availability of long-term finance for sustainable development, and tackling the debt crisis strangling many developing economies. Otherwise, countries simply won't have the funds to invest in women and girls. We need immediate action to provide breathing space for countries with unbearable debt repayments looming, and to encourage multilateral development banks to leverage far more private finance. Over the long term, we must reform the global financial architecture and make it more responsive to the needs of developing countries. Second, countries must recognise that equality is not only a matter of rights but the bedrock of peaceful, prosperous societies. That means governments actively addressing discrimination, spending on programmes to support women and girls, and ensuring investments respond to their needs. Third, we need to increase the number of women in leadership positions. Having women in positions of power can help to drive investment in policies and programmes that respond to the realities of women and girls. I am particularly proud that since early in my tenure — and for the first time in history — we have equal numbers of women and men in senior management across the entire United Nations system. Equality is overdue. Ending the patriarchy requires money on the table — it's time to cough up.

# Tesla boss' Twitter buy makes rival auto firms pause ads on the platform

The list of the companies that paused ads on the social media platform includes some of the biggest automakers like General Motors, Ford, Mazda and Volkswagen that has brands like Audi, Porsche. Tesla chief's Twitter acquisition has prompted some of the biggest rivals of the electric vehicle maker to stop advertising and promoting their brands on Twitter. The list of the companies that paused ads on the social media platform includes some of the biggest automakers like General Motors, Ford, Mazda and Volkswagen that has brands like Audi, Porsche. Companies are uncertain about the direction of Twitter under the new ownership of Musk and the impact of the changes made by him.

General Motors and Ford were among the first automakers to say they won't be putting ads on the platform until they understand the scope of the changes made on Twitter by its new chief, Forbes reported. General Motors said that they are engaging with Twitter to evaluate the direction of the platform under their new ownership.

Stellantis also said that they will pause

paid advertising posts until they have a clear understanding of the future of the platform, Reuters reported. Companies like Volkswagen have stopped advertising on Twitter due to concerns about how Twitter will moderate content, Forbes reported. Some automakers like Stellantis-owned Citroen hinted at a typical situation being created by advertising on a platform owned by the man who also owns a rival carmaker. "Hello to the social media platform owned by one of our competitors," French automaker Citroen said in a cryptic tweet. There is also growing fear that Musk's decision to monetize verified accounts will flourish misinformation and hate speech on Twitter. Paid Twitter verification may lead to the blue tick losing its value if it becomes too easily available. It may lead to rampant misinformation and chaos, Aparajita Bharti, founding partner, TQH Consulting, a Delhi-based consultant, said. Advertisers like the Volkswagen Group fear that their advertising may appear alongside objectionable content putting the brand reputation at stake. There are concerns if the new policies will curtail free



speech, and flourish cyber threats. "Elon Musk's plan to charge verified users will further attract cybercrimes," Rajarshi

Bhattacharyya, chairman and managing director of Process IT Global, a Kolkata-based consulting company, said

# Microsoft faces new EU antitrust complaint on cloud computing practices



Microsoft faces a new antitrust complaint over its cloud computing practices as trade group CISPE, whose members include Amazon, took its grievance to European Union antitrust regulators on Wednesday. CISPE has alleged that Microsoft's new contractual terms imposed on Oct. 1 together with other practices are irreparably damaging the European cloud computing ecosystem.

Amazon is the market leader in the cloud computing sector, followed by Microsoft and Alphabet unit Google. "Leveraging its dominance in productivity software, Microsoft restricts choice and inflates costs as European customers look to move to the cloud, thus distorting Europe's digital economy," CISPE secre-

tary general Francisco Mingorance said in a statement. The company uses its dominance in productivity software to direct European customers to its Azure cloud infrastructure to the disadvantage of European rivals, CISPE alleged in its complaint to the European Commission. It alleged that Microsoft's anti-competitive practices included discriminatory bundling and tying of its products, self-preference pricing and locking in customers both on the technical and competitive level. Microsoft, which has been fined more than 1.6 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) by the Commission in the previous decade for various antitrust violations, said it is committed to addressing valid licensing concerns and supporting a competitive environment. "The licensing changes

we introduced in October give customers and cloud providers around the world even more options for running and offering our software in the cloud," a spokesperson said. Cloud service providers in Germany, Italy, Denmark and France, two of whom are members of CISPE, have filed similar complaints with the Commission in the past couple of years. Microsoft subsequently amended licensing deals and other changes to make it easier for cloud service providers to compete starting Oct. 1 in a bid to stave off EU antitrust concerns. Rivals Amazon.com, Alphabet's Google, Alibaba

and Microsoft's own cloud services however are excluded from the changes. CISPE said the EU competition watchdog should tackle the issue by applying the trade body's principles of fair software licensing devised last year to Microsoft. It said an independent European Observatory could be set up to audit dominant software companies' licensing terms. The Commission could also add another provision to newly adopted tech rules, known as the Digital Markets Act, prohibiting cloud computing gatekeepers from favouring their software applications, CISPE said.

# tvS motor amazon india inks pact to strengthen ev deployment

As part of this collaboration, a fleet of electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers from TVS Motor will be deployed for Amazon's last-mile deliveries. TVS Motor Company Ltd has entered into a strategic engagement with Amazon India to strengthen electric mobility, electric infrastructure and connected services. As part of this collaboration, a fleet of electric two-wheelers and three-wheelers from TVS Motor will be deployed for Amazon's last-mile deliveries, the leading two-and-three-wheeler manufacturer said in a statement. In addition, the two companies will work in tandem to examine EV use cases for various Amazon business groups for its network and logistical requirements.



In order to test solutions, the two companies will pilot TVS Motor's EV solutions through partner base and delivery associates across India. "The collaboration marks another decisive step for Amazon to achieve our goal of becoming net-zero carbon by 2040, as part of our commitment to the Climate Pledge,"

# Lessons from Norway in smashing the patriarchy

It was my second day in India. I was presenting my credentials to the Hon'ble President, Droupadi Murmu. As I entered the hall with my all-women Norwegian team to meet her, she looked at us and exclaimed words in Hindi that were translated to me as women's power. That was my introduction to the world's largest democracy, one with a woman President, a woman finance minister and a Parliament that had just adopted a Bill reserving two-thirds of the seats in the Lok Sabha for women. I felt I was in the right place at the right time.

I represent the Norwegian foreign service, which presently has a ratio of 48% women and 52% men posted as ambassadors worldwide. It is important to underline that this is the first year of nearly 50% of women ambassadors, so it has taken us time to get here. In general, 55% of employees in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs are women, which has been the case for much longer, showcasing the extra time it takes for women to climb up the ladder.

The growing number of women in the Indian foreign service is also impressive and shows progress. The Indian ministry of external affairs sets a good example with an increasing number of divisions headed by women, an increasing ratio of women ambassadors posted worldwide and since 2022, the first ever Indian woman permanent representative to the United Nations in New York. However, having said that, it is 2024, and being a woman ambassador is still noticed, making us continually reflect on what more must be done. Research done by several institutes globally refers to gender inequality among diplomatic corps worldwide, especially when it comes to appointments as ambassadors. The key to solving this challenge is to work at all levels, all the time.

It is no coincidence that we have managed to reach a near 50/50 ratio in our diplomatic service, our government and several businesses. Measures taken in Norway for the last several decades, like parental leave, right to childcare, and 40% reservation for women on boards in public limited companies have given women greater manoeuvrability to work on an equal footing. We celebrated 40 years of legislation promoting gender equality already in 2018. Some studies suggest that Norway would have lost 3300 billion NOKs (\$317 billion) in income in the 40 years preceding the law if it had not been applied. In a historic move in 2023, the government took a step further and proposed that medium-sized and large companies should also have at least a 40% gender balance on the boards of private limited companies. This will be gradually introduced already from 2024 and the aim is to cover around 20,000 companies. Norway is the first country in the world to take this step.

Our new action plan for women's rights and gender equality in Norway's foreign and development policy (2023-2030) outlines concrete measures Norway will

take both internally and externally. It aims to contribute to achieving the SDGs by 2030, particularly Goal 5, on women's rights and gender equality. We will continue to assert ourselves on the global stage to achieve gender equality and safeguard the rights of all girls and women through strategic cooperation with diverse partners, diplomatic efforts in multilateral and bilateral forums, and financial contributions, particularly through development funds. Furthermore, we are committed to our objective of a minimum of 50% of all bilateral aid explicitly prioritising gender equality as a principal or significant target. Internally, it is our aim that all staff should possess a solid understanding of efforts to combat sexual harassment, aligning with our international obligations. We will also continue to build competence and offer training on gender equality and women's rights including sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as queer rights across the board. We are living in a post-pandemic era, with raging wars and the dire need for humanitarian assistance in several parts of the world. Therefore, we have also strengthened our existing action plans on women, peace and security (2023-2030) and efforts for women in humanitarian settings covered in Norway's humanitarian strategy.



Lastly, we are also focusing our efforts on technology and equality. To leave no one behind, all girls and women need access to digital technology, and they need to be taught the skills to use it. If technology is created by men – for men – we risk missing out on innovations that could have improved the lives of half of the planet's population. To end with a few more examples, I would like to share that in Norway, Prime Minister Støre's cabinet has 45% women. At the Norwegian embassy

in Delhi, we are 46% men and 54% women. As I attended my first Republic Day celebrations in India this 26 January, India's focus on Nari Shakti resonated with me deeply. We are not just breaking the glass ceiling.

We are not just breaking patriarchal rules. We are aiming to break generations of habits, and (bad) habits die hard. It's time they did. May-Elin Stener is Norway's ambassador to India. The views expressed are personal

## EU regulators seek details of escalating Apple, Epic Games spat

Apple has been asked by the EU to explain why it prevented Fortnite videogame maker Epic Games from launching its own online marketplace on iPhones and iPads. Apple has been asked by the EU to explain why it prevented Fortnite videogame maker Epic Games from launching its own online marketplace on iPhones and iPads in Europe and whether this breaches EU technology rules, antitrust regulators said on Thursday.

The iPhone maker on Wednesday terminated a new developer account created by Epic in Sweden in an attempt to put Fortnite and other games back on iPhones in Europe by running its own game store on Apple's devices. Epic Games sought to take advantage of landmark EU rules known as the Digital Markets Act (DMA) which kick in on Thursday and require Apple to open up its closed eco-system to rivals. Apple blocked the effort, citing Epic's past breaches of contract in the long-running legal dispute. "We have requested further explanations on this from Apple under the DMA (Digital Markets Act)," a European Commission spokesperson said in an email. "We are also evaluating whether Apple's actions raise doubts on their compliance with the DSA (Digital



Services Act) and the P2B (Platform to Business Regulation), given the links between the developer programme membership and the App store as designated VLOP (very large online platform)."

Under the DSA, decisions suspending or terminating accounts have to be proportionate and with due regard to fundamental rights while the P2B requires a platform to notify a business user when terms

and conditions are changed and before an account is closed. Apple reiterated on Thursday that it exercised its rights which has been determined by courts. "Epic's egregious breach of its contractual obligations to Apple led courts to determine that Apple has the right to terminate 'any or all of Epic Games' wholly owned subsidiaries, affiliates, and/or other entities under Epic Games' control at any time and at Apple's sole discretion',"