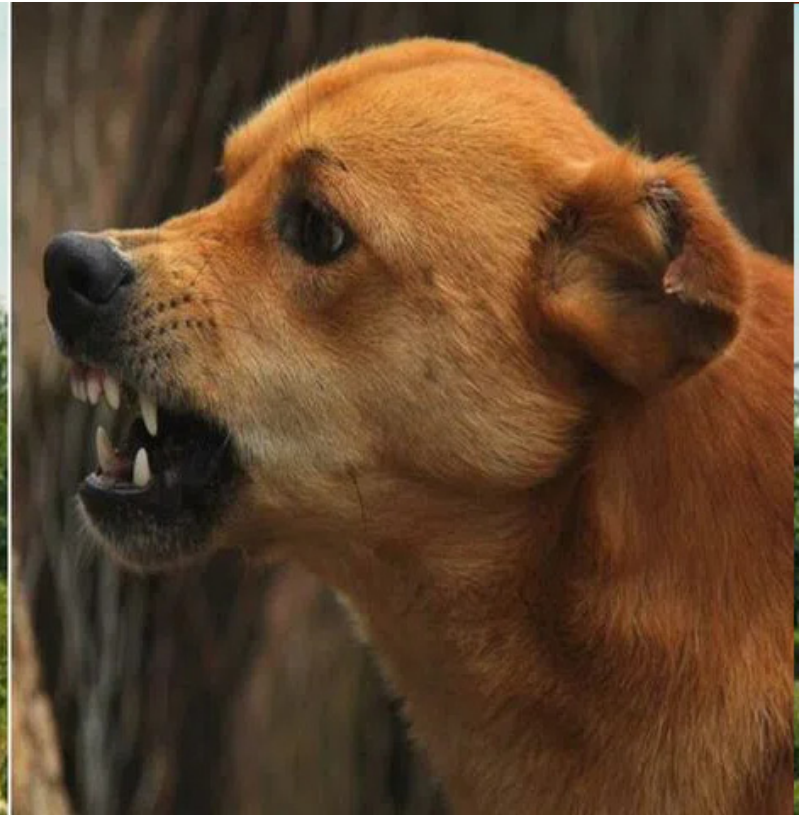


Telangana High Court pulls up State Govt on stray dog attacks in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Thursday expressed serious dissatisfaction with the State's inaction in addressing the problem to tackle the growing issue of stray dogs in Hyderabad. The court directed the State government to immediately formulate a comprehensive action plan to tackle the growing issue of stray dogs in Hyderabad within a week. The division bench comprising Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Anil Kumar Jukanti was dealing with a suomoto PIL taken based on reports of stray dogs attacking children and causing widespread panic among residents. Initially the PIL was taken up on a report on a pack of dogs mauling a four-year-old boy to death in the city. Another tragic event took place on July 16, wherein an 18-month-old toddler was attacked by a group of stray dogs in Adarsh Nagar, Jawaharnagar. The boy suffered severe injuries in his scalp and succumbed to his injuries despite immediate medical treatment. The court on Thursday took up a suomoto case and reprimanded the government for its negligence in addressing the problem. The State government informed the court that approximately 3,80,000 stray dogs were present within the GHMC limits. The government also stated that relocating these dogs to shelters was a bit challenging task. The court pointed out that improper waste disposal on roadsides significantly contributed to the



stray dog problem. It emphasized the need for authorities to ensure proper waste management and maintain clean surroundings

to mitigate the issue. The court has directed the government to explore effective solutions to protect children. Accordingly, it di-

rected the State to prepare a detailed plan of action by the next hearing and adjourned the matter for a week.

Rythu Bandhu funds diverted for Congress crop loan waiver?



Hyderabad: In the guise of implementing the crop loan waiver, the Congress government is allegedly taking farmers for a ride. While the Congress government is boasting about the crop loan waiver, it is maintaining a strategic silence on the Rythu Bandhu assistance to be extended

to farmers this season. Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao charged that the Congress government was yet again deceiving the farmers. Under Rythu Bandhu, the Congress government had to extend Rs.7000 crore assistance to farmers in June but these funds

have been diverted for implementation of the crop loan waiver, he said.

Over 40 lakh farmers had secured loans upto Rs.1 lakh but the Congress government was waiving off the loans of only 11 lakh farmers. More so, the crop loan waiver being done by the Congress government was meager compared to the waiver done under the KCR government in 2014 and 2018, he pointed out. Laying threadbare the details of Rythu Bandhu assistance, he said in 2014, the KCR government had waived off Rs.1 lakh loans secured by 35 lakh farmers by spending about Rs.16,144 crore. Again in 2018, loans of 37 lakh farmers were waived off by spending about Rs.19,198 crore, he explained on X. "As promised in its manifesto, the Congress government should waive off all the loans upto Rs.2 lakh. These apart, all eligible farmers should be extended Rythu Bandhu assistance immediately," Rama Rao demanded.

Echoing similar opinion, former Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy asked

as to how can the Congress government claim waiver off loans with Rs.6800 crore for just 11.5 lakh farmers. The Congress government should disclose the details of farmers, who secured loans upto Rs.1 lakh and those, who had obtained Rs.2 lakh loans. Further, the government should also announce the total amount required for waiving off Rs.2 lakh loans, he demanded. A few people also found fault with the State government's front page advertisements in different newspapers over the crop loan waiver. Sharing an old video of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy while he was PCC president, Ravi Teja, an X user said "With the amount spend on advertisements in newspapers, another 1000 farmers loans could have waived off." In the video, Revanth Reddy is seen asking the then BRS government as to why government money was being spent on advertisements. "Whose property is this? There are Rs.1300 crore in BRS account, this amount should be used for advertisements," he asked then.

The PDS impact on household expenditure

The Public Distribution System (PDS) is an important social security programme in India. Its objective is to ensure food security. Today, up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population are eligible for subsidised foodgrains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013. If the cost of consuming foodgrains from the PDS is subsidised, this then frees up resources for a household to spend on other items such as vegetables, milk, pulses, egg, fish, meat and other nutrient and protein-rich food items. It is an empirical question whether households indeed diversify their food consumption. With the release of data from the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES):2022-23, there will be renewed interest in the above line of inquiry, i.e., the impact of consumption of free food items from the PDS on expenditure on items other than foodgrains.

On representativeness To the extent possible, the HCES:2022-23 canvassed information on food and non-food items received by households free of cost through various social welfare programmes. In the HCES:2022-23 report published by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) and available on the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation website, there is detailed information on pages 15 to 18. The objective of the survey is not to provide precise estimates of the proportion of households receiving benefits under every scheme. In most cases, survey estimates of coverage of a programme will be lower than that suggested by the administrative data. A common conjecture in the literature on the PDS is inclusion error (when an ineligible household consumes from the PDS) and exclusion error (when an eligible household is not consuming foodgrains from the PDS). For this purpose, researchers will compare the proportion of households consuming PDS items with the coverage under the NFSA. While care should be exercised in terms of interpreting the estimates, one advantage of the survey data is that it allows us to examine the characteristics of households that report benefits from the programmes. Unless detailed information is sought on the nature of an ailment or disease in the case of health shocks, and waiver of fees or reimbursement in school or college, imputing the value of free medical services and education services received by the households is not possible. In the case of education and health, the NSSO conducts separate surveys where detailed information is canvassed on out-of-pocket expenditure and free services that are availed by a household. One might ask why one cannot use data on information paid by households to impute the value of medical services. Insurance products are treated as an investment and not consumption. The relevant information is sought as part of the All India Debt & Investment Survey, and not as part of the HCES.

In order to provide guidance to analysts and researchers, the NSSO, for the first time, decided to impute the value figures of selected food and non-food items



which were received free. This allows us to compute two metrics. The first is the Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) of a household, which is the ratio of monthly consumption expenditure to household size. The second metric is the value of household consumption in a month considering the imputed value of free food and non-food items, i.e., 'MPCE with imputation'. Both metrics are published by the NSSO in its report. Imputation of values

The NSSO has suggested two sets of values for each State and by sector (rural, urban) for imputation of food and non-food items received free of cost — modal unit price and the 25th percentile unit price. Consumption expenditure refers to out-of-pocket expenditure while value of consumption would include free and subsidised items consumed by households. In the report published by the NSSO, imputation has been done using the modal price only for items received free. The operative word is free and not subsidised. Thus, no imputation is done for the purchase of food items from the PDS at nominal regulated prices. The main item that a large proportion of households received free was foodgrains from the PDS. Not surprisingly, at the all-India level, we find that in rural and urban India, about 94% and 95%, respectively, of the value of imputed items is attributable to food items. When we consider all the households, i.e., even those who did not receive any free items, the imputed value for food is ₹82 and ₹59 in rural and urban areas, respectively. The report published by the NSSO has the average value of MPCE among those in the bottom 5% of distribution by the MPCE, 5-10, 10-20, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 70-80, 80-90, 90-95 and top 5% of distribution. Each interval is called a fractile class. The average MPCE of those in the bottom 5% of

MPCE distribution is ₹1,373 in rural and ₹2,001 in urban. This means that the MPCE of 5% of Indians is less than this cut off. When we focus on the imputed value of consumption of those in the bottom end of the rural distribution, we find that 20% of those in this fractile class, or about 1% of India's rural population is actually in the next fractile class, i.e., 5%-10%. In absolute terms this is about 86 lakh individuals in rural India. Similar patterns are observed till the sixth fractile class. In urban areas too, we see upward movement. There are different patterns observed across the major States. Needless to say, depending on their use case, researchers can impute the modal value for calculations for purchases from the PDS at the subsidised rate. This will increase the average MPCE with imputation. In short, there is evidence that even a limited imputation exercise establishes that in-kind social transfers help in-

crease the value of consumption of poorer households. Implications for poverty

Ever since the release of the report, there have been calls for a larger discussion on where the poverty line should be drawn. Among the issues that need to be considered is whether one needs to estimate the number of poor households based on the expenditure or based on the total value of consumption which includes the value of free items consumed. Needless to say, in-kind social transfers have implications for the well-being of households that are at the bottom end of consumption or income distribution. Amitava Saha is Deputy Director General, Survey Design and Research Division, National Sample Survey Office, Kolkata. Gopal Saha is Deputy Director, Survey Design and Research Division, National Sample Survey Office, Kolkata. The views expressed are personal

Akshaya Patra Foundation, HSBC collaborate to launch sustainability projects

Hyderabad: The Akshaya Patra Foundation has collaborated with HSBC Global Service Centres, India, to launch new sustainability projects including solar and biogas plants at its kitchens in Kandi, Narsingi and Warangal. As a part of HSBC India's wider energy transition programme, the project includes installation of a 165-kW solar plant and a 2,000 kg capacity biogas plant in the kitchens. The newly launched energy conservation units will generate clean, renewable energy while reducing CO2 emissions by approximately 152 tons annually, a press release said. The integration of biogas systems re-

places conventional LPG usage for cooking and harnessing organic waste from the kitchens, facilitating not only efficient waste management but also improves soil health using organic slurry as fertilizer. Mamatha Madireddy, Managing Director, Head of HSBC India Global Service Centres, said, "This initiative is a true reflection of our commitment to harness renewable energy for a better future."

Satya Gaura Chandra Dasa, Trustee and regional president of Akshaya Patra Foundation Hyderabad, Dhananjay Ganjoo, Chief Marketing Officer,

Will BJP sail on Hindu-Muslim agenda and OBC appeasement?

It is pertinent to mention here that the BJP, whose candidates contested in the name of Modi, won in 240 seats out of total 543 seats in Lok Sabha, falling short of the 272-majority mark. Its tally remained far behind from previous two elections wherein it had won 303 and 282 seats in 2019 and 2014, respectively, to have a majority on its own. Now BJP government is stacked on such two pillars which can fall at any time. With the support from key allies N Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which won 16 and 12 seats in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, respectively the BJP is enjoying the power game. Nitish Kumar, the Chief Minister of Bihar, is an experienced and expert power game changer and he can turn the tables at any moment. The political analysts observe that despite knowing its weak base, the BJP is still waving its flag in the same manner and in addition it is trying to crack the society in caste segments also. The speech of Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, in a rally on 16th July in Haryana clearly reflects the party's agenda for the forthcoming assembly elections.

After losing five out of ten seats in Lok Sabha election held in May, 2024 in Haryana, Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), along with its old Hindu-Muslim agenda, has started to lure Other Backward Class (OBC) voters to sail through the forthcoming Assembly Elections going to be held in October 2024. Seeing the annoyance of the farmer community, comprising of all segments- without any caste and creed differentia, against the party and especially the then Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, before the Lok Sabha elections, the High Command had replaced Mr. Khattar with the present Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, an OBC category person, the then sitting MP. However, the anti-incumbency was so high that the party had to see a befitting defeat in just held Lok Sabha Elections and had to lose its ground in five out of ten seats. In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the party had captured all the ten seats squeezing the main opposition party, congress to zero. But in Assembly elections held just after six months in October 2019, the BJP could not get the majority mark and had to adopt the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), to save the Chief Minister's chair. The political observers smell that as the farmers' anger against the BJP is still on high pitch, so the party has decided to bifurcate the farmers in castes and religion segments. The Party seems to sail on the OBC category in the forthcoming Assembly elections and has started to bifurcate the voters on caste basis in addition to its all-time favourite Hindu-Muslim segmentation. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah while addressing the 'Pichhda Varg Samman Sammelan' at Mahendragarh, Haryana on July 16, not only revolved his speech around the OBC category, but also tried to woo anti-Muslim general category Hindu castes by expressing BJP's anti-Muslim stand. Mr. Shah denounced the Congress party for its soft corner towards Muslims and said, "We will not allow reservation for Muslims in Haryana."

Shah said that Congress gave reser-

vation to Muslims in the backward class in Karnataka. If they come to Haryana, they will do the same here. He assured that reservation for Muslims will not be allowed in Haryana. What is the factual position of Muslim Backward classes reservation in Haryana? Reacting over the statement of Home Minister Amit Shah about the Muslim reservation in Haryana, Aftab Ahmed Deputy Leader of Opposition in Haryana Legislative Assembly claims that 60 percent of Muslims in Haryana already are the part of backward class list and enjoying the reservation. Aftab added, "Haryana Backward Classes (Reservation in Govt Jobs and admissions in Educational Institutions) Bill, 2016, backward classes are divided in into two categories. BC 'A' is an exhaustive list of 71 castes amongst which 13 are Muslim communities. Similarly, Meos are included in BC 'B' category along with other Hindu castes."

CPI(M) has also alleged that Amit Shah is deliberately misleading the people. The reality is that backward class Muslims and Meos already come under the reserved category. The Haryana State Secretariat of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has expressed strong objection to some parts of the speech given by Home Minister Amit Shah in a program organized in Mahendragarh. The Party in a reaction alleged that in a conference held in the name of backward classes on Tuesday, Amit Shah targeted the Muslim community and said that the reservation of backward classes will be abolished and given to Muslims in Haryana as Congress has done in Karnataka. In a press release issued by the CPI(M) on Wednesday, the statement of the Home Minister was described as a malicious attempt to spoil the social harmony of different communities by spreading hatred among them and it was said that this is a criminal act from the legal and social point of view. When the Home Minister himself makes such statements, it is not difficult to guess how dangerous a message it gives to the country. The party believes that the cheap politics of dividing people in the name of religion and caste for electoral gains has been the well-known devious trick of the BJP and the BJP has not learned any lesson even from the recent shameful defeat in Ayodhya and Badrinath.

Shah Claims How BJP benefitted OBC?

Union Home Minister claimed that in 2014, Shri Narendra Modi, in his first speech as Prime Minister in Parliament, had said that this is a government of Dalits, poor and backward. The Home Minister said that his party has given the country its first strong Prime Minister who comes from a backward class. He said that today, out of 71 ministers in the Union Cabinet led by Prime Minister Modi, 27 are from Backward Classes, including 2 from Haryana. He said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has honoured the entire OBC community from the country, including Haryana. Criticizing the previous congress government for keeping the OBC's deprived of their rights, Amit Shah said that when the Kaka Kalelkar Commission was formed in 1957 for the reservation of OBCs, it was not al-



lowed to be implemented for many years. He said that in 1980, the then Prime Minister put the Mandal Commission on hold and when it was brought in 1990, the then Prime Minister opposed it. He said that Prime Minister Modi has provided constitutional rights to the OBC society by giving constitutional recognition to the OBC Commission. Shah added that for the first time, Modi ji has given 27 percent reservation in Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, Sainik Schools and NEET examinations. Along with this, a historic decision was also taken by Prime Minister Modi to increase the limit of the creamy layer by excluding agriculture and salary income from it. Union Home Minister said that the Haryana Government has also launched several schemes for the welfare of backward classes. He said that in Haryana, a backward class person has been made the Chief Minister and now the state will move forward under the leadership of Nayab Singh Saini.

Amit Shah said that the Haryana government has taken another historic decision by increasing the reservation for backward classes in Panchayats, Municipal Corporations, and Municipalities. Previously, there was a provision of 8 percent reservation for the BC-A category in Panchayati Raj institutions. Now, an additional 5 percent reservation will be provided for the BC-B category. This decision will significantly benefit the people of Haryana by expanding access to reservation. Similarly, there is an existing provision of 8 percent reservation for the BC-A category in urban local bodies. Now, a 5 percent reservation will also be provided for the BC-B category. Union Minister Amit Shah said that following the Central Government's guidelines, the creamy layer limit for backward classes in Haryana has been increased from Rs 6 lakh to Rs 8 lakh annually. Similar to the Government of India, salary and income from agriculture will not be clubbed in this limit, benefiting lakhs of people. Hitting BJP with a harsh reply, former Chief Minister of Haryana Bhupinder Singh Hooda said that it was BJP that had curbed reservation, welfare schemes for Dalits and Backward classes ever since it came to power. "The BJP reduced the creamy layer limit from Rs 8 lakh

to 6 lakh to squeeze the reservation of backward classes. Income from agriculture and salary were also added to decide the creamy layer limit. As a result, lakhs of people from backward category were deprived of their reservation right." The BJP government should seek an apology from backward classes, not their vote," Hooda added.

Whether all OBC's will go with BJP?

Union Minister of State Rao Indrajit Singh, a leader of the largest and strongest OBC (Ahir-Yadav) community in Haryana, welcoming Amit Shah on behalf of the people of Southern Haryana, emphasized that they (Yadavs) have consistently supported the BJP by giving all seats to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He highlighted the unwavering support of the OBC and BC classes towards the BJP from the beginning. Rao Inderjit said that the BJP government has taken meaningful steps by forming a commission for backward classes. Though Union Minister of State Rao Indrajit Singh was claiming full support of OBC and BC classes to the BJP, but his statements on separate platforms reflect his anguish. He shows his resentment time and again that he is the only MP to be made a Minister of State (MoS) for two decades. While addressing a gathering on Saturday, 13th July, Rao Inderjit Singh's lava erupted, as quoted by Indian Express in its July 17, 2024 edition. Expressing his hidden agony, Mr. Singh said, "There are two types of people in politics—one who wins when the wind blows in favour of the party, but the second leader gets elected even when the party is unpopular. In my 45 years of political career and 20 years in Lok Sabha, I was a minister of state in 2004 and am still a minister of state in 2024." Without naming former Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, Rao added, "Those who became MP for the first time have been inducted into the cabinet, those who were below me have been taken in as cabinet ministers. Everyone knows that I have proven myself by getting elected six times, but not everyone knows I am the only MP to have secured the MoS position for this long. This food is for thought." Supporting the feelings of Rao Sahab, the crowd chanted, "

Nawab Raunaq Yar Khan Visits Historic 'Ali Lodge' on 10th Moharram

On the 10th of Moharram, Nawab Raunaq Yar Khan, the 9th Nizam of the Asif Jahi Dynasty, visited the historic 'Ali Lodge' at the residence of Syed Abid Ali, who traditionally hosts the event, opposite Aza Khana Zehra adjacent to the Salar Jung Museum. Janab Syed Sikandar, guided Nawab Raunaq Yar Khan through the sacred steps & spaces of the 'Ali Lodge,' a site of immense cultural and historical significance. The visit coincided with the arrival of the sacred Alams during the Elephant procession which enabled them to exchange blessings, a rare honor for a residential house but a regular tradition for their family since the Qutub Shahi era. Nawab Raunaq Yar Khan expressed his deep appreciation and honor for being a special guest for the occasion, and pledged his support to the royal community. In response, Nawab Abid Ali welcomed future visits from the Nawab, strengthening the bond between the two families. "The visit of Nawab Raunaq Yar Khan to 'Ali Lodge' on this auspicious day holds great significance for our family and the community," said Syed Sikandar. "We are honored to have hosted the Nizam and look forward to continued collaboration and support." This event underscores the rich cultural heritage and traditions that have been preserved within the Hyderabad region, fostering a sense of unity and respect among the local community.



Government is expected to do higher allocation towards agriculture, welfare schemes, job creation and rural housing: CareEdge Ratings

CareEdge
RATINGS

According to CareEdge Ratings, the Union Budget will focus on supporting consumption via higher allocation for rural economy, welfare schemes and agriculture. It expects focus on capex to continue as the government is likely to retain its interim budget's target of capex. It expects the government to retain capex target for FY25 at Rs 11.1 trillion. Overall public capex grew by 15.1% in FY24. It believes the Government is likely to stick to the FY25 target of miscellaneous capital receipts (includes divestment) of Rs 500 billion. However, achieving this target hinges on government undertaking big-ticket divestments.

On revenue front, CareEdge Ratings expect gross tax revenue to grow by 11% in FY25, higher than budgeted growth of 10.6% led by strong growth in direct tax

collections. It expects a total upside of Rs 1.4 trillion in overall revenue collection when compared to estimates of interim budget (~Rs 1.25 trillion in non-tax revenue plus ~Rs 150 billion from tax revenue). Consequently, CareEdge Ratings expect tax buoyancy at 1.04 marginally higher than budgeted buoyancy of 0.96 in FY25.

According to Sachin Gupta, CRO & Executive Director, CareEdge Ratings said, "Job creation will be a priority in this Union Budget with higher allocation for MNREGA and PLI for labour intensive sectors. The allocation under major PLI schemes have grown significantly in FY25. Large Scale Electronics and IT Hardware, Automobiles and auto components and Pharma has dominated most of the allocation under the PLI Scheme in the interim

budget. Government may look to increase allocation or include more labor-intensive sectors like textiles, leather and footwear and toys to aid job creation. We also expect welfare schemes to get higher allocation in this budget, while Capex will continue to remain in focus." Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist, CareEdge Ratings said, "Over past couple of years, share of revenue expenditure in total expenditure has declined from pre-pandemic average of ~88%. We expect FY25 revenue expendi-

ture to grow by 6.8%, higher than budgeted growth of 4.6% resulting in ~ Rs 750 billion higher allocation compared to interim budget's estimate. Government is expected to do higher allocation towards agriculture, welfare schemes, job creation and rural housing. Some of the major schemes/ministries that can see higher allocation include MNREGA, PM Awas Yojana, PM Gram Sadak Yojana, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi and schemes related labour intensive MSME sectors".

Reena and Gracy to sniff out ganja peddlers in Kothagudem

Kothagudem: Ganja peddlers in Kothagudem will now have to be wary of two names, Reena and Gracy, if they venture out for their illegal business.

This is after the district police have started using the services of sniffer dogs to detect and prevent ganja smuggling and sale. According to SP B Rohith Raju, the district police were regularly checking the bus stands, railway stations and business complexes across the district. Now, they will

be aided by two sniffer dogs, Reena and Gracy, who have been roped in from the district dog squad. The two canines were specially trained to detect narcotic substances, the SP said.

"The two sniffer dogs are effective in detecting ganja and other drugs. Vehicle checks will also be conducted to nab those who are transporting ganja," he said, adding that if the public had any information on ganja smuggling or sales, they should inform the police immediately.

Government-Governor rift in West Bengal



With every passing week, relations between Raj Bhavan, Kolkata, and the West Bengal government are touching a new low. It is no longer only about pending Bills and the appointment of Vice Chancellors to State universities; there are far more serious issues which are resulting in administrative and legislative bottlenecks.

In the past few days, Governor C. V. Ananda Bose's insistence on action against the Kolkata Police Commissioner and an IPS officer posted as Deputy Commissioner of Kolkata Police's Central Division for setting up a committee to probe sexual harassment allegations against him has dominated headlines. This week, a defamation petition filed by the Governor against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee came up for hearing before the Calcutta High Court, which has restrained Ms. Banerjee from making any defamatory statements against the Governor till August 14. The West Bengal government has also approached the Supreme Court alleging that the Governor has been withholding key Bills passed by the State Assembly. While questions about whether the Governor or the Ministry of Home Affairs can unilaterally take action against IPS officers or the constitutional and political head can be locked in a defamation suit may be pertinent, the bigger issue is that differences between the constitutional head and the political head are hampering the day to day functioning of the government.

Relations between the Governor and the Chief Minister have been declining for the past several months, but they reached a nadir after Mr. Bose filed a defamation case against Ms. Banerjee. What precipi-

tated the situation was a police complaint against the Governor by a Raj Bhavan employee who alleged sexual harassment against him. Even though the Governor has immunity under Article 361 which states that no criminal proceedings shall be initiated against the Governor of a State in any court during the term of his office, the Kolkata Police set up a special investigation team to probe the allegations and tried to record statements of Raj Bhavan employees. For the past one-and-a-half decade, there's been a constant tussle between Raj Bhavan and the West Bengal government, which escalated after 2006.

During the last term of the Left Front, former Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi's statements on the Nandigram violence, calling out the "cold horror" prevailing in the region, had embarrassed the government. When the Trinamool Congress came to power, relations between Raj Bhavan and the West Bengal government were far from being cordial during the regime of several former Governors like M.K. Narayanan, Late Keshari Nath Tripathi and more recently Jagdeep Dhankhar. There are several instances that reflected tensions in the ties. The regime of Mr. Bose as Governor started with a spirit of cooperation, but soon differences started emerging over the appointment of Vice Chancellors of State-run universities. With the Governor and the State government locked in legal disputes, political observers believe that the bitterness in ties has reached a point of no return. The differences between Raj Bhavan and the State government have led to tensions in State-Centre relations too. The oath administered to the Gover-

nor under Article 159 says that the Governor will preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law and will devote himself to the service and well-being of the people of the State. However, the perpetual dispute has not been of any service to the 10-crore population of the State. Moreover, a situation where the Governor is raising questions about the functioning of the government under him, and the Ministers targeting the constitutional head, is not a healthy sign. The Governor and the State government need to take a step back

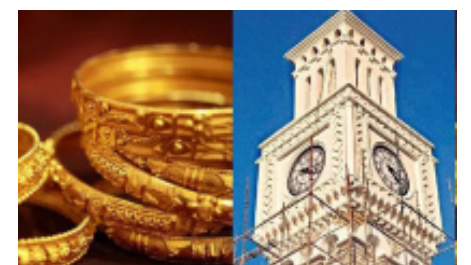
and complement each other's functioning rather than contradict each other. It is not necessary that the Governor should make his opinions public on every issue relating to the State government and neither it is imperative that the State government has to react to such criticism. It is high time that both the Governor and the State government break the cycle, settle disputes outside the courts and work unitedly for the people. There are far more pressing issues in West Bengal that require the attention of the State government and Raj Bhavan.

1 kilogram of gold robbed on Clock Tower road in Sec

Hyderabad: A jeweler was robbed of one kilogram of gold at Secunderabad on Thursday evening. According to the police, the jeweler accompanied by his salesman, was travelling to their shop at Monda Market in Secunderabad on a motorcycle with one kilogram of gold kept in a bag.

"When they reached Clock Tower, two persons waylaid them and threatened them with dire consequences. They managed to snatch away the bag in which gold was kept and fled away," an official of Monda Market police station.

On receiving information, the police rushed to the spot and started analyzing footages of the closed circuit cameras installed in the vicinity of the crime spot. The police formed special teams to identify and



"When they reached Clock Tower, two persons waylaid them and threatened them with dire consequences.

nab the offenders. The police suspect that the some persons who are known to the shop owner or salesman could be behind the heist.

How do you make India's fastest faster? Tear down invisible barriers

Usain Bolt. Carl Lewis. Asafa Powell. Maurice Greene. Jim Hines. Over the years, the world's fastest men, officially, have come from either Jamaica or the USA, with a smattering of outsiders occasionally trying to break into the club. For the past five years, a Welshman has been trying to convince people that an Indian could, someday, join that league. While India has had success in the middle-distance and the 400m has been the shortest route to recognition, James Hillier is on a mission to prove they can go fast over a shorter distance, too. Integrated approach

"We have always had good sprinters here but it's been in pockets — so a sprinter would be really good for a couple of years, then another will come and the first one gets injured. Hopefully, we have shown people how we can be consistent. I believe we have brought a level of professionalism and an integrated approach. So the athlete sits in the middle but it's focused on the coach and the supporting services on the outside," Hillier, the Athletics Director at Reliance Foundation, tells The Hindu. Shifting with his family to the Odisha High Performance Centre in Bhubaneswar wasn't easy but Hillier has adapted well and admits his kids, five and three years old, are now as Indian as they come. His other set of 'kids' are some of the fastest Indians on the track. Tejas Shirse, Manikanta Hoblidhar, Amlan Borgohain, Jyothi Yarraji, Animesh Kujur — the names making waves today were all either written off or clueless about the future before coming into the Reliance-Hillier fold.

Consider this: Jyothi was mentally and physically broken when she started training with Hillier in 2021. Shirse was an uncertain youngster with little focus and a lot of stubbornness. Animesh, who is monitored by Hillier but primarily trains under athletics head coach Martin Owens, only knew he wanted to run fast but had no idea how to go about it. Amlan was simply a talented lad. No one knew Hoblidhar six months ago. Today, they hold the national records in 100m, 100 and 110m hurdles, and 200m, all set in the last 18-24 months. Then there is the next batch of exciting talent — Moumita Mondal and Pragyan Sahu pushing Jyothi in the 100m hurdles. Graceson Jeeva competing with Shirse. Bapi Hansda in the 400m hurdles and 17-year old Mohd. Reyhan Basha in the 100m, among several others. With the Athletics Federation of India planning to decentralise training after Paris, it is only expected to get better. "It is a team project," says Hillier. "If we look at women's hurdles, when I first got here people said 'Oh, it's not possible to break the 13-second mark'. And I asked why? Who came up with that rule? Once Jyothi broke it, she created belief and now there are other girls coming up as well.

"In the men's 100m, Amlan's there, Animesh, Gurindervir Singh is back to fitness which is fantastic for the sport. There's a few other young guys knocking around as well. That can only be good. I want to see a final of eight athletes and not know who's going to win. We have to work on strength in depth. I think that internal com-



"It is a team project," says Hillier. "If we look at women's hurdles, when I first got here people said 'Oh, it's not possible to break the 13-second mark'. And I asked why? Who came up with that rule? Once Jyothi broke it, she created belief and now there are other girls coming up as well.

petitiveness will help drive things forward." It's a mutual admiration club. "Today I'm running 13.06 here [at the 2024 Inter-State Championships] because of him [Hillier]," says Jyothi. "Because it's not only the training, it's the mindset. A month ago I was unable to lift my leg because of a Grade-2 muscle tear [suffered during competition in Finland]. He never tells me to beat someone or run a specific time or try to be something I am not. He only teaches me how to manage myself."

Coach who doesn't coach It's a constant refrain — the coach who doesn't coach. "My coach always likes his athletes to think. We sit together and then he asks me how I will run faster. I then tell him what I want to do and we make plans accordingly," the ever-smiling Amlan says. "James coach's main role is being a facilitator," says Shirse. "He lets you think, asks you what you want, then moulds you into a pattern where you can thrive yourself. I have seen many athletes even at the top level in India who don't know why they are doing what they are doing, they don't know their own bodies. But James guides us to know ourselves better."

The athletes' comfort around Hillier is visible. "I don't over-coach. It's about putting an athlete in an environment and then let them flourish, figure stuff out themselves.

Athletes need to know so they can prepare, they can plan, they can start to take ownership of things because the athlete must be involved in the process. "Create challenges in training and let them solve it. If you don't have that structure, if you don't periodise your training or progress, there's going to be problems. My athletes know exactly what they're doing every day of the week. I think the biggest thing that I brought is that structure. A by-product of that environment is improved performances," Hillier explains. Hillier's sprint mission means he has an eye on every noteworthy performance. Case in point is Gurindervir Singh, who won the Inter-State meet and has been consistently impressive this season. Although the Punjab sprinter trains in Jalandhar, Hillier is all praise. "He's phenomenal. Few know this but I knew about Gurindervir even before I came to India. He was probably the only one — besides Neeraj [Chopra]. 'I'm a big fan of his and he deserves to win. He's had a tough 3-4 years, he hasn't got a huge amount of support and I was really chuffed he won. I know he beat my guys but it's good for Indian sprinting,'" Hillier gushes. He has also invited Gurindervir to train at the Reliance HPC post the Olympics as he plans to take the next step towards his sprint-coaching goals — a 100m national relay team with

the brightest Indian runners. A training pack "Having a group together with everyone pushing each other can be a big help. That's what I want to do, create a strong group. I want training to be more competitive. But you have to get the right people in and I believe Guri is a good fit," Hillier says. Shirse agrees. "It is very important to have a group pushing each other. There are days when you don't want to get up and train but when there is someone to prod you, you are motivated to go out. We trained in Tenerife earlier this year, where there were several elite athletes including Finn Elmo Lakka. I trained with him for three sessions, absorbed everything and then beat him, in Finland." Hillier acknowledges Indian runners are still a long way from the very best but insists it's not a weakness. "See, if we try to take on the Jamaicans right now, we're just going to get killed and that'll be demoralising. So let's dominate Asia first, and that's getting harder. Let's get that one ticked off, then let's create a culture of success. We don't want to create invisible barriers of 'we can't do this' and 'they're better than us.' They're not, they're just 20 years ahead and it's an advantage because we can learn from them. If the conditions are right, I wouldn't be surprised if [an Indian] runs 10.1 this year," he signs off.

Freedom and control in Xinjiang

Nine musicians dressed in bright outfits assemble on stage at the centre of an accordion museum in Yining city in Xinjiang province, China. It is June 17, the day of Eid-ul-Adha, and everyone is in celebratory mood. Thousands of tourists and locals have gathered on Liuxing street despite the heat to enjoy street food, watch graceful performances, and drink chilled fresh juice and beer. In the museum crammed with instruments, each musician holds an accordion. Before bursting into song, they introduce themselves, not by name but by ethnicity – Uyghur, Kazakh, Mongolian, Uzbek, and so on. Then, in chorus, they shout cheerfully in English, “We are all part of the Chinese nation.”

The proclamation of national unity and the carefully curated diversity on stage, particularly on the occasion of Eid, is significant. Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, located in northwestern China, is home to 56 ethnic groups, including the Uyghur, Kazakh, Mongol, Manchu, Uzbek, Xibe, and Russian, who are all termed “ethnic minorities” by the state. The vast province is home to followers of many religions such as Islam, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity. For years, China has faced accusations from human rights groups of committing crimes against humanity of mostly Muslim ethnic groups in the region. According to several reports, including by the United Nations Human Rights Office, and Human Rights Watch, the Chinese were detaining Uyghurs, who form the majority of the ethnic minorities, in “detention centres” and subjecting them to abuse.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has rubbished these claims. It has repeatedly argued that these are not “detention centres” but “education and vocational training centres”. A booklet issued by the State Council Information Office says these centres were established with the “goal of educating and rehabilitating people guilty of minor crimes or law-breaking, and eradicating the influence of terrorism and extremism.” In 2019, however, the Chairman of the Xinjiang regional government announced that these centres would be gradually wound down “if society no longer needed them.” Various studies have also claimed that the population of the Han Chinese, the country’s dominant ethnic group, has grown in the region, while the Uyghur population has declined ever since the People’s Republic of China took over the province in 1949. However, official data show that the Uyghur population, which was 3.6 million in the first national population census of 1953, grew to 11.6 million (222%) in the seventh census of 2020. The increase has been attributed in part to the fact that Uyghurs and other minorities, along with the rural population, were exempt from China’s decades-old one-child policy. The ‘Sinicisation’ of religion At the Shaanxi mosque, an important heritage site in Yining, the Imam, Ma Jirong, says all these accusations are “greatly exaggerated”. He points towards the mosque, where 1,300 Muslims had assembled to pray that morning. “Since you are here, you can see for yourself,” he says. “Foreign countries have a hatred towards China. It is like a tumour in their body.” The centuries-old mosque behind him, painted in red and dark blue, is built in the “traditional palace style of Chinese architecture,” according to the guide. The structure is made

of wood and brick and showcases the characteristically Chinese upturned eaves. The dome and minarets, commonly found in several mosques around the world, are missing. The call to prayer can be heard only within the premises. The ceiling is painted with flowers and plants, and journalists from West Asia wonder loudly about the absence of Arabic script on the inside walls. The Shaanxi mosque in Yining, which is built in the traditional palace style of Chinese architecture. The Shaanxi mosque in Yining, which is built in the traditional palace style of Chinese architecture. | Photo Credit: Radhika Santhanam

Ma shrugs off these observations. “It is a Chinese mosque,” he says. “Mongolian, Uyghur, and many other ethnic communities participated in its construction. It shows that Xinjiang is an inseparable part of Chinese territory.” This adaptation of religion to Chinese characteristics, and specifically to Chinese socialism, is what Abud Rakev Tumunyaz, the Imam at the Xinjiang Islamic Institute at Kuqa, 280 kilometres away, refers to as “Sinicisation”. “Religion has no national boundaries, but believers have a motherland. Chinese people belong to the People’s Republic of China, so religion should adapt to socialism in China,” Tumunyaz, 62, contends. Ma believes there is no contradiction between Chinese socialism and Islam. “Both prioritise the happiness of the people,” he says. The mosque at Kuqa has a dome and minarets. Inside the Islamic Institute’s sprawling library, which houses about 30,000 books, the Imam flips through the copies of the Koran laid neatly on a table. The bound books look new and the pages crackle when flipped. There are copies in Uyghur, Arabic, and Chinese. Newspapers in Mongolian, Uyghur, and other languages are stacked in a rack in the reading area. The mosque at the Xinjiang Islamic Institute of Kuqa. However, just like the rest of the country, Xinjiang promotes standard Chinese in public educational institutions; students say lessons are not taught in Uyghur or other languages. Uyghur is spoken everywhere, but shop signs are mostly only in Chinese. A government booklet claims that ethnic minorities are “enthusiastic” about learning and using standard Chinese. It says ethnic groups are “encouraged to learn spoken and written languages from each other... (emphasis added)” and ethnic languages are “extensively used in areas such as judicature, administration, education, press and publishing, radio and television...” A small newsroom and the printing press of a county-level newspaper called Chabuchar Daily, brought out in the Xibo or Xibe language, are showcased as evidence of this. The four-page tabloid, which translates newspaper reports into Xibo, which is closely related to Manchu, a nearly extinct language, is brought out twice a week for the 30,000 speakers of Xibo in Xinjiang. “As you can see, the government cares about ethnic cultures and languages,” says one of the editors, Zhao Jinxiu. Zhao Jinxiu, one of the editors of the Chabuchar Daily tabloid, which is published in the Xibe language. | Photo Credit: Radhika Santhanam Deradicalisation programme

Both Ma and Tumunyaz emphasise the importance of “laws and regulations” and firmly state that Islam should “develop



accordingly”. When asked to cite an example of how the law dictates the practice of religion, Tumunyaz says, “The government designates areas where prayers and other religious activities can take place.” At the Islamic Institute at Kuqa, students are given religious education, which includes learning to recite the Koran. They are taught Chinese culture and history, and Islamic history from the time it was introduced in China about 1,300 years ago. They study lessons about the civil code, and laws and regulations regarding religion. They also undergo a ‘deradicalisation programme’. The Chinese argue that this stems from Xinjiang’s troubled history. In the last two decades, the region has seen many terror attacks. In 2012, knife-wielding terrorists attacked civilians in Kashgar, leaving 15 dead. In May 2014, attackers crashed cars into shoppers and threw explosives, killing more than 30 people in the capital city of Ürümqi. In July the same year, an Imam in Kashgar was stabbed to death. China has blamed the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, which was founded by militant Uyghur separatists, for some of these attacks. The fight against what the government calls the “three evils of extremism, terrorism, and separatism” is also China’s rationale for the “education and vocational training centres.” In written communication with the media, the CCP says through these centres, Xinjiang has “destroyed 1,588 violent and terrorist gangs, arrested 12,995 terrorists..., punished 30,645 people for 4,858 illegal religious activities, and confiscated 3,45,229 copies of illegal religious materials” since 2014. The curriculum at the centres, it says, “begins with learning standard spoken and written Chinese language, then moves onto studying the law, and concludes with learning vocational skills”.

Waiting for freedom However, several Uyghurs have publicly spoken and written about how they did not choose to go to these centres. Many critics have also raised questions about why prominent Uyghur

intellectuals, writers, and artists were sent to places that purportedly provide “vocational skills”. Many ethnic minorities have also fled China fearing ill treatment at these centres. In 2013, three Uyghurs — Adil, Abdul Khaliq, and Salamu — from Kargilik in southwest Xinjiang crossed the border into Ladakh in India without any travel documents. They were apprehended by the Indian Army, which handed them over to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police. Later, the three of them were handed over to the local police. They have been in jail since. “All the three young men, one of whom was a minor then, fled to India saying Uyghurs were being persecuted in their country,” says Mohammad Shafi Lassu, a lawyer in Leh who is representing them. “They said they had seen all kinds of atrocities. They came to India because they knew that Pakistan would hand them back to China. But in India, after completing their sentence, they were booked under the draconian Public Safety Act in 2015.” The Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978, is a preventive detention law under which a person is taken into custody so that they will not act in a manner that is prejudicial to “the security of the state or the maintenance of public order”.

Lassu sounds tired. “I have little hope for their future,” he says. Apart from the stringent law, he also cites India’s neutrality on the Uyghur question as a reason for his despair. In 2022, the country abstained on a draft resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Commission on holding a debate on human rights in Xinjiang, arguing that it “favours a dialogue to deal with these issues” instead. It is common refrain in China that “international forces were influencing people over the web”; this is why the government also further tightened its control over the Internet, a move defended as ‘cyber sovereignty’. Confident now that terrorism is a thing of the past, Xinjiang also has an ‘exhibition of anti-terrorism and anti-extremism’. The fear of attack had turned Xinjiang into a security zone by all accounts.

the scandal that singed a king in Singareni

The Indian government is set to auction coal-bearing seams of Singareni coal mines, the reserves of which stretch 350 square kilometres in Telangana. While the current mining company is a joint venture between the government of India and Telangana State, the auction will create another stakeholder for the mining operations in the region. A similar privatisation effort happened nearly 140 years ago when another entity gained the concession agreement. It was called Hyderabad (Deccan) Mining Company, Limited.

Beginning as a police officer in Kalyan in present day Karnataka, Abdul Haq later titled Diler Jung became the éminence grise when Nizam Mahbub Ali Khan was a young man in the later part of 1800s. He negotiated the deed for bringing Railways to Nizam's Dominion, he crafted the concessionaire agreement to mine the coal of Singareni. Then everything fell apart as the rumour mills started churning. The Singareni coal mines or as the locals remember Yellanadu coal seam was well known. Telangana was a centre for artisanal steel for centuries with craftsmen in Nirmal, Nizamabad creating batches of steel using coal, wood and iron ore. But it drew the colonial notice in 1871 when William King of the Geological Survey of India visited the Nizam's Dominion and reached Singareni. "The present field is situated ... near the villages of Rumpaid, Yellindallapad (Yellandu), Hooserakapully (Usirkayalapalli), and Ragabonagoodium (Ragaboinagudem), in the eastern part of the Kundaconda talook. Its southern extremity is about four or five miles east of the large village of Singareny, and it may be as well to give this name to the field," he wrote in March 30, 1872. Within a few years this would be transformed into a coal rush.

The coal was there but it was the nature of the mining agreement and investors involved that became a hub of the scandal. The British who were building a railway line to Secunderabad from Wadi wanted to extend it to Singareni to transport the coal. Abdul Haq successfully negotiated the agreement for the railway line built with Nizam's money but executed by the British. Then he played a different gambit. Abdul Haq and his associates created a company called Hyderabad (Deccan) Mining Company Limited. Haq secured a 99-year lease for Watson and Stewart on January 7, 1886, this had the sanction of Secretary of State, and was signed on July 27 of the same year. The capital of the Company was to be £1,000,000, in 100,000 shares of £10 each. Of these 85,000 were allotted to the concessionaires, Messrs. Watson and Stewart for their role in securing the concession. A year later, staying at the upscale Alexandra Hotel in London, Abdul Haq wrote to W.C. Watson on June 2, 1887: "I am instructed by the Government of His Highness the Nizam to purchase 10,000 £10 shares of the Hyderabad (Deccan) Mining Company, Limited. As you are the agent of the Government here, I write to ask you to be



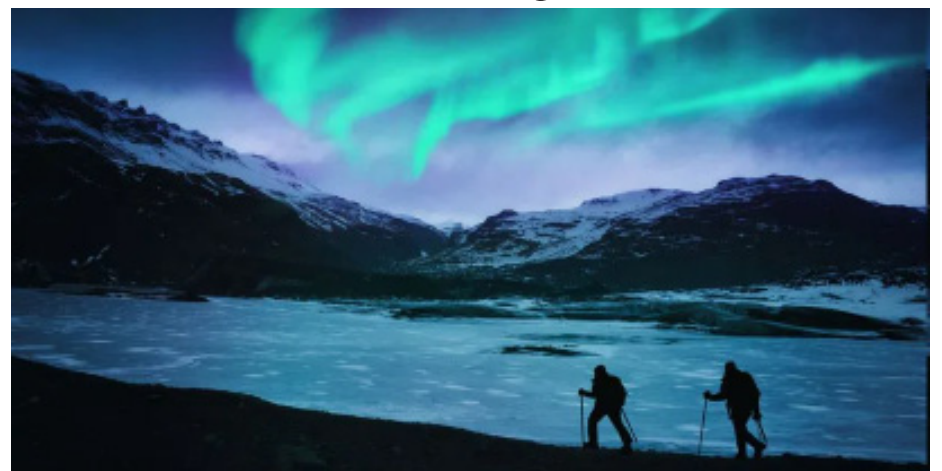
so good as to arrange for the purchase of these shares at the lowest possible price, not exceeding £12 per share, the Government having decided to invest only £120,000 in these shares." The sentence was prove very expensive for Abdul Haq's career. "Purchase these shares at the price you name is a most difficult and almost impossible operation, and will require the greatest skill and circumspection," wrote Mr. Watson to Diler Jung. The Nizam's man in London agreed to the proposal for a higher valuation and agreed to pay £131,250. The shares were duly delivered the same day by eight different firms of brokers. The shares were in two lots, one of 3750 and another 8750 but with all consecutive numbers. The sequential numbering of shares set off alarm bells. The Hyderabad (Deccan) Mining Company Limited had a spent a grand sum of £6,411 and most of it was 'establishment charges'. The British House of Commons set up an inquiry Committee. The Committee completed its report on August 6, 1888. It found: "that the concessionaires have used the concession for the purpose of realising great gains not intended to be conferred on them, and that this has been done to the injury of the State from which they received the concession with the assistance of their partner, Abdul Hakk." It also found that the shares bought by Abdul Haq on behalf of the Nizam's government actually belonged to him! But there was no punishment or as much as a rap on the knuckles for Abdul Haq. An incensed young man Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem about it and coined a word for Abdul Haq:

Abdul Haq died a very wealthy man with stakes in the Watson Hotel and other properties in colonial Bombay. After his death in London on May 21, 1896, his body was brought back to India. "In the afternoon an immense crowd attended the procession from the Prince's Dock through streets

not far from the hotel to a mosque and then to the Victoria Terminus railway station," recorded a newspaper. The body was brought back to Hyderabad where it is interred beside his mother's tomb. While a great grand dome known as Saidanima's tomb is on the banks of the Hussainsagar Lake, Abdul Haq Diler Jung is buried in a

grave with a modest flat roof nearby. The Singareni coal mines remain a significant asset, having yielded 1753.78 million tonnes of coal up to the year 2023-24. As Telangana's coal-rich landscape faces another bout of privatisation, the echoes of the scandal serves as a reminder of the intricate dance between money, power, and resource grab.

Threat to magnetic field



Northern lights have a dark side Auroras, while awe-inspiring, reveal critical information about disruptions to Earth's magnetic field, especially relevant in our technology-driven era. The forces behind auroras also generate currents that can damage electrical infrastructure, such as pipelines and power grids.

A recent study highlights that the impact angle of interplanetary shocks plays a crucial role in the strength of these currents, providing a way to predict and mitigate potential damage. Both auroras and Geo-magnetically Induced Currents (GICs)

are driven by space weather events. Auroras serve as visual indicators that electric currents in space can produce GICs on the ground. During severe geomagnetic storms, the auroral region can expand significantly. Typically, its southern boundary is around 70 degrees latitude, but during extreme events like the May 2024 storm, it can extend down to 40 degrees or further, marking the most intense storm in two decades. Auroras occur through two primary processes: Particles from the sun striking Earth's magnetic field or interplanetary shocks compressing the magnetic field.