

## KTR gifts 100 laptops to girl students, financial aid to children of deceased weavers

Hyderabad: Fulfilling his promise to students of the State Home, BRS working president KT Rama Rao distributed 100 laptops on the occasion of his birthday on Wednesday. He celebrated his birthday in the presence of students in Hyderabad. As part of his annual Gift A Smile initiative, he also supported the families of 13 weavers who died by suicide in the State and provided financial aid for their children's education and future needs.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Rama Rao had launched the 'Gift A Smile' initiative in an attempt to celebrate his birthday by helping others. He called upon his well-wishers, fans, BRS leaders, and activists to participate in this programme. Every year since, he has been involved in various philanthropic activities. Over the last five years, he has provided more than 100 ambulance vehicles and tablets to 6,000 students for competitive exams, as well as three-wheeler scooters to 1,400 differently-abled individuals. Speaking on the occasion, Rama Rao expressed immense satisfaction with the programme he has been running for five years. He stated that, as elders say, only birth and death are certain, while everything in between is uncertain. Thus, engaging in activities that bring satisfaction to the heart gives him the most happiness. His wife Shailima, son Himanshu, and daughter Riyanshi joined



him in this event. Meanwhile, the BRS cadre organised blood donation, fruit dis-

tribution and other philanthropic services across the State. A few BRS leaders ex-

tended financial support to students from poor families to pursue their higher studies.

## Premium Nilgiri tea brand 'Chamraj' launches two new variants



Tea enthusiasts can now enjoy the new 'Master Blend Ginger' and 'Master Blend Lemon' flavours.

Hyderabad: Chamraj, the premium Nilgiri tea brand from United Nilgiri Tea Estates & Company Limited, established in 1922, has announced the launch of its 'Master Blend' and two new variants under its popular CTC brand, 'Master Blend CTC Tea'. Tea enthusiasts can now enjoy the new 'Master Blend Ginger' and 'Master Blend Lemon' flavours.

Chamraj's new Master Blend CTC tea is crafted to cater to the widespread palates of tea lovers across the nation. This blend is robust and rich, complementing both milk and sugar perfectly. Master Blend CTC is available in packet size of 500gm, 250gm with a price tag of Rs. 175 and Rs.95 respectively. The 'Master Blend Ginger' variant introduces a spicy ginger flavour, a timeless addition to tea known for its numerous health benefits. Master Blend Ginger is available in packet size of 250 gm

with a price tag of Rs 210.

The 'Master Blend Lemon' variant offers a unique taste experience, merging the zest of fresh lemons with high-quality tea. Master Blend Lemon is available in packet size of 250 gm with a price tag of Rs 210. Chamraj Tea's single-estate Orthodox Tea, Broken Orange Pekoe is renowned for its superior quality and aromatic richness. This tea offers a complex, full-bodied flavour that pairs well with milk and sugar, preserving the authentic taste. With its updated packaging, Chamraj Tea Estate aims to revive the tradition of drinking orthodox tea among Indian tea consumers. "Our new Master Blend variants, Ginger and Lemon, are a testament to our commitment to quality and innovation," said Shilajit Roy Choudhury, Vice President at The United Nilgiri Tea Estates Company Limited

# Social justice and 75 DMK years of Tamil Nadu

The party will mark its 75th anniversary on Sept 18, a history of seven decades marked by mass mobilisation, loss of public confidence, and political survival. At the public function marking the launch of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) on the evening of September 18, 1949, at Robinson Park in Royapuram, Chennai, there were approximately twenty-six speakers on the dais to address the gathering of several thousand people. However, due to incessant rains, only nine of them could speak. Even in the face of relentless rain, the founding general secretary, Conjeevaram Natarajan Annadurai, also known as C.N. Annadurai or Anna, was determined to deliver his concluding speech without any cuts.

The final speech, in which he discussed the Dravidian self-respect philosophy upon which the party was founded, took him one and a half hours to deliver. According to books on the DMK's birth and evolution, 75 years ago, the young leaders who convened the meeting in Chennai that led to the formation of the present ruling party in Tamil Nadu experienced a rollercoaster of emotions. The leaders were filled with sadness, bitterness, euphoria, and hopefulness as they embarked on this political journey. They had just parted company with the Dravidian icon and their father figure, Periyar E. V. Ramasamy, who was adamantly opposed to their idea of becoming part of electoral politics and usurping power on behalf of the socially and culturally marginalised segments of Tamil society.

They had just walked out of the five-year-old Dravidar Kazhagam (DK), which was moulded in 1944 as a reform movement from the remnants of the Justice Party, or South Indian Liberal Federation, founded in 1917, and the Self-Respect Movement, a vibrant collective mentored by Periyar since 1925. For the inheritors of the Dravidian ideology that evolved from the Justice Party, Ramasamy was Thanthai, or father, who never believed in electoral politics or the benefits of being in power. On the other hand, Anna termed himself the foster son of Periyar, who initiated major social transformations in the south, first as a Congress leader and then as a Dravidian icon, who uplifted the morale of those being pushed to the margins by the caste hierarchy. However, they had many differences, and the major one was related to power politics. According to 'Rule of the Commoner,' DMK's political history between 1949 and 1967, authored jointly by Rajan Kurai Krishnan, Ravindran Sriramachandran, and V M S Subagunaranjan, the remarriage of 70-year-old Ramasamy with 30-year-old Maniammai also contributed to the followers' parting of ways, to which the father figure responded with extreme sarcasm. Ramasamy claimed he sought a reliable successor to manage the organisation and the movement through his marriage to Maniammai, who was active with him in all the uprisings. On the other hand, Anna found it to be a lack of trust in him. When Ramasamy termed



India's independence as an affirmation of North Indian suzerainty over South India, Anna disagreed, saying it was the end of colonial rule and an occasion to celebrate. "Despite all these differences, Ramasamy and Anna found common ground in fighting casteist hegemony. Though DMK made occasional compromises on its secular ideology and social justice-based visions in all these years of experimenting with power politics, the party deserves credit for transforming the living standards of the people as well as ending social discrimination significantly. Even Ramasamy had to correct his perception of the party after it attained power," said C. Lakshmanan, a political observer and a former faculty member of the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS). Ramasamy used his final five years to praise DMK for carrying forward the social justice legacy.

The party will mark its 75th anniversary on September 18, a history of seven decades marked by mass mobilisation, loss of public confidence, recurring splits, and political survival. On many occasions, fellow travellers accused it of watering down the core ideologies, especially when striking an alliance with the BJP at the national level to make A B Vajpayee prime minister. It also faced national-level isolation, with a commission that investigated Rajiv Gandhi's assassination blaming its leaders for providing fertile land to the LTTE in the state. A similar kind of isolation emerged during the period of the second UPA government when DMK ministers in the union cabinet faced serious corruption charges related mainly to awarding the 2G spectrum. Now, the party is attempting heavily to shrug off those dubious legacies. At the national level, the party has become a trusted alliance partner of the

Congress-led opposition India alliance. Through its able administration and steadfast commitment to secular and inclusive ideals, the M.K. Stalin-led Tamil Nadu government is also helping the DMK recover from the past credibility crisis. The party, which faced major splits orchestrated by late leader M.G. Ramachandran and present MDMK leader Vaiko during the days when Stalin's father M. Karunanidhi led from the front, is now emerging as a force to be reckoned with by uniting all the major secular, minority, and Dalit formations in the state.

According to Chennai-based political observer Arul Ezhilan, Tamil Nadu continues to be ranked among the best states in the country in terms of human development indicators, and the credit goes to the DMK governments led by Anna, Karunanidhi, and Stalin. "It aggressively pushed the social justice concept and valiantly fought upper caste dominance. The movement also alleviated poverty through food subsidies and women's empowerment by initiating gender-neutral workplaces. The party also plays a constructive role in maintaining communal harmony by fighting the agents of hate," he said. It took eight years for the DMK to plunge into electoral politics. In 1957, when Congress was ruling in the then-Madras state, it won 15 of the 112 assembly seats it contested. At that time, it also won two parliamentary seats.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) did not officially recognise the Dravidian party during the 1957 election. The party's candidates had to run as independents and were not united under the rising sun symbol now associated with it. Many candidates had to contest the election using the rooster symbol. In 1962, the ECI officially recognised the DMK as a political party and assigned it the rising sun symbol. The inspiration for the party sym-

bol came from the leader and scriptwriter M. Karunanidhi's 1950s play 'Udaya Surya' (Rising Sun in Tamil), which had been banned. The DMK's symbol symbolises the 'rising' spirit of the Dravidian people. "Since 1967, when Anna formed the first DMK government in Tamil Nadu, the social reform agenda has been at the heart of the state's governance. The DMK legalised self-respecting marriages in 1967 that disregarded caste and religious traditions. Madras became Tamil Nadu in 1969. Women were given equal succession rights in 1989. The state created inter-caste housing communities, or samathuvapurams in 1998. Legislation to tear down caste barriers within the priesthood was passed in 2006. Mid-day meals, maternity benefits, and women's self-help groups can all be traced back to the policy platforms of the DMK," said S Vijayalakshmi, a Chennai-based poet and activist. But critics point to the recent surge in caste and "honour"-based crimes, religious bigotry and social disparities in Tamil Nadu and term them as a great challenge to the DMK and its radical politics to face within the coming days. "The future of the Dravidian Movement lies in how its successors find a common cause in a society where identities have begun to trump ideologies. The party won influence in Tamil Nadu by fighting the imposition of Hindi and Hindutva. Now there are renewed challenges in the form of the same old symbols of hegemony," said Lakshmanan. Still, he said the Dravidian movement must be celebrated for being the first backward-class mobilisation in the country, which has created historic social change and political empowerment. Since parting ways in 1972, then party treasurer M G Ramachandran and his close aid J Jayalalithaa posed a severe challenge to DMK by floating AIADMK.

# Forcing eateries to display the name of the owner: Won't it disrupt the communal harmony?



JAG MOHAN THAKEN

(Jag Mohan Thaken) July 24: Sociologists Maclver and Page have defined society as a web of social relationships. Another Sociologist Giddings shares the viewpoint of Ginsberg and gives the definition of society as-- "Society is the union itself, the organisation, the sum of formal relations in which associating individuals are bound together". Whether these parameters of society always stand static? Whether the web of relationships always remains unaffected? Whether the sum of formal relations, in which associating individuals are bound together, ever remains effective in maintaining the social fabric intact?

Before analysing these questions, we should have a sight over Newton's first law of motion, which states, "If a body is at rest or moving at a constant speed in a straight line, it will remain at rest or keep moving in a straight line at constant speed unless it is acted upon by a force." Newton's first law of motion truly holds good in describing society fabric also. Cooperation, harmony, relations and the social fabric run smoothly unless and until some outer or inner destructive force disturbs these. In India, during this running decade, the country has faced or seen some factors- internal or external, which have tried to disturb or budge the harmony or social fabric of the society. Present issue of 'Kanwar Yatra' related orders issued in BJP governed Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand states, fears the intellectuals and political leaders that it may destroy the communal harmony in the country.

What is Kanwar Yatra?

The Kanwar or Kanvad Yatra is an annual pilgrimage of devotees of Shiva, known as Kanvarias or Bhole to Hindu pilgrimage places to fetch holy waters of

Ganges River. Millions of pilgrims fetch sacred water from river Ganga and carry on their shoulders for hundreds of miles to offer it in their local Siva shrines, or specific temples.

The Current Issue Last week, the police in the western Uttar Pradesh districts of Muzaffarnagar, Shamli, and Saharanpur issued orders directing eateries to put the names of owners on shops or carts. Later on, the Uttarakhand government also followed the same path. The police plead that Kanwariyas abstain from certain food items during Shravan month. They said that some shopkeepers, selling all types of food items, on Kanwar Yatra Marg named their shops in such a way that it created confusion among the Kanwariyas which led to a law-and-order problem. It is also pertinent to mention here that special camps/ tents are also set up by many social organizations and individuals for the purpose of rest and night stay of the kanwariyas, where food and refreshments are provided free of cost. However, the Uttar Pradesh police later on softened its stand, but the Chief Minister of the state issued the harsh directions. Jul 19, 2024 The Hindustan Times (HT), an English daily quoted the version of CM directions. 'Chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday ordered mandatory mentioning of owners of all eateries on the Kanwar Yatra route across Uttar Pradesh a day after the police softened its controversial directive asking restaurants along the 240km stretch the pilgrims take in the western part of the state.' HT reported, "A spokesperson for the state government said Adityanath has issued "stern directives" over displaying names and identities of the owners of eateries, shops and carts on the route to ensure that religious sanctity of the pilgrimage remains intact, and the pilgrims are not disturbed during

the 11-day pilgrimage beginning on July 22 in the Hindu holy month of Shravan. He added Adityanath also directed action against those involved in selling and promoting halal (permissible in Arabic) products." The BJP supporters smell no foul odour in these orders. An advocate practising under Punjab & Haryana High court supporting the step of the police, says, "What's the wrong in displaying the name of the owner? No one is asking to write their religion, why hue and cry? Why is the opposition giving it a communal colour? However, the orders convey no mention of religion, but Opposition leaders and activists feared that the action was aimed at displaying the faiths of food sellers. What critics allege?

Criticizing the move, the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the statement to show its anxiety and demanded that Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand BJP Governments must rescind this divisive order. The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly condemns the decision by the BJP state governments in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand directing all eateries along the entire stretch of the Kanwar Yatra route to display the owners' names. Clearly, this is designed to sharpen communal polarization and foster tensions among religious communities. This move is blatantly unconstitutional and strikes at the foundation of the fundamental right of equality for all citizens. While the immediate objective is to sharpen communal polarization, such actions by the BJP governments may soon lead to the exacerbation of caste tensions and intensifying caste-based social oppression. This is the direction in which the BJP aims to reorder our society along the lines of the 'Manusmriti', negating the foundations of our Constitution and its guarantee of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice for all citizens." The CPIM added that BJP allies in the ND alliance must immediately ensure that such divisive and dangerous moves are not permitted and must mount pressure on both the UP and Uttarakhand governments to rescind this order.

CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat says, "Uttar Pradesh government is destroying the constitution of India by issuing such orders... A whole community is being humiliated... They are trying to divide society... This type of targeting was done by Nazis in Germany... I condemn it. Why are the courts not taking suo-moto action against it?... The order should be withdrawn." Member of Parliament Asaduddin Owaisi condemned the decision and likened it to apartheid in South Africa and the Juden boycott in Hitler's Germany. Jayant Chaudhary, Member of Parliament and President of Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), who is also holding the charge of Minister of State (Independent Charge) in the BJP led government in the center as its ally, has also broken his silence on UP's Kanwar Yatra order, and stated that govt's decision 'not well thought out'. Pawan Khera @Pawankheraa, the Chairman, Media & Publicity Deptt. AICC and Member, Congress Working Committee on his X account comments, "We don't know whether this is a step towards economic boycott of Mus-

lims or economic boycott of Dalits, or both.

Those who wanted to decide who will eat what, will now also decide who will buy what from whom?"

Senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader and Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal, participating in the All-Party meeting called on the eve of the budget session, also spoke on the increasing discrimination and even attacks on minority communities in the country. She said it was disconcerting that the Uttar Pradesh police was forcing members of the minority community to display their name plates on vendors and eateries which would hit them economically. "Similarly in Rajasthan baptized Sikh women were barred from entering the examination centre for a judicial paper which is a clear violation of their fundamental right to practice their religion. A case under the National Security Act (NSA) was registered against the head of a gurdwara in Sri Ganganagar solely because the gurdwara head was speaking against someone who was calling for the destruction of gurdwaras". What shall be the final outcome? Now the only ray of hope is the Supreme Court of India, which on Monday, 22 July, stayed the directions issued by Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments to the effect that eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route should display the names of the owners and staff outside the shops. "Until the returnable date, we deem it appropriate to pass an interim order prohibiting the enforcement of the impugned directives. In other words, the food sellers (including dhaba owners, restaurants, shops, fruits and vegetable sellers, hawkers, etc.) may be required to display the kind of food that they are selling to the Kanwariyas. But they must not be forced to display the names/identities of owners and also the employees, deployed in their respective establishments. It is ordered accordingly", a bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti ordered while issuing notice to states including Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh in three writ petitions, reports livelaw. The apex court posted the matter for hearing on July 26. The bench was hearing a plea filed by an NGO, the Association of Protection of Civil Rights and others, challenging the Uttar Pradesh government's order. Whatever the Supreme Court's decision comes, the divisive orders of the police for the time being have shaken the trust between different communities, which will take a long time to restore. Welcoming the apex court decision, CPIM Politburo Member Brinda Karat says, "It's a very welcome intervention by the Supreme Court and its interim order staying what we consider utterly divisive, communal and 'Manuvad' orders of the UP, followed by Uttarakhand governments. So, this is really a slap in the face of the UP and Uttarakhand governments. BJP, after their defeat in elections, are once again trying to divide the people on communal and casteist grounds." If the CPIM leader's allegations carry weight and have a solid base, then the public will have to understand the divisive agenda as alleged and have to think over who is the real propagator and what's the motive behind it.

# Introducing New Firmware and Applications for 4K Remote PTZ Camera Systems Including a Lite Version for Auto Tracking



Canon India, a leading company in digital imaging solutions, announced that they will begin offering firmware updates in early July 2024 to enhance functions and performance, including auto tracking, for

its 4K remote PTZ cameras<sup>1</sup> and remote camera controllers<sup>2</sup>. Notably, the firmware will include a limited feature version of the Auto Tracking Add-On Application on supported cameras<sup>3</sup> at no charge. Canon In-

dia has been enhancing its product line-up of remote PTZ camera systems by providing application software<sup>4</sup> that adds necessary functions according to their usage to camera systems, including 4K remote PTZ cameras and specialised controllers. With upgrades to firmware and applications across the system to improve their respective functionality and performance, Canon aims to assist workflow improvements on video production projects and aid visual communication in situations such as web conferences and lecture broadcasts. Enhanced Auto Tracking Performance and Free Auto Tracking Application (Lite)

Enhancements to the Auto Tracking Add-On Application<sup>5</sup> results in smoother, more natural pan tilt movement, and algorithm improvements to help maintain tracking of the desired subject even when crossing paths with others. Additionally, detailed auto tracking settings can now be adjusted from the controller, enabling operation without a PC. Canon will also be including in the firmware update a free lite version of the Auto Tracking Add-On application. Named Auto Tracking Application (Lite), this free version provides the same smooth and precise auto tracking experience as

the paid version, but without some of the advanced customizations that are available in the full licensed version. CR-N100 & CR-N300 Improved Frame Rate for USB Camera Output

The CR-N100 and CR-N300 will also see some significant improvements with this firmware. Their performance when in USB webcam mode will see a significant boost with higher frame rates and the addition of YUV format, which facilitates easier post-shooting image processing, making them versatile for various web conferencing applications in the Corporate and Education markets. Improved Camera Control Experience The remote camera controller RC-IP1000 will now be able to display thumbnail images of the camera's registered preset/trace functions on its touch panel.

This allows for intuitive control by reducing operation errors when recalling functions based on thumbnail images. Additionally, up to nine camera feeds displayed on the touch panel can be output to external monitors via SDI and HDMI. This capability enhances on-site operational convenience by enabling control while viewing multi-camera displays on large screens.

## The all-new BMW CE 04: First premium electric two-wheeler in India.

BMW Motorrad India has launched its first electric offering - the all-new BMW CE 04 - India's first premium electric scooter. The urban electric scooter will be available as a Completely Built-up Unit (CBU) in select metropolitan cities in India. Deliveries will commence from September 2024.

With its electric drive, forward-looking design and latest technology, the new scooter is built for a fresh mobility experience. The lightness of a scooter paired with the technology of a motorbike has been perfected for an urban environment.

Mr. Vikram Pawah, President and Chief Executive Officer, BMW Group India said, "The all-new BMW CE 04 is the beginning of a whole new era of electro-mobility at BMW Motorrad India. It is the new electric star, made for the city. Quiet, quick and agile, the BMW CE 04 slips easily through the city, turning the urban sprawl into a playground. It's big on design statement with futuristic and innovative style. Impressive power, latest technology and abundant range deliver a fun riding experience that you want to wake up for every day. An ideal companion for anyone who feels part of new urban living."

The ex-showroom price of BMW CE 04 starts at INR 14,90,000.

\*Prices prevailing at the time of invoicing will be applicable. Delivery will be made ex-showroom. Ex-showroom price (inclusive of GST) as applicable but excludes Road Tax, RTO statutory taxes/fees, other local tax/cess levies and insurance. Prices and options are subject to change

without prior notice. For further information, please contact your authorized BMW Motorrad Dealer in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi NCR, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune.

BMW India Financial Services offers customized and flexible financial solutions for BMW Motorrad. Customers can get their loans approved before delivery takes place. For complete peace of mind, all BMW Motorrad vehicles come with a standard warranty for 'three years, unlimited kilometres', with an option to extend the

warranty to fourth and fifth year. Road-Side Assistance, a 24x7 365 days package ensures prompt services in case of breakdown and towing situations.

The new BMW CE 04.

The design of BMW CE 04 combines functionality and clear aesthetics with digital reality. The shape is dominated by large, calm surfaces, contrasted by sharp edges. The long, stretched form envelops the slim energy storage unit in the underfloor assembly and the compact drivetrain. The front end is excitingly broken up while the

rear end reveals technological components, a typical feature of motorcycles. Powerful LED lighting all round increases safety.

The floating seat underscores visual lightness. Side design is practical too, for instance, the charging compartment and helmet storage unit fold out towards the side. Trend-setting 15" standard wheels have a disc-like look and the side stand seamlessly blends in the styling. The low center of gravity represents a further benefit: fun handling, surprising dynamism and timeless riding pleasure.

## 6th-gen Samsung Galaxy foldables now available in India

New Delhi: South Korean giant Samsung on Wednesday announced the sale of its sixth-generation foldable smartphones along with other new devices for consumers in India. Galaxy Z Fold6, Galaxy Z Flip6 and the Galaxy connected ecosystem products will be available across retail outlets. The company said consumers can own Galaxy Z Flip6 at just Rs 4,250 and Galaxy Z Fold6 at just Rs 6,542 with no-cost EMI for up to 24 months, along with other benefits. The company said that in the first 24 hours, pre-orders for Galaxy Z Fold6 and Z Flip6 jumped 40 per cent higher as compared to the previous generation foldables in India. For Indian con-

sumers, Galaxy Z Fold6 and Z Flip6 are being manufactured at the company's Noida factory.

The new foldables are the slimmest and lightest Galaxy Z series devices ever, and come with perfectly symmetrical design with straight edges. The Galaxy Z series is also equipped with enhanced Armor Aluminum and Corning Gorilla Glass Victus 2, making this the most durable Galaxy Z series yet. The Galaxy Z Fold6 offers a range of AI-powered features and tools - Note Assist, Composer, Sketch to image, Interpreter, Photo Assist and Instant Slowmo - to maximise the large screen and significantly enhance your productivity.



# HIV/AIDS: Key interventions and progress so far

From July 22 to July 26, Munich plays host to AIDS 2024, the 25th International AIDS Conference, also accessible virtually to participants across the globe. The conference will see an estimated 15,000 participants living with, affected by and working on HIV “share knowledge, best practices and lessons learnt from the HIV response over the past 40 years, as well as from the responses to COVID-19, mpox and other public health threats.” Featured speakers include the likes of former Prime Minister of New Zealand Helen Clark, Françoise Barre-Sinoussi, the winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2008 and First Lady of the United States Jill Biden. Renowned doctors, scientists, activists, researchers and health journalists will also form part of the conference. The core principle of the Conference is to champion an evidence-based approach to HIV that puts people first. From The New York Times’ headlines about a “mysterious fever” to an understanding of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and the eventual stage of the infection caused by it — Acquired immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) — scientific understanding about AIDS has grown exponentially since the first cases were detected in the 1980s. As science progresses, new interventions emerge to treat and manage HIV/AIDS. For example, a large clinical trial in South Africa and Uganda recently found that a twice-yearly injection of a new pre-exposure prophylaxis drug gives young women total protection from HIV infection. The focus of the trial was testing whether a six-month injection of lenacapavir would provide better protection against HIV infection than two other drugs, both daily pills which are also pre-exposure prophylaxis (or PrEP) drugs.

One of the highlights of the conference is a unique HIV cure case pertaining to a German man who is purportedly the world’s seventh person to be cured of AIDS following a stem cell transplant. He stopped taking antiretroviral treatment for HIV in late 2018 after receiving a stem cell transplant for leukemia in 2015. Notably, this is the first time the stem cell donor had a single HIV-resistant mutation, rather than two, which physician Christian Gaebler said could have “promising implications” for future cure strategies. Much remains to be done. As of 2022, 39 million people globally were living with HIV. Of these 1.3 million had become newly infected in 2022. In India, 2.4 million are HIV positive. While these numbers do not seem encouraging, they show a reduction since the early years of the AIDS epidemic, and a testament to a global push to destigmatise and intervene in HIV transmission. AIDS-related deaths have been reduced by 69% since the peak in 2004. We take a brief look at interventions currently in place to tackle HIV/AIDS, and how the world and India have sought to stem and reverse the tide of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. AIDS is a chronic condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, which attacks the body’s immune system, particularly white blood cells called CD4 cells. The virus is transmitted primarily through sexual contact, but also through the transfer of bodily fluids in other ways, such as through infected needles, blood transfusions and from mother to child at birth. Multimodal interventions have been developed to prevent, detect and tackle the HIV/AIDS virus. Pre-exposure prophylaxis

(PrEP) refers to medicine that prevents HIV after potential exposure. It is to be started within 72 hours after the exposure. The course is to be taken daily for 28 days. Lenacapavir (Len LA), the recent drug tested in South Africa and Uganda, is a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) drug. It operates as a fusion capsid inhibitor which interferes with the HIV capsid, a protein shell that protects HIV’s genetic material and the enzymes needed for replication.

Prevention of transmission is also achieved by use of condoms during sex, using sterilised needles and not reusing needles. Certain communities in countries like the U.S run Syringe services programmes (SSPs), to ensure safe disposal of used needles and syringes, as well as access to sterile syringes. They may also provide links to treatment for drug use disorders, infectious diseases spread by needle-sharing, and vaccination. Such programmes aim to tackle spread of diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C among populations where drug use is prevalent. They also safeguard public health by ensuring that used needles are disposed of safely. Use of infected blood may also be an issue. A recent report revealed that between the 1970s and 1990s, more than 30,000 people were infected with HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B after receiving contaminated blood and blood products imported from the U.S. — making it the “worst treatment disaster” in the history of Britain’s state-funded National Health Service (NHS). Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) is the use of antiretroviral drugs after a single high-risk event to stop HIV seroconversion. PEP must be started as soon as possible to be effective—and always within 72 hours of a possible exposure. It usually needs to be taken daily for 28 days. The first antiretroviral drug, AZT (zidovudine), was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) in March 1987. A further three drugs were approved in 1988, and a new class of antiretroviral drugs— protease inhibitors were introduced in 1995. A HAART (highly active antiretroviral therapy), a ‘cocktail therapy’ combining three or more antiretroviral drugs, became available starting in 1996. Costs, however, remained prohibitively high (\$10,000 a year). To deal with the high costs, the Indian government launched Free Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), for Persons living with HIV (PLHIV) on April 1, 2004. It was first made available for all adults living with HIV. From November 2006, it was made available for children as well. As of April 2024, facilities offering ART have increased from less than 10 to around 700 ART centres. 1,264 Link ART centres make free ART drugs available to approximately 1.8 million PLHIV on treatment. There are a number of drugs used in PrEP, PEP and ART. Till recently, these were available in pill form, but recent developments mean that injectables are becoming more common.

Part of the updates being released by the World Health Organisation at AIDS 2024 include its 2024 update of the provider module of the WHO Implementation tool for pre-exposure prophylaxis of HIV infection, replacing a 2017 clinical module. The module integrates clinical service delivery guidance for all 3 WHO recom-



mended PrEP products: oral PrEP; the dapivirine vaginal ring; and long acting injectable cabotegravir. Psychological and social support Often, stigma and social challenges may affect People Living with HIV (PLHIV). The People living with HIV Stigma Index is a tool designed to gather evidence about how discrimination and stigma affects the lives of those living with HIV. The index was developed by the Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+), ICW, UNAIDS and International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF), and first launched in 2008. The latest report available for India dates back to 2011 and is based on a study done in Tamil Nadu between December 2010 to September 2011, using a cross sectional design to survey a sample of 1594 PLHIV. The study found that self stigma among the PLHIV respondents was incredibly high, with marginalized groups expressing more self stigma reportedly based on their sexual identity or behaviors. Feelings of shame and guilt were often based upon experiences of social exclusion, such as exclusion from religious or family activities, or assault (verbal or physical). Frequently, this included violence by close family members as well as public violence, particularly in the case of people who use drugs and transgender persons. Community groups, psychological counselling and therapy, and psychiatric intervention thus may also be required to support persons living with HIV. At-risk populations and challenges with access Certain populations face a greater risk of acquiring HIV infection; stigma and laws surrounding these populations may make interventions even more challenging. As per a UNDP report titled ‘Pathways to Achieving the Global 10-10-10 HIV Targets,’ persons who inject drugs have a 35 times greater risk of acquiring HIV than adults who do not. Men who have sex with men (MSM) have a 28 times greater risk of acquiring HIV than other adult men (aged 15–49). Transwomen have a higher risk (14 times) than adult women (aged 15–49). Female sex workers are at 30 times greater risk adult women (aged 15–49). But medical access to these societies is hindered by legal frameworks. As of 2023, use or possession of drugs is criminalised in 115 countries. Consensual same-sex relations are criminalised in 67 countries, while identifying as transgender was criminalised in 20. Sex work or some aspect of it was criminalised in at least 168 countries. Other legal roadblocks exist too,

hindering access to treatment. Globally, HIV transmission, non-disclosure or exposure is a punishable offence in at least 143 countries. Several countries also require consent from a parent or guardian for access to beneficial healthcare services. As of 2021, at least 40 countries needed such consent for hormonal or long lasting contraceptives. 108 countries required consent for an HIV test, 43 for HIV self-testing. While Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) required consent in 22 countries, treatment required consent in 92 countries. Global agencies and how they’re tackling it The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) was created in 1996. It is co-sponsored by eleven United Nations agencies— World Health Organisation, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme, UN Development Programme, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women, International Labour Organisation, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank. In 2000, world leaders issued a declaration to stop and reverse the spread of HIV in the UN General Assembly’s Millennium Summit. 2002 saw the creation of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, for promoting universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care. In 2006, the General Assembly met to review progress since its special session and adopted a 53-point Political Declaration on the way towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. A similar meeting was held in June 2011. In 2015, countries achieved the targets envisaged under Millennium Development Goal 6A — to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. Target 6B sought to achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it by 2010. The next goal is to end the AIDS epidemic entirely by 2030. This is part of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by UN members states in 2015. Notably, SDG3 pertains to good health and well-being. In 2023, UNAIDS released a report titled Let Communities Lead, highlighting community participation in efforts to end the AIDS epidemic. Through its recommendations, the report sets out how to: Make communities’ leadership roles central to the formulation, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all plans, policies and programmes that will affect communities and that impact the HIV re

# An exclusive preview of Delhi's new Mughal museum

Delhi is crusted with layers and layers of the past. These exist laterally, extending outwards, but also vertically, beneath the ground, under a surface that millions of feet pound on every day. It is fitting, then, that the newest landmark of this city of graveyards is entirely underground. Opening in August, the Humayun Museum lies beneath the soil on which the Mughal identity, which gave a distinctive character and left an indelible mark on India, first began to take shape. Indeed, the earliest city of the Mughals was not Agra, or Lahore, or Fatehpur Sikri. Neither was it the Walled City of Shahjahanabad, the so-called Purani Dilli. It was around the much older 14th century shrine of Delhi's great Sufi saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. This is the assertion of the country's newest museum.

"The Humayun Museum will serve as a gateway to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Humayun's Tomb," says Ratish Nanda, the CEO of Aga Khan Trust for Culture, which has built the museum. "Each artefact relays and interprets the story of this historic precinct, where 700 years of monumental architecture is surrounded with craft, music, culture, and pluralism."

Stepping inside the museum, visitors are transported into the world of Humayun's Tomb — from the 16th century, when the monument was built, to the later centuries whose narrative the tomb helped shape, right up to this modern age. Each galley is arrayed with numerous clusters devoted to different themes — their arrangement resembling French gardens whose hedges are arranged like a maze. The clusters feature artefacts, replicas, films playing on loop, architectural models, stone fragments, statues and paintings that come together to weave hundreds of years of history. The Humayun Museum is the culmination of 15 years of work by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, in partnership with the Archaeological Survey of India — the same team that restored Humayun's Tomb. Fashioned as a site museum, the subterranean sprawl awakens visitors to the aesthetics of a slice of land that was — due to its intimate proximity to Nizamuddin's shrine — the preferred burial field for both the awaam and the baadshah (commoner and king). The dargah was venerated by the Mughals all through their 331-year rule. Each of the 18 emperors kept their links with this Sufi terrain; if not always through ziyarat (pilgrimage), then through architecture, or by making the zameen (ground) their final resting place. Until now, India's only prominent UNESCO World Heritage Site museum was in Sarnath, which bears a collection of 7,000 precious objects, out of which 300 are on display. The new museum in Delhi exhibits 700 objects, out of which 500 are original — some are provided by the National Museum, and many are from the collection of the Archaeological Survey of India and the Aga Khan Trust. The 200 replicas are of the same dimensions, and in the same materials, as their originals — made by artists trained in the crafts of the time.

Humayun's father Babar founded the Mughal dynasty. Humayun's son Akbar be-

came the greatest of all the Mughals. Nestled between them, Humayun remains somewhat out of focus. The most famous thing about him is the Humayun's Tomb — and that wasn't built by him. The museum reveals the lesser-known Humayun. Far from being a nonentity, he was a warrior who fought numerous battles, founded the Mughal school of miniature art, lost Hindustan (to Sher Shah Suri) after ruling it for about a decade, and then re-won it 15 years later. During the intervening years, Humayun stayed in Iran for 11 months as a guest of its Shah. And this dagger belonged to the Shah, inscribed with the words: "Sultan Tahmasp Safari". The iron blade, with its graceful curve, is a tangible link to a long, tumultuous period in Humayun's life. A life full of contrasting probabilities that could have spun our national history to one of several "what if" alternatives. On this, he must have sat and mulled upon the end of his dynasty. This was the ornate throne of the final Mughal emperor. At first, Bahadur Shah Zafar's marble throne looks small, not quite a seat of power. Gradually, it grows on the senses, becoming statelier as one observes it closely. The armrests are supported by latticework in stone. The tip of each armrest curves into stylised swans. Rows of coloured spots appear to mark the places inlaid with gems, though these are traces of severely faded paint.

A devotee of Sufism, Zafar had allotted himself a grave next to the dargah of a cherished Sufi saint in Mehrauli. But his plan didn't work — following the failure of the 1857 war of independence, in which Indian fighters rejected British rule and chose Zafar as their nominal ruler, the emperor was sent into exile in Rangoon, Burma (now Yangon, Myanmar), where he was eventually buried. Now, at long last, Zafar finds some posthumous peace in the museum. His throne commands a part of the gallery that celebrates his beloved Sufi mystics. The saint of Mehrauli belongs to the same Sufi order as Hazrat Nizamuddin, the surrounding grounds of whose shrine eventually became the resting place of hundreds of Mughal royals. Called the "dormitory of the Mughals," Humayun's Tomb is home to 160 graves, most of them in ground-level vaults. A display case beside Zafar's throne details all the Mughal monarchs who visited Nizamuddin's dargah. Their veneration began in 1526, following Babar's victory over Ibrahim Lodi. Among the first things that Babar did on entering Delhi was to pray at this dargah. Years later, his son Humayun built his capital of Dinpanah, known as Purana Qila, close to the dargah. Humayun also built a tomb for his mother, Maham Begum — it was even closer to the dargah (and now functions as a traffic island). Then, Humayun's successor, Akbar, built a mausoleum for his father close to Nizamuddin's dargah — the Humayun's Tomb. One of the two most significant early Mughal monuments, it served the model for the other, the Taj Mahal. The tomb was Zafar's refuge after he lost to the British in 1857, and it was from here that he was arrested and deported to Rangoon. This is the 14th century illustrated and handwritten manuscript of the roman-



tic poem Laila Majnu. The version is by the poet Abdullah, who was from Jam town in modern-day Afghanistan. The manuscript has 332 pages of text and 18 illustrations, some bearing floral details in gold. The copy does not belong to Humayun, but its presence reiterates how books were his spiritual companions. Literature was Humayun's lifeblood. His father authored one of the world's most vivid early memoirs (Baburnama). Humayun himself was a poet who penned in Persian and Turki. An avid reader, he was a compulsive collector of books. His library was carried along on all his frequent journeys, on the backs of special library camels called shutur-i-kitubkhana. His encampment was once attacked in a battlefield close to Kabul, and the camels carrying his library were lost, causing him acute anguish. But the camels were later spotted wandering on their own, and the books were retrieved.

Upon losing the Bengal sultanate to Sher Shah Suri, Humayun was obliged to add even more distance to his travels. In all, he journeyed 34,000 km — from present-day Bangladesh to the borders of Europe. His books would always be with him, and they found their final home in his city of Dinpanah, where Humayun built a double-storeyed kitubkhana, or library. The museum exhibits a beautiful model of this library, and a painting displays the tile decor of the interiors as they originally looked. The tiles in the actual library have lost their shine, and the walls show their faded gleam. For a man who spent much of his life on the road, and much of that time in wars, it was a tragic yet fitting farewell that the book-collector Humayun died in his library after slipping on its steep stairs at the age of 47. Although born in Kabul, the texture of Humayun's daily life was steeped in the traditions of the land where he was eventually buried. The museum's seven bronze Humayuns are sculpted by Scottish artist Jill Watson. Each Humayun is wearing the same ulbaqcha — a jacket that the emperor designed himself — but the robes are of different colours. In Hindu astrological traditions, planets associated with a day of the week are worshipped as deities. To avail the benefits of the powers associated with the planets, Humayun matched the colour of his robes to correspond to the colour of the planet of the day.

For instance, white (moon) was for Monday, and black (Saturn) was for Saturday. The day Humayun fatally slipped, he was on his library's roof, waiting for a word from his mathematician, whom he had sent to observe the rise of Venus in order to set the most auspicious hour to take an administrative decision. Since he died on a Sunday, Humayun must have been wearing a golden robe. The silver rupee coin bears the Arabic inscription, "Allahu Akbar jallajalaluhu". Flip it around, and it bears, in Persian, the word "Ram". Minted during Akbar's reign in Berar, which is in present-day Maharashtra, the coin is evidence of the Muslim-born ruler's fascination for various faiths — a passion that led him to propound the spiritual system "Din-i-Ilahi", or the religion of God. This aspect of Akbar is reflected in another exhibit — a much-faded 17th century Persian-language farman, or royal decree, issued by him, referring to scores of land allotments for the construction of temples. Age-old tradition does not let women enter Hazrat Nizamuddin's small grave chamber. But the museum has an exact replica — not of the grave but of the grave chamber's spectacular wooden canopy gifted by a Mughal noble from 17th century Bengal. It is inlaid in mother-of-pearl, ostensibly to mimic the starry effect of the night sky. A giant Tree of Life holds up each of the four corners of the canopy. In a sense, the museum's spiritual core is this recreated canopy, simply because its original hangs over Nizamuddin's grave. Had the saint's grave not existed here, there would be no Sufi dargah at this place. And no Humayun's Tomb. The golden vase looks fragile, as if could shatter at the touch. The vase exists as a drawing on a damaged tile and lies beside tiles of competing exquisiteness. The 17th century Shahjahani tiles were recovered by Old Delhi's illustrious Persian scholar, the late Yunus Jaffrey, from the Neeli Chatri monument at the foot of Salimgarh Fort, which stands beside the Red Fort. It was Humayun's favoured riverside pavilion, where he would often look at the Yamuna, or read a book. The edifice still exists, without the tiles. Fortunately, a handful of Delhi's monuments continue to hold on to their glazed tiles (plainer than the Shahjahani tiles), which are indicative of the Central Asian origins of the Mughals. Such tiles once adorned parts of Humayun's Tomb,

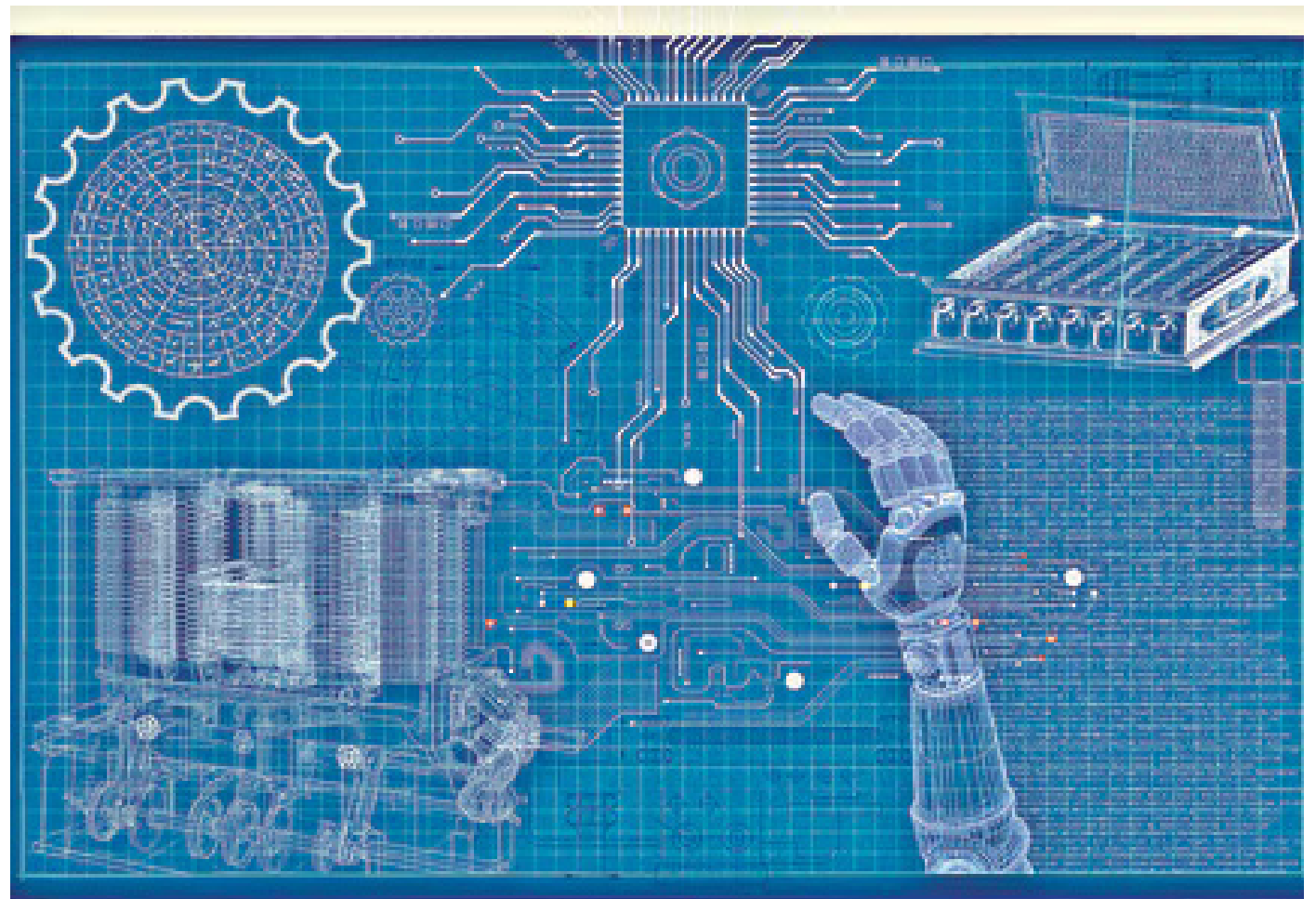
# We've been trying to chat with machines for centuries. See what came before AI

All those years ago, an Arabic astrology wheel was built in an early attempt at automated chat. Then, in 17th-century Europe, a "mathematical cabinet" was built in an attempt to automate poetry, music and coded messages. There was an American robot in the 1930s designed to spit out story ideas for Hollywood. Spell checks, text messaging and autocorrect would follow.

It's an intriguing journey that Dennis Yi Tenen, a scholar and software engineer, traces in his new book, *Literary Theory for Robots: How Computers Learned to Write*. His aim, he says, is to take some of the fear and confusion away from how we view this technology, and offer a reminder that humans have always woven threads of language and technology together, driven by a primal urge to protect and promote intelligence and knowledge. "Language and technology didn't just develop together; language is technology," says Yi Tenen, an associate professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University. "While many animals teach things to their young, only humans are able to do it remotely, for instance, preserving and transmitting our collective know-how across time and space." Can we go too far in this quest? "Of course we can. I find it difficult to use technology in a balanced way in my own life," Yi Tenen says. With AI, of course, the struggle isn't quite the same. It is, potentially, a struggle over the nature of reality, veracity, truth.

Which is why it is even more vital to view this technology accurately and dispassionately as a product of human endeavour, Yi Tenen says, and not as something that is a being by itself. If we view it as an extension of our collective intelligence, we can hold technology makers responsible and accountable, he adds. His book, accordingly, takes a step back, into the historical context of AI. How far back can we trace our efforts to create "intelligent" machines? Take a look.

This device, created in Arabia, was a maze of concentric circles and elaborate charts that bore zodiac signs, letters, symbols and numerical values. Cords zig-zagged across the whole. A manual or rulebook of sorts helped soothsayers interpret the readings, particularly in matters of astrology. What's interesting, though, is that some of the circles contained verses from the Quran and other holy texts, "and in manipulating the circles, one could actually kind of have a conversation with the device," Yi Tenen says. "The fact that we're still in Q&A mode with ChatGPT... I thought that was such a cool parallel." The earliest literary bots were shaped like giant cupboards, and operated like a sort of word loom. One of the earliest examples is the Mathematical Organ created by 17th-century polymath Athanasius Kircher. Made of painted wood, this was a box-style chest made up of rows and columns of wooden slats or rods. Attached to each were paper booklets on subjects such as arithmetic, music, geometry, chronology and astrology. In a spooky foreshadowing, Kircher called them "applications". Manipulating these rods and consulting the booklets, which were ar-



anged in a matrix, could help the user compose poetry and music (of a sort), write encrypted messages, and work out certain kinds of mathematical and astronomical calculations. Kircher sold a version of the device to the young Archduke Charles Joseph of Austria to help with his studies. It sparked several debates, including a public one at a bar between Kircher and the German poet Quirinus Kuhlmann. The latter argued that the path to knowledge should be "torturous, accessible only to those willing to walk it properly". It wasn't the organ that was intelligent, the poet added; the intelligence lay with Kircher. "Without the box, the young duke remains an idiotic parrot." Essentially, an early instance of the argument that computers are making us lazy and stupid. The Analytical Engine, 1830s It was Kircher's Mathematical Organ that inspired the English mathematician Charles Babbage to create what would go down in history as the world's first computer, in the 1830s. Babbage called it the Analytical Engine, and developed its functions in collaboration with the countess and mathematician Ada Lovelace.

It eventually looked like a weaver's loom. The machine — only partly built by Babbage in his lifetime — had a mill (like the central processing unit), store (like memory storage), reader (input device) and printer (output device). The mill could process calculations with the help of punch cards inserted into the reader. The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations, 1895 By the 19th century, amid the early years of the industrial revolution, templates were emerging: for furniture, machinery, clothing, equipment, and for the arts (literature, film, mu-

sic), journalism, even philosophy. In the arts, templates have always been looked down upon as a poor substitute for missing genius. But, Yi Tenen argues, they have always lain at the heart of how we learn. Could a machine, then, help a not-so-great writer write a great tale? Long before ChatGPT, an outline generator was created by the French writer Georges Polti, in 1895. Titled *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, it listed three dozen predicaments designed to help a struggling playwright. These included supplication, deliverance, vengeance, pursuit, disaster, revolt, rivalry and adultery. Each was explained briefly with examples. For instance, pursuit came with the instructions that the plot should be "held by the fugitive alone; sometimes innocent, always excusable, for the fault — if there was one — appears to be inevitable, ordained; we do not inquire into it or blame it, which would be idle, but sympathetically suffer the consequences with our hero, who whatever he may once have been, is now but a fellow-man in danger". Combining elements from his set of dramatic situations,

hundreds of thousands of stories could take shape. Though rarely acknowledged, such templates were frequently used by writers well into the age of cinema, Yi Tenen says. This machine, built by Los Angeles screenwriter Wycliffe Hill, could produce a complete outline of a story in 20 minutes, its whirring gears drawing background, characters and dramatic situations from a series of tapes housed in its chassis. The robot found no takers (it is unclear why, but expense may have been a factor; it is also possible that the stories weren't very good). But it prompted Hill to write a book titled *Plot Genie* (1935), about a wheel that could be spun to point to seemingly random numbers, which could be referenced against a set of charts, to generate plot requisites (locale, character, the beloved, the problem, and so on). As it turns out, Hill wasn't a polymath or early technocrat. He was a scriptwriter who became fixated on decoding the intricacies of what makes a good plot, when his own screenplay was rejected. His aim was to take the effort and uncertainty out of writing.

## AFA former and present commandants get medals

Hyderabad: Air Marshal (ret'd) B Chandra Sekhar, former Commandant of the Air Force Academy (AFA) in Hyderabad, received the Param Vishisht Seva Medal. Additionally, current AFA Commandant, Air Marshal S Shrinivas has been honoured with the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal for his exceptional services to the

Indian Air Force (IAF), a press release said. On Friday, President Droupadi Murmu conferred 94 Distinguished Service Decorations to the personnel of the Armed Forces and the Indian Coast Guard during the Defence Investiture Ceremony (Phase-2) at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi.

# What is the 'conservative roadmap' suggested for a potential second Trump term?

A defiant Donald Trump has been voted as the official Republican candidate for the 2024 U.S. Presidential polls at the Republican National Convention (RNC) held in Milwaukee. Mr. Trump, who survived an assassination attempt on July 13, recently came under fire for a controversial policy roadmap called 'Project 2025', penned by some of his allies and ex-employees of his administration. The 78-year-old ex-president has denied any knowledge about it. The 900-page document outlines a 'conservative' approach to overhaul the federal tax code, restrict abortions and bring most government employees directly under the President's control, rather than their independent departments. U.S. President Joe Biden, who is Mr. Trump's Democratic rival, has termed the project as the "biggest attack on the government in U.S. history." Linking Mr. Trump directly to it, Mr. Biden pointed out that the initiative is "run and paid for by Trump people" and is "a blueprint for a second Trump." Here's a look at what the document proposes, who is behind it and its significance.

## What is 'Project 2025'?

Project 2025, termed as a 'Presidential Transition project' talks of how to reshape US governing policy with a conservative agenda, personnel, training and a roadmap for the first 180 days of the presidency. While the project has been in the making since 2023, it has recently gained traction after Mr. Biden declared "Project 2025 will destroy America" in early July, and has continued to attack Mr. Trump over it. Under its policy agenda, Project 2025 quotes a book named 'Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise' which will aid the next 'conservative President' taking office in January 2025 to 'deconstruct the Administrative State' and 'save America'. Detailing its plans for various government departments like Defence, Education, Commerce, Trade, Justice, Homeland Security, Health, Energy, Environment and the bureaucracy, the project makes several dramatic suggestions: Overhaul of foreign policy regarding Mexico, Russia, China, Iran, and Korea; make immigration and visa policies more stringent. The 'Personnel' part of the project invites interested conservatives to apply for positions in the next administrations via a questionnaire. Apart from the standard questions on personal details, educational and professional qualifications, the questionnaire asks applicants to answer in detail about their political philosophies, policies of interest, opinions on immigration, abortion, education, sexuality, religion, unions, law enforcement, healthcare, gender, military, and free speech. Details are to be compiled on a presidential personnel database to help the team select like-minded political appointees in its administration. Potential political appointees can attend online courses offered by their 'Presidential Administration Academy' to learn conservative governance, administrative and regulatory processes. The project also has a 180-day playbook for the transition of each federal agency from the old administration to the new conservative one.

## Who is running Project 2025?

The initiative, which was first commis-

sioned in 2023, is spearheaded by The Heritage Foundation – an influential right-wing think tank which has been guiding conservative policies since the Reagan Administration. In its latest 'Mandate for Leadership', it claims that the Trump Administration followed almost two-thirds of its goals within its first year. Apart from the Foundation, there are about 100 conservative organizations involved in the project such as Alabama Policy Institute, American Cornerstone Institute, Center for Military Readiness, Gun Owners Foundation, Hillsdale College, James Madison Institute, National Rifle Association, and Project 21, to name a few.

How is Donald Trump connected to it?

While Mr. Trump is not mentioned in the document and his campaign is not mentioned as one of the coalition partners, many former officials of his administration and several of his political advisors are in key positions of the initiative. Paul Dans, the project's director, was Chief of Staff at the Office of Personnel Management in the Trump administration, reported the BBC. Similarly, former Trump official and Republican National Committee's 2024 platform policy director Russell Vought is another contributor to the policy document. At least 140 former Trump administration officials, including six former cabinet secretaries and four ambassadors nominated by Trump are involved in the project, according to a CNN estimate. Several lawyers, who aided Mr. Trump during his bid to overturn the 2020 election and his impeachment trial, such as Jay Sekulow, Cleta Mitchell and John Eastman, are advising the project. Apart from direct officials, several Trump appointees in independent bodies have also contributed to the project, reports CNN. The project is the brainchild of The Heritage foundation, led by Mr. Kevin Roberts. The foundation is closely associated with Mr. Trump—the former president has spoken at several events hosted by the think tank and Mr. Roberts has publicly backed Mr. Trump, claiming to have spoken to the ex-president multiple times. "I disagree with some of the things they're saying and some of the things they're saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal. Anything they do, I wish them luck, but I have nothing to do with them," he wrote in a post on Truth Social.

What is the significance of Project 2025?

The project has alarmed not just Mr. Trump's opposers, but several legal experts, bureaucrats, law enforcement agents and some Republicans. A recent ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court maintaining that presidents enjoyed broad immunity from prosecution for their actions while in office has raised concerns of abuse of power. With Project 2025 recommending higher presidential authority, politicising bureaucracy and make sweeping policy changes without Congressional approval, many fear that such changes, if implemented under a second term Trump administration, would be dangerous for the U.S. Certain extreme suggestions in the document, such as those on abortion pills and gender, are not supported by Mr.



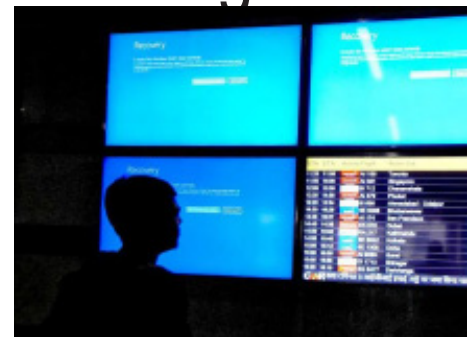
Trump. However, others like increasing presidential powers and political appointees were suggestions voiced by Mr. Trump. The Trump campaign has issued a statement to Reuters saying, "Team Biden and the DNC are lying and fearmongering," adding that the official policy platform of the Republican party was published under Agenda 47, distancing Mr. Trump and the party from Project 2025. Close shave: Republican presidential candidate and former U.S. President Donald Trump is surrounded by U.S. Secret Service agents following the shooting at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday. Close shave: Republican presidential candidate and former U.S. President Donald Trump is

surrounded by U.S. Secret Service agents following the shooting at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday. | Photo Credit: Evan Vucci With polarization running high in this election cycle, as witnessed by the assassination attempt of Mr. Trump, the conservative base has rallied strongly behind the former President. Several polls predict that the recent attempt and his strong defiance to it is likely to favour Mr. Trump's poll chances. While several 'tell-all' books have revealed that federal officials working in the White House had limited the damage of the first Trump term, Project 2025 paints a grave, organised picture of a second Trump presidency taking the U.S. down a steep conservative route.

## CrowdStrike details causes of Microsoft outage

New Delhi: As millions of Windows computers were left crippled for hours, disrupting the services of airlines, banks, hospitals and stock exchanges worldwide, cyber-security platform CrowdStrike on Saturday tried to explain what actually went wrong at their end. According to the company which provides third-party security updates to the Satya Nadella-run tech giant, on July 19, at 9.30 a.m. (India time), it released a sensor configuration update to Windows systems. Sensor configuration updates are an ongoing part of the protection mechanisms of the Falcon platform.

"This configuration update triggered a logic error resulting in a system crash and blue screen (BSOD) on impacted systems," said CrowdStrike. In a technical blog, the company said the sensor configuration update that caused the system crash was remediated at around 10.57 a.m. This issue is not the result of or related to a cyberattack," it said. Millions of customers running Falcon sensor for Windows version 7.11 and above that were online were impacted. "Systems running Falcon sensor for Windows 7.11 and above that downloaded the updated configuration from 9.30 a.m. to 10.57 a.m. — were susceptible to a system crash," the company said. According to it, this is not a new process and the architecture has been in place



since Falcon's inception. The update that occurred at 9.30 a.m. was designed to target newly observed, malicious named pipes being used by common C2 frameworks in cyberattacks. The configuration update triggered a logic error that resulted in an operating system crash. "CrowdStrike has corrected the logic error by updating the content in Channel File 291. No additional changes to Channel File 291 beyond the updated logic will be deployed. Falcon is still evaluating and protecting against the abuse of named pipes," the company explained. Systems that are not currently impacted will continue to operate as expected, continue to provide protection, and have no risk of experiencing this event in the future. "We understand how this issue occurred and we are doing a thorough root cause analysis to determine how this logic flaw occurred."