Over 2200 power utilities company employees promoted in Telangana

Hyderabad: In a significant development, 2263 employees of Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited(TGSPDCL) were promoted simultaneously on Sunday.Company Chairman and Managing Director Musharraf Ali Faruqui issued orders in this regard. The company management has issued promotion orders right from junior linemen to chief general manager rank officers.

According to a statement issued, as many as 101 employees were promoted in the engineering wing; 47 in accounts; 2099 in Operation & Maintenance; 16 officers in P&G services.As per information, two Superintendent Engineers(SE) were promoted as Chief Engineers and one General Manager has been promoted as joint secretary. As many as 8 Divisional Engineers(DEs) were promoted as SEs, 30 Assistant Divisional Engineers were promoted as DEs, 58 Assistant Engineers/Assistant Executive Engineers were promoted as ADEs and 1650 junior linemen were promoted as assistant linemen.

The issue of promotion was brought to the notice of Deputy Chief Minister and Energy Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka recently and he asked the SPDCL CMD to take steps to issue promotion orders. Following which orders were issued on Sunday.The promotion has been pending

since 2017 and many employees retired without getting promotions. The CMD said steps would be taken as per the orders of the State government to fill up the vacant posts created due to the promotions of 2263 staff.

Farmers take to streets over crop loan waiver; AIPKS calls for protests on August 28

Khammam: Even as the agricultural officials started receiving applications on Tuesday from farmers whose crop loan was not waived off, farmers took to streets at different places seeking crop loan waiver for all.A large group of farmers staged rasta-roko in front of Vemsoor mandal MPDO office on the main road. Similarly farmers staged a protest at Chandrugonda Rythu Vedika in Kothagudem district demanding crop loan waiver for all farmers.

Extending support to the protesting farmers All India Pragathisheela Rythu Sangham (AIPKS) called for protests at all the district collectorates in the State on August 28 demanding unconditional crop loan waiver.Speaking to the media here, the sangham leaders Gurram Achaiah, M Nageswara Rao and Avula Venkateshwarlu stated that during the recent Assembly elections, the Congress party had promised to waive off the crop loans up to Rs 2 lakh.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy announced that crop loans would be waived off by August 15. Even after nine months passed by since Congress came to power,

crop loans were not waived off fully. While the government blames technical problems for the same.The government has cheated lakhs of farmers by imposing restrictions instead of waiving their loans. Lakhs of small and marginal farmers could not get relief as ration cards were taken into consideration to identify farmer families, they said.

As ration cards were not issued to eligible farmers, lakhs of farmers were unable to avail loan waiver. Out of 3.17 lakh farmers, loans of only 1.15 lakh farmers waived and the figures announced by the government made it clear that more than two lakh farmers yet to avail loan waiver.It was unfair to ask farmers pay the loan amount above Rs 2 lakh to get Rs 2 lakh loan waiver. If the government waives off Rs 2 lakh loan the farmers would be able to pay the remainder, the sangham leaders said.

They wanted immediate steps to solve the technical problems identified by the agriculture department and measures by the Central and State governments to provide a minimum support price for the crops.

Extending support to the protesting farmers All India Pragathisheela Rythu Sangham (AIPKS) called for protests at all the district collectorates in the State on August 28 demanding unconditional crop loan waiver

Promises kept: Have newly sworn-in Prime Ministers fulfilled their Independence Day promises?

As India celebrated its 78th Independence Day on August 15, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) by 2047 in his 11th consecutive address from the ramparts of the Red Fort.Since India's first Prime Minister – Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru – every newly sworn-in Prime Minister has made promises or policy announcements, or issued fervent appeals to the nation in their Independence Day address.In the first article of this two-part series 'Promises made, Promises kept', we listed the promises made by Indian Prime Ministers (starting from Mr. Nehru to Mr. Modi) in their Independence Day addresses. In this article, we explore if and how these promises have been implemented by them.

Foodgrain production in India rose steadily in 1952 from 51.99 million to 59.20 million tons and plateaued at 66 to 69 million tons in 1957-58. This was mainly due to a balanced policy adopted by the Nehru government which reduced the Centre's distribution commitments while ensuring that sufficient food demand was met at controlled prices i.e. neither total control nor complete free play of market forces, explains the United Nations' (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization.According to a World Bank report titled 'Perspectives on poverty in India', the percentage of people below the poverty line rose steadily in the early 1950s to a peak of 50% (urban) and 65% (rural) before falling and rising multiple times before 1960. Hence, Mr. Nehru's promise of uplifting the poor remained unfulfilled throughout his tenure.1957's promises: Peace with Pakistan, neutrality in Cold warAfter signing a ceasefire in 1948, India and Pakistan signed several treaties throughout Mr. Nehru's tenure regarding protecting minorities and migrants, trade, utilisation of Indus waters, financial payments, and rail transport, in a bid to promote peace between the two neighbours. Similarly, upholding India's intention to maintain global neutrality, the non-alignment movement was established in 1961 during the Cold War to retain an autonomy of policy between that of the two blocs headed by United States and Russia respectively.1962's promises: Closing wealth gapThis promise was somewhat fulfilled in the 1960s as a recent study revealed that the wealth gap rose briefly during the 1950s but then consistently fell over the next two decades to 6.1% by 1982 – likely due to the socialist policy agenda pursued by the Centre. However, India's wealth gap is at its highest at present, with the top 1% holding 40% of the nation's wealth.

Lal Bahudar Shastri: 1965Promises: No talks with Pakistan, reduce machine imports, investment in agriculture, take over procurement and distribution of foodgrainsMr. Shastri soon back-tracked from an assertion that he would not hold talks with Pakistan, as he signed the Tashkent Declaration on January 10, 1966 — a day before his untimely death. The declaration normalised peaceful relations between the two neighbours after the 1965 war in accordance to the UN Charter, with the two nations agreeing to troop withdrawal, repatriation of prisoners of war and continued talks with each other.With the

setting up of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in 1965, the Centre became the biggest purchaser of foodgrains like wheat and rice, offering minimum support price to farmers— thus fulfilling Mr. Shastri's promise. FCI also maintains operational and buffer stocks of food grains to ensure food security and facilitates distribution to citizens via the Public Distribution System (PDS).Indira Gandhi: 1967, 1971, 19801967's promise: Three-language formula, tackling price riseIn 1968, Ms. Gandhi's government rolled out India's first National Policy on Education, which included the three-language formula advising State governments to include the study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the Southern languages apart from Hindi and English in Hindi-speaking States and of Hindi along with English and the regional language in non-Hindi speaking states. There was progress on price rise as well: India's inflation between 1967 and 1971 fell rapidly from 13.05% to -0.58% before stabilising at 5.09%.1971's promises: India's support to Bangladesh, tackling price rise

Within a year of Bangladesh's birth, India signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship on March 19, 1972, pledging 'fraternal and good-neighbourly relations' to maintain lasting peace and respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other. On the domestic front, India's inflation skyrocketed from 3.08% in 1971 to 28.06% in 1974 before Ms. Gandhi imposed Emergency across the nation in 1975 sinking inflation to -7.63%.1980's promises: Punishing the perpetrators of the Moradabad riots, root out corruptionInitially, Ms. Gandhi alleged that a 'foreign hand' was involved in the Moradabad riots which had killed over 300 people in several districts in Uttar Pradesh. After visiting the site, she dismissed it. Even after her promise of strict action against the perpetrators, violence continued across UP till November 1980. A blame-game between the Congress and BJP continued in Parliament, with the former blaming RSS for stoking communal violence and the latter blaming Jamaat-i-Islami for the attacks. A judicial commission probed and tabled a report in 1983 which was publicised only in 2023, clearing RSS and Dalit organisations of wrongdoing and blaming IUML leader Dr. Shamim Ahmed Khan and his supporters for instigating the riots.Rooting out corruption is a promise which remains unfulfilled, as every succeeding Prime Minister (including Mr. Modi) has vowed to root out.Morarji Desai: 1977Promises: Eradicate untouchability, stabilise price rise, increase employmentMr. Desai's promise to 'eradicate untouchability' was vague as Article 17 already prohibited it and Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Moreover, the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 affirmed Dalits' right to education, religion, use public spaces. Admittedly, there is no clarity on whether and where untouchability prevails in the nation.Inflation in 1977 was at 8.3% before it fell to 2.5% and rose to 6.28% in 1979. Unemployment which had fallen to 1.62% in 1973 had gradually risen to 2.58% by 1978, in stark contrast to Mr.

Desai's promise.Charan Singh: 1979Promises: Reconsider India's nuclear options, eradicate corruption, boost cottage and small-scale industries and offer remunerative prices to farmersWhile India did not have a clear 'No First Use' policy in nuclear weapons till 1999, there were major changes to India's nuclear policy prior to that. Due to his short tenure of 23 days, Mr. Singh was unable to present a budget and fulfill his agricultural promises.Promises: Peace in Assam and Punjab, Lok Pal Bill, seventh (five-year) plan, peaceful resolution to Sri Lanka-Tamil conflictDuring his tenure, Mr. Gandhi signed the Rajiv-Longowal accord with the President of the Shiromani Akali Dal, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, after releasing 1700 alleged Sikh militants jailed following the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. The accord recognised the territorial, economic and religious demands of the Sikh people in the aftermath of Operation Blue Star. However, the accords failed to bring peace as Mr. Longowal was assassinated within days and the BJP slammed the Congress for being soft on Sikh Army deserters. Militancy in Punjab continued to grow.On the Assam front, the accords set the cut-off date as January 1, 1966 after which those who entered Assam were labelled as foreigners. While this kicked off the demand for a National Register for Citizenship, the Assam agitation was ended. Versions of the Lok Pal Bill were introduced by Mr. Gandhi's government in 1985 and 1989, but were not passed. Another promise fulfilled by Mr. Gandhi was the seventh (five-year) plan, which had several schemes to use modern technology to enhance productivity of small- and large-scale farmers, implement social welfare schemes and strengthen industrialisation.The last hope which Mr. Gandhi had — a peaceful resolution to the Sri Lanka-Tamil conflict— failed disastrously, as it ended in him being assassinated by LTTE terrorist Dhanu at Sriperumbudur in retaliation to Mr. Gandhi's decision to send the Indian Peace-Keeping Force to Sri Lanka.V.P. Singh: 1990Promises: OBC reservation, 40% reservation to poor in legislatures, national agriculture policy

The only triumph in V.P.Singh's one-year tenure as Prime Minister is the implementation of the Mandal commission recommendations, which has stood the legal and judicial test of time till date. Apart from

that, the suggestion of reserving 40% seats in legislatures for the poor has never been considered and no agricultural policy was formulated by his government.

Promises: Incentives for foreign investors, Punjab elections, protection to minorities, rapid industrialisation, Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water missionFollowing through on his promises, Mr. Rao opened up the Indian market to foreign investors by allowing foreign equity investment of up to 51% in 34 industries without permission from the Centre. He also eased permission norms for new investment into various sectors, paving the way for industrialisation. Heimplemented Phase 1 of the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water mission,providing water to 31,249 villages.Elections were held in Punjab with the Congress winning 87 of 117 seats.The only promise he failed to fulfill was the one to protect minorities, as the Ram Janmabhoomi movement peaked during his regime, culminating in the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992. Riots ensued across India in Surat, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Bhopal, Mumbai and Delhi, killing almost 2,000 people— with 900 killed in Mumbai alone.H. D. Deve Gowda: 1996Promises: Assurances to J&K, Uttarakhand formation, continuing Agni and Prithvi defence programme, extending PDS, national water-sharing policyMaking Jammu-Kashmir his first priority, Mr. Gowda followed through on his promisea by visiting the Valley and restaring State elections— the first since the 1987 elections, which were mostly believed to be a political understanding between the Congress and the National Congress. He also extended PDS to offer free foodgrains to the poor. While he did announce the formation of Uttarakhand, it was only in 1998 that the Vajpayee government sent the UP reorganisation Bill to the State assembly, paving way for a new state in 2000. He also failed to amend the Inter-State River Water Dispute Act, which was first passed in 1965.The astute diplomat-turned-Prime Minster faced many foreign policy successes with the Gujral doctrine which set the tone for India's policy towards its neighbours. His other success is India's refusal to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) – a policy in force till date. His government signed a ceasefire agreement with NSCN(I-M), ending a bloody chapter of militancy in Nagaland.

42nd Quarterly Review Meeting for June 2024

State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), Telangana has convened its 42nd Quarterly Review meeting today i.e on 20.08.2024 to review the performance of the Banks for the quarter ended June 2024 in Telangana State. The meeting was attended by:

1. Shri Batti Vikramarka Mallu garu, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister & Minister for Finance & Planning, Energy, Telangana State

2. Sri. Tummala Nageswara Rao garu, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Marketing, Co-operation, and Handlooms & Textiles, Telangana State

3. Sri Sandeep Kumar Sultania, IAS, Principal Secretary (Finance), Govt. of Telangana

4. Sri M Raghunandana Rao, IAS, APC & Secretary to Government of Telangana

5. Sri Kamal Prasad Patnaik, Regional Director, RBI, Hyderabad

6. Smt Suseela Chintala, CGM, NABARD, Hyderabad

7. Shri Prakash Chandra Baror, GM, SBI & Convenor, SLBC

Senior Officials from the line departments of Govt of Telangana, Government of India, executives from Public Sector Banks, Private Sector Banks, RRBs, SFBs, Payments Banks etc., Sri Prakash Chandra Baror, GM, SBI & Convenor, SLBC presented the performance of the banks in Telangana during the quarter June 2024 as under: Total Deposits of the banks grew by **Rs. 2,005 crores** during the quarter June 2024 and the total deposits were at **Rs.7,81,959 crores.**Total Advances with Banks grew by **Rs. 16,289** crores and the advances of all banks were at Rs. **9,95,348 Crores** CD ratio continues to be above 100 percent and it has gone up from **125.53%** to **127.29** % during the quarter. During the quarter, Banks have disbursed Short Term Production Loans amounting to **Rs.17,383** crores achieving **35.56%** of the Kharif targets**.** Banks have disbursed **Rs.23,848** crores as Investment Credit to Agri. Allied, Agri. Infra and Agri. Ancillary activities achieving **41.65%** of the targets**.**Banks have disbursed Educational loans amounting to **Rs.220.49 Crores** and Housing loans amounting to **Rs.984.34 Crores** under Priority Sector during the current financial year so far**.** Banks have disbursed Rs.**57,079** crores to Micro, Small & Medium enterprises (MSME) segment achieving **44.03%** of the targets.Under Pradhan Manthri Mudra Yojana Scheme, Banks have sanctioned **Rs.1,987** crores achieving **21.49%** of the annual targets Banks together have disbursed an amount of Rs. **1,00,731** crores to various sections of borrowers under Priority Sector, recording an achievement of **35.9%** of targets.

On the Financial Inclusion front;

a) As per the information provided by Dept of Financial Services, there are no Unbanked Rural Centres in the State. An agenda on this will be presented during the course of meeting.

b) Banks in the State have **118.55 lakh** PMJDY accounts in their books and **95.72 lacs i.e., 80.75%** of the PMJDY accounts are seeded with Aadhar**.** RuPay cards were issued to **86.54 lacs** i.e **73%** of the PMJDY accounts.

c) As far as the social security schemes are concerned, Banks have covered **151.63 lakh** customers under Pradhan Manthri Suraksha Bheema Yojana (PMSBY) and **67.94 lakh** customers under Pradhan Manthri Jeevan Jyothi Beema Yojana (PMJJBY). **19.38 lakh** customers have subscribed for Atal pension Yojana scheme.

Under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhayan:

d) Under PM Svanidhi Tranche 1, Banks have sanctioned **4,22,697** applications and disbursed **loans to 4,19,600 Street Vendors.** Under Tranche 2, Banks have sanctioned **2,10,332** applications and disbursed loans to **2,06,764** Street Vendors. Under Tranche 3, Banks have sanctioned **52,850** applications and disbursed **50,527**.Under Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, banks have sanctioned **Rs.2811 crores** against a cumulative target of **Rs.3200** crores so far**.**

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Tummala Nageswara Rao, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture emphasized the need to focus more on well exceeding the stipulated targets for FY 2024-25 under Agriculture and Allied activities. He further sought the support of Banks in focusing on development of Agricultural Economy. While reiterating the strenuous efforts put in by Government of Telangana in implementing CLW-2024 scheme in record time, he emphasised the need and involvement of Banks in handling the various issues related to Crop loan waiver at the branch level effectively. Further he appealed to the Banks to expedite the process of timely disbursement of crop loans within the season and without troubling farmersShri Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, while applauding the efforts of Banks in achieving various targets, sought the Banks to be benevolent in focusing more on extending credit to weaker sections and SHGs. Further, he conveyed that more and more micro enterprises are to be credit linked, which will bring in significant change in scenario. From the viewpoint of priority sector lending, he advised the Banks to have more exposure in Priority sector lending with a special focus on Agriculture, Housing and Education loans to weaker sections. He further assured the Banks of all needed support from the State Government, in partnering with social development of the State. He further sought the support of Banks in ensuring timely renewals/disbursements of crop loans which are benefited from CLW2024 scheme, keeping in view the objectives of the scheme and strenuous efforts put in by State Government in mobilizing the funds for the scheme. He further appealed to all Banks for extending all needed support to another flagship scheme of State Government, "Indira Mahila Shakthi scheme", for empowerment of SHG women, by extending credit to potential income generating activities. Smt Chintala Suseela, CGM, NABARD, Shri Kamal Prasad Patnaik, RD, Reserve Bank of India also spoke on the occasion. The meeting concluded with vote of thanks by Shri Prashanth Kumar Bariyar, DGM (FI & SLBC),SBI.

(Prakash Chandra Baror)

GENERAL MANAGER & SLBC CONVENOR STATE BANK OF INDIA. LHO, HYDERABADDate: 20.08.2024

Trump posts image of fake Taylor Swift endorsement

Former President Donald Trump has posted a fake social media image of pop superstar Taylor Swift asking people to vote for him in the November election.A Sunday entry by the Republican candidate on Truth Social showed Swift dressed in red, white and blue with a caption that said "Taylor Swift Wants You To Vote For Donald Trump.""I accept!" Trump wrote.

Swift has not publicly endorsed a candidate in the 2024 race but has supported Democrats in the past.The singer backed President Joe Biden and running mate Kamala Harris in 2020. Harris is set to be formally nominated as the 2024 Democratic candidate at the party's national convention in Chicago this week. She also criticized Trump in a 2020 documentary.Spokespeople for Swift and Trump did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Trump also posted photos of young women wearing "Swifties for Trump" shirts, and a satirical article with the headline "Swifties Turning to Trump After ISIS Foiled Taylor Swift Concert." The article was marked "SATIRE" above the headline.Swift canceled three shows in Vienna this month after authorities said they had foiled a planned attack. Local officials arrested a 19-year-old man who they said was inspired by Islamic State.Several Swift fans and watchdog groups said many of the images posted by Trump appeared to be deepfakes generated by artificial intelligence.Advocates in the music industry, Hollywood and Washington have been pushing for federal legislation and other measures to fight the explosion of fake AI images online.

On World Photography Day, Canon India Launches #Capture WithCare Campaign to Advocate for Safe Photography Practices

Highlighting the alarming rise in accidents due to social media-driven photography trends

"Don't Let That Breathtaking Shot Get Literal"—this line was at the forefront of Canon India's latest initiative, sparking curiosity and discussion. To commemorate World Photography Day, Canon India, a leader in digital imaging solutions, has launched the '#CaptureWithCare' digital campaign, a thought-provoking effort aimed at reminding photographers that safety should always come first. Through this campaign, Canon India seeks to educate the community on the importance of responsible practices, ensuring that the art of photography remains both beautiful and safe.
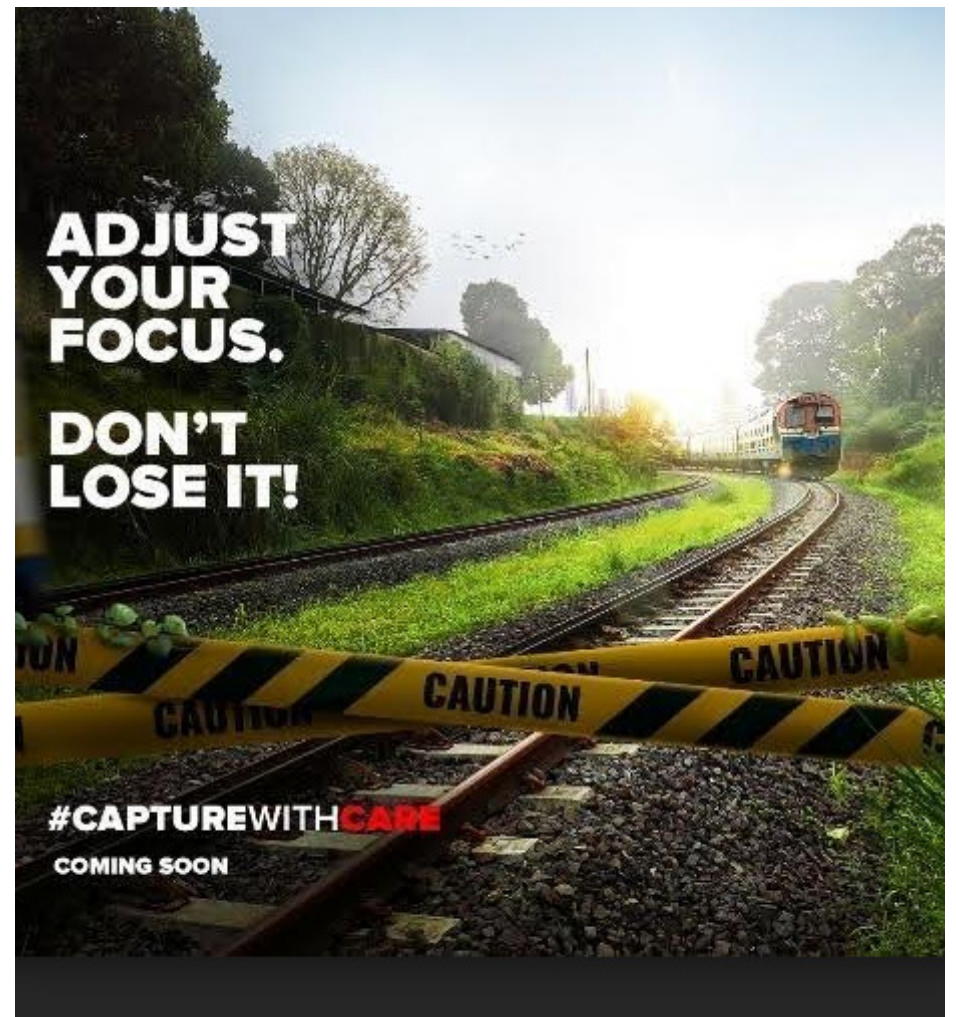
In a time where social media often drives trends, the pursuit of attention-grabbing content has led to a worrying rise in dangerous photography practices. Reports indicate numerous incidents involving both young social media users and influencers risking their lives for the perfect shot in hopes of gaining followers and validation. The sheer size of India, with its 1.4 billion citizens coupled with the rapidly growing affinity for social media, contributes to this alarming trend. Disturbingly, there has been a 63% increase in train track accidents over the past two years in Uttarakhand alone owing to the craze of selfies and Instagram reels, underscoring the urgent need for responsible photography practices.

On the sidelines of such startling facts, the #CaptureWithCare campaign was devised and rolled out in two stages. The first phase featured teaser posts on Canon India's social media handles with witty one-liners, aimed at creating buzz and drawing attention to the campaign.For the second phase, a powerful video was released

on World Photography Day across social media platforms—including Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, X, and YouTube—highlighting the stark contrast between the beauty of photography and the potential dangers of unsafe practices. The video, anchored by the message #CapturewithCare, emphasizes that photography should be a celebration of life, not a cause for mourning.

As a brand deeply committed to the art of photography, Canon India remains dedicated to fostering a culture of safety alongside creativity. This campaign aligns with Canon's philosophy of 'Delighting You Always,' ensuring that photographers can continue to capture moments of beauty without compromising their safety or that of others.

About Canon Inc. Canon Inc. (NYSE: CAJ), headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, is a leader in the fields of professional and consumer imaging equipment, industrial equipment, and information systems. Canon's extensive range of products includes production printers, multifunction office systems, inkjet and laser printers, cameras, video and cinematography equipment, network cameras, medical systems and semiconductor-manufacturing equipment. Originally established in 1937 as Precision Optical Industry, Co., Ltd., a camera manufacturer, Canon has successfully diversified and globalized to become a worldwide industry leader in professional and consumer imaging systems and solutions. With approximately 180,775 employees worldwide, the Canon Group includes manufacturing and marketing subsidiaries in Japan, the Americas, Europe, Asia and Oceania; and a global R&D network with companies

based in the United States, Europe, Asia and Australia. Canon's consolidated net sales for fiscal 2022 (ended December 31, 2022) totalled $30.31 billion (at an exchange rate of ¥133=U.S. $1). Visit the Canon Inc. website at: global. canon

Airtel Payments Bank Introduces Face Match to Enhance Account Security

Airtel Payments Bank has unveiled Face Match, a security enhancement feature, designed to safeguard customer accounts. Face Match uses sophisticated machine learning algorithms to calculate a threat score for each savings bank account user based on multiple inputs and signals ranging from user behaviour, transaction pattern & location, historical data of similar pattern, device and mobile app-based signals.

If a user surpasses this threat score, their account is secured with Face Match to prevent potential fraudulent transactions. The user will immediately receive a notifi-

cation on their registered mobile number, notifying them that Face Match has been activated and instructing them to complete a quick verification using the link in the notification to proceed with their transactions. The link redirects them to the Face Match section of the Airtel Thanks app, where the user simply needs to take a selfie, which is then compared to the original photo from their onboarding process using advanced facial recognition and liveliness checks.

A successful match allows the user to continue their transactions, while an unsuccessful match prompts them to visit a nearby banking point for biometric verification. This process ensures that only the account holder can perform transactions, maintaining user control and enhancing security.

As the digital banking landscape evolves, customers are increasingly vulnerable to fraudsters who exploit security gaps to commit crimes such as conduit account frauds, account takeovers, and money laundering. Face Match is designed to address

these challenges effectively and at a scale.

Speaking about the feature, Anubrata Biswas, MD and CEO of Airtel Payments Bank, said, "At Airtel Payments Bank, delivering secure digital banking is central to our mission.

The introduction of Face Match marks a significant step in reinforcing our commitment to safeguarding our customers. By employing cutting-edge technology, we can effectively address potential threats while offering a seamless and secure banking experience. Our aim is to provide customers peace of mind through robust security measures and efficient account management."

The implementation of Face Match not only enhances protection but also facilitates a smoother banking experience by allowing for quick and easy verification. Airtel Payments Bank remains dedicated to offering a secure and trustworthy banking environment. Face Match is a testament to the Bank's ongoing efforts to prioritize and enhance the safety of the customers.

IDBI Bank Announces Enhanced Interest Rates on Utsav Fixed Deposit

IDBI Bank announces enhanced interest rates on the Utsav Fixed Deposit scheme for a limited period. The Bank has increased the interest rates on special tenures of 444 days and 375 days, now offering a peak rate of 7.85% and 7.75% per annum. This enhancement makes the Utsav Fixed Deposit an even more compelling option for customers seeking higher yields.

This limited period offer is valid till September 30, 2024. Customers can open an Utsav Fixed Deposit conveniently through the Bank's website or mobile banking application or at any IDBI Bank branch.

Besides this, IDBI Bank continues to offer competitive rates on other special tenures under the Utsav Fixed Deposit scheme. The 700-day tenure offers a peak rate of 7.70% p.a., while the 300-day tenure provides 7.55% p.a.This revision in interest rates reflects IDBI Bank's commitment to offering customers attractive investment options that meet their financial needs.

OPPO F27 5G: The Ultimate Party Smartphone

OPPO India announced the launch of the F27 5G—a smartphone that boasts OPPO's new Halo Light—a circle of LEDs at the rear of the smartphone that pulsates to the beat of the music you play, as well as advanced AI camera features that let you capture fun party pictures that you can share with friends and post on social media. The OPPO F27 5G will be available in two colours— Amber Orange and Emerald Green —and retails at INR 22,999 with 128GB storage and INR 24,999 for the 256GB variant. Party-Ready Design and FeaturesThe OPPO F27 5G sports an upgraded Cosmos Ring design from the OPPO F27 Pro+ that runs around its camera module but now comes with a dynamic Halo Light that syncs with music beats to enhance your party atmosphere. This Halo Light can be configured to silently notify you of messages and updates when the phone is placed face-down on your desk.

The smartphone is available in two colours: Amber Orange with a flickering flame texture and Emerald Green with a curved light column effect. Its sleek profile, just 7.69mm in Emerald Green and 7.76mm in Amber Orange, with its lightweight 187g build, ensures it's comfortable to carry no matter where the night takes you.The 120Hz Smart Adaptive Screen delivers vibrant visuals and smooth interactions, perfect for capturing and viewing those epic party moments. And with advanced eye protection features, you can enjoy the night without straining your eyes.

As an extra, the Music Party app on the OPPO F27 lets you connect with friends who also use the OPPO F27 to play the same music in sync. Multiple users can join "parties" by scanning a code from any device to enable collaborative song selection and simultaneous playback across devices – perfect for silent discos when paired with earbuds, or intimate house parties.AI-Powered Fun with Photos and Videos

Now what's a party without fun photographs? The OPPO F27 packs advanced Gen AI features that make it the ultimate fun camera. Its AI Studio feature transforms portraits into unique digital avatars that you can share as party invites or print to decorate and liven up your party space. OPPO has introduced a unique Disco party theme in the AI studio of the OPPO F27 5G.

This addition complements the device's party-centric features, allowing users to transform their photos with retro-inspired effect that capture the essence of a classic disco atmosphere.

With AI Eraser 2.0, you can easily remove unwanted objects and photo-bombers for that perfect capture. AI Smart Image Matting 2.0 lets you create precise multi-subject cutouts that can be saved as stickers to add a playful touch to your photo collection or to create memes.Photography enthusiasts will appreciate the Ultra-Clear Camera System on the OPPO F27 comprising a 50MP main camera, 2MP portrait camera, and 32MP selfie camera. The Pro Portrait Mode utilises both main and macro cameras for professional bokeh effects, while AI Portrait Retouching ensures vivid, natural enhancements. This hardware-software synergy captures portraits with exceptional detail and natural beauty, making every shot Insta-worthy.But it's not just about photos: The OPPO F27 also includes AI Recording Summary, which extracts key information from voice recordings into concise summaries, perfect for remembering those late-night conversations.

The AI Toolbox, powered by Google Gemini LLM, includes tools like AI Writer for quick content creation, AI Summary for text condensation, and AI Speak for text-to-speech conversion, accessible via a convenient sidebar. Whether you're capturing the moment or staying productive, the OPPO F27's AI features make it easy and fun.Powerful Performance, Lasting EndurancThe OPPO F27 is built to keep up with your lifestyle. It is powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 6300 platform to deliver smooth performance and extended battery life so you can capture, share, and enjoy every moment. The chip is engineered on a power-efficient 6nm process to offer a 10% energy efficiency boost, while its GPU posts a 13% improvement in performance over the previous generation to excel in demanding tasks, and casual gaming. The OPPO F27—available with 8GB RAM and 128/256GB ROM configurations—also features OPPO's RAM Expansion technology that lets you allocate free storage of up to 8GB to be used as virtual RAM for smooth multitasking. Additionally, the device is designed to maintain its performance over an extended period;

Starting today F27 5G will be available for purchase on OPPO e-Store, Flipkart, Amazon, and mainline retail outlets

it has passed OPPO's 50-Month Fluency Protection test that guarantees system smoothness for over four years.Its 5,000mAh battery ensures you stay connected and entertained without frequent interruptions, while its 45W SUPERVOOCTM Flash Charge enables a full charge in 71 minutes. A quick 10-minute charge from 1% delivers over 7 hours of music playback or 6 hours of call time so the fun never stops.

Are educational institutions closed on Aug 21? All you need to know

Hyderabad: The 'Reservation Bachao Sangharsh Samiti' has given a nation-wide bandh call on August 21, 2024. Call for Wednesday's 'Bharat Bandh' comes in response to the Supreme Court's ruling on SC/ST reservations.The bandh call given out seeking the reversal of the SC's decision, has garnered strong support, and is expected to receive a widespread participation.

What is the Supreme Court ruling on SC/ST reservations?

The Supreme Court, in a ruling al-lowed States to create sub-categories within the SC and ST groups. It stated that "those who need it shout get priority in reservation."This decision is widely being opposed by several political and social organisations, which argue that the ruling undermines the purpose and principles of having reservations in place.

What is open and what is closed?

As per a report on Business Standard, ambulance services, emergency, hospital, medical services, and pharmacies will be open.Schools, colleges, banks and gov-ernment offices will also function normally.Meanwhile, all business organisations across the country have been asked to remain closed on Wednesday.

However, it is unclear if markets will be shut down throughout the day as there has been no confirmations from any market committees so far.

How an Iranian group used ChatGPT to influence U.S. presidential election

The story so far: OpenAI on Thursday (August 16, 2024) said it banned ChatGPT accounts linked to an Iranian influence operation that used the chatbot to generate content to influence the U.S. presidential election. The Microsoft-backed company said it identified and took down a "cluster of ChatGPT accounts" and that it was monitoring the situation.

What is Storm-2035?

OpenAI assigned the group the Storm-2035 moniker, and said the operation was made up of four websites that acted as news organisations. These news sites exploited issues like LGBTQ rights and Israel-Hamas conflict, to target U.S. voters. The sites also used AI tools to plagiarise stories and capture web traffic, per a Microsoft Threat Analysis Center (MTAC) report issued on August 9.Some named sites included EvenPolitics, Nio Thinker, Westland Sun, Teorator, and Savannah Time. The operation allegedly targeted both liberal and conservative voters in the U.S.

How did the group use ChatGPT?

According to OpenAI, the operatives used ChatGPT to create long-form articles and social media comments that were then posted by several X and Instagram accounts. AI chatbots such as ChatGPT can potentially assist foreign operatives fool gullible internet users by mimicking American users' language patterns, rehashing already existing comments or propaganda, and cutting down the time it takes to create and circulate plagiarised content meant to sway voters. Apart from the upcoming U.S. presidential election, Storm-2035 operation covered world issues such Venezuelan politics, Latin rights in the U.S., the destruction in Palestine, Scottish independence, and Israel taking part in the Olympic Games. The network also exploited popular topics like fashion and beauty. OpenAI shared screenshots of some of the news stories and social media posts it attributed to the operation; one article claimed that X was censoring former president Donald Trump's tweets, while separate social media posts asked users to "dump" Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris.
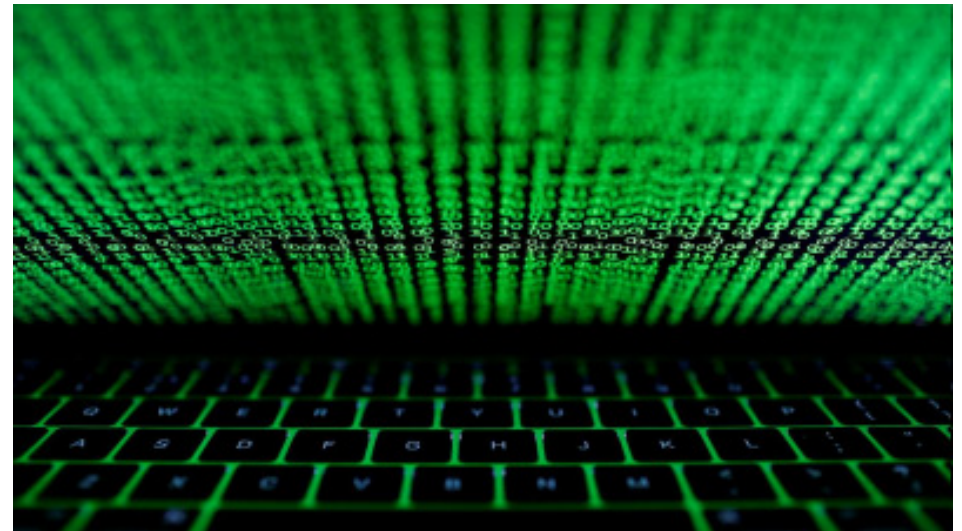
How severe is the impact of Storm-2035?

OpenAI has downplayed the severity of the incident, claiming that audiences did not engage much with the uploaded content on social media. Using Brookings' BreakoutScale, which measures the impact of covert operations on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 6 (highest), the report shared this operation was at the low end of Category 2, meaning it was posted on multiple platforms, but there was no evidence that real people picked up or widely shared their content. However, OpenAI stressed it had shared the threat information with "government, campaign, and industry stakeholders." While OpenAI presented the discovery and disruption of the Iran-linked influence operation as a positive development, the use of generative AI tools by foreign operatives against U.S. voters is a gravely urgent issue that highlights multiple points of failure across OpenAI, X, Instagram, and the search en-

gines ranking the sites.

Were there other similar issues OpenAI faced in the past?

In May, the AI firm posted a report revealing it had been working for over three months to dismantle covert influence operations that used its tools for generating comments on social media, articles in multiple languages, fake names and bios for social media accounts, and translating or proofreading text. A Russian outfit that OpenAI called 'Bad Grammar,' used the Telegram to target Ukraine, Moldova, the Baltic States and the U.S. Separately, another Russia-based operation titled 'Doppelganger,' an Israeli operation that OpenAI nicknamed 'Zeno Zeno,' a Chinese network called 'Spamouflage,' and an Iranian group called 'International Union of Virtual Media' or IUVM, used ChatGPT to write comments on social media platforms like X and 9GAG, and to post articles and news stories.The investigation found that the content covered issues like Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Gaza conflict, Indian and European elections, and the criticism of the Chinese government by Chinese dissidents or foreign governments. Besides hunting down influence networks, OpenAI also found incidents of state-backed threat actors abusing AI to attack enemies. Other serious cases exposing OpenAI's vulnerabilities followed. In July, the Microsoft-backed firm revealed that early last year, a hacker gained ac-

cess to OpenAI's internal messaging systems and stole information related to the company's AI technologies. While the hacker was found to be an individual, the incident raised alarms that Chinese adversaries could easily do the same.

What is OpenAI doing to safeguard its tech?

While studying these cases, OpenAI found that its AI tools thankfully refused to generate text or images for some prompts due to the safeguards already built into them. The firm also developed AI-powered security tools to detect threat actors within days instead of weeks. While not explicitly

discussed by OpenAI, the AI company has become enmeshed with prominent figures from U.S. federal agencies or government bodies. In June, OpenAI picked cybersecurity expert and retired U.S. Army General Paul M. Nakasone to be a part of its Board of Directors. Nakasone led the U.S. National Security Agency and has served in assignments with cyber units in the U.S., Korea, Iraq, and Afghanistan. A couple of weeks ago, the firm also announced it will be teaming up with the U.S. AI Safety Institute, so that its next big foundational model GPT-5 can be previewed and tested by it.

Manda Krishna: Rebel with a cause

What started as a small movement for the sub-categorisation of the Scheduled Castes in united Andhra Pradesh three decades ago in a small village of Eedumudi in Prakasam district has come to centre stage after the Supreme Court earlier this month gave a historic verdict that the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes can be divided into sub-groups for the purpose of reservations and employment.

The man credited with this achievement is 59-year-old Manda Eliah, more popularly known as Manda Krishna 'Madiga', founder of the Madiga eservation Porata Samiti (MRPS), the movement that rocked A.P. for years causing tension to the Governments headed by Chief Ministers of those times, be it Nedurumilli Janardhan Reddy, Kotla Vijayabhasakara Reddy, N. Chandrababu Naidu and Y.S.Rajasekhara Reddy.

Born to Manda Kommuraiah and Manda Kommuramma on July 7, 1965 in Shayampet near Hanamkonda of Warangal district in Telangana, Mr. Krishna was a rebel fighting for the cause of the downtrodden, particularly the Madigas among the SCs. His grouse was always against the dominant Malas among the SCs, who he claimed had cornered Government jobs and dominated the educational field by enjoying the quota for Dalits.

In his early 20s, Mr. Krishna was attracted to the outlawed People's War

Group (PWG) and briefly worked for the underground party. He followed another PWG leader K.G. Satyamurthy, who was expelled from the party. Mr. Krishna went to Prakasam district where Satyamurthy ran the Marxist Leninist Centre and started working there. During this time, he broached the idea of the injustice to Madigas and wanted the ML Centre to take up the cause.Failing to get a positive response from the leadership, Mr. Krishna distanced himself from the activities of the group. He and his comrades founded the Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti (MRPS) in 1994.

The MRPS, which began on a humble note, was popularly known as Madiga 'Dandora' – means announcements made by a Dalit by beating a drum in villages. The MRPS faced a stiff challenge from the rival 'Mala Mahanadu' movement, which was against categorisation of SCs. Malas are numerically strong in Andhra Pradesh, while Madigas are the leading numbers among the SCs in Telangana.

Mr. Manda Krishna proved his leadership qualities by organising the first meeting of the MRPS in Hyderabad with lakhs of people at Nizam College grounds in 1996. The meeting turned out to be watershed moment as the MRPS realised that categorisation of the SCs into 'ABCD' alone would solve their woes. He never looked back and organised a series of meetings and took out rallies. One such 'Chalo As-

sembly' call given in September 1996 almost brought the then TDP government led by Chandrababu Naidu to its knees as Mr. Krishna refused to leave the Basheerbagh area near the Babu Jagjivan Ram statue till the CM made a categorical announcement on sub-categorisation.

A 50-day 'Mahapadayatra' from Naravaripalle (native village of Chandrababu Naidu) to Hyderabad in 1997 saw massive ground swell of support from the Madigas across the 1.052 kms route. The mass contact programme of Manda Krishna during this padayatra made him unparalleled leader of the Madigas. After the Justice Ramachandra Raju submitted the report coinciding with Manda Krishna reaching Hyderabad to conclude his 'padayatra', the Government issued orders categorising SCs quota into ABCD categories.But, the euphoria was short-lived as Mala Mahanadu leaders filed writ petition challenging the government order, and the High Court subsequently suspended the orders on technical grounds. The then AP Government in 1998 issued an ordinance on categorisation. Mala Mahanadu leaders again challenged the ordinance and the Supreme Court dismissed categorisation stating that Parliament alone can pass a Bill to sub-categorise SCs.An undeterred Mr. Krishna continued his agitation by taking out rallies and his long march from Bengaluru to Hyderabad in 2005 yet again brought the Madigas on to the streets.

Why can't a plumber aspire to be a water systems engineer?

Education makes one think and helps one to act. Knowledge and skill are the corollaries of thinking and acting. They feed upon each other.The head and the hand had always worked in symphony to produce food, weave cloth, build structures, sing songs, create music and launch vehicles on land, water and in space — to attain progress and continue on an upward moving spiral, or a downward spiral as some environmentalists would argue. At some point in time, though, the wall between the head and the hand became pronounced by the emergence of guilds for crafts and arts and universities for theology and philosophy.The great divergence in India

In India, two great divergences happened. The first was religious sanction accorded to birth-based occupations, despite the possibility of Jatis moving up and down the varna system. The overall system classified professions on a graded scale of purity and forbade interactions between jatis, resulting in silos that got solidified first and ossified later. The idea of impurity of professions over the millennium is so deep rooted that it is banal now.The second accelerating factor was the western world's consistent effort to destabilise and destroy local productive knowledge and patronage networks, as well as the total bypassing of India from the forces of industrial revolution.This has resulted in a system that glorifies rote learning especially in a language that is foreign to a substantial majority of the country. By categorising education as distinct from skills, it has made the distinction between head and hands so deep that one does not speak to the other. And one is distinctly superior to the other.The disdain for physical labour is deeply linked to the disdain for those performing it. Our level of productive forces is such that Prince Philip commented on a loose fuse box in Scotland that it appeared to have been put together by an Indian. Jugaad has become our national pride though it's only a compulsion.

Why is our education stunted?

World over, TAFE and TVET — systems of technical education — have evolved so much that the distinction between them and higher education is almost nil. But in India, in discipline after discipline, we have built silos that do not talk to each other.Take electrical engineering as an example. To join as a helper in the electricity board you need no education. To be a wireman, you need to pass Class 8 and get a one-year ITI. Most do neither and learn on the job.To be an electrician Grade II you need to pass Class 10 and do two years ITI. The wireman has no future education possibility. The electrician Grade II can theoretically pursue four years of part time polytechnic, but access and availability are almost nil.Only a microscopic minority of plumbers, carpenters, masons, electricians and mechanics in our country get education. Most of them learn on the job and none of them barring the mechanic (only four-wheeler, not two wheeler) has the possibility of furthering his prospects by further education.No link between education and experience
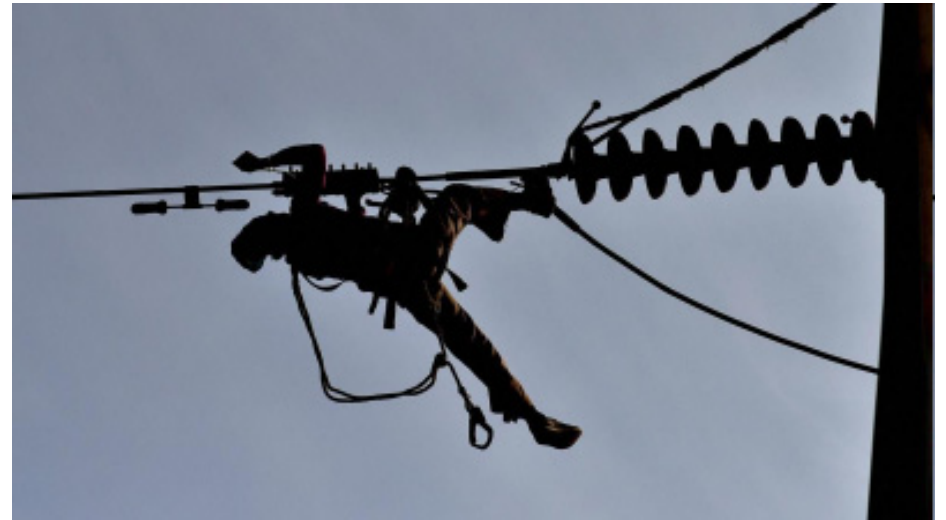
Further, the linkage between experience and education is almost nil here especially in the public sector which still remains the largest employer. For instance, a Rajasthan State Gazette notification for qualification and eligibility for its electricity board recruitments says to be a foreman in the electricity board one needs to have a diploma plus one year of experience or secondary school plus ITI plus 11 years of experience. So two years of some education is equivalent to 11 years of work experience. No other country would devalue real work like this. No wonder the country's youth go for a B. Tech that does not give you a job rather than an ITI that might put food on the tableContextual educationI spent over two years intermittently in a State with a large tribal population, trying to put together a career guidance programme for the children of the State. A relook at the vocational education system especially at the school level was part of the brief.

The system offered banking as a subject for children in a district where the nearest ATM was 50 km away. Tribal medicine, tribal food, value added crafts and value added forest produce were all total anathema to the framers of their education

system.The children had tremendous ability to work with their hands.

Their ability to reproduce a product just by looking at the process for a few minutes was astounding. But they were forced to read about Akbar and Indian polity, bad English, banking and beauty. No wonder most failed in their exams.Professor Dharampal, a Gandhian, looked at indigenous knowledge systems a little too uncritically. A.K. Perumal, a researcher in Kanyakumari, who didn't know Dharampal, chronicled the efficient water harvesting, storage and management systems of erstwhile Nanjil Nadu in today's Kanniyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. Mahatma Gandhi proposed Nai Talim as a system of basic education in which knowledge and doing are not separate. It can serve as a good starting point.

Migrants toil in Tamil Nadu's Cauvery delta

Migrant workers from other parts of India are slowly making their presence felt in the agricultural fields in the Cauvery delta, in Tamil Nadu, often referred to as the granary of South India. The development comes amid there being a severe shortage of farmhands.

The gradual influx of migrant workers in agriculture has, however, not set alarm bells ringing as yet among trade unions or local labourers as the numbers in the farm sector are not as high when compared to the situation in the industrial and other sectors in Tamil Nadu.The shortage of labour still remains a common complaint among farmers in the delta, as the younger generation has turned away from farming, leaving the elders to shoulder the burden."It's becoming really hard to find labourers to tend to the crops," says R. Anandan, a farmer from Parasanallur in Mayiladuthurai district.Migrant labourers have been filling this gap in some places. They move across the State in groups during the agricultural seasons and are largely hired for the transplantation or the harvesting of paddy as far as the delta region is concerned. Many of them are from West Bengal and Bihar, and are skilled in paddy transplanting and other agriculture activities. They are sought after by farmers here for their swift work and at relatively lower costs."For the past three years, we have been working in different districts across Tamil Nadu," says Deva Mondal, a Bengali labourer, who was part of a group engaged in transplanting paddy seedlings in Mayiladuthurai district, recently.Deva highlights the demanding nature of their work. The group, he says, works from dawn to dusk, transplanting paddy seedlings on four to five acres per

day. "We charge ?4,500 to ?5,000 for planting an acre as a group (of 13 workers), whereas local labourers are paid ?600 per day for the same work. By covering more area in a day, we earn more," he says."Farmers who hire us say that there is shortage of labourers locally and fulfil their requirement. However, this is not yet a widespread phenomenon in the delta," he add.Labour unions too agree. "The issue of engaging migrant workers for farm operations in the delta districts is not as alarming as [it is] in the northern districts of Tamil Nadu. Many farmers are going in for government-supported farm mechanisation. Besides, local youngsters are opting for jobs with a steady income. These factors are contributing to the decline in local labour in agricultural fields," observes V. Jeevakumar, a CPI(M) cadre and Vice-President, All India Agriculture Labourers Union, Thanjavur.Migrant labourers can be seen engaged in farm activities in some parts of the delta region, particularly in the urban or semi-urban pockets. This is because there are opportunities available for them during the off-season period, says G. Sethuraman, a progressive farmer with the sizeable landholding in Dharasuram near Kumbakonam."Workers from other States usually avoid areas with a significant labour population and focus on villages near urban/semi-urban areas where there is a shortage of labour," explains A. Baskar, General Secretary, Tamil Nadu Agricultural Workers' Union. "Although there haven't been any conflicts between workers from other States and locals, so far, possible disputes can be averted by ensuring equal pay for all labourers," he says.Socio-economic changes and MGNREGA

Ayalai Siva Suriyan, District Secretary,

Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, Tiruchi, attributes the shrinkage of the agricultural workforce to larger socio-economic changes. "Earlier, those who completed standard 8 or standard 10 took up agricultural work, but now they want jobs in cities. Middle aged and old people largely constitute the farm workforce in many parts of the State. Hiring workers from outside is inevitable," he says.Though the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is blamed by a section of farmers for the shortage of labour and rising wages, not all agree. "Last year, most beneficiaries got only 40 days of work under the scheme in Tiruchi district, far from the promised 100 days and the decline has been consistent over the years," claims Mr. Siva Suriyan.If the implementation of MGNREGA is confined to the non-cultivation season, there would be no need to scout for migrant labourers, Mr. Sethuraman argues. The labour unions in the delta region, which are strong, had for long ensured that the local labourers got priority when it came to hiring. Farmers, irrespective of the size of their landholdings, were dependent on the local labour to carry out all cultivation activities, right from aerating the soil to harvesting. There was stiff resistance from farm labour unions towards mechanisation and hiring outsiders. "Farmers had to run behind the local workforce, who called the shots," says L.N. Renganathan of Kamalapuram near Mannargudi.But the advent of the MGNREGA changed the situation during the first decade of this century. As farmhands relished the advantages of being a "stakeholder" in the scheme aimed at enhancing their livelihood security,

'Free bus travel for women admirable; building more flyovers a crime'

TransMilenio, the Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) in Bogota, the capital city of Colombia, has been hailed as one of the most effective forms of urban development inspiring cities across the world. Extremely popular and widely adopted by city dwellers, TransMilenio serves around two million rides a day.However, the growing city needed more. The BRTS which started crumbling under the weight of a growing population also became a victim of political warfare. After discussions and debates that lasted years, Claudia Nayibe López Hernández, the first female mayor of Bogota who took charge in 2020, initiated the first line of the Bogotá Metro to solve the problem and to reduce the city's dependency on diesel buses that cause high emissions. She launched a fleet of 1485 electric buses and expanded the city's cycling infrastructure.

Lopez's policies including the renowned Care Blocks and nutrition centres for migrant and refugee children and mothers' strongly focused on sustainable and inclusive development of the city and its people. Currently a Harvard ALI Fellow and an advisor at the World Resources Institute (WRI), she was in the city recently where she conversed with policymakers, bureaucrats and urban enthusiasts.Lopez spoke to The Hindu on the similarities between Bengaluru and Bogota, and the challenges and opportunities before the two global cities.How do you compare Bengaluru and Bogota? How can these cities grow sustainably and inclusively?

Both Bogota and Bengaluru are cities from the global south. We share similar challenges, opportunities, and hopes to have economic growth in a socially inclusive and sustainable manner and to strengthen democracy. Bogota is a city of 8 million people and there are 12 million people in the larger metropolitan region. Bogota alone accounts for 25% of Colombia's GDP. I think Bangalore has similar figures. To develop inclusively and sustainably we need to integrate both the rural and urban development. We need to coordinate with the people and the elected representative of the regions from where the water, energy and food for the urban regions is coming from.It's important to decarbonize the economy and start it by decarbonizing public transportation. A multi-modal interconnected mode of transportation based on clean energy and inclusive spaces for people is a huge part of the response to the climate change challenge and the urban productivity challenge. Both Bogota and Bengaluru are very well known for their problems of traffic. We deal with the same challenge: when people achieve more economic inclusion and income, more of them want to have a private car. For them that's not even an economic hope, it's a cultural hope. They see a car as not just a means of mobility, but as a symbol of status, a cultural status of modernisation. We still have that ingrained in our minds, even though it doesn't have anything to do with real development. The byproduct of that in the United States was

an incredibly unsustainable polluted urban development. If the rest of the world urbanized the same way as the U.S. did we will simply kill this planet in a matter of years. The technical solution is to build multi-modal, clean, fast affordable public transportation. You may have metro lines, but you also need a bus rapid transit (BRT) system, hopefully electric. Also, you're going to need preference lanes for feeder buses, hopefully electric too. Also, you're going to need regional trains that connect the entire region around the city in a more comprehensive way. Bengaluru is the perfect city to have more bikes (bicycles) and dedicated lanes for them. The city is also the Silicon Valley of India. What Bengaluru as well India needs, is data on how people move, why each person decides a certain mode of transportation, each trip's origin, destination, cost, time, and so on. The tech industry of Bangalore should provide this information for free to the state, it's the minimum contribution they could make. With that information, you can plan and build the most effective multimodal system which can then help with your land use planning. We should never forget that we share the planet with other living forms. They are as crucial as we are to sustain our planet. They don't need the metro or buses, but ecosystemic connectors within the city.

How do you view the importance of social and gender inclusion in development?There is still a large number of people in poverty in India. A third of the population is in poverty in Colombia. So social inclusion in development is very important. Let's take the example of the 'care system' in Colombia. Women, particularly, are left behind in economic development. One of the things that holds back women is that we, everywhere in the world, have more poverty of time than men. In

Bogota, women dedicate seven hours more work per day, but it's unpaid care work. Care economy accounts for 13% of the GDP of Bogota, 20% of the GDP of Colombia, but it's unpaid care work 90% of which is done by women and 10% by men. So not surprisingly, those men and women are under poverty. And they cannot contribute to other industries. To solve this, we took advantage of all the existing social infrastructure such as the schools, health centres, community centres, recreation and cultural facilities. We used these facilities that are near the homes of these unpaid caregivers to get close to them and added some social workers there so that we could provide three types of services. First of all, to take care of those people that the women are taking care of - children, elderly, loved ones with disabilities, and thereby free up time for those women. In the same places, we organised spaces and services for the women to have leisure, to access labour opportunities and organizational opportunities for social empowerment. The third service is to teach all the other members of the family to provide care.

What is your opinion on building more flyovers to solve the city's traffic woes?

The problem is not that people own a car. But when people intend to do the daily commute during peak hours in an individual car, there is no way we are not going to be congested regardless of how much more infrastructure is built. If you build flyovers saying you don't have enough surface space, it will be congested in another 10 years, period. We need to incentivise and teach people to use cars for casual or emergency trips, and not for daily commutes. For the latter, they should use the metro, the BRT, the feeder buses, bikes and other forms of public transportation. This is not a war against cars. It's a

collective commitment to use multimodal transportation for different types of trips. We need to go from the typical, car-driven avenue of the 20th century to the Green Corridors of the 21st century. In the case of Bogota, 80% of people don't own a car. Only 15-17% of the trips in Bogota are done by individual cars. Roughly 50% of the trips are done by public transportation. About 8% are done by bike and 24% of the trips are done by walking. But at least 70% of the public space for mobility is devoted to cars. It's unfair for almost every other modes. People who use cars during peak hours need to feel the pressure of the space and price. We could take a leaf out of what they have done in Santiago and charge them tolls. Otherwise, they are not going to be disincentivized. Better public transportation includes more trips without congestion. Better car infrastructure includes more trips with more congestion. That's the difference. With the amount of experience, data and lessons we have with 150 years of urbanisation, building more flyovers in the 21st century is a crime.

What are some of the lessons both cities can learn from each other? Not only Bengaluru, but other Indian cities also, at the moment have a much more gender inclusive public transportation than Bogota. There are exclusive train coaches for women, free bus transport for women and so on. Public transportation in India is by far cheaper, which is fair for people in general and particularly for women who bear high levels of poverty. We are trying to learn from you and include that in our systems. Where we are probably doing much better is in walkable spaces. Here it's an adventure to walk on the sidewalks or to try to cross the streets. I'm not claiming Bogota is the best, but our walkable spaces, sidewalks and bike lanes are safer, better designed, inclusive, and highly used.