

Ashoka University, AI & Beyond launch 'AI Unboxed' for business leaders

Hyderabad: Ashoka University and AI & Beyond on Wednesday announced AI Unboxed, a collaborative learning programme aimed at empowering business leaders with AI literacy and an in-depth understanding of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its transformative potential in organisations. The AI Unboxed programme, part of AshokaX, Ashoka University's corporate learning platform, is designed to guide participants through the strategic application of AI, helping them navigate key decision-making processes and ethical considerations, a press release said.

Targeted at mid to senior-level professionals, the course aims to address the growing need for AI literacy in leadership

positions, enabling the successful integration of AI technologies to enhance business operations and drive innovation, it said. A three-day in-person course is designed specifically for senior executives to master AI leadership. Participants will be able to demystify AI through deep insights into core technologies, separating hype from reality.

The programme will explore AI's strategic applications across various industries such as finance, healthcare, and retail, thereby unlocking its transformative potential, it said. Enrollment for AI Unboxed is now open, and the programme is set to launch soon. For those interested further details can visit- <https://x.ashoka.edu.in/ai-unboxed/>.



CP Avinash Mohanty inspects key traffic-prone areas within Cyberabad



Hyderabad: The Cyberabad Police Commissioner, Avinash Mohanty, along with Joint Commissioner of Traffic, D. Joel Davis, conducted a comprehensive inspection of key traffic-prone areas within Cyberabad. The inspection was carried out in collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), Telangana State Power Distribution Company Limited

(TGSPDCL), and Town Planning officials.

GHMC Zonal Commissioner Upender Reddy, TGSPDCL Assistant Engineer Prashanth, Madhapur Traffic Assistant Commissioner of Police, Satyanarayana, and Madhapur Traffic Inspector, G. Narsiah were also present during the inspection. The primary objective of this visit was to assess and implement measures aimed at reducing road congestion and

enhancing overall road infrastructure. The officers began their visit at the JNTU-Yashoda ROB road, Siddhi Vinayak Nagar, Madhapur, and the NIA Service road, where they analyzed existing road congestion issues and identified potential solutions to improve traffic flow. Ongoing work to widen the carriageway on both sides from Cyber Towers Junction to Yashoda Hospital, aimed at easing traffic flow and

reducing bottlenecks in the area, were also inspected. Joint Commissioner of Traffic D. Joel Davis said efforts were on to take every possible measure to improve the traffic situation in Cyberabad. "The relocation of electric poles along the JNTU-RoB service road is one of the key steps we are implementing to ensure smooth vehicular movement," he said.

IDBI Bank launches "Sugam Rinn Bhugtan Yojana (SUGAM)"



IDBI Bank has announced a special Scheme "Sugam Rinn Bhugtan Yojana (SUGAM)", to boost its recovery efforts through One Time Settlement of Retail NPAs up to March 31, 2021 with Borrower's Principal Outstanding above Rs.0.10 crore and up to Rs.10 crore (subject to eligibility criteria), at relaxed terms to provide a renewed opportunity to the borrowers who are in distress and are willing to settle their dues to avoid legal entanglement. Brief of the scheme is available at <https://www.idbibank.in/idbi-bank-sugam-rinn-bhugtan-yojana.aspx>.

Women on the margins of the political sphere in J&K

Despite women comprising almost 48% of the electorate in the Union Territory, their political representation has remained poor. In the 2014 J&K Assembly elections, only 3.6% of the total candidates were women. In the 2024 elections, there were only nine women out of the 219 candidates in the first phase. The political landscape is deeply rooted in J&K's patriarchal social structure that views public and political life as male-dominated. Further, political instability and concerns about safety in a volatile atmosphere have kept women at the margins. While there have been legal and advocacy efforts in expanding the representation of women, such as granting 33% reservation to women in the J&K Assembly, they often fall short in addressing the deep-seated cultural and institutional barriers that limit women's political engagement. The two main political parties in the region — the National Conference and the People's Democratic Party — have historically sidelined women. Even female leaders, including former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, have failed to effect the needed transformation, as they often conform to the male-dominated political structures themselves. When women are fielded as candidates, it is often in constituencies considered unwinnable or in token positions within party structures. In the 2020 District Development Council elections, though 33% of the seats were reserved for women, actual representation barely crossed 10%.

Further, there are no dedicated women-centric policies. Neither the major political parties nor the local governance institutions have implemented policies that specifically address the economic, social, and political empowerment of women, such as reserving seats for women in legislative bodies, introducing gender-sensitive economic schemes, or supporting women entrepreneurs in J&K. While women's literacy in J&K has improved over time, the gender gap remains significant — 66% of women are literate compared to 84% of men. Additionally, women's labour force participation is abysmal, hovering around 25%. The absence of gender-responsive budgeting, economic empowerment initiatives, or electoral reforms contribute to the ongoing political exclusion of women.

Elections are a mechanism to ensure that all sections of society are represented, but when half the population is under-represented, the very foundation of democracy is undermined. In J&K, where women's participation is notably low, the absence of female voices results in policies that fail to comprehensively address gender disparities, further entrenching patriarchal norms. The formulation and implementation of incisive, women-centric policies are imperative for ensuring equitable representation in democratic governance. Making women's perspectives integral to peace-building, education, healthcare, and employment will ensure that their voices are heard and encourage political involvement. Providing free childcare, healthcare benefits, and family support policies for fe-

male politicians would ease the burden of familial responsibilities, enabling more women to enter and stay in politics. A push for political quotas in J&K, as implemented in post-conflict Rwanda where 60% of parliamentarians today are women, including electoral reforms and capacity-building initiatives for women, could substantially alter the status quo. After the dilution of Article 370 in J&K in 2019, the UT came under the scope of Central laws, including the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001). There is a strong foundation now to support women in participating more actively in politics. These laws offer a chance to not only boost women's involvement in decision-making but also to secure their rights and dignity. By focusing on political participation, we can empower women to shape their own futures and create a more inclusive society in J&K.



EY employee death: Young professional Indian women work 55 hours a week, highest globally

The death of Anna Sebastian Perayil, a 26-year-old Chartered Accountant based in Pune, has led to intense discussions about the workload of professionals in India. According to a letter by Anna's mother, Anita Augustine, the young professional at Ernst & Young (EY) lost her life due to "work stress". Ms. Augustine said in her letter to the Chairman of EY that Anna would be assigned "work at night with a deadline [the] next morning". She added that this was a "systemic issue and goes beyond managers and teams". According to her, the workload, the new environment, and the long hours took a toll on her daughter. She also alleged that no one from the office turned up at Anna's funeral. Ms. Augustine's anguished letter went viral, eliciting a reply from the Chairman of EY India, Rajiv Memani, who "truly regretted" the fact that employees of the company were absent at Anna's funeral. "The well-being of our people is my top-most priority," he said. The incident has put the spotlight on how the increasing workload in India especially impacts young women who work in male-dominated environments. Data show that Indian women who have jobs similar to the one that Anna had work for the longest hours globally. In fact, the younger the professional, the more number of hours they work. Indian women workers in information and communication jobs, which includes IT professionals and journalists, worked 56.5 hours every week in 2023, the most for any job type in India. If we consider a work week of five days, that amounts to more than 11 hours of work a day, or in the case of a six-day work week, it amounts to more than 9 hours of work a day. Women working in professional, scientific and technical activities in India do 53.2 hours a week. Anna belonged to this category. In comparison, a female teacher works 46



Young Indian women in professional jobs are working over 55 hours a week

hours a week in India.

Chart 2 shows the mean weekly hours of across various ages in 2023. It shows that the hours increase if only younger workers are considered. For instance, Indian women IT/media workers who are aged 15-24 put in 57 hours every week. Indian women in professional, scientific and technical fields aged 15-24 put in 55 hours of work, the highest among all age groups. The 56.5 hours and 53.2 hours of work that Indian women do every week in information and communication jobs and in professional, scientific and technical jobs, respectively, is the highest such share among similar jobs globally. Chart 3 shows the mean hours of work done by women weekly for these two job types across nations. India and other BRICS countries

are highlighted. The 56.5 hours done by Indian women in IT and media are the highest in the world. In Germany, for instance, women in IT and media work for 32 hours, and in Russia, for 40 hours. Chart 4 shows share of women in the total workforce across job types in India. Not only are Indian women working the most number of hours globally in such jobs, but they also work in offices dominated by men. Only 8.5% of the Indian workforce in professional scientific and technical jobs are women, and only 20% of the Indian workforce in information and communication jobs are women. Such an imbalance in these two types of jobs was less pronounced in many other countries. Indian women's share of 8.5% in professional scientific and technical jobs is 15th from the bottom in a list of 145 countries.

Celebrate the Festive Season with the OPPO Reno12 Pro 5G Manish Malhotra Edition: A Tribute to India's Rich Cultural Heritage

This festive season, OPPO India unveils the OPPO Reno12 Pro 5G Manish Malhotra Limited Edition, the perfect smartphone to celebrate India's vibrant culture and traditions. Inspired by Manish Malhotra's iconic World Collection, this special edition reflects the opulence of Indian design heritage through intricate gold filigree and floral embroidery over an elegant black backdrop.

The fusion of OPPO's innovative material design with Malhotra's signature motifs brings together luxury and craftsmanship in a stunning celebration of India's festive spirit. The smartphone's body graphics draws from India's rich artistic traditions, notably the floral motifs of Mughal art and the intricate embroidery techniques from regions like Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Patterns inspired by Zardozi and Parsi Gara embroidery in the black and gold celebrations. While black represents timeless beauty and versatility, gold symbolises luxury and grandeur, evoking the opulence

and festivity associated with Indian celebrations. This combination not only enhances the OPPO Reno12 Pro 5G's visual appeal but also mirrors the regality of traditional Indian attire to make it the perfect companion for the festive season. Savio D'Souza, Head of Product Communications at OPPO India, shared, "We are excited to introduce the OPPO Reno12 Pro 5G Manish Malhotra Limited Edition that blends functionality with aesthetics. This collaboration merges Manish Malhotra's craftsmanship with OPPO's advanced technology to deliver a product that is stylish, unforgettable and deeply resonates with our target audience."

To create the Manish Malhotra Limited Edition Reno12 Pro 5G, OPPO combined its cutting-edge technology in material science with intricate artistry. OPPO used advanced double etching and annealing—a high-precision heat treatment process—to achieve a rich contrast between the gold filigree and the black back-



ground. This process allows for vibrant colours, finer detailing, and a smooth, flawless surface that showcases the floral motifs. The intricate patterned annealing process—a complex and high-cost tech-

nique—ensures the lines of the design remain continuous and uninterrupted. This is achieved through multiple rounds of optimisation, including adjustments to screen material, ink viscosity, and screen-printing parameters.

SBI Foundation launches Asha Scholarship 2024 to support 10,000 of India's brightest young minds

SBI through its CSR arm **SBI Foundation**, has announced the 3rd edition of its flagship **Program - Asha Scholarship**, guaranteeing support to 10,000 meritorious students Nationwide, from underprivileged backgrounds.

Shri.Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, Chairman, State Bank Groups speaking about the initiative, said that "**Asha Scholarship**" embodies SBI's core value of "**Service Beyond Banking**" and actively contributes to our Nation's steady march towards progress and prosperity for all. SBI Foundation this year has expanded this transformative initiative to 10,000 students. **Asha Scholars will play an important role in achieving our Nation's vision of a "Viksit Bharat", by 2047.**

SBI Foundation's Education vertical - Integrated Learning Mission (ILM), identifies and supports meritorious students from the most underserved backgrounds for scholarships, with a mission to make quality higher education accessible for young Indians and mentor them as leaders & changemakers for the future.

Students from Class 6th to those pursuing Postgraduate programs can get benefits from **₹ 15,000 to ₹ 20,00,000**. Specialised categories are available for students in High school, pursuing undergraduate courses, postgraduate courses, as well as for those currently enrolled in IITs and IIMs in India.

The scholarship program under "**Study Abroad**" category for SC and ST students will support those pursuing Masters and above from eminent institu-

tions worldwide. In the School category, **top 300 students from each State will be selected** as the '**Super 300**', most meritorious students from across the country. Students from **Classes 6th to 12th who have scored more than 75% marks in the previous academic year** and have an **annual family income of less than ₹ 3 Lakh per annum** are eligible to apply in this category. The scholarship application is

available on <https://www.sbifashascholarship.org> and will remain open till 1st October 2024. The details of eligibility and timelines for the scholarship are available on the website and students can also inquire on **Email: sbifashascholarship@buddy4study.com**; **Phone: 011-430-92248 (Ext: 303)** (Monday to Friday - 10:00 AM to 6 PM). SBI Foundation true to its tradition of service beyond banking, currently extends support for edu-

cation, rural development, healthcare, livelihood & skill development, youth empowerment, promotion of sports in over 27 states and union territories of India. SBI Foundation believes in reflecting the ethos of the SBI group, in running interventions that are ethical, promote growth & equality and create a positive impact on society. To learn more about SBI Foundation, please visit : www.sbifoundation.in.

Education only weapon to eradicate ignorance: Garikapati

Khammam: Students could focus on education by practicing digital fasting for two days a week by staying away from phones and television, suggested noted scholar, Padma Shri awardee Garikapati Narasimha Rao. Speaking at an orientation programme organised for the first students at Swarna Bharathi Institute of Technology (SBIT) here on Thursday he said that students should learn to respect teachers and parents while making them aware of the importance of parents and teachers. Narasimha Rao said that one might come under immense pressure due to the burden they could not carry, however any pressure could be overcome by discussing with gurus. While pursuing studies the students should think about the development of the country, he noted and later interacted with the students answering their questions.



University of Auckland India High Achievers Scholarship worth \$20,000 now LIVE for Indian students

The University of Auckland has announced that the university's India High Achievers Scholarship is LIVE for the 2025 intake. This scholarship of up to \$20,000 towards tuition fees are available for Indian students enrolling in undergraduate degrees, PGDip or Masters programme. The main purpose of the scholarship is to attract new international students of high calibre from India to enrol full-time in undergraduate or postgraduate study of one year or more at Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland. The University of Auckland is ranked 65th according to QS World University Rankings 2025.

More details about the scholarship Application status: Apply now Applicable study: New International students from India enrolling in undergraduate degrees, PGDip or masters programmes Opening date: 30 August 2024 (Semester One 2025 intake) and 1 February 2025 (Semester Two 2025 intake) Closing date: 24 October 2024 (Semester One 2025 intake) and 1 April 2025 (Semester Two 2025 intake) Tenure: One year For: Tuition fees Number on offer: 30 Offer rate: Biannually Value: Up to \$20,000 for either postgraduate study or undergraduate study For more details, please visit: <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/study/scholarships-and-awards/find-a-scholarship/university-of-auckland-india-high-achievers-scholarship-1143-all.html> About University of Auckland University of Auckland is a top-100 world university and New Zealand's highest-ranked and largest higher education institution. It has more than 46,000 students, 11,000 of whom graduate annually with internationally recognised degrees. The University has a

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long-standing commitment to sustainability. It has been consistently listed in the world's top ten universities for its efforts towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). QS ranks the

University fifth in the world for sustainability and first in Oceania. The University of Auckland is also the designated official hub for SDG 4, Quality Education, by the United Nations Academic Impact. These achieve-

ments reflect the University's Vision 2030 and Strategic Plan 2025 to be internationally recognised for its unique contribution to fair, ethical and sustainable societies. The University

"Rahul Gandhi's Family Sacrificed for India, BJP Leaders Should Respect Their Legacy," Says Kisan Congress Leader Chaitanya Reddy

In response to the recent barrage of criticism from BJP leaders against Rahul Gandhi, S. Krishna Chaitanya Reddy, the National Joint Coordinator of Kisan Congress, has come forward to defend the Gandhi family's legacy and their unwavering commitment to the nation.

"It is shameful to see BJP leaders barking at Rahul Gandhi, a member of a family that has sacrificed so much for this country," said Chaitanya Reddy. "The Gandhi family, particularly Rahul's father, the late Rajiv Gandhi, has a long history of humanitarian service and selfless dedication to the betterment of India." Chaitanya Reddy went on to highlight the exemplary contributions of Rahul Gandhi's father, Rajiv Gandhi, who served as the Prime Minister of India from 1984 to 1989. "Rajiv Gandhi was a visionary leader who played

a crucial role in the country's technological and economic advancement. He was also a great humanitarian who extended a helping hand to those in need, including the BJP veteran, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, when he required medical assistance." Chaitanya Reddy's quote also took a swipe at the current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, stating that he "is nowhere equal to the leaders of the past, such as Rajiv Gandhi and Atal Bihari Vajpayee." Chaitanya Reddy further accused Modi of "spreading violence for religious vote bank," while asserting that Rahul Gandhi "spreads love and nation progress." Chaitanya Reddy concluded by emphasizing that the real BJP leaders, who have been with the party for years, will stand with Rahul Gandhi, as they "know how Advani ji was tactfully kept away" from the party's leadership.



Anant Ambani and Murray Auchincloss inaugurate Jio-bp's 500th EV-charging station at Jio World Centre (JWC), BKC, Mumbai, marking the installation of 5,000 Jio-bp charging points in India-Driving India's critical EV charging infrastructure expansion



Anant Mukesh Ambani, Director, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and Murray Auchincloss, CEO, BP today inaugurated the 500th Jio-bp pulse EV-charging station of Jio-bp, a fuels and mobility joint venture between RIL and bp. The commissioning of the EV-charging station enables access for guests at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre, Jio World Plaza and Jio World Convention Centre in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai, marking the installation of the 5000th Jio-bp pulse charging point in India.

Jio-bp has expanded its network of EV-charging stations at a rapid pace, growing from 1,300 to 5,000 in just a year. With 95% of its EV-charging network comprising of fast-charging stations—the highest in the industry—the company is poised to deliver high-speed electrons with unmatched industry-leading uptime of 96%, establishing itself as the country's most reliable charging network.

Jio-bp is also the first in the industry to deploy the top-rated 480 KW chargers backed by unique CVPs, which enables it to provide an efficient and quick charging experience at locations such as malls, public parking, corporate parks, hotels, and wayside amenities. By reducing range anxiety

through its rapidly growing charging infrastructure, minimising charging time with DC fast chargers, and delivering a seamless charging experience through its state-of-the-art Jio-bp pulse charging app, Jio-bp has occupied pole position in accelerating the adoption of electric vehicles in India.

"Jio-bp is playing a pioneering role in accelerating EV adoption in India. With the

largest network share of fast-charging stations, fastest growth in EV charging infra, and highest reliability, Jio-bp is offering a well-packaged, digitised charging solution to millions of Indians," Mr. Anant M. Ambani stated during the launch.

With its foray into green electrons, powered by Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited's solar power plants, Jio-bp is making rapid progress in its the broader

goal of promoting sustainable green mobility in India. "EV charging is one of BP's key transition businesses in our journey to becoming an integrated energy company. We are focusing on scale, speed, and strategic locations to provide a seamless customer experience. By combining bp and RIL's capabilities, we are delivering EV charging with convenience, creating a unique value proposition for customers," Murray Auchincloss said in a statement.

Stable crude prices could lead to Rs 2-3 per litre cut in petrol, diesel: ICRA

New Delhi: Healthy marketing margins on auto fuels could spur price reductions of Rs 2-3 per litre in petrol and diesel prices in the country if crude prices remain stable, leading rating agency ICRA said on Thursday. The marketing margins on retail sales of auto fuels for the Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs) have improved in recent weeks with the reduction in crude prices. The rating agency anticipates that there is headroom for the downward revision of retail fuel prices if crude prices remain stable at current levels. The

outlook for the refining and marketing sector remains stable. "ICRA estimates that the OMCs' net realisation was higher by Rs 15/litre for petrol and Rs 12/litre for diesel compared to international product prices in September 2024 (till September 17)," said Girishkumar Kadam, SVP and Group Head – Corporate Ratings, ICRA. Another leading rating agency CLSA said on Wednesday that petrol and diesel prices may be reduced after October 5. According to ICRA, the retail selling price (RSPs) of these fuels have been unchanged since March 2024 (Rs 2/litre was reduced on

petrol and diesel on March 15) and there appears to be headroom for their downward revision by Rs 2-3/litre, if crude prices remain stable, he added. Crude prices have witnessed a sharp decline in the last few months, primarily due to weak global economic growth and high US production and the OPEC+ has pushed the rollback of its production cuts by two months to combat the declining prices. The impact is mainly on account of weak demand from China due to rising electric vehicle (EV) sales, muted industry demand and real estate downturn.

Leveraging transit-oriented development to build productive cities

Indian cities are on the brink of a transportation revolution, with a projected expenditure of ₹3 trillion (between 2022–2027) set to be spent on approved metro rail projects. These investments will not only enhance urban mobility but can also unlock vast economic potential. Studies reveal that investment in public transportation can generate thousands of jobs and deliver economic returns 5-7 times greater than the initial outlay. To leverage investments in mass transit and maximise the economic benefits as well as improve quality of life in cities, the Government of India approved the National Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy and Metro Rail Policy in 2017, encouraging the adoption of TOD as a key urban planning and growth management strategy. With this national policy and funding push, 27 Indian cities are building metro rail systems, and many others are building other forms of rail- and bus-based mass rapid transit systems. To improve accessibility to jobs

Public policies and land market conditions drive the development of economic centres in suburban and peri-urban areas, and public transport systems struggle to keep up with this outward sprawl. The resulting longer work-home commutes, and the congestion and pollution arising from greater private vehicular use, are hampering access to jobs and labour markets, productivity and liveability. Bengaluru, for instance, is among the world's most traffic-congested cities, with the social cost estimated to be ₹38,000 crore annually (5% of the city's GDP) as per 2018 figures. TOD presents a promising approach to address these challenges, while contributing positively to India's low-carbon growth ambitions. Premised on the principle of land use-transport integration, TOD promotes compact, mixed-use development and sustainable transport modes, like walking, cycling and mass transit, effectively decoupling density from congestion and economic growth from resource use and carbon emissions. WRI India's recent publication titled 'Jobs near metro rail transit in Bengaluru: Enabling an accessible and productive city' underscores the critical need for integrated spatio-economic planning and bringing jobs closer to transit through TOD, given its significant benefits and co-benefits. Improving accessibility to jobs, through safe and efficient transport modes, can significantly enhance workforce productivity and participation. Workplace proximity and higher job densities drive transit rider-ship more effectively than residential density. Clustering job growth near transit creates an agglomeration effect that boosts innovation, productivity, and competitiveness — far more than dispersed job growth. Apart from expanding worker and customer catchments for businesses, it also spurs local economic and real estate development, leading to increased revenues for public agencies, which can be reinvested into infrastructure and service upgrades revitalising city neighbourhoods. Key findings WRI India's study examines the spatial distribution of jobs associated with registered factories (manufacturing enterprises) and shops and commercial establishments (service enter-



prises) in the Bengaluru Metropolitan Area (BMA). The study also assesses current job proximity and density along the city's operational and under-construction metro network which are Phases 1, 2, and 2A-2B, and offers insights into the locational considerations for businesses and the benefits, trade-offs, and market or regulatory challenges they face in locating near metro stations. The paper provides actionable recommendations for enabling job growth near mass transit stations.

The research indicates there are about 0.2 million registered enterprises in the BMA, employing close to 4.6 million workers, with service enterprises accounting for the bulk of it. Notably, large enterprises (100+ employees) constitute only 2% of all enterprises but contribute 60% of all jobs. Owing largely to the service sector, average job densities are highest in inner-city areas within the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and decrease further away. Peak job densities range from about 25,000 jobs/sq. km in large industrial clusters to 58,000 to 1,09,000 jobs/sq. km in hi-tech clusters such as Whitefield and Electronic City. Once the ongoing metro phases are completed (172 kms), 28% of the total mapped jobs in the BMA will be within 500 m of the nearest metro station, 59% within 1 km, and 85% within 2 km. Some large job clusters however remain disconnected, and most jobs currently lie beyond a comfortable walking distance (500 m) from metro stations, emphasising the need for pedestrian infrastructure, and feeder services, particularly in the 1-3 km range.

Market linkages and agglomeration economics drive enterprises of certain sizes and types to be located near each other, with large businesses anchoring smaller ones around them, collectively gaining from the benefits of agglomeration. The study found that service enterprises, especially those benefiting from enhanced catchments and accessibility for employ-

ees and customers, prefer to locate and cluster near the metro. However, the metro has little impact on the location choice of manufacturing enterprises. Most blue-collar workers tend to live in surrounding areas and either walk, cycle, or use public buses or informal transport to commute to work. The study corroborates other research findings that suggest that the metro has boosted real estate development nearby, especially the growth of service enterprises. The main barriers discouraging large businesses from locating near metro stations include the lack of suitable properties, unfavourable development regulations, and inadequate infrastructure levels. Developed inner-city areas have limited land availability for large-scale commercial businesses and are packed with buildings that often do not meet their requirements, for instance, legally compliant Grade-A buildings. Moreover, small plot sizes and other regulations pertaining to access road widths, setback, ground coverage and parking norms, hinder higher-density (re)development. Also, plot amalgamation processes involving multiple owners can be difficult, risky and costly. Higher property prices near metro stations however tend to dissuade smaller businesses, more than larger established ones. Market saturation and community resistance to greater commercialisation in station areas also pose a challenge for businesses seeking to locate there. The way forward

High-functioning global cities like Hong-Kong have 57% of jobs within 500 m of a transit station, 84% within 1 km, and 96% within 2 km as per LSE 2013 data. The city has one of the highest levels of transit use (90% of motorised trips) and one of the lowest levels of car ownership (56 cars per 1,000 people). This has enabled its Gross Value Added per capita to increase by 50% between 1993 and 2011, while fuel consumption and carbon emis-

sions per capita decreased by 10%. In Bengaluru, the impending revision of the city's master plan provides a valuable opportunity to set aspirational targets for jobs near transit and strategise transit network extensions to connect existing and emerging high-density job clusters. To optimise resource and economic efficiencies, the plan should also identify and prioritise areas served by transit where job densities can be increased through renewal and densification, balancing market demand with environmental and community goals.

Public policies can stipulate location-efficient incentives such as additional development rights or fee/tax subsidies to encourage businesses to locate near transit or in economically depressed areas. Apart from conventional funding sources, the government can explore public-private partnerships and value capture financing mechanisms that can be ring-fenced for station area improvements. It should also designate a nodal agency to facilitate interactions between multiple stakeholders and coordinate TOD planning and implementation. The private sector (businesses, developers, financing institutions) can play a significant role in directing commercial and industrial investments, near transit stations. Additionally, proactive partnerships, between the private and public sector, can enable catalytic developments with augmented amenities, public realm enhancement, and provision of last-mile connectivity between workplaces and transit stations. Transport infrastructure is a prime driver of economic activity and a developing country like India will continue to invest in it. For our metropolitan cities to become, and remain, globally competitive, the government needs to prioritise job densities near transit in policy-planning-regulatory frameworks. This must encompass the upgradation of public infrastructure, and institutionalising coordinated action to shape inclusive, low carbon, compact and connected growth.

How Supreme Court strengthened the law against child pornography

Tightening the law on child pornography, the Supreme Court on Monday (September 23) said that even viewing, possessing, and not reporting such content is punishable under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act regardless of whether it is shared or transmitted further. In doing so, the SC set aside a Madras High Court decision from earlier this year, where a single-judge Bench had quashed criminal proceedings against a 28-year-old man who had downloaded two pornographic videos involving children on his phone. In a 200-page judgement, a Bench comprising Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud and Justice J B Pardiwala outlined a strict interpretation of what constitutes an offence of "storage of child pornography".

What is the law in question?

The Bench expanded the interpretation of Section 15 of the POCSO Act, which deals with the "Punishment for storage of pornographic material involving child". Child pornography, POSCO Act, child pornography law, Supreme Court, SC on child pornography, Indian Express News Data on POCSO cases. Originally, the provision was restricted to cases where a person stored child pornographic material "for commercial purposes". In 2019, the POCSO Act was amended to introduce three connected offences under Sections 15(1), (2) and (3) with increasing grades of punishment — from fines to a three to five year jail sentence. These punish any person, who stores or possesses pornographic material in any form involving a child, but fails to delete or destroy or report the same to the designated authority, as may be prescribed, with an intention to share or transmit child pornography; Any person, who stores or possesses pornographic material in any form involving a child for transmitting or propagating or displaying or distributing in any manner at any time except for the purpose of reporting, as may be prescribed, or for use as evidence in court; and Any person, who stores or possesses pornographic material in any form involving a child for commercial purpose. The court's verdict, authored by Justice Pardiwala, refers to these as "inchoate" offences — offences that are in anticipation or preparation for committing a further criminal act. The court said that Section 15 was not limited to punishing the sharing or transmitting of child pornographic material, and could even be used to punish the "intent" to commit such an act. The law in these cases, the court held, punishes "overt steps" taken towards committing a crime and not "the mere thought of committing an offence". For instance, the court held that a failure to "delete or destroy or report" child pornography would allow the court to "indirectly" infer that the concerned individual intended to share or distribute it under Section 15(1).

What was the case before the SC?

On January 11, the Madras HC quashed the criminal proceedings against a man charged with downloading and possessing child pornography on his mobile phone. The FIR filed against the accused only mentioned Section 14 of the POCSO Act which punishes using children for "pornographic purposes", and the offences

under Section 15 were added in subsequent chargesheets. However, the High Court confined its ruling to Section 14 alone and held that "mere possession" of child pornography would not violate the provision "since he has not used a child or children for pornographic purposes". The court also held that the offences under the POCSO Act could only be made out if the accused had transmitted or published the material, and there was no evidence to suggest that this took place.

What did the SC rule?

The Supreme Court expanded the definition of "possession" in child pornography cases to include cases where the individual may not have physical possession of child pornographic material, but they have "the power to control the material in question and the knowledge of exercise of such control". The court termed this "constructive possession" and held that "viewing, distributing or displaying" such material would still amount to it being in the accused's "possession" under Section 15. Justice Pardiwala provided some illustrations of such possession. On viewing child pornography, he said: "Say for instance, 'A' routinely watches child pornography over the internet, but never downloads or stores the same in his mobile. Here 'A' would still be said to be in possession of such material, as while watching he exercises a considerable degree of control over such material including but not limited to sharing, deleting, enlarging such material, changing the volume etc. Furthermore, since he himself on his own volition is viewing such material, he is said to have knowledge of having control over such material." Another illustration dealt the responsibility of an individual who receives child pornography unwittingly from an external source: "For instance, say, 'A' is sent an unknown link by 'B', which upon click-



ing opens a child pornographic video on the phone of 'A'. Now if 'A' immediately closes the link, although once the link is closed 'A' is no longer in constructive possession of the child pornography, this by itself does not mean that 'A' has destroyed or deleted the said material by merely closing the link. 'A' will only be absolved of any liability if he after closing the link further reports the same to the specified authorities". This puts emphasis on reporting of child pornographic content. The penalty for not reporting is a fine "not less than five thousand rupees and in the event of second or subsequent offence, with fine which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees." The court also held that the offence under Section 15 will apply even if the accused does not have physical possession of child pornography at the time when the FIR is filed. Charges can be made if it is established that the accused possessed child pornographic material "at any point". The court said that if a person "immedi-

ately after storing and watching child pornography in his mobile phone deletes the same before an FIR could be registered" could still be found liable under Section 15.

How will such cases be registered?

The court held that the intention of an accused can be determined based on the "manner in which such material is stored or possessed and the circumstances in which the same was not deleted, destroyed or reported". From these actions and circumstances, the court will determine the mens rea or the intention of the accused. The court also cautioned the police and courts from limiting their inquiry to one of the sub-sections under Section 15. Even if an offence under one sub-section is not made out, the court held that the police and courts must not "jump to the conclusion" that there is no offence at all. Instead, the police must see if an offence has been out in one of the other sub-sections.

Notarised properties can now have electric meters from Discom websites

Hyderabad: Now residential houses, apartments and commercial establishments built on notary lands, will now be able to get electric meter connections directly from the Discom websites. The Discoms have reportedly decided to provide meters to notarised properties on a special fee structure. Notarised property transactions are done on a stamp paper attested by a notary advocate instead of actually registering it. This is legally not valid and cannot be transferred to others and even Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) had stopped assessing property tax on such properties a few years ago as people were registering them using property tax receipts. Currently, the Discom authorities are issuing new connections only to registered structures and notarised properties were not entertained. However, the field staff of the Discoms and brokers used to collect huge sums from people and get them meters by



submitting false documents. Consumers having notarised properties in Hyderabad city and other areas had to depend on these brokers in unavoidable situations for get-

ting new connections. That the people having notarised properties can now get new connections from TGSPDCL official website by paying stamp duty for small properties.

Why PGI Chandigarh's 'donate your body' campaign holds out hope for medical research

Just outside the anatomy department of PGIMER, Chandigarh, a wall is lined with photographs of people who donated their bodies for medical research. Among them is Ajmer Singh, a former Olympian and Rama Bhanot, the mother of Neerja Bhanot, the air-hostess who saved passengers from hijackers on a Pan Am flight in 1986 and was shot dead. Doctors call it a "memory lane" to honour everyday people who decided to forego funerary rites so that medicos could use their cadavers, train better and save more lives. Seeing this, academic Prof Dina Nath Jauhar, his wife, brother and friend pledged their bodies for research on his 77th birthday. "It is the best gift I could give myself, give back to society" as he calls it. Thanks to the PGIMER's awareness campaign, linking cadavers to organ donations as a noble cause, 4,700 people from Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula, have pledged their bodies for research, a positive step in meeting the cadaver shortage at teaching hospitals in the country. Over the last two weeks, two donor families chose donation over cremation. Amteshwar Sandhu and Ayesha Sandhu donated the body of their father, 72-year-old Maj Adesh Pal Singh Sandhu as did the children of 82-year-old Bhagwant Virk. Cadaver donation has been in focus

ever since party veteran Sitaram Yechury's body was donated to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, for medical research. Since cadavers are needed for precise surgical and anatomical training, a shortage means students now make do with synthetic dummies instead. Even at AIIMS, it is mostly former doctors who donate their bodies. Very few patients' families are as committed. Yet, as Prof Kamran Farooque, Jai Prakash Narayan Trauma Centre Chief, AIIMS, argues, cadavers are needed more than ever before, given the evolving nature of surgical technologies which need to be tested before use on a patient. "The cadaver is closest to human anatomy. It gives a surgeon/doctor the near actual experience before he or she finally operates on the patient," he says. Although there's no national registry on the total number of bodies donated, the Indian Express reached out to medical colleges in Delhi and Chandigarh. PGIMER, Chandigarh, receives around 25 to 30 cadaver donations annually. Dr Rima Dada, professor, department of anatomy, AIIMS, says 70 bodies were donated to the institution in the last two years. In comparison, the Safdarjung Hospital and its affiliate Vardhaman Mahavir Medical College (VMCC) received 24 donor cadavers in five years. The Ram Manohar Hospital and the associated Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Medical Sciences (ABVIMS) received 18 cadavers since the inception of its MBBS course in 2019. Of the 18, 10 were from the patients who were either admitted at the hospital or passed away while on their way to the RML hospital.

WHAT ABOUT AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS?

A part of the reason PGIMER's campaign is more successful is because it focusses on sessions with common people. "While many people pledge their bodies, often their families and relatives say or



claim they do not know about it. Some are uncomfortable about the process and many times, they delay contacting the institute. A body has to be retrieved and handed over to the department of anatomy within three to five hours. So, we encourage donors to make a will in their lifetime and take their family into confidence. And if our medical college or any other teaching institution is far away, we tell them to preserve the body in any mortuary on ice slabs," says a consultant in the anatomy department, PGIMER.

WHY CADAVER DONATION IS LOW?

Since hospitals only accept bodies of people who have died from natural causes, chronic diseases, age or trauma and not infectious viral diseases, the COVID years saw a slump in cadaver donation. Says Dr Bidya Rani, anatomy professor at ABVIMS, "No donation happened in the Covid years of 2020 and 2021 because of the possibility of infection spreading."

Although nurses and doctors have donated their family members' bodies and even signed consent forms to donate their own, a lot more awareness is needed among patients and their families. "There is an interest at least. A government officer recently signed up to donate his body and I expect more people to come forward slowly," says Dr Bidya. Dr Vandana Mehta, head of anatomy at VMCC and Safdarjung hospital, concurs that regular awareness campaigns about organ donations have helped break the barrier. "Some donors are from the middle and upper middle classes," she adds. However, the numbers are a trickle compared to the requirement of medical colleges, which now use existing cadavers selectively.

HOW CADAVERS HELP SENIOR DOCTORS TOO Cadavers are not only used by medical students and resident doctors but also by doctors pursuing MCh degrees and scientists. Professor Vijay

Devagourou of the Cardio Thoracic Vascular Surgery (CTVS) department at AIIMS says cadavers are used to teach residents how to take organs out and put them back, crucial for heart and lung transplants. "We teach students how to make a minimal incision and harvest blood vessels, like using the mammary artery for bypass surgery. These delicate procedures need practice and can't be done directly on the table," he says. Dr KB Shankar, head of the neurosurgery department at Safdarjung Hospital and VMMC College says cadavers are a must for deep-seated precision surgeries. "When we operate on pituitary adenoma, a benign (non-cancerous) growth on your pituitary gland, we have to teach students through a dissection on a cadaver. This way we are better prepared to handle any complication that arises during the actual surgery. We get to know how to avoid damaging the arteries and veins when we are approaching a tumour," he says. Former AIIMS student Dr Saurabh Kumar, who completed his MCh

programme in neurosurgery, says cadaver dissections are important for learning new surgical procedures, including minimally invasive and keyhole surgeries. "The more they train, the doctor will become more confident and easily overcome the learning curve," he says. Explaining the importance of cadavers in plastic surgery, Dr Maneesh Singhal, who heads the department at AIIMS, says they are an absolute must for trauma-induced reconstruction surgery. "We teach our residents on how bone, muscle and skin flaps have to be translocated to and transplanted on the affected area. We put a silicone dye in the neck area of the cadaver to differentiate between arteries and veins. This cannot happen in a synthetic dummy," he says. Which is why, the decision of Prof Jauhar, former Vice-Chancellor of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar University, to donate his body holds out hope. "My teaching was possible because I could access resources that were the effort of other people. So it is only fair that I give back to the world I have taken so much from," he says.

Congress in a spot of bother

Hyderabad: All the enthusiasm and excitement that was exhibited by the Congress in welcoming the 10 turncoat MLAs into the partyfold appear to have fizzled out. The High Court's notices to the 10 turncoat MLAs has now further put the Congress in a spot of bother. After having encouraged defection of BRS MLAs, the party is now trying to distance itself from the MLAs.

The way the Congress handled Serilingampally MLA Arekapudi Gandhi's presence at the Congress Legislative Party meeting at a private hotel reflects the current situation. Despite the presence of Gandhi, Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender, Rajendranagar MLA Prakash

Goud and Station Ghanpur MLA Kadiam Srihari at the CLP meeting venue, the Congress leaders made a vain bid to downplay their presence.

Legislative Affairs Minister D Sridhar Babu even went to the extent of saying that the Serilingampally MLA had come to greet Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy at the venue as a courtesy. He was here since the venue comes under his constituency limits, the Minister had claimed. But his claims evoked sharp criticism from different sections. While, acknowledging the fact that Gandhi was the local MLA, many took to social media and questioned the Congress about the presence of Nagender, Prakash Goud and Kadiam Srihari at the venue.