

Telangana government rolls back its decision on removal of part-time teachers in TGSWREIS

Hyderabad: After BRS leaders vehemently opposing removal of 6,200 part-time teachers and other staff in the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Institutions, the Congress government has come down and rolled back its decision. Following continuous protests by teachers and students, the government decided to continue services of the part-time teachers.

On Friday, the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGSWREIS) senior officials held an online Zoom meeting during which the officials concerned were permitted to continue services of part-time teachers working in the sanctioned posts in respective institutions. "Part-time teachers working in sanctioned posts are permitted to continue. Likewise, vocational teachers also continued. These are oral instructions and order copy is awaited," a teacher said. Earlier, ahead of Teachers' Day, the society directed its principals to discontinue any non-regular staff working in the category of part-time/additional staff including staff on honorarium basis with immediate effect. This impacted 6,200 teachers.

Slamming the Congress government for issuing dismissal letters ahead of



Teachers' Day, BRS senior leader T Harish Rao had said "Is this the people's governance and Indiramma rule that you promised?" Removal of 6,200 part-time teachers, lecturers, and DEOs in the middle

of the academic year was a heartless decision that left thousands of families in distress, he said. BRS leader RS Praveen Kumar had said the Congress government was conspiring to destroy the welfare resi-

dential educational system.

He also had said the dismissal of 2,000 teachers from SC residential welfare schools, was an attack on constitutional and legal provisions.

Harish Rao criticises Congress government over deteriorating law and order, demands justice for tribal victim



Accompanied by a BRS delegation including Talasani Srinivas Yadav, P Sabita Indra Reddy, V Sunitha Laxma Reddy, Kova Lakshmi, and others, Harish Rao visited the rape victim who is undergoing treatment at Gandhi Hospital on Friday. They consoled her and her family members, assuring all support from the BRS.

Hyderabad: Former Minister and senior BRS leader T Harish Rao lambasted the Congress government over the deteriorating law and order situation in Telangana. He demanded a compensation of Rs 10 lakh for the victim from Jainur in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district and condemned the Congress's failure to ensure women's safety. Accompanied by a BRS delegation including Talasani Srinivas Yadav, P Sabita Indra Reddy, V Sunitha Laxma Reddy, Kova Lakshmi, and others, Harish Rao visited the rape victim who is undergoing treatment at Gandhi Hospital on Friday. They consoled her and her family members, assuring all support from the BRS.

Speaking on the occasion, Harish Rao expressed outrage at the Congress government's lack of response to the increasing crimes. He said that the State was witnessing a disturbing rise in violent crimes against women since the Congress came to power. He pointed out that rising weapons culture which is otherwise seen in some North Indian States like Uttar Pradesh. "In just nine months, there have been 1,900 sexual assaults and 2,600 murders, while around 230 smuggled weapons have been seized. The Chief Minister himself holds the Home Depart-

ment, yet we see crimes rising at an alarming rate," he said.

The former Minister also pointed to repeated incidents of rape and rape attempts on girls and women of different age groups in the State, and criticised the Congress for failing to act. "The State government is in deep slumber, even as the situation deteriorates. The Union Home Ministry should intervene to improve the situation. The National Commission for Women also should respond in this regard," he opined. He reminded that during former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao's regime, Telangana was recognised as one of the safest States for women. "SHE Teams were introduced, and Telangana was praised globally for its efforts in maintaining law and order. But today, the State's image is being tarnished by this government," he said. Harish Rao also criticised Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for neglecting disaster relief efforts and not visiting the victim in Gandhi Hospital. "

The Chief Minister is in Hyderabad but doesn't have time to show concern for the woman who is fighting for her life," he added. He urged the State government to give a free hand to the police to address the growing crime rate and communal violence.

Rudraneil Sengupta writes on India at the Paralympics

She releases the arrow, which buries itself into the black dot at the centre of the target with a satisfying thunk. The crowd gathered at the formal gardens of Les Invalides in Paris erupts in joy. A new sporting hero was born at the 2024 Paralympics. The France and Barcelona footballer Jules Kounde posted a clip of Devi hitting the bullseye, alongside a starry-eyed emoji. Devi is 17. She was born with severely underdeveloped arms, the result of a rare medical condition called phocomelia. That didn't stop her from climbing trees as a child, and climbing trees gave her the phenomenal strength and agility needed to be an archer without arms. In Paris, Devi missed out on an individual medal, losing by a solitary point in her quarterfinal encounter. She did team up with 39-year-old Rakesh Kumar later, to win the team bronze. But anyone who has watched her in action knows this: there is something deeply thrilling and intensely cathartic about watching her shoot. The ease and grace with which she goes about her process, the economy of movement, the power she generates, mark her out as a future star. Devi and Kumar's bronze was one of eight medals won by Indian Paralympians that day, in an extraordinary spree for India.

Let that sink in: In roughly 10 hours of competition, on September 2, India won eight medals. That's more than the country has managed at any single edition of the Olympics. In all, India has won 15 medals at this Paralympics, including three golds. That is as many medals as India had won in its entire Paralympic history before

Tokyo. The pre-Tokyo tally stood at 12; in Tokyo, India won 19. Indian para-athletes have been on an unprecedented rise ever since, not just winning medals but doing so repeatedly. Avani Lekhara, a 22-year-old paraplegic, defended her Tokyo gold in the air-rifle range, becoming the first Indian woman to win two gold Paralympic medals. Sumit Antil, 26, that extraordinarily powerful javelin thrower, broke the world record in his category thrice to take the Tokyo gold; in Paris, he broke his record twice more, and won gold again. Two things have stood out as I have learnt more about these young men and women. First, many were injured in road accidents. Lekhara was 11 when a car crash caused grievous spinal damage; Kumar contemplated suicide to reduce the difficulties his family faced after his spine was damaged in a car crash; Antil was an aspiring wrestler before a bike crash led to an amputation and the end of a dream. India consistently tops the list of countries with most fatalities from road accidents. None of us needs statistics to tell us how unsafe the roads are. The second thing that struck me was the obvious question: How did we get so good at para-sports? Well, Lekhara's coach is Suma Shirur, who is also the high-performance director for India's Olympic shooting squad. Antil trains at JSW's Inspire Institute of Sport, where Neeraj Chopra trains too. Some of the badminton medallists for India train at the Pullela Gopichand Academy in Hyderabad. There is increased government funding, and more para-athletes are being taken more seriously and brought in to train at top facilities.



Covering the IC-814 hijack

The controversial Netflix series, IC814: The Kandahar Hijack, has attempted to recount the events of 1999 for a new generation. Every journalist who covered the story at the time has their own personal narrative about the last week of the previous millennium when, instead of celebrating, India lurched through the harrowing ordeal of the IC-814 hijack, and the sadness and anger that followed the surrender of three dreaded terrorists at Kandahar.

My own story began four years before that, when I was a new recruit at CNN International. It was a slow news day in August 1995, and the office bell was rung by a courier carrying a video tape from Srinagar. As I popped the tape into the machine, a wave of sickness hit me. That image of a European man with curly hair in a green kameez, with his severed head placed on his body, still flashes before me. Hans Ostrø was among the six foreigners kidnapped by a group called Al-Faran, believed to be the Pakistan-backed Harkat-ul-Ansar, founded by Masood Azhar, who had been arrested in India in January 1994. They had been taken hostage at gunpoint in July 1995, when they had gone trekking in the Kashmir Valley, and the gunmen had

demanding the release of Azhar in exchange for them. One hostage escaped, while the rest were never found. The kidnappers had carved the name of their group on Ostrø's chest.

In 1994 too, the Harkat-ul-Ansar had kidnapped two sets of foreigners with the aim of exchanging them for Azhar. They had first kidnapped two British men, who they had been forced to release under public pressure. Their kidnapping later of four tourists had been thwarted by the police after a shoot-out. Omar Saeed Sheikh (later known as the killer of journalist Daniel Pearl), who had travelled to India to free Azhar, was injured and arrested in the encounter. Why the Indian government did not join the dots to realise how important Azhar was to the Inter Services Intelligence-funded operations in Jammu and Kashmir despite these kidnappings and prepare better for a bigger hostage situation will remain a mystery.

On December 24, 1999, I was at the Airports Authority of India building at Palam airport, getting permissions for our crew to film on the tarmac on New Year's day, when the hijack took place. When an official told me about it, I thought it was a security drill.



I realised something was wrong when senior officials rushed to the domestic terminal. Nothing had hit the airwaves yet, and my news editors in the U.S. were hesitant to even take the story live until it was confirmed on camera. The next few hours were agonising for the families. When the aircraft landed in Amritsar, there was hope that the crisis could be managed. But a hapless government was unable to ensure that it stayed in India, and there was never

any public scrutiny of why our systems didn't move quicker. There were other questions that never got answered too, as the hijack unfolded, such as why the international community — the U.S., the U.K., Saudi Arabia, and the UAE — which had influence over Pakistan and the Taliban, did not do more to end the crisis, or realise the filip that attack would give terrorists globally. The 9/11 attacks took place just two years later.

IIM Mumbai Unveils Plans for 800 Crore State-of-the-Art Facilities for Students and Innovation

On its Foundation Day, IIM Mumbai has announced an investment of INR 800 crores for its campus enhancement project. This significant investment will help towards modernizing and developing state-of-the-art facilities on the campus. The initiative comes on the heels of the institute's rapid ascent to the 6th position in national rankings within a year of its establishment.

To mark Teachers' Day, Mr. Shashi Kiran Shetty, Chairman, of the Board of Governance, IIM Mumbai, and Founder and Chairman, of Allcargo Group, inaugurated the commencement of the new facilities, underscoring the institute's commitment to fostering innovation and excellence. Mr. Shetty emphasized the institute's dedication to providing students with an optimal environment for exploring Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technology. IIM Mumbai proudly acknowledges the distinguished presence of Dr. Satheesh Reddy, President of the Aeronautical Society of India, Former Secretary of DDRND, Chairman, of DRDO, and Scientific Adviser to Raksha Mantri, who played a significant role in the inauguration of IIM Mumbai's INR 800 crore campus enhancement project. Dr. Reddy, known for his groundbreaking contributions to India's defence sector, attended the Bhumi Pujan ceremony, where he laid the foundation stone for the new development phase of the campus. IIM Mumbai is honored to have Dr. Reddy's support and is excited about the new opportunities this project will create for students and researchers alike. His contribution to the event exemplifies the institute's commitment to bridging the gap between academia and real-world technological advancements.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Shashi Kiran Shetty, Chairman, Board of Governance, IIM Mumbai and Founder and Chairman, Allcargo Group said, "This occasion will go down in the history of IIM Mumbai as a key milestone which marks the journey of this premier institute towards becoming one of the best B-schools in the world. The initiative to upgrade the campus is a part of our goal to develop a 21st-century infrastructure capable of exceeding global standards. Thanks to the prestigious IIM tag and the strategic location of the campus in Mumbai, the institute has started attracting faculty and students across the world. With state-of-the-art infrastructure, excellent faculty, and best-in-class pedagogy, IIM Mumbai will emerge as the best management institute in the world, producing the best in quality leadership and entrepreneurship." The forthcoming facilities will include the sprawling net zero campus of the future with world-class residential accommodation for faculty & students, startup ecosystem development, Management Development Programs, and a large auditorium. Additionally, the facility will include an Innovation Center focused on banking, finance, and fintech, an AI-based research hub, and a state-of-the-art library connecting students with global resources. The campus will host a prominent Management Training Center, offering certification courses and serving as a focal point for industry leaders. Formerly known as NITIE, IIM Mumbai has a strong legacy in industrial



and engineering education. Since its transition to an IIM, the institute's climb to 6th

position this year in national rankings underscores the benefits of this change. Situ-

ated in India's financial hub, IIM Mumbai is a significant development for the mega city.

Press Note: Globex Awards Ceremony Highlights the Launch of Afro-Asian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AFACCI)

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AFACCI, an initiative spearheaded by Dr. Rameswara Ramadun from Mauritius, Dr. P.V. Majeed, and Dr. Venkata K. Ganjam from India, was officially unveiled during the Globex Awards ceremony. With its headquarters based in Mauritius, AFACCI is more than a business platform; it is a powerful bridge connecting the two dynamic continents of Africa and Asia. The chamber aims to harness the abundant natural resources, human talent, and rich cultural heritage of both continents, positioning them to lead in the global economic

landscape of the 21st century. Dr. P.V. Majeed, President of AFACCI, highlighted the importance of this new platform during the event, emphasizing that the Chamber's mission is to foster economic cooperation, sustainable growth, and a robust business environment that benefits its members and the larger communities. He further announced the appointment of Dr. Venkata K. Ganjam as the Secretary-General of AFACCI, commending his vision and efforts in establishing the Chamber's presence in India.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Venkata K. Ganjam expressed his commitment to building strong Afro-Asian ties, remarking, "The Afro-Asian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is dedicated to realizing the immense potential of our two continents by working together in innovative ways. We are ready to lead the world into a future of shared prosperity." The unveiling of the AFACCI logo was a key highlight of the evening, symbolizing the start of a new era of collaboration between Africa and Asia.

The logo embodies the core values of unity, progress, and mutual growth that AFACCI stands for. The Globex Awards program also saw the participation of esteemed dignitaries, including Mr. Sirisilla Rajaiiah, Chairman of the Telangana State Finance Commission; Mr. Nehru Naik, LM33 Telangana State Finance Commission; Mr. Murthy Devarabhotla, President of The Diplomatic Club; Dr. Mohd. Nizamuddin, Global Rule 5; and Mr. V. Sudhakar, further adding to the event's prestige. AFACCI's mission is clear: to create a thriving network of businesses and professionals that will drive economic development across both continents. Through this platform, members will have access to a wealth of opportunities, resources, and partnerships that will contribute to sustainable growth and long-term success. As the Globex Awards ceremony concluded, it was evident that this event was not just about recognizing business excellence, but also about laying the groundwork for a brighter, more connected future for Africa and Asia.

Indicators of Adulterated Loose Tea

Tea is an essential part of daily life for millions worldwide, and its significance is only growing. With global production surpassing 5.8 million tons in recent years, the tea industry has expanded rapidly. In India, tea remains a beloved beverage, with consumption steadily increasing. In 2022 alone, India consumed around 1.2 billion kilograms of tea, a testament to its cultural and social importance. However, the increasing demand for tea has led to a rise in adulteration, where foreign substances are added to tea to cut costs and boost profits. This article explores the indicators of adulterated loose tea and offers practical steps for consumers to identify and avoid such products. As economic globalization progresses, tea safety has become a growing concern, especially since adulteration is more common in loose tea than in branded varieties. Ensuring pure, unadulterated tea is the consumer's right, and fostering trust between retailers and consumers is essential.

Understanding Tea Adulteration Tea adulteration involves mixing inferior substances into tea leaves to enhance appearance, increase weight, or alter the taste. These contaminants range from harmless fillers to dangerous chemicals, driven by the demand for cheaper products. This practice often leads suppliers to compromise on quality. The consequences of consuming adulterated tea can range from mild digestive issues to severe long-term health problems. Common adulterants

in Loose Tea

1. **Unnatural Colouring Agents:** To make tea leaves appear fresher and more vibrant, some suppliers use synthetic dyes, which are often toxic and can cause health issues over time.

2. **Used Tea Leaves:** A common practice is mixing used tea leaves with fresh ones. These re-dried leaves increase the volume but significantly reduce the tea's quality and taste.

3. **Harmful Chemicals:** Some tea producers add chemicals like lead chromate or copper salts to enhance the tea's appearance. These substances are highly dangerous and can lead to serious health complications, including poisoning.

4. **Filler Materials:** Low-quality tea often contains filler materials like twigs, sand, or starch. These are added to increase weight but degrade the overall quality and taste of the tea. Identifying Adulterated Loose Tea Although adulteration can be challenging to detect, several indicators can help consumers ensure they are buying pure, high-quality tea:

1. **Check the Colour:** Unadulterated tea leaves should have a natural, earthy color. If the leaves appear too bright or unnaturally green, it could indicate spurious coloring. When brewed, tea should produce a clear, bright liquor without any sediment.

2. **Inspect for Foreign Particles:** Tea



leaves should be free from extraneous materials like twigs, stones, or other contaminants.

3. **Examine the Texture:** Authentic tea leaves have a consistent texture and size. If you notice a lot of grime, broken leaves, or uneven textures, the tea may be adulterated with fillers. Quality loose tea should feel slightly coarse and firm, not powdery or excessively soft. Professionally trained tea testers can determine whether the tea has been adulterated by analyzing

the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) present in the tea.

These compounds are often detected through advanced techniques such as gas chromatography–olfactometry (Kang et al., 2019), gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (Torres, & Almirall, 2022), and gas chromatography–ion mobility spectrometry (Liu et al., 2021). This research is inspired by the medical field, where exhaled air is analyzed for biomarkers used in disease diagnosis and health monitoring.

Auckland University of Technology Launches Australasia's First University Course with Taylor Swift



Auckland University of Technology (AUT) has announced the launch of a pioneering summer school course, Taylor Swift: Communications Professional, marking Australasia's first university-level course with the global pop icon. Offered by AUT's School of Communication Studies, the course will critically analyse Taylor Swift's 18-year career through the lens of

modern communications disciplines. Senior lecturer Rebecca Trelease (Te Ati Haunui a Paparangi) highlighted Swift's mastery of communication as a driving force behind her media success. "Throughout her career, Taylor Swift has demonstrated excellence in lyrics, music, and a curated image of a pop culture phenomenon," said Trelease. "What

must also be examined is Swift's prowess as a communications professional, the backbone to curating and maintaining her career in the media."

The new course comes on the heels of overwhelming interest in Swiftposium, an academic conference held in February 2024 to critically examine Swift's global impact. The conference, co-funded by AUT and partner universities in Australia, drew immense attention from both high-school students and fans alike, reflecting the singer's widespread influence. The Taylor Swift: Communications Professional course will allow students to learn and apply communications theory to Swift's body of work.

From analysing her visual and audio content to critiquing her branding strategies, the course offers students a unique opportunity to understand communication principles through the lens of a globally dominant figure in pop culture.

"This course is for everyone – from high school students eager for a head start on university study, to established professionals looking to expand their knowledge," added Trelease. "We're thrilled to offer a course that reflects the cultural relevance of Taylor Swift while equipping students

with the tools to analyse and apply communication strategies in their own careers."

The course will run from November 18 to December 13, coinciding with Taylor Swift's 35th birthday, and will be held three days a week at AUT's City Campus. If there is enough interest, AUT may also offer the course online to cater to students who are unable to attend in person. Notes to Editors: About Education New Zealand (ENZ) <https://www.enz.govt.nz/Education> New Zealand Manapou ki te Ao (ENZ) is the government agency responsible for taking New Zealand's education experiences to the world. ENZ promotes a New Zealand education as one that teaches students to be critical thinkers, problem solvers and lifelong learners, which will help them succeed in their future careers and create a positive impact on the world.

In 2019, New Zealand's education system was ranked first among English-speaking countries and third in the world for delivering a future-focused education (out of 50 economies) by the Economist Intelligence Unit. With approximately 100 staff in 18 locations around the world, ENZ works closely with New Zealand's diverse education sector, including schools, English language providers, Private Training Establishments, Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics, universities, and internationally with NZ Inc agencies, Government agencies and education providers to encourage sustainable growth and identify opportunities.

Bollywood Star Anushka Sharma Unveils Special Edition Watch in Collaboration with Michael Kors

In a groundbreaking move that redefines the luxury watch landscape in India, Bollywood's leading actor and Michael Kors watch ambassador Anushka Sharma unveiled her exclusive limited-edition timepiece. The collaboration marks a historic moment as it is the first time a female Indian celebrity has launched a commercially available signature watch.

Anushka Sharma shared her thoughts, "Designing my own signature watch with Michael Kors has been a rewarding experience. As their brand ambassador, I've always admired their seamless blend of timeless elegance and modern sophistication. With this limited-edition watch, I wanted to create something that not only reflects my personal style but also reflects the personal significance a watch holds for me every time I wear it.. The sleek casing paired with the rich forest green face and sporty bracelet embodies both sophistication and functionality, making it a versatile piece for any occasion. I'm happy to share this special creation with everyone and look forward to seeing how each of you will make it your own."

This special-edition watch features a 32x27mm stainless steel case and bracelet, complemented by a vibrant green dial and a green cabochon stone. Anushka's signature is beautifully engraved on the case back and the packaging, adding a personal touch to each watch. Limited to just 500 units, this exclusive timepiece is a coveted addition for collectors.

Johnson Verghese, Managing Director for Fossil India, commented, "We are delighted to launch this special-edition watch with Anushka Sharma. The watch captures the elegance and modernity that both Anushka Sharma and Michael Kors embody. This collaboration reflects our dedication to creating unique and ex-



quisite designs, and we are proud to bring this remarkable timepiece to our customers." To celebrate the launch of this exclusive watch, Michael Kors held a private event at JW Marriott (Juhu) in Mumbai. At the event, Anushka Sharma announced the

collaboration and unveiled the watch to the audience of select influencers including Aastha Shah, Jahanvi Chaudhary, Debashree Biswas, Ash Ambawat and Rajvee Gandhi.

The event itself was a glamorous af-

fair, featuring a captivating showcase of the watch, which blends Anushka Sharma's distinct style with the timeless elegance of Michael Kors. Priced at INR 19,995, this exclusive timepiece is now available at select online and offline stores.

Sanga Venkatarajam is the best teacher in Warangal district.

For the past 30 years, he has approached the teaching profession as an art, a responsibility, born in poverty and has considered the profession as divine. He has studied above and beyond, serving as a lecturer and teacher, providing education to numerous students and establishing various colleges and educational institutes that have also created job opportunities for the unemployed. Many student-teacher groups have been thrilled to be selected for the Upadhyaya Award. On September 5, 2024, Guru Pujotsavam will be celebrated nationally every year to honor the birth anniversary of Sri Sarvepalli Radhakrishna. On this day, the Teachers' Day program will be held under the supervision of Warangal district educational officer Gyaneshwar, with the attendance of chief guest MP Dr. Kavaya Garu, Warangal District Collector Mrs. Satya Sarada Garu, Vardhanna peta Legislators Nagaraju, Parakala Legislators Prakash Reddy, and

MLC Basavaraju at Aakuthota function hall in Ursu gutta, Warangal. And felicitation to best teachers awardees. and given valuable speeches. On this occasion, Mr. Sanga Venkatarajam, the head of Scholars Educational Institution in Warangal, was felicitated with the best teacher award of Warangal district and a certificate of appreciation. On this occasion, Sanga Venkatarajam said that every award and honor increases the responsibility, and the poor students get the idea that God will give them the fortune to serve the students. Similarly and thanks to those who support and encourage this award Warangal District WADUPSA President Veeraswamy, Honorary President Shyam, General Secretary Billa Ravi, Advisors Sridhar, Chakrapani, Treasurer Gyaneshwar Singh, Warangal Mandal WADUPSA President Kranti Kumar, Secretary Srinivas, Treasurer Kurapathi Mohan and the rest of the working group.



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Delhi High Court Issues Restraining Order Against Unauthorized Use of "OZONE" and "OZEN" Brand owned by Ozone Overseas Private Limited

Ozone Overseas Pvt. Ltd ("OZONE"), India's leading provider of architectural hardware fittings and security solutions, has taken legal action to protect its Trademark and other intellectual property rights against unauthorized use of its brand in the South Region, specifically in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam.

Recently, the company reported several instances of unauthorized use of its trademark "OZONE" and "OZEN" by

unassociated entities, which has led to confusion among consumers and potential harm to the brand's reputation. In response to secure its brand value, OZONE has initiated legal proceedings for trademark, design, and copyright infringement before Delhi High Court. On August 9, 2024, the Hon'ble Delhi High Court issued an interim order in favor of OZONE and restrained two Hyderabad-based entities, Sri Siddhi Vinayaka Hardware Solutions and Taiton Hardware Pvt. Ltd., for using the

trademark 'OZONE and OZEN', and related materials without the company's permission. The High Court appointed a Local Commissioner to conduct a search and seizure operation at the Hyderabad-based office of the above-mentioned entities on 21.08.2024, wherein a large stock of OZONE-branded products were recovered and sealed in compliance with the Court's directives.

In another case, the Delhi Court granted a permanent injunction against

Classic Glass & Hardware, Hyderabad, prohibiting the use of the trademark "Plus Ozone" for hardware products.

The brand has also urged its customers, distributors, channel partners, and stakeholders to stay vigilant and report any suspicious products that may infringe on its trademarks. Reports of potential counterfeit or unauthorized products should be directed to the Customer Support Team at customercare@ozone.in or connect at +91 9310012300.

Punjab Congress organises statewide protest against petrol and diesel price hike

Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN)
September 6:

Punjab Congress on Friday organised a statewide protest against the AAP government's decision to increase the prices of petrol and diesel on Thursday and gave a memorandum to the government officials demanding the immediate withdrawal of the price hike. To enhance the state revenue, on Thursday, the Punjab Cabinet approved a hike in value-added tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. The VAT on petrol will increase by 61 paise per litre, while the tax on diesel will rise by 92 paise per litre. The state Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema stated that the VAT increase is expected to boost revenue by Rs 395 crore from diesel and Rs 150 crore from petrol. Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, the President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and Member of Parliament from Ludhiana, led a powerful and peaceful protest today at Sri Muktsar Sahib against the Aam Aadmi Party government's recent decisions to hike the prices of petrol, diesel, and electricity in Punjab. Accompanied by several Punjab Congress leaders and workers, Raja Warring marched to the office of the District Commissioner of Muktsar Sahib, where he personally handed over a memorandum demanding the immediate reversal of these price increases. Speaking at the protest, Raja Warring voiced the collective anger and frustration of the people of Punjab, stating,

"The AAP government is playing a cruel joke on the people of Punjab. By raising the prices of essential commodities like petrol, diesel, and electricity, they are deliberately pushing the middle class and the poor into deeper financial distress. We are here to make it clear that we will not stand by and watch as this government robs the pockets of Punjabis. This is the state government's way to fund their self-advertisement budget from the pockets of the middle class and the common man of Punjab." The PPCC Chief was resolute in his stance, emphasizing that the Congress party would continue to fight for the rights of the people. "Today, we are not just submitting a memorandum to the DC of Muktsar Sahib; similar memorandums are being handed over to the DCs of every district across Punjab. We will ensure that the voice of the common people reaches the ears of the government," Raja Warring asserted. Raja Warring also criticized the timing and method of the AAP government's policy implementation. "The AAP is avoiding transparency and accountability by introducing these hikes outside of the Vidhan Sabha sessions. This is a blatant attempt to avoid opposition scrutiny and dodge questions that would expose their anti-people policies," he said. The protest at Muktsar Sahib is part of a statewide movement initiated by the Punjab Congress to hold the AAP government accountable for its decisions. Raja Warring made it clear that the Congress party would not rest until these price hikes were rolled back. "The Congress party has always fought for the rights of its people, and even now, we will not allow the pockets of Punjabis to be



robbed," he concluded. The memorandum handed over to the DC at Muktsar Sahib clearly outlines the Punjab Congress's demands, urging the state government to

immediately reverse the price hikes and alleviate the financial burden on the people. Raja Warring and the Punjab Congress leaders vowed to continue their pro-

tests until the government accedes to these demands, standing firm in their commitment to protect the interests of the common people of Punjab.

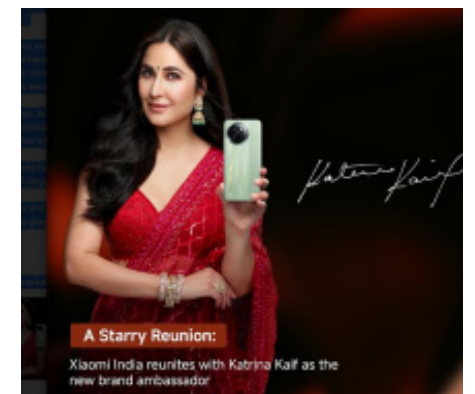
Xiaomi India onboards Katrina Kaif as brand ambassador: A Magical Reunion for a Smarter Tomorrow

Xiaomi India, a global technology brand renowned for its innovation, today announced a strategic partnership with the iconic global actress Katrina Kaif. Kaif will serve as the brand ambassador for Xiaomi's diverse range of Smartphones, TVs, and Tablets. As Xiaomi celebrates a decade of excellence in India, this announcement stands as a testament to Xiaomi's unwavering commitment of innovation for everyone, and it encapsulates the essence of Katrina's global appeal and charismatic beauty perfectly.

Katrina Kaif, a celebrated actress in the Indian film industry and a global icon, embodies the spirit of innovation, style, and excellence that Xiaomi strives to embody. Her immense popularity and influence resonate deeply with the brand's growing customer base. With Katrina as its brand ambassador, Xiaomi further aims to strengthen its connection with consumers and reinforce its position as a preferred choice for aspirational Indians seeking cutting-edge technology. In the wake of the exciting announcement, Anuj Sharma,

Chief Marketing Officer, Xiaomi India, commented, "As we commemorate a decade of innovation in India, welcoming Katrina Kaif back to the Xiaomi family feels like the perfect way to celebrate. Her grace, widespread appeal, and deep resonance with our audience makes her an ideal ambassador for our next chapter. Both Xiaomi and Katrina have a unique ability to connect with millions of people in an endearing manner. Together, we'll continue to create magic with this association and bring innovative technology to everyone."

Sharing her excitement on coming on board as Xiaomi's new face, actor Katrina Kaif said, "I am thrilled to be back with Xiaomi, especially at this exciting juncture when the brand is celebrating a decade of bringing magic to people's lives. Xiaomi is a household name in India and their commitment to innovation is something I deeply admire. It feels great to be part of a brand that is constantly evolving and contribute to its iconic legacy. I look forward to represent Xiaomi, a brand that is loved by people across the country and excited to further



engage my fans in the innovative world of Xiaomi." Prateik Das, Associate Director, Marketing Partnerships and Alliances, Xiaomi India further added, "We're thrilled to announce this exciting collaboration between Xiaomi India and Katrina Kaif. This partnership brings together two iconic brands that resonate deeply with Indian audiences. We believe that Katrina's charisma and Xiaomi's innovative technology will create a powerful synergy that will inspire and delight audiences of all ages."

Behind an error by the North East Council, a complicated colonial history of territorial divisions

On August 17, Manipur chief minister, N Biren Singh, took to social media to announce that the Indian government's North East Council (NEC) had withdrawn its 'Vision Plan 2047' after he pointed out an error in one of its chapters, which had referred to the Kukis of Manipur as belonging to the so-called "Chin State of Manipur". The absurd mistake instantly drew the ire of not just the state government in Imphal, but also influential Meitei civil society organisations like the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), which has now threatened legal action against the document's drafters.

Why has a supposedly simple error triggered the Meitei political elite and civil society in Manipur, which has been roiling in an intense ethnic armed conflict between the Meitei and Kukis since May 2023? What is the historical significance of this mistake?

The most obvious aspect of the error is its historical inconsistency – there is no evidence to indicate that any administrative or political unit by the name of "Chin State" existed in the territory that has been known as "Manipur" through various periods of history. In fact, "Chin State" is a political unit in present-day Myanmar, bordering Mizoram and a small stretch of southern Manipur. Interestingly, towards the final decades of the 19th century, the British colonial administration almost ended up creating what the NEC erroneously referred to as the "Chin State of Manipur". In 1881, a British colonial administrator in the North-east, Sir James Johnstone, officially recommended the annexation of the Chin Hills into the Meitei-ruled kingdom of Manipur. This would, he believed, subdue the "barbaric" tribes living in these hills. However, the idea was shot down by Johnstone's superiors, including Fitzpatrick and Sir Robert McCabe, who were the then chief commissioner and deputy commissioner of Assam, respectively. While the Manipur-Chin Hills Boundary Commission appointed in 1893 did give a few Chin-Lushai villages to Manipur (dominated by tribes that eventually adopted the 'Kuki' super-identity), the British government had decided just a year ago that the Chin Hills would remain under the control of the colonial administration in Burma.

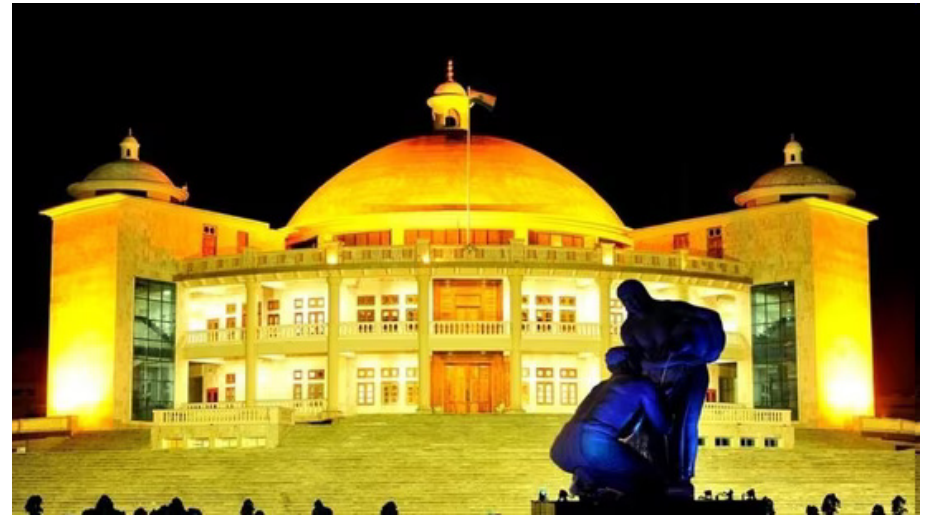
In fact, in 1894, the Boundary Commission demarcated the Manipur-Chin Hills boundary with eight stone pillars in an attempt to concretise a map of the Indo-Burma frontier drawn by R.B. Pemberton in 1834. This cartographic project not only drew a permanent line between Manipur and what went on to become "Mizoram" and "Chin State" in India and Myanmar, but it also fractured what the "Zo" people (including the Chin and Mizos) considered as a continuous historical homeland. Present-day territorial contestations

The key reason why the NEC's mix-up has angered Meitei groups is that it seemed to validate demands for a separate administration that Kuki-Zo groups have been raising since the current ethnic conflict began last year May. The Meitei see this demand as separatist, and an attempt to usurp the "territorial integrity" of Manipur. For the Kuki-Zo, however, it is the only way

to free themselves from the discriminatory control of what they see as a pro-Meitei government in Imphal and govern themselves better. Many of them argue that such a territorial split is now inevitable, even as the Meitei political class and civil society refuse to cede any ground. This clash of two ethno-territorial visions, rooted in the Kuki-Zo disenchantment of the Imphal-based political class and civil society, continues to perpetuate the violent conflict in Manipur.

In many ways, it has completely reshaped the state's modern political geography by partitioning it along neat ethnic lines. Yet, the roots of this split can be traced to the colonial policy of drawing and re-drawing arbitrary lines on the map of the Northeast for its own administrative convenience and in the process, undertaking what academic Pum Khan Pau has called a "reordering of indigenous space". These lines not only conjured up new political units but also created divided lifeworlds that continued to fuel inter-ethnic friction more than a century later. Need to settle anxieties

The current controversy reaffirms the fact that the Manipur conflict is inherently tied to conflicting geographical imagina-



tions of space and society. The Meitei elite finds it nearly impossible to imagine a distinct Kuki-Zo (or Chin) political unit within their state, even in distant history.

The Kuki-Zo still reminisce about a single contiguous homeland. Yet, the long history of colonial reconfiguration of territory, followed by postcolonial processes of reifying those divisions, has complicated the process of collective reconciliation of

space. The Manipur conflict is a good opportunity for all sides to take a fresh look at their shared anxieties and settle them through multi-stakeholder consultations with an open mind. Angshuman Choudhury is a New Delhi-based researcher and writer, formerly an Associate Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research and focuses on Northeast India and Myanmar. The views expressed are personal.

The right mix of information, resources, diagnostics, therapeutics needed to control it

On August 14, 2024, the Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared the current outbreak of mpox as a public health emergency of international concern. This is a status defined by the International Health Regulations (2005) indicating that the 2024 outbreak is "an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response". There have been eight such declarations by WHO since 2005. The last one was, in fact, mpox itself, during the 2022 outbreak. Before that was the Covid-19 outbreak. Mpox is a zoonotic disease caused by the monkeypox virus. This virus is a DNA virus, unlike the SARS-CoV-2 virus which is an RNA virus. It belongs to the pox family of viruses which causes smallpox, cowpox, variola and vaccinia (chicken pox is not a true pox virus). "Mpox has been around for a long time," pointed out WHO medical epidemiologist Otim Patrick Ramadan, during a Live Q&A session on August 22. The virus was first discovered in monkeys kept for research in Denmark in 1958 and the first reported case of infection in a human was in 1970, a nine-month-old baby in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Ever since the end of smallpox vaccination around the world (after its eradication in 1980), mpox has been affecting humans, though it was usually limited to central, east and west Africa. The first time there was a global outbreak was in 2022. "During the

2022 outbreak, there were 30 cases in India, including in Kerala," said Adarsh AK, who heads the Infectious Diseases and Adult Immunization department at Amala Institute of Medical Sciences, Thrissur. WHO confirmed during its live session on Thursday that there are 11 countries with active outbreaks at the moment, though only two - the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi - have over 50 cases. There has been no confirmed case in India so far. What's different this time? What sets the 2024 mpox outbreak apart is that it is being driven by a different subtype of the virus called clade 1b, which seems to be deadlier and spreading faster than clade 2 which caused the 2022 outbreaks. As a result, the disease has reached countries where it has never reached before, like Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya. On Thursday, Thailand became the first Asian country to report a case of mpox clade 1b. Sweden was the first. Though there are many symptoms, the three primary ones according to Ramadan are fever, swelling of lymph nodes and lesions. Mpox can affect anyone, but it spreads largely via skin-to-skin contact. As a result, the transmission of the virus currently seems to be within the household as well as through sexual networks. Also at risk are the immunocompromised. "Because the last outbreak was most commonly seen among men who had sex with men, there was a big stigma around the disease," explained Adarsh. In reality, he pointed out, even people without these risk factors were developing the disease. "The current out-

break, caused by clade 1b, is affecting many children below 15 years of age," he added. The case fatality rate of clade 1b appears to be alarmingly high; some reports say 3% and this goes up to 10% in children. However, Rajib Dasgupta, a professor of community health at Jawaharlal Nehru University, warns that these figures are likely to be influenced by the fact that the surveillance rate is still low. "The number of diagnoses is less. As more cases are detected, these rates come down. But that doesn't mean we can discount this outbreak. 3% is still a high mortality rate," he said. Vaccines and vigilance There are two vaccines currently in use for mpox, both are also smallpox vaccines. WHO is reportedly working on priority to ensure access to these vaccines to the countries that are most at risk. At his hospital in Thrissur, Kerala, Adarsh and his colleagues have to be vigilant. "There has to be a high index of suspicion, especially with patients who have travelled from areas where mpox has been reported. In such scenarios we will take their sample and send it for testing," he said. There are currently 32 labs equipped for testing, including one in ICMR-NIV's Kerala Unit in Alleppey, according to Adarsh. He added that they would be following the mpox advisory issued earlier this week by AIIMS Delhi and also the national guidelines from 2022. "India receives relatively less traffic from African countries, but like with Covid, the disease can spread through air hubs such as the middle-east," said Dasgupta. What is critical, he emphasised, is that cases are detected and contacts are traced.