

Five months into 2024-25 FY, Telangana's finances take a massive hit

Hyderabad: In the first five months of the current financial year 2024-25, the Telangana's finances have gone for a toss, with massive revenue and fiscal deficits, stagnant revenues and expenditure. According to the CAG's monthly key indicators on Telangana accounts for the month of August 2024, the total receipts of the State worked out to Rs.91,085.54 crore and the total expenditure was Rs 85,467.75 crore for the five-month period (April-August 2024).

The revenue receipts aggregated to Rs 61,618.60 crore and the capital receipts amounted to Rs 29,466.94 crore whereas the revenue expenditure totaled Rs 77,140.22 crore and the capital expenditure was pegged at Rs 8,327.53 crore. The revenue deficit at the end of August 2024 mounted to Rs 15,521.62 crore and the fiscal deficit escalated to Rs 29,449.94 crore. The CAG figures show that the total receipts and expenditure for the five-month period was only 33.24 % and 33.59% of the annual target (budget estimates) spelt out in the State Budget for 2024-25 presented by Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka in July 2024. The actual revenue receipts amounted to only 27.85% of the annual target while the revenue expenditure was higher at 34.91%. Similarly, the capital receipts jumped to 55.79% of the target while the capital expenditure was lower at 24.87%. The tax revenues, including GST, Stamps Duty and Registration Fees, VAT, State Excise Duties and other taxes and duties, were lower at 35.11% of the annual target and the non-tax revenues were only 4.12 % of the annual target (Rs 1,449.54 crore as against Rs 35,208.44 crore).

The State's share of union taxes amounted to Rs 3,316.35 crore, or 33.83% of the annual target (Rs 18,834.19 crore) and the grants-in-aid and contributions from the Central Government were only 11.31% of the target (Rs 2,447.03 crore against the annual target of Rs 21,636.15 crore). The "committed" expenditure of the State government on account of interest payments, salaries, wages and pensions of employees and expenditure on subsidy has shown a sharp increase vis-à-vis the annual estimates. Interest payments rose to Rs 10,497.52 crore (59.21% of the annual estimates), salaries and wages mounted to Rs 18,152.28 crore (45.33%), pensions soared to Rs 7,165.65 crore (61.55%) but subsidy was pegged at Rs 5,398.86 crore (33.24% of the annual estimate). The State's net borrowings and other liabilities rose to Rs 29,466.94 crore (that is, 59.79% of the annual estimates), thereby contributing sharply to the State's mounting public debt. If the State's net borrowings of Rs 11,438.04 crore in the last four months (December 2023-March 2024) of the last financial year (2024-25) are added to the net borrowings of Rs 29,499.94 crore in the first five months of the current financial year 2024-25, the public debt of Telangana rose by Rs 40,887.98 crore in the first months of the Congress government which assumed office in December 2023.

It is doubtful whether the State would be able to meet the targets of receipts and expenditure in the remaining six months of the financial year (as the half-year will be over in the next few days with no significant change during September from the trends of the previous five months of the



financial year). The Finance Minister's efforts to mobilise additional resources from the State's own tax and non-tax revenue sources are unlikely to yield any results since the VAT on petroleum products and liquor, Motor Vehicle Tax, Stamps Duty and Registration Fees and State Excise Duties cannot be raised any further since they have already reached peak levels. Adding to the State's financial woes, HYDRAA's adverse impact is likely to cause huge shortfall in tax revenues from Stamps and Registration on the one hand and non-tax revenues from the auctions and sales of Government lands and plots on the other. There are, thus, bound to be huge shortfalls in achieving the targets of non-tax revenues and grants-in-aid and other contributions, which will bring down the State's expenditure correspondingly. The government,

which is struggling to implement the six guarantees as well as scores of other promises of the Congress manifesto so far, is staring at a serious situation as it has far less resources on hand to incur on the ongoing schemes as well as the guarantees and the myriad promises. The State cannot go for higher quantum of borrowings than what has been budgeted as per the FRMB Act stipulations, as the pleas of the State government to the Central Government to relax the norms and facilitate higher borrowings by Telangana are unlikely to be heeded. Just a few days ago, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy boasted that the Government would make efforts to increase the State's annual budget from Rs 3 lakh crore currently to Rs 7 lakh crore in the next four years with the ambition of making Telangana a one-trillion dollar economy.

Building and layout permissions delayed in Telangana; people on tenterhooks

Hyderabad: The real estate sector in Telangana has distinctive features, with the primary USP being a fast and time-bound building and layout approval system. But that appears to have become history now. Since the last few months, builders, developers and even individual house owners are being made to run from pillar to post to get their applications processed and approved. Applicants from different categories are complaining about inordinate delays in application processing and issue of approvals.

As the real estate sector in the State, especially in Hyderabad, is going through a lean patch, the inordinate delay in application processing is leaving the applicants more worried. Despite applicants submitting all required documents and officials at

the local level conducting inspections, applications are being held up for many days, citing different reasons. This is not confined to high rise projects or vast layouts, but to individual houses and five floor apartments in different colonies as well. In a few cases, applicants complain that officials had inspected the building construction and checked all the documents and yet their applications, including issue of occupancy certificates, were kept pending. On being questioned, authorities claimed that the official concerned was on leave and the application would be processed only after the official joins the duty. In other cases, applicants complain that their applications have been pending for over three months. In the past to facilitate transparent and time-bound approvals, the State government

had introduced Telangana State Building Permission Approval and Self-Certification System (TG-bPASS). Under the system, it was announced that if applications were not processed and approved in 21 days, they were deemed to be approved. This apart, officials with whom the applications were pending for more than the stipulated time were liable for punishment, including penalty. It is learnt that over 500 applications (which have been pending for over 21 days) are yet to be processed under TG-bPASS. Admitting the delay in permissions, Praneeth Group Managing Director Narendra Kumar Kamarju said there were multiple reasons. Approvals and No Objection Certificates (NOC) had to be obtained from multiple departments, including irrigation, revenue, environmental com-

mittee and others. Now, after HYDRAA came into vogue, all the NOCs obtained in the past were being checked and processed. To avoid this inordinate delay, the State government has to establish a procedure under a system. There was no issue to secure fire, air, environmental, electricity, Water Board approvals etc. But there has to be a proper way to follow for getting the applications processed, he said. "It is only procedural and system-oriented changes fixation that we are expecting from the government," said Narendra Kumar. Echoing similar opinion, IRA Realty Founder and Managing Director Narsi Reddy said obtaining permissions for bigger projects was getting very challenging for reasons unknown. In the last few months, very few permissions bigger projects were approved, he said.

Police stations and custodial violence: A look at the trends

Former Chief Justice of India, N. Ramana, in 2021 stated that the most dangerous places in the country for threats to human rights are police stations. Looking at the recent case of police brutality in Odisha, it seems nothing has changed in the last three years. Police brutality and custodial torture despite their shocking nature have been normalised in India. It is precisely because of this, that most people think twice before going to a police station. Courts over the years have ordered several reforms to prevent the occurrence of custodial violence, be it orders to install CCTV cameras inside every room in police stations, constituting a police review board and issuing fresh guidelines on arrest. The parliament has also amended laws to create stringent punishments against custodial violence and made judicial magisterial enquiries mandatory in case of custodial deaths. However, despite these steps, a report noted that from 2001-2020 a total of 1,888 custodial deaths had occurred a total of 893 cases registered and 358 personnel charge-sheeted. The report also noted that only 26 policemen had been convicted in this period. Subsequently, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) recorded 88 custodial deaths in 2021 and 75 deaths in 2022.

In 2021, 26 cases were registered against the police for human rights violations, which included extra-judicial killings, torture, illegal detention, and extortion along with deaths in custody with 16 personnel being arrested and 2 being charge-sheeted. There was an increase in this trend in 2022, a total of 30 cases have been registered against the police for human rights violations, with 41 personnel arrested and 24 charge-sheeted. As per NCRB data, there has been a total of 275 cases of custodial rapes from 2017 to 2022; there seems to be a gradual decrease in the trend with 24 cases of custodial rape registered in 2022 as against 89 cases in 2017.

Of the 24 cases registered in 2022, seven are attributed to police personnel, three to armed forces, 12 to staff of jails and remand homes and one each to public servants and hospital staff. These are the statistics provided by the NCRB and include only cases where an FIR was registered. The reality is that most cases of police atrocity go unreported. The Supreme Court once said: "Bound as they are by the ties of brotherhood, it is not unknown that the police personnel prefer to remain silent and more often than not even pervert the truth to save their colleagues."

In 1992, in a shocking case of violence, a man picked up on the suspicion of being a thief was brutally tortured and died in custody while his wife was stripped and gang raped before him. The woman, a sweeper, ran from pillar to post seeking assistance but was up against an uncooperative criminal justice system. It was only after the intervention of the Madras high court and the transfer of the case to the CID did the investigation progressed. While framing the charges, the charge of murder was dropped and only charges pertaining



to wrongful confinement, assault and custodial rape survived. The conviction of the police personnel for gang rape was sustained by all three courts. The Supreme Court in an appeal in this case (Mehboob Batcha & Ors v State) lamented the lack of a murder charge in the case, while quoting the judgment in Justice DK Basu noted, "Experience shows that worst violations of human rights take place during the course of investigation when the police with a view to secure evidence or confession often resorts to third-degree methods including torture and adopts techniques of screening arrest by either not recording the arrest or describing the deprivation of liberty merely as a prolonged interrogation." This is a rare case where the police personnel were convicted.

In most cases, FIRs once registered are put in the cold storage. The nature of the offence, lack of evidence and the confusing labyrinth of the criminal justice system make it very difficult for someone wanting to fight the system. Last year, the Delhi High Court in Pradeep Kumar v. State of UP, upheld the conviction of police personnel in a case of custodial death. The incident took place in 2006 in Uttar Pradesh. The complainant was informed by the police that his son had committed suicide in custody. Suspecting foul play the father began his fight for justice. The case was transferred to Delhi in 2011 by the Supreme Court due to the influence exerted by the police in Uttar Pradesh, making a free and fair trial an impossibility. While initially a charge of murder was framed, the Court on examination of the evidence concluded that an intent to kill was not present and modified the charge to culpable homicide not amounting to murder and convicted the personnel in 2019 and sentenced them to 10 years rigorous imprisonment. The conviction was upheld by the Delhi High Court in 2023. Thus, it took 13 years for the legal process

to convict the errant officials. In March 2024, while reversing the bail granted to a police constable accused of being party to violence, the Supreme Court noted that a stricter approach needed to be applied while deciding cases of police personnel accused of custodial violence. Custodial violence is a deep-rooted problem and requires a multifaceted approach. Mere changes in the law or procedures will be redundant if reforms in the policing system are not undertaken. The errant officials need to be held accountable, with a fair

and speedy investigation and trial. The Indian police still reel under a colonial hangover where its focus seems to be more on ruling over the citizens rather than serving them in their pursuit of justice. Only when the police realise that they are bound by the law and not a law unto themselves can there be any reform. Parijata Bharadwaj, a lawyer and researcher based in New Delhi, co-founded the Jagdalpur Legal Aid Group that offered legal services to adivasis in Chhattisgarh. The views expressed are personal.

Three top executives, including CTO Mira Murati, depart OpenAI under Sam Altman

San Francisco: In a significant development at the Sam Altman-run OpenAI, three top executives — including Chief Technical Officer Mira Murati — have left the ChatGPT developer. According to Altman, they made the decision to leave independently of each other and amicably. Of the 13 people who helped found OpenAI in 2015, only three now remain at the company.

"But the timing of Mira's decision was such that it made sense to now do this all at once, so that we can work together for a smooth handover to the next generation of leadership," he posted on X social media platform. "Mira has been instrumental to OpenAI's progress and growth the last 6.5 years; she has been a hugely significant factor in our development from an unknown research lab to an important company," said the OpenAI CEO. Murati said in a separate X post that after much reflection, "I have made the difficult decision to leave OpenAI." "There's never an ideal time to step away from a place one cherishes, yet this moment feels right. My six-and-a-half

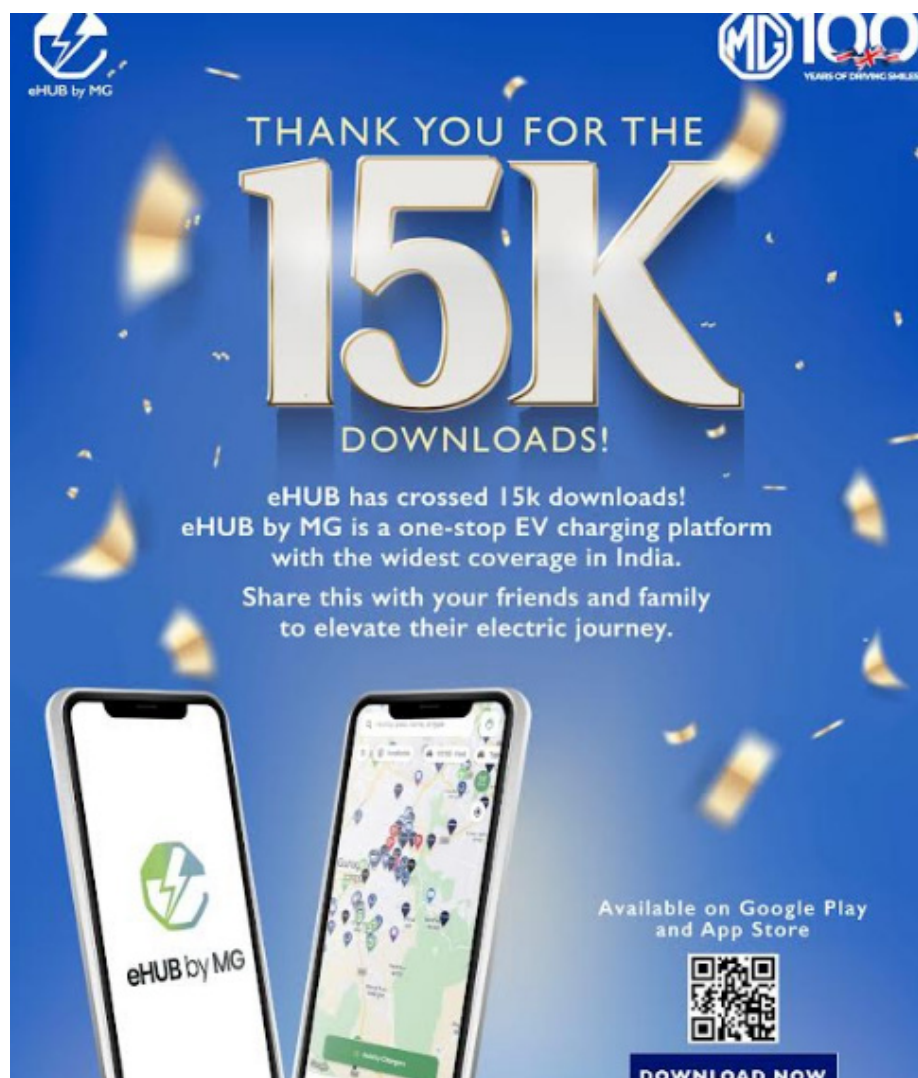
years with the OpenAI team have been an extraordinary privilege," she added. Altman said that Matt Knight, formerly head of security, will be OpenAI's chief information security officer. Chief product officer Kevin Weil and VP of engineering, Srinivas Narayanan, will continue to lead OpenAI's applied team. Josh Achiam will be the Chief Scientist at the AI company.

"Achiam is going to take on a new role as Head of Mission Alignment, working across the company to ensure that we get all pieces (and culture) right to be in a place to succeed at the mission. Kevin and Srinivas will continue to lead the Applied team," announced Altman. "Mark, Jakub, Kevin, Srinivas, Matt, and Josh will report to me. I have over the past year or so spent most of my time on the non-technical parts of our organisation; I am now looking forward to spending most of my time on the technical and product parts of the company," he added. According to Altman, leadership changes are a natural part of companies, especially companies that grow so quickly and are so demanding.

eHUB by MG app crosses 15,000 downloads in less than two months

JSW MG Motor India today announced that it has achieved a milestone of 15,000 downloads for the eHUB by MG app since its launch on 6th August this year. With over 28 leading charging partners, including many leading players, the eHUB by MG app boasts of approximately 80% fast charging network coverage. The eHUB by MG app offers a user-friendly and seamless experience and is witnessing rapid adoption by current and prospective EV owners. This user-friendly app has received a great response from customers, resulting in an impressive 4.6 rating on Play Store and 4.3 stars on App Store. Notably, around 17 million green kilometers and approximately 30,000 trips have been planned on the app, highlighting its integral role in the nation's transition to green mobility. With the eHUB by MG app, customers can conveniently discover EV chargers, reserve them, initiate charging, and pay for the charging service, all through this app. They can even plan trips across India by discovering chargers for their route and undertake an anxiety-free drive experience. In addition, this app eliminates the need of downloading multiple apps and maintaining several wallets. In addition,

customers of the recently launched MG Windsor – India's 1st Intelligent Crossover Utility Vehicle, will enjoy one year of free charging by using the eHUB by MG app. The company is committed to enhancing the ownership experience of the MG Windsor. Initiatives such as the eHUB by MG app aim to boost EV demand by simplifying the ownership process and addressing consumer concerns. About JSW MG Motor India SAIC Motor, a global Fortune 500 company with a presence in over 100 countries and JSW Group (India's leading conglomerate with interests across B2B and B2C sectors) formed a joint venture - JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. in 2023. The joint venture aims to build a smart and sustainable automotive ecosystem while continuing to stay focused on developing a diverse portfolio of vehicles to give car buyers better access to advanced technologies and futuristic products with attractive value propositions. JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. is committed to introducing world-class technology, strengthening the manufacturing landscape, best of innovation across its business operations, and generating significant employment opportunities through extensive localisation.



“Hello Godrej” – A farming advisory helpline launched by Godrej Agrovet for crop protection



Godrej Agrovet Limited (GAVL), one of India's largest diversified food and agri-business conglomerate, recently announced the launch of 'Hello Godrej', a multilingual farming advisory helpline to

provide real-time expert solution for crop protection over a phone call. To be accessible to farmers across the country in eight regional languages – Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Punjabi,

and English, this new initiative is in sync with company's endeavor of improving farm productivity by handholding and being there with the farmers whenever they need on ground or over a call.

Commenting on the initiative, Balram Singh Yadav, Managing Director, Godrej Agrovet Limited said, "Upliftment of the farming families is at the core of everything that we do at Godrej Agrovet. With the availability and usage of right solution at the right time being an imperative for better yields, "Hello Godrej" will help us bridge the gap between farmers and agricultural experts by offering real-time personalized solutions." Changing climatic conditions and increased pest attacks have increased concerns of the farmers. Amidst such continuously evolving farming conditions, enabling farmers to get access to the latest crop protection solutions and personalized guidance in their preferred language is a

need of an hour. Through "Hello Godrej," farmers across India can now avail real time advise through direct communication from our team of agricultural experts. "Hello Godrej" embodies company's vision of being the most trusted partner for Indian farmers in their journey towards sustainable and profitable agriculture. Leveraging Godrej Agrovet's extensive experience and reputation, the initiative aims to build strong, trusting relationships with farmers, making it the go-to source for reliable agricultural information thus solidifying its leadership in the agriculture sector," Rajavelu NK, CEO of the Crop Protection Business at Godrej Agrovet Limited. Through this initiative, the company intends to reach farmers across the country to address their unique needs and challenges backed with Godrej Agrovet's long standing commitment of providing quality and reliable products to uplift the farming families.

Female singer lodges complaint against YouTuber Mallik Teja

Jagtial: A female folk singer and writer has lodged a complaint against folk singer and YouTuber Mallik Teja with the Jagtial Town police, accusing him of abusing her sexually several times by blackmailing her.

According to the police, a resident of Chinnapur of Buggram mandal, Singarapu

Mallesham alias SV Mallik Teja started a YouTube channel MV Music Movies along with the woman, who hails from Somanpalli. They worked together for six years. In her complaint, the woman said she used to write and sing songs for the channel, which became popular over a period of time.

Counterpoint Survey: OPPO India takes No 1 position in After-Sales Service; 62% 'very satisfied' customers

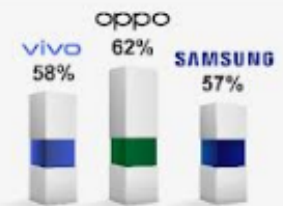
In line with its commitment to offer unparalleled service experience, OPPO India earned No 1 position in customer satisfaction for after-sales with 62% of its customers rating their in-store after-sales service as 'very satisfactory'. In August 2024, Counterpoint Research carried out a survey comprising 2,000+ customers among India's top five smartphone brands to measure their after-sale service experiences. The recognition is reflective of OPPO India's customer-first approach to elevate the service experience through its new generation centres. The survey was conducted across 13 Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities among customers of OPPO India, realme, Samsung, vivo, and Xiaomi. OPPO India emerged as a front runner with 'very satisfied' customers in key areas of repair quality, costs, speed of resolution, transparency, staff expertise and multilingual communication. After-Sales Experience: 62% of OPPO India customers were 'very satisfied' with the after-sales service centre experience, followed by vivo and Samsung 58% and 57%, respectively. Transparency: OPPO India leads in transparency, with 78% of repairs performed in customers' presence, followed closely by Xiaomi at 77%. Speed of resolution: OPPO India leads in resolving issues for 35% of its customers within an hour, ahead of Samsung at 34%. Repair

quality: 57% of OPPO India customers reported high satisfaction with quality of repair, followed by vivo at 52%. Cost of fixing the issue: 51% of OPPO India customers were very satisfied with the cost of fixing the issue with their smartphones, followed by vivo and Xiaomi at 45% each. Multilingual support: 48% of OPPO India customers interacted with service representatives in languages other than English and Hindi, the highest among the brands. Staff Knowledge: 56% of the OPPO India customers were very satisfied with the knowledge of the staff regarding the issue, followed by Samsung and vivo at 49% each. Trustworthiness: Trustworthy and "Genuine" are the most popular words used to describe OPPO India Service centre location: OPPO India excels with the highest share of respondents being very satisfied with the service centre location (51%) followed by vivo at 46%. "At OPPO India, we have transformed our after-sales service model to cater to our customers through measures like Service Centre 3.0 and OPPO Self-Help Assistant," said Savio D'Souza, Head - Product Communications at OPPO India. "Being recognised as the No 1 brand in India in customer satisfaction for after-sales is a validation of our efforts to deliver a timely, transparent, reliable and cost-efficient experience to our users."

INDIA SMARTPHONE AFTER-SALES SERVICE CONSUMER STUDY

KEY TAKEAWAYS

OPPO India leads in after-sales service experience with 62% "very satisfied" customers, followed by vivo and Samsung with 58% and 57%



Importance of Transparent After-sales Repair Service

92% Survey respondents consider transparency in phone repair process important, ranging from "somewhat" to "very" important



Ranking	Quality of Repair	Knowledge of Staff	Cost of Repair	Service Centre Location
1	oppo	oppo	oppo	oppo
2	vivo	vivo	vivo	vivo
3	mi	SAMSUNG	mi	mi

PhonePe partners with Jar to launch Daily Savings in Digital Gold



PhonePe, today, announced its partnership with Jar to launch its new product offering 'Daily Savings' on its platform, enabling users to save money in 24K digital gold through incremental daily contributions. With Daily Savings, users can set aside as little as ₹10 per day, up to a maximum of ₹5000 per day in digital gold, empowering individuals to build a consistent savings habit.

The product is powered by Jar's integrated Gold Tech solution that streamlines the digital gold investment process in just under 45 seconds. Initially exclusive to users within its ecosystem, Jar's Gold Tech stack is now available to partner businesses who can provide their users with the ability to save in digital gold. Jar's inte-

gration with PhonePe's existing payment ecosystem ensures easy fund transfers and payments. Automated daily contribution makes it easy to save consistently without manual intervention. Users have the option to pause or cancel their Daily Savings anytime or redeem the gold for cash whenever they want. PhonePe has seen a growing consumer preference for affordable, convenient and secure digital gold savings options. Furthermore, Digital Gold eliminates the hassle of worrying over security and logistics, allowing for a shift in consumer behaviour. This strategic alliance combines PhonePe's strong user base of 560+ mn registered users with the Gold Tech stack of Jar to seamlessly handle a significant volume of transactions, ensur-

ing that users can transact with ease and security. Speaking on the launch of the new product, Niharika Saigal, Head of InApp Categories, Consumer Payments, says, "We have seen a significant surge in adoption of Digital Gold on our platform in recent years. We are thrilled to introduce Daily Savings, a product designed to facilitate bite sized everyday savings through 24K Digital Gold. By starting small and saving consistently, individuals can progressively work towards achieving their financial goals." "We are excited to expand Jar's capabilities beyond our own platform and offer 360-degree services around gold savings, while also enabling users to convert their savings into jewellery through our in-house brand, Nek." said Nishchay AG,

Founder and CEO, Jar. "By offering our Gold Tech platform to PhonePe, we are enabling brands to seamlessly integrate gold savings into their services. This marks a significant milestone for Jar as we continue to empower businesses and individuals alike with simple, scalable solutions for financial fitness, making gold savings more accessible than ever." PhonePe offers 99.99% purity-certified 24K Digital Gold from leading and trusted partners, with over 1.2 Crore customers from 19,000+ postal codes in India having bought high purity 24K gold on the PhonePe platform at transparent prices. The accumulated gold is stored digitally in the user's account, backed by physical gold stored in secure vaults.

Mother, daughter die after falling from 18th floor of apartment

Hyderabad: A mother and her daughter died after falling from an apartment building at Narsingi on Sunday evening. The woman Manasa and daughter Krishna, stayed at the 18th floor of an

apartment building in Narsingi. On Sunday evening, the apartment dwellers and security personnel heard a huge noise of something falling from the top floors of the building.

Kohler Unveils First Studio Kohler in India: A New Pinnacle of Luxury Design and Innovation in Hyd

Hyderabad welcomed a new landmark in luxury and innovation as Kohler, the globally renowned leader in bath and kitchen solutions launched its first-ever Studio Kohler in India. Nestled in the vibrant heart of the city at Banjara Hills, Road no. 2, this highly anticipated space is set to become a hub of inspiration, blending art and innovation to redefine bathroom design and fittings in India. Studio Kohler offers an immersive sanctuary where architects, designers, and discerning consumers can discover exceptional products, engage in creative dialogue, and bring design visions to life.

Speaking on the occasion David Kohler - Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Kohler Co. said "We are thrilled to launch our first-ever Studio Kohler in India, marking a significant milestone in our journey of design excellence and innovation. This space embodies our deep commitment to bringing exceptional experiences to our customers here in India, offering them a destination where they can curate a personalized space that reflects their aesthetics. As we continue to expand our presence, we are keen to empower and inspire the design community to transform spaces into expressions of style, luxury, and functionality, all with the unmatched quality Kohler is known for."

Further adding to the same, Salil Sadanandan - President, K&B SOUTH

ASIA & ASIA PACIFIC, Kohler stated, "With the debut of our first Studio Kohler, we are excited to present a unique exploration of luxury design. The South market has been essential to our growth, and Hyderabad—celebrated for its vibrant cultural legacy and cutting-edge innovation—provides the perfect setting for this launch. We are confident that this new space will set a new standard for luxury living and become a symbol of refined elegance."

The launch of Studio Kohler brought together esteemed architects, art curators, design enthusiasts, and lifestyle aficionados to witness the fusion of design and luxury through Kohler's innovative products. The space also hosted an interactive zone where visitors can experience products and Kohler's strong heritage of colours and finishes in a hands-on environment and visualize new possibilities in their bathroom design.

Ranjeet Oak, Managing Director, Kohler South Asia added, "We are excited to open the doors of this unique space that will allow our consumers to discover a wide range of cutting-edge bath space solutions which are tailored to their design sensibilities. We hope to inspire them and turn their aspirations into reality, offering a truly transformative experience."

Within the opulent confines of Kohler Studio, a harmonious symphony of colours and finishes awaits with bathroom en-



sembles that can create bath spaces beyond imagination. Consumers can immerse themselves in a treasure trove of showers, faucets, and Intelligent Toilets, each meticulously crafted to elevate bathing experience. Indulge in the opulent Statement Showering System, with its range of rejuvenating water sprays that transforms your daily showering ritual into a spa-like expe-

rience. Customize your bathing experience with Anthem digital controls and discover new levels of wellness. And for a touch of artistic elegance and craftsmanship, explore the exquisite Artist Edition Collection of basins and faucets. Kohler Studio is a sanctuary of design and innovation, where every element is meticulously curated to create a space of unparalleled luxury and comfort.

"Jaunty Hat Announces the 2nd Edition of "Dandiya Masti 2024" with Exciting Lineup of Events"



Jaunty Hat, the leading event management company, proudly announced the launch of its highly anticipated "Dandiya Masti 2024" event at a grand poster unveiling ceremony held on September 29th, 2024, at Maaya Luxury Convention in Kondapur, Hyderabad. The event was

graced by the presence of actress Bindhu Nuthakki, who starred in the movie "Devara," Actor Viraj Reddy Cheelam and Deepika Baji Reddy, the Founder of Jaunty Hat Events. The vibrant poster was unveiled amidst much fanfare, setting the stage for the upcoming cultural extravaganza.

On this occasion Deepika Baji Reddy shared her excitement about the 2nd edition of Dandiya Masti 2024, which will be held from October 3rd to 12th, 2024, at the Maaya Luxury Convention. She highlighted the exciting lineup of activities planned for

the event, including live DJ performances by top artists in the city, a captivating live dhol performance, and a diverse array of food stalls.

"We are thrilled to bring Dandiya Masti 2024 to our community, offering a vibrant and immersive celebration of our rich cultural heritage," said Deepika Baji Reddy. "This year, we have curated an even more captivating program, with a range of entertainment, shopping, and culinary experiences to delight our attendees."

Dandiya Masti 2024 will take place in an indoor AC venue, providing a comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere for the festivities. In addition to the live performances and food stalls, the event will feature a Dandiya Flea Market, where visitors can explore a diverse array of local crafts, delicacies, and unique finds.

To further enhance the experience, Jaunty Hat will be giving away silver coins to the best dance performers and best-dressed attendees, adding an element of excitement and competition to the celebration. Tickets for Dandiya Masti 2024 are now available, with prices starting from ₹299. Interested individuals can contact 97041 00162 for registrations and passes. DJ VINISH, DJ Kim, DJ Rishi, DJ pratap, DJ floza, DJ vivan, DJ Umesh and others were also participated

OpenAI to remove non-profit control and give Sam Altman equity: Report

ChatGPT-maker OpenAI is working on a plan to restructure its core business into a for-profit benefit corporation that will no longer be controlled by its non-profit board, people familiar with the matter told Reuters, in a move that will make the company more attractive to investors. The OpenAI non-profit will continue to exist and own a minority stake in the for-profit company, the sources said. The move could also have implications for how the company manages AI risks in a new governance structure. Chief executive Sam Altman will also receive equity for the first time in the for-profit company, which could be worth \$150 billion after the restructuring as it also tries to remove the cap on returns for investors, sources added. The sources requested anonymity to discuss private matters.

"We remain focused on building AI that benefits everyone, and we're working with our board to ensure that we're best positioned to succeed in our mission. The non-profit is core to our mission and will continue to exist," an OpenAI spokesperson said. The details of the proposed corporate structure, first reported by Reuters, highlight significant governance changes happening behind the scenes at one of the most important AI companies. The plan is still being hashed out with lawyers and shareholders and the timeline for completing the restructuring remains uncertain, the sources said. The restructuring also comes amid a series of leadership changes at the startup. OpenAI's longtime chief technology officer Mira Murati abruptly announced her departure from the company on Wednesday. Greg Brockman, OpenAI's president, has also been on leave. Founded in 2015 as a non-profit AI research organization, OpenAI added the for-profit OpenAI LP entity in 2019 as a subsidiary of its non-profit, securing capital from Microsoft to fund its research. The company captured global attention with the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, a generative AI app that spit out human-like responses to text queries, which has become one of the fastest-growing applications in history with over 200 million weekly active users, igniting a global race to invest in AI. Along with ChatGPT's success, OpenAI's valuation has skyrocketed from \$14 billion in 2021 to \$150 billion in the new convertible debt round under discussion, attracting investors such as Thrive Capital and Apple.

The company's unusual structure, which gives full control of the for-profit subsidiary to the OpenAI nonprofit, was originally set to ensure the mission of creating "safe AGI that is broadly beneficial," referring to artificial general intelligence that is at or exceeding human intelligence. The structure came into focus last November during one of the biggest boardroom dramas in Silicon Valley, where members of the non-profit board ousted Altman over a breakdown in communication and loss of trust. He was reinstated after five days with overwhelming support from employees and investors. Since then, OpenAI's board has been refreshed with more tech executives, chaired by Bret Taylor, former Salesforce co-CEO who now runs his own AI startup. Any corporate changes need



approval from its nine-person non-profit board. The removal of non-profit control could make OpenAI operate more like a typical startup, a move generally welcomed by its investors who have poured billions into the company. However, it could also raise concerns from the AI safety community about whether the lab still has enough governance to hold itself account-

able in its pursuit of AGI, as it has dissolved the superalignment team that focuses on the long-term risks of AI earlier this year. It's unclear how much equity Altman will receive. Altman, already a billionaire from his multiple startup investments, has previously stated that he chose not to take an equity stake in the company because the board needed a majority of disinterested

directors with no stake in the company. He has also said he has enough money and is doing it because he loves the work. The new structure of OpenAI would resemble that of its major rival Anthropic and Elon Musk's xAI, which are registered as benefit corporations, a form of for-profits that aim to promote social responsibility and sustainability in addition to making profits.

LinkedIn goes local, adds 10 new language options, including Telugu

New Delhi: Leading professional networking platform LinkedIn on Thursday announced it has added 10 new language options, including four Indian regional languages. The new language options are Vietnamese, Greek, Persian, Finnish, Hebrew, Hungarian, along with four Indian regional languages — Bengali, Marathi, Telugu and Punjabi. The new additions bring LinkedIn's support to five Indian languages, including Hindi, it said in a statement. We're excited to announce that LinkedIn is now more inclusive and accessible than ever. We've expanded our language support to include 10 new languages, each representing a vibrant part of our global community," said Chief Product Officer Tomer Cohen. LinkedIn's member base in India has surpassed 135 million, with engagement rates growing at 20 per cent year-over-year. India stands as LinkedIn's second-largest and fastest-growing market. By adding these languages, LinkedIn aims to bridge language barriers on the platform, allowing more people to establish deeper professional identities and engage more meaningfully with their networks. "With these additions, our platform now supports a total of 36 languages, helping professionals around the



world connect, communicate, and collaborate more effectively," said Cohen. Last month, the Microsoft-owned platform appointed Kumaresh Pattabiraman as new Country Manager and Product Head in India. According to Pattabiraman, LinkedIn has evolved from being just a jobs platform to becoming a dynamic global community where professionals connect for jobs, learning, networking, and knowledge

sharing. India is among the top five countries with the fastest-growing AI talent and has the highest AI skill penetration globally, and LinkedIn members are using AI skills three times more frequently than the global average. LinkedIn recently launched a new video experience in India, in a bid to tap into one of the fastest-growing markets with uploads growing 60 per cent year-over-year in the country.

Jobs of the future require upskilling workers

Data on employment growth in India reveals contrasting trends. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI's) Capital, Labour, Energy Materials, Services (KLEMS) data reports a 6 per cent increase in job growth for FY24, a significant rise from the 3.2 per cent growth in FY23. However, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) offers a less optimistic view: The unemployment rate climbed to 9.2 per cent in June 2024 from 7 per cent in May, with the annual rate for FY24 at 8 per cent. According to Citigroup Research, India needs to create about 1.2 crore jobs every year over the next decade to absorb the number of new entrants to the labour market. However, with a 7 per cent growth rate, the country can generate around 80–90 lakh jobs annually, a deficit of around 30–40 lakh jobs. As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the unemployment rate in urban areas decreased from 6.8 per cent to 6.7 per cent between January to March 2023 and January to March 2024 for persons aged 15 years and above. Labour force participation rate in urban areas has increased from 48.5 per cent to 50.2 per cent from January to March 2023 and January to March 2024 for persons aged 15 years and above. Given the disparate trends in employment growth from different agencies, it is important that the National Statistical Commission address data discrepancies by improving data quality, improving coordination between agencies and increasing transparency in reporting. In fact, much of the difference is due to the differing definitions of employment used.

The incommensurate pace of employment generation is due to two major factors. First, imperfections in labour markets create rigidities resulting in persistent shortages and excesses. Apart from the institutional factors, which influence wage setting, there are several irritants in the operation of the labour market of which the "skill gap" is important. There are two kinds of skill gaps. One, when job seekers, despite acquiring qualifications, fall short of skills due to poor training. Second, when there is a complete lack of skill training. In India, both gaps co-exist. Compounding skill gaps is the non-availability of jobs that meet the aspirations of job seekers — the aspirational gap. The growing demand for jobs in the IT sector and the increasing presence of migrant manual labour in the southern states are examples of aspirational gaps. We need to find solutions to bridge all these gaps for the smooth functioning of labour markets and absorb new additions to the workforce.

Second, is the incongruence between growth in output and labour absorption due to technological changes resulting in the decline of employment elasticity. The substitution of labour by machines has a long history with innovations often resulting in simultaneous increases in output and employment. However, earlier inventions were machines, and tools to reduce physical labour. These "mechanical muscles", deemed stronger and tireless compared to human muscles, increased production and productivity. The emergence of AI, or mechanical minds, raises another ques-

tion: Will the demand for human brain labour fall? Idea creators and professionals who can apply new technologies will thrive. However, there's a distinct possibility of the middle management being downsized. Mechanical muscles pushed horses out of the economy, while mechanical minds can do the same to humans unless we equip the workforce to cope with the change. Meeting future job requirements calls for substantial educational and skilling reforms. Educational institutions today are struggling to meet industry needs, leading many young Indians to pursue multiple degrees from lower-quality institutions. This has led to higher unemployment rates among highly educated youth. Despite enrolment rates going up, the quality of education has lagged behind requirements, exacerbating the employability crisis. The need for skill development after graduation is a sad commentary on our education system. A balance between economic growth and employment growth can be achieved by pursuing a two-pronged strategy. First, concerted attempts need to be made to push industrialisation in sectors that absorb more labour. These sectors normally have strong inter-sectoral linkages and the ability to cater to the domestic market. Food processing and products, textiles and apparel have high labour absorption, and linkages with agriculture and other sectors within manufacturing, but might lag in terms of international competitiveness to penetrate global markets. Second, international competitiveness needs



to be improved in technology-intensive sectors. They have higher technology adoption rates, increased research and development and the ability to cater to global markets. These include chemicals and chemical products, pharmaceuticals, medicinal, chemical and botanical products, motor vehicles, computers, electronic and optical products and manufacture of electrical equipment. Pursuing this strategy requires a sectoral approach and differentiated incentive system for employment generation and capital investments. As of now, there is very little space to increase either the price of capital or lower the price of labour. In fact, the scope for altering tech-

nological choices concerning the production of any industrial output is limited. This is not only in matters of new technology. Even older technologies are becoming increasingly less labour-intensive. Smart factories are becoming more common. We need a good combination of relatively labour-intensive sectors and those that are contingent on high technology. A comprehensive policy framework focussing on sectors needs to be evolved to tackle the question of employment generation. The cardinal principle of such a framework should also be to enhance growth rates, as growth per se is important for generating jobs.

Hit by China's predatory pricing, India 'exploring ties with West'

India's clean energy manufacturing is feeling the impact of Chinese predatory pricing, which is affecting the country's ability to promote its ambitious domestic manufacturing under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, a government official told The Indian Express. "The Chinese have aggressively slashed prices in the clean energy sector such as solar energy, posing a challenge for domestic manufacturing growth. Even anti-dumping duties are insufficient. Solutions such as collaboration with the West are being explored, as several Western countries, including Germany, are facing similar challenges," the official said. This comes days after the US advised India to "expand and protect" its clean energy manufacturing. India's PLI schemes have invested over \$4.5 billion to catalyse nascent clean energy manufacturing, however, "additional policies are essential" to expand and protect these investments in the face of "global market dynamics" and "thin profit margins", according to an India-US joint statement released Saturday. This is not the first time concerns have been raised over China's impact on domestic clean energy manufacturing. The Economic Survey 2023-24 had highlighted that China's manufacturing trade surplus has been ex-

panding since 2019 due to weak domestic demand and increasing industrial capacity. The mismatch between domestic supply and demand in China has widened in recent years, prompting Chinese companies to seek additional markets overseas, the survey noted. Indicating coercive actions taken by China to restrict India's access to solar equipment, the survey stated: "...in response to India's anti-dumping probe against Chinese entities, China has been quietly blocking India's access to solar equipment." Notably, to safeguard investments in domestic solar photovoltaic (PV) module manufacturing, including those under the PLI scheme, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) reinstated the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) order on April 1. This order bars domestic solar projects from using imported modules, primarily from China, which are sold at significantly lower prices. In June 2024, imported modules were priced at an average of 9.1 cents per watt (CIF basis), while domestic modules averaged 18 cents per watt, according to CRISIL. Earlier this month, the ministry announced plans to extend the ALMM order to solar cells from April 2026. The PLI scheme for high-efficiency PV modules, with a total budgetary outlay of Rs 24,000

crore across two tranches, also incentivises solar cell production. Notably, 3,212 MW of Arizona-based First Solar's module manufacturing capacity in Tamil Nadu is listed in the ALMM, making it one of India's largest module manufacturers. First Solar is also a beneficiary of the PLI scheme, eligible for Rs 1,177 crore in incentives for establishing 1,700 MW of manufacturing capacity. "Let's be clear: imported solar modules and cells are being dumped from China, and this anti-competitive behaviour has distorted market pricing. Chinese solar manufacturers are selling their products at prices below the cost of production due to systemic overcapacity in Chinese crystalline silicon solar supply chains," Sujoy Ghosh, VP & MD of First Solar's India operations, told The Indian Express earlier. India has a similar list for wind turbines, the Revised List of Models & Manufacturers (RLMM), but wind turbine manufacturers are not yet eligible for PLI schemes, despite industry appeals. Meanwhile, the Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) PLI scheme, which aims to incentivise 50 gigawatt hours (GWh) of battery manufacturing, has already allocated 40 GWh, including 20 GWh to Ola Electric, 15 GWh to Reliance Industries, and 5 GWh to Rajesh Exports.

A walk to school that ended in six-year-old's murder, a principal's arrest

IT WAS a regular school day morning. Around 10.20 am on September 19, at a remote village in Gujarat's Dahod district, the six-year-old and her mother took a short walk from their home to the point where the road curved. They spotted a familiar vehicle – the principal's car. "I waved and requested him to take my daughter along to school, like I have done several times in the past. He agreed and my daughter happily went along," the woman recalls. That was the last time she saw her daughter, the first of her two children, alive. On September 22, police arrested the 58-year-old principal under POCSO Act charges and BNS sections related to murder and rape. Police said the accused attempted to rape the girl on their way to the school and, when she resisted, smothered her to death. As the evening wore on, and the family realised that the girl had not turned up, they began asking around. The search ended a few hours later, on the premises of the primary school – her body was found in the backyard, in a small space that separated the school building from its boundary wall. The Dahod police, which investigated the case, questioned multiple people – teachers, the child's classmates, children in the village with whom she would often walk back home. No one had seen the girl in school that day.

The incident, and the subsequent arrest, has left the villagers in shock. The walk to school – the only government primary school in the vicinity – is in a neighbouring village. Children mostly went to the school in groups – a 10-15-minute walk through a partly paved road, flanked by corn fields. If their teachers or principal happened to pass by, they would hitch a ride. Which is why, says the mother of the six-year-old girl, she did not think twice before sending her daughter with the principal that morning.

"All through her school life, she has regularly travelled with the teachers, including the principal. We never suspected anything about his behaviour," she says. Since the incident, the family's mud house has seen a stream of visitors – police, political leaders, social workers, legal advisers, media persons and neighbours. To each of them, the girl's parents narrate the events of that day: how the mother and daughter, her hair oiled and neatly plaited, had left for school that morning before spotting the principal's car, how they grew worried when she did not get home, the hurried walk to school, the frantic search, the jump over the boundary wall of the locked premises, and then, the discovery of her body. "We picked her up in our arms and rushed her to hospital. At the PHC, they put an oxygen mask on her face. Then they referred us to the Limkheda hospital, but there, they told us our daughter had died," says her father. 6 year old rape and murder. According to the police, the principal kept the girl's body in the car the entire school day. Once the school emptied out, he allegedly dumped the body in the backyard and left.

According to the police, the principal kept the girl's body in the car the entire school day. Once the school emptied out,



he allegedly dumped the body in the backyard and left. To throw the police off the scent, he allegedly put her bag inside her classroom and kept her slippers outside. The man has been remanded in police custody until September 27. The girl's mother recalls her conversation with the principal that afternoon. "I called him up after children from our village told me that they had not seen my daughter at school. The principal said he had dropped her at school, but did not know where she went. He hung up after that. I was surprised that he did not show any concern." On how they zeroed in on the principal, Dahod District Superintendent of Police Rajdeepsinh Zala says, "While the principal said he had dropped the child in school and that she had even attended the morning prayers, it struck us as odd that nobody else had seen her. The school parking area is a 25x25-metre space and someone would have seen the child getting out of his car, but no one did. The teachers conducting the morning prayers said she was not present there. Her classmates as well as the mid-day meal in-charge confirmed she had not come to school that day." Zala says the technical surveillance of the principal's phone revealed that he had taken "longer than usual" to cover the distance to school that morning. Besides, the accused claimed to have left the campus at 5 pm but his mobile location showed he was in the compound until after 6 pm, Zala adds. "The autopsy report had also confirmed that the time of death was much earlier than when the body was discovered. What was her fault?"

The family of marginal farmers is now questioning its decision to send the child to a school outside the village. "I am illiterate but what I earned from farming was

enough to sustain my family. Had we not thought of educating her, she would perhaps have been alive today," says the child's grandfather. Demanding death sentence for the accused, her father says, "What was my child's fault? How could the man just dump her body in the backyard?" A former sarpanch says villagers have decided not to entrust their children with outsiders. "We never imagined that teachers, whom we trust to look after our children, would turn into demons. The village elders have decided not to send younger children alone to school," he says. At the village where the school, and the principal's house, are located, residents refuse to provide directions to the home of the "one who should not be defended". Says a villager, "He can't be forgiven... The administration should run a bulldozer over his house." The school, which runs out of two buildings, has 196 children and six teachers. The most senior teacher has now been handed over

the charge of the principal. Five days after the incident, not many had turned up at school. One of the teachers – all of them are now witnesses in the case – says, "It is indeed heartbreaking that an innocent child met such a tragic end. What has happened has tarnished the image of teachers. It is unpardonable." She looks across at the parking area, where the accused had allegedly parked his vehicle, which has now been sent for forensic examination. "The car had dark film covering its windows and windscreens. We had no idea that her body was inside throughout." Another teacher says they are trying their best not to bring up the case with the children. "We are not talking about it in school. Of course, the police were here and spoke to many children. The older children are aware of what happened but the younger ones do not understand that much," says a teacher. "They only know that one of their classmates died and the principal has been taken away."

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.