

4G network towers of BSNL to be inaugurated soon in Adilabad

Adilabad: Woes of aboriginal tribals dwelling in remote parts of erstwhile Adilabad district over the lack of telecom signals are expected to end soon as installation of around 150 towers meant for providing 4G network by the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is nearing completion. The tribals residing in hilly areas and valleys of Adilabad, Nirmal and Kumram Bheem Asifabad district would invariably climb trees and scale hillocks in search of a network of a telecom provider.

They would trek for long distances to speak to their family members through mobile phone during emergencies, while their children struggle to attend online classes. However, these would be a thing of the past in a few days. Sanctioned to the district in 2022, the towers will virtually be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a couple of months.

"The installation of the towers reached the final stage. Electricity facility was created, while 4G sets were installed," Sridhar, BSNL's divisional engineer, Bellampalli, said. The BSNL's 4G network will end a decades-long wait of the tribals, who are still deprived of the communication facility. It would herald a new chapter in the lives of

the dwellers of interior parts. The tribals would easily be able to stay connected with the mainstream, besides getting to know current affairs and seeking help from officials when required.

"We have been struggling to find the connectivity of a telecom provider for over two decades. We are left with the option but to live without a communication facility. We feel isolated due to lack of coverage of a provider in over habitations. However, we will be freed from the shackles of the challenge," Vedma Venkatesh, a resident of Mangi village in Tiryani mandal opined. Incidentally, 16 towers were granted to Tiryani mandal. However, construction of four towers were stalled, while the remaining 12 towers were readied to be inaugurated. Similar remote villages in Kerameri, Bejjur, Lingapur, Jannaram, Jainoor, and some other mandals of composite Adilabad district will be able to have improved mobile phone connectivity at the earliest. As many as 390 interior villages, which have no basic amenities, across Telangana were selected for the 4G network connectivity as part of a pan-India initiative rolled out by the union government two years back. Of them, 153 were sanctioned to the composite Adilabad district.



EV charging rates in Telangana as per ToD tariff system



Under the ToD tariff system, electricity charges will vary based on the time of day. The current flat rate system will be replaced.

Hyderabad: Telangana State Electricity Regulatory Council (TGERC) has reportedly fixed the tariff of electric vehicle (EV) charging as per Time of Day (ToD) tariff system.

Under the ToD tariff system, electricity charges will vary based on the time of day. The current flat rate system will be replaced. During daytime, the tariff may decrease by up to 20 percent, benefiting consumers. Conversely, during night-time, the tariff will increase by the same amount. As per the new tariff, Rs. 7 per unit will be charged between 6 am to 10 am and 6 pm to 10 pm. Similarly, between 10 pm to 6 am Rs. 5 per unit will be charged and for the other time slot Rs. 6 per unit will be charged. The average cost of service (CoS) for the entire State has been fixed at Rs. 6.04 per unit. The DISCOMS had proposed a tariff of Rs.6.10 per unit.

The Telangana Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TGSPDCL) and Telangana Northern Power Distribution Company Limited (TGNPDCL) had filed pleas before the commission seeking

determination of tariff for electric vehicle charging stations (battery swap) under section 64 of Electricity Act, 2003. The commission did not concede to the same rate of fixed tariff applicable in other States arguing that there were several factors which determine the tariff such as financial viability of the distribution licensee, and therefore one rate cannot fit the bill for all the States. It also rejected the use of open access through renewable energy sources for charging stations as rules and regulations are in vogue at present to release power supply to charging stations. The commission, while setting the tariff, considered that the central government in its draft amendments to the Tariff Policy had stated that the applicable tariff for charging stations will be less than or equal to the average cost of supply determined by the AT and C (Aggregate Technical & Commercial) loss level of 25 percent or actual, whichever is lower. There are 508 EV charging stations in the low tension (LT) category and 21 in the high tension (HT) category in the State.

Bengaluru's civic body turns to AI to assist in mother-child care

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) Health Department is now seeking the help of Artificial Intelligence to augment its maternal healthcare system. It has launched an AI-based pilot initiative called 'SaveMom' to assist pregnant women, lactating mothers and infants in monitoring their health and ensuring safer deliveries, providing comprehensive 1000-day follow-up. This innovative application provides a centralised information pool accessible to pregnant women, ASHA workers, medical officers, and doctors from private clinics and hospitals. It tracks symptoms, vital signs, health facility visits, and test results, among other data of pregnant women within the BBMP limits. By analysing this information, the system can also identify markers indicative of high-risk pregnancies.

Speaking to The Hindu, Suralkar Vikas Kishor, BBMP's Special Commissioner for Health, shared how this turned into a healthcare platform for the BBMP. "I came to know of SaveMom a couple of months ago when I was watching a show that provides a platform for start-ups. SaveMom is run by a company called JioVio Healthcare. They already have an application that is being used across the country by various NGOs and governments to keep track of pregnancies. We have asked them to create a separate application and website with the BBMP to keep track of pregnant women within the BBMP limits." Complete tracking

Suralkar says in the existing platform provided by the Central government, pregnant women are identified by ASHA workers and have an initial interaction and basic data. Through SaveMom, ASHA workers will continue to do their work, but data will be more consistent and accessible. "With the input given by these workers and the help of medical officers, details of pregnant and lactating mothers are tracked on the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) portal. However, all of this is being recorded only in one portal (RCH), which may not be easily accessible by all healthcare centres. But if the pregnant woman is registered on SaveMom, it will turn into a backup portal, which will be accessible to all health care centres when the woman provides her details," he adds.

"There are instances where a woman, during the first few months of pregnancy, may have regular checkups at a BBMP public healthcare centre, but after a few months, if she decides to move to a private practitioner or hospital, the private centre fails to update her details on the RCH portal. This is when we lose track of her. However, through this application, both private and public healthcare centres within the BBMP limits will be asked to update findings and investigations on all carrying women who visit the centres. Which will eventually help the BBMP keep track of pregnant and lactating mothers," he explains.

Better mobility Suralkar says if a woman conceives and is for most of her pregnancy in BBMP limits but chooses to



move to a different city or State during the time of delivery, the BBMP will not be able to keep track of her well-being, but the pregnant woman will still have access to all her reports and details, which she can share with her new doctor or health care centre. If a pregnant woman feels uneasy, has discomfort, or suddenly goes into labour, she can use the platform to seek immediate medical assistance. Meanwhile, since the platform will keep track of the pregnancy from the start if it is observed to be at high risk, the BBMP will provide devices by SaveMom to track the pregnant woman's basic parameters. "These devices will be in the form of a bracelet or a necklace, which can be worn throughout and after pregnancy. Basic parameters that can be tracked without noninvasive methods, like blood pressure, heart rate and more, will be available through this device. Whenever there is a variation in these parameters, an alarm will ring, intimating the pregnant woman and those in her surroundings and the local medical officer," he says.

Post-pregnancy care Suralkar says that post-pregnancy, the platform will help keep track of the health of the mother and child. "Currently vaccination of infants is being recorded in a hard copy. The mother or family members may not be able to keep track of which vaccine has been given to the child, may not be educated enough to remember the names of vaccines or might lose the hard copy that has a record of all the vaccines given to the child. But through this application, it will be accessible from wherever the mother or child moves to, within or outside the BBMP limits," he explains. If thorough data is entered into this application, it will also help the healthcare sector keep track of vaccinated infants who are yet to be vaccinated. "The ultimate aim of hospitals or health care workers is to make sure all pregnancies are safe and

maximum vaccination during the initial life of the baby is achieved. SaveMom will not just help the BBMP keep track but will help both private and public health care centres achieve their goals," says Suralkar. Privacy concerns The initiative was started close to a month ago, and so far, the response to the platform has been good, but doctors and pregnant women have raised a few concerns. "Doctors expressed con-

cerns on patients raising privacy concerns, like where the data will be saved, how much personal information must be shared, who will be able to access it and more. We are working on privacy issues. Since we are still in the pilot stage, we are going to monitor this for another 6-9 months for us to know if this has helped or needs to be tweaked for the betterment of the mother and child," said the special commissioner.

RBI MPC meeting: Policy rate unchanged at 6.5%

Taking various factors into consideration the MPC has projected real GDP growth for 2024-25 to 7.2%. This number remains unchanged from the last projection. Also, taking various factors into consideration, the CPI inflation for 2024-25 has been projected at 4.5%, the same as projected in the previous policy. Governor Shaktikanta Das announced the central bank's decision on policy rates in the RBI's concluding day Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting on Wednesday. "The Flexible monetary policy framework has completed 8 years. This is major structural reform," Mr. Das said in a statement. When asked what do these inflation and growth trends mean for monetary policy, Mr. Das cited the favourable agricultural crop outlook which could ease food inflation pressures, subject to weather risks. "Core inflation is expected to remain broadly moderate. It is with a lot of effort that the inflation horse has been brought to the stable. We must be careful about opening the gate lest the horse bolts," he said. The RBI changes stance of monetary policy to 'neutral' from

withdrawal of accommodation, Mr. Das said. The yields on the 10-year government bonds softened over the past two months, due to many factors, including the policy shift by the US Federal Reserve and accelerated domestic fiscal consolidation, the RBI Governor said. On the forex front, Mr. Das said the Indian Rupee remained the least volatile, till October 8, 2024. While stressing that the health parameters of banks and the Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) sector continued to be strong, Mr. Das said continued attention needs to be given also to potential risks from mule accounts, inoperative accounts and cyber risks. "NBFCs in particular have registered an impressive growth over the last few years. While the overall sector remains healthy, I have a few messages to a few outliers that are aggressively building up growth without adequate risk management. A growth at any cost approach would be detrimental," the RBI Governor said. "Some are chasing excessive returns in equity, concerns arise when interest rates they charge is usurious and accompanied by high processing fees and other charges.

Hyundai Motor India Limited's initial public offering to open on October 15, 2024



Hyundai Motor India Limited (the "Company"), a part of the Hyundai Motor Group, which is the third largest auto OEM in the world based on passenger vehicle sales in CY2023, according to the CRISIL Report, proposes to open its initial public offering of Equity Shares ("Offer") on Tuesday, October 15, 2024. The Anchor Investor Bidding Date is one Working Day prior to Bid/Offer Opening Date, being Monday, October 14, 2024. The Bid/ Offer Closing Date is Thursday, October 17, 2024. The Price Band of the Offer has been fixed from ₹ 1,865 per Equity Share to ₹ 1,960 per Equity Share. Bids can be made for a minimum of 7 Equity Shares and multiples of 7 Equity Shares thereafter.

The Offer is being made in terms of Rule 19(2)(b) of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, as amended (the "SCRR"), read with Regulation 31 of the SEBI ICDR Regulations. The Offer is being made through the Book Building Process in accordance with Regulation 6(1) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations wherein not more than 50% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to Qualified Institutional Buyers ("QIBs") (the "QIB Portion"), provided that our Company, in consultation with the BRLMs, may allocate up to 60% of the QIB Portion to Anchor Investors and the basis

of such allocation will be on a discretionary basis by our Company, in consultation with the BRLMs, in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations (the "Anchor Investor Portion"), of which one-third shall be reserved for domestic Mutual Funds, subject to valid Bids being received from the domestic Mutual Funds at or above the price at which allocation is made to Anchor Investors ("Anchor Investor Allocation Price"). Further, 5% of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis only to Mutual Funds, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Offer Price, and the remainder of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to all QIBs (other than Anchor Investors), including Mutual Funds, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Offer Price. Further, not less than 15% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation to Non-Institutional Investors ("Non-Institutional Category") of which one-third of the Non-Institutional Category shall be available for allocation to Bidders with an application size of more than ₹ 200,000 and up to ₹ 1,000,000 and two-thirds of the Non-Institutional Category shall be available for allocation to Bidders with an application size of more than ₹ 1,000,000 and under-subscription in either of these two sub-catego-

ries of Non-Institutional Category may be allocated to Bidders in the other sub-category of Non-Institutional Category in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Offer Price. Further, not less than 35% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation to Retail Individual Investors ("Retail Category"), in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations, subject to valid Bids being received from them at or above the Offer Price. Further, Equity Shares will be allocated on a proportionate basis to Eligible Employees applying under the Employee Reservation Portion, subject to

valid Bids received from them at or above the Offer Price. All Bidders (except Anchor Investors) shall mandatorily participate in this Offer only through the Application Supported by Blocked Amount ("ASBA") process and shall provide details of their respective bank account (including UPI ID (defined hereinafter) in case of UPI Bidders (defined hereinafter)) in which the Bid Amount will be blocked by the Self Certified Syndicate Banks ("SCSBs") or the Sponsor Bank(s), as the case may be. Anchor Investors are not permitted to participate in the Anchor Investor Portion through the ASBA process.

37-year-old scrap trader stabbed to death at Falaknuma

Hyderabad: A scrap trader was murdered at Falaknuma late on Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Mohd Sajid (37), a resident of Fatimanagar of Falaknuma.

According to police officials, he returned home from work when at around 10.30 pm, some people called him over

phone to discuss some issue. "When he came out, a man, Siddiq, stabbed Sadiq repeatedly leading to severe bleeding injuries. Subsequently, he was pronounced dead at OGH. A case was registered and teams have been formed to investigate the case," said ACP Falaknuma, Mohd Jaweed. Senior police officials later in night visited the spot.

K. K. Pictures Film Unit met Swami Swaroopanandendra Saraswati

K.K Pictures is thrilled to announce its upcoming pan-India movie, produced by Kashetti Kumar and directed by M.V. Satish Kumar. This much-anticipated film is set to be released in multiple languages, including Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada, to reach audiences across the nation. The film unit met spiritual leaders Sri Swaroopanandendra Saraswati, Pitadipati, Vishaka Sri Sarada Math and Bala Swami Swatmanandendra Saraswati. On this auspicious occasion they offered their divine blessings to the producer and director, marking a significant moment for the film as it progresses through production. The film addresses pressing social issues such as the protection of Hindu girls, the safeguarding of Hindu Dharma, and the resistance against attacks on Sanatana Dharma. Director M.V. Satish Kumar emphasized the film's commitment to raising awareness about these crucial topics while delivering an engaging narrative. Present at this momentous occasion were producer Kashetti Kumar, director M.V. Satish Kumar, and senior journalist Siva Shankar, who shared insights on the film's ambitious vision and its relevance in contemporary society.



Warner Bros. Discovery Unveils a Diverse Factual Entertainment Content Slate for South Asia

Warner Bros. Discovery, a leader in the factual entertainment and lifestyle content space, has announced its content slate for streaming and linear platforms, with a strong emphasis on Indian originals. The company plans to significantly enhance programming across discovery+ and its linear channels, including Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, and TLC, with a focus on a diverse and distinctive mix of local originals and global titles in India. By the end of this year, the cluster would have delivered over 4000 hours of fresh content across linear and discovery+ designed to engage and captivate viewers. Additionally, the revamped DTamil channel will showcase top global entertainment content, including Hollywood blockbuster movies and series, in the Tamil language, establishing itself as the go-to destination for dubbed films.

An internal study commissioned by Warner Bros. Discovery and Ormax Media revealed key trends, highlighting national pride, cultural preservation, and vicarious experiences as dominant themes within the non-fiction genre. It also showed a strong appeal for sub-genres like history, survival, wildlife, and food. Credibility also emerges as a critical need in the genre; as trust in digital media declines, this presents a unique opportunity for television to distinguish itself.

The first tentpole show under the India Originals roster on discovery+ and Dis-

covery Channel was The Secrets of the Buddha Relics, hosted by Manoj Bajpayee and created by Neeraj Pandey. This compelling documentary delves into the final days of Gautam Buddha and the origins of his sacred relics.

Captivating audiences far and wide, is Reality Ranis of the Jungle, that premiered on September 23 and is hosted by Varun Sood. This exhilarating show follows twelve reality stars—including Pavitra Punia and Eksha Kerung—as they trade their luxurious lifestyles for an adventurous off-grid experience in the jungle.

For fans of history and exploration, discovery+ and Discovery Channel will soon unveil Mystery Hunter, hosted by the talented Rannvijay Singha, which delves into the mysteries of the past. The content lineup also includes the highly anticipated sequel, Star vs. Food Survival Season 2, featuring popular personalities from comedy, Bollywood, and cricket, including Kartik Aaryan, Shikhar Dhawan, Munawar Faruqui, and Shriya Saran, with Chef Ranveer Brar returning as the host.

Following the mega hit premiere of Legends of The Ramayana with Amish, a sequel titled Legends of Shiva is set to premiere in 2025. In addition, the second season of Cult has been renewed, promising to be just as gripping as its predecessor, My Daughter Joined the Cult. Together, these shows provide a captivating blend of action, discovery, and cultural insight.



How artist Gigi Scaria's new show at Chemould Prescott Road draws attention to the uncomfortable realities of our times

I have been working on the issues of drastic change in massive urbanisation of rural India, its deep impact on the social system and the cultural and political undercurrents of our country. The extension of the same can be seen by the changing climatic conditions and environmental disasters. In that context, the term 'biophilia' has an important role to play. A human-centric perspective has been shifted to accommodate other life forms and its existence through this term. For years, you have highlighted the nature-human relationship. In this exhibition, too, the bronze sculpture Phantom Limb depicts a tonsured earth transformed into a large flower, representing the power of nature to assert itself. The digital installation Shut Wide Open underscores the consequences of the calamities prompted by humans. If you could talk about this engagement?

This is an urgent need of our times. In the '70s and '80s people thought the climate crisis was distant but now the drastic changes are evident. There is social consciousness, but also a feeling of helplessness on how a substantial change can be achieved, which perhaps also needs more political will. In this exhibition, Phantom Limb shows a massive mountain dismantled by bulldozers and trucks over a period of time. As the title suggests, mother earth could have the sensation of pain for that amputated or missing part.

The video sculptures titled Shut Wide Open opens three different doors to the viewers. In the first segment, a shooting star represents the unpredictability of life — each observer sees something different: a wish, a sign, or a fleeting moment of change. The star speaks to our varied perspectives on predictions. The second part unfolds with an infinite series of doors, opening and closing — a metaphorical exploration of opportunities and choices. Finally, the third segment brings us to stark glacier melt, symbolising the undeniable truth of our changing environment. It serves as a bare confrontation with reality, highlighting the pressing consequences of human-made calamities. Together, the three parts create a poignant narrative, reflecting on humanity's role in shaping the environment, the varied lenses through which we view our actions, and the doors of opportunity that may either lead to change or exacerbate our impact on the planet. Architecture and city-building have also been recurring themes in your work. You started sketching abstract maps of Delhi when you were still pursuing your post-graduation at Jamia Millia Islamia. More recent works such as Absence of an Architect (2007) Philosopher's Stone (2017) and All About This Side (2017) also warn of the widening disparities brought by urban development. If you could talk about highlighting the issue?

These issues are universal, only the nature and degree might vary. The painful truth of human existence has made its brutal assertion on everything perceived and imagined. We are now introducing ecologically-conscious models of architecture but in the present demography these small efforts can bring little change. In this exhibition, the canvas If on a winter's night, a traveller — that borrows its title taken from



the novel by Italo Calvino — shows five landscapes in one frame connected with aspects of time. A serene landscape changes with a massive destructive makeover, leading to a large urban settlement and subsequently transforms into an enormous industrial unit in the final frame. Another single-channel video, Familiar places, estranged surroundings, shows random landscapes shot by me from different parts of the world where I travelled in the last decade. Each landscape is slashed in the middle, through which you see the next landscape. The cut destroys the calmness of nature, going beyond the

stage of repair. The slashing also has an art historical reference, drawing from Italian artist Lucio Fontana's experimental paintings where he cut his canvas to create a hole in the middle, suggesting flatness of an artist's vision, which goes beyond the surface to experience reality. Do you feel it essential as an artist to engage with the social realities of the times? For your 2004 video A day with Sohail and Mariyan, you followed two waste-pickers for a month; the video installation Elevator From the Subcontinent transported viewers to urban homes from different strata of society. The recent exhibition "Moments of

Collapse", curated by you, pondered the realities of our condition "socially, personally and politically". As an artist, I draw inspiration and content from my immediate surroundings. I am not propagating that an artist should always respond to one's own social realities, but a reality which the artist perceives cannot be devoid of the time we live in. Understanding and being aware of the parallel existence of different realities is very important in order to create. Personal perspective and political realities, at times, create a definite clash. That's where an artist creates a parallel world, which holds the key to the future and the making of a better one.

After his party wipeout in J&K, Ghulam Nabi Azad stares at political dead end

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, 75, had launched his outfit, Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP), after quitting the Congress amid fanfare, hoping that it would emerge as a key player in J&K politics. However, if the DPAP's poll debut, in the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year, was a flop show, its maiden bid for the J&K Assembly polls has turned out to be a disaster. Azad's party, which contested 23 seats out of 90 in the Assembly polls, could not make any impact, failing to open its account. Five DPAP candidates secured less votes than NOTA in their constituencies, with the party getting over 10% votes in only three seats. In the Lok Sabha elections, the DPAP had contested from Anantnag-Rajouri and Udhampur-Doda, but its nominees lost their security deposits from both the seats. Soon after its inception, Azad's party has faced a steady exodus of leaders. Although several prominent Congress faces had initially joined the DPAP, they deserted Azad, one after

another. Weeks before the Assembly polls, Azad suddenly announced that he was "unwell" and that he may not campaign for his candidates. This threw his party's campaign out of gear, while prompting a few of its candidates to even withdraw their candidature from the first phase of polls held on September 18. In 23 seats that the DPAP contested, its average vote share stood at 5.34%, registering 14.92% in Hazratbal, its highest, followed by 13.74% in Doda and 10.95% in Gurez. The party recorded its lowest vote share of 0.27% in RS Pura-Jammu South and 0.28% in Jammu North. The five seats where the party polled less votes than NOTA include R S Pura-Jammu South, Ramnagar, Bahu, Jammu North and Doda West. In Doda West, the DPAP got 436 votes while NOTA got 998. The party polled 237 votes in RS Pura where NOTA got 432. In Ramnagar, the party secured 463 votes whereas NOTA polled 1,167. The DPAP garnered 362 votes in Bahu where NOTA polled 460. In Jammu North, the party got 204 votes while NOTA received 319. Azad's best hope in



these polls was that some of his party candidates would win some seats so that it could give him a leverage in the post-poll scenario. Struggling to keep his party afloat, Azad, whose political career seems to be at its fag end, has also reeled from the "BJP proxy" tag used by his critics in J&K. Talking to The Indian Express during his campaigning last month, Azad had predicted a hung Assembly, arguing that no party or alliance would get a majority. In the final analysis, the polls were however clinched by the National Conference-Congress alliance.

Since 2014 in Haryana, move towards bipolar, tighter BJP-Cong contests

Months later, the BJP won the Haryana Assembly elections, getting a majority with 47 seats and a 33.3% vote share, ending the Congress's 10-year rule in the state. The Congress won just 15 Assembly seats and a 20.7% vote share, while the INLD won 19 seats and a 24.2% vote share.

As the BJP on Tuesday won a historic third consecutive term in Haryana, data from Lok Sabha and Assembly polls showed that electoral contests in the state have become increasingly bipolar over the last decade. The data also reveal that the gap between the BJP and Congress, the top two parties in the state, has narrowed in the same period, as the regional parties have been increasingly squeezed out. In 2014, the BJP won seven out of Haryana's 10 Lok Sabha seats en route to power at the Centre. While the Congress won just one seat, the O P Chautala-led Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) won two. The BJP led with a 34.8% vote share, followed by the INLD at 24.4% and the Congress at 23%. Months later, the BJP won the Haryana Assembly elections, getting a majority with 47 seats and a 33.3% vote share, ending the Congress's 10-year rule in the state. The Congress won just 15 Assembly seats and a 20.7% vote share, while the INLD won 19 seats and a 24.2% vote share.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the BJP improved its tally, winning all 10 seats. It won a whopping 58.2% of the vote; the Congress got only 28.5%. However, in the Assembly polls, which took place later that same year, the BJP fell to 40 seats, six short of majority. The party needed 10 MLAs of the Dushyant Chautala-led Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) to form the government.



The Congress won 31 seats. Both the BJP and Congress increased their vote shares to 36.5% and 28.1% respectively. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP fell to just five Lok Sabha seats, the same as what the Congress won. The BJP secured a vote share of 46.11%, and the Congress 43.67%. On Tuesday, however, the BJP emerged with its highest-ever seat tally (48) and vote share (39.9%) in the state. The Congress recorded an improved vote

share at 39.1%, but won only 37 seats. Over the course of the last three Assembly polls, the gap between the Congress and BJP in terms of vote share has shrunk considerably. From being separated by 12.6 percentage points in 2014, the gap is now just 0.8 percentage points. There is a similar trend in Lok Sabha polls as well. The gap between the two parties shrank from 29.7 percentage points in 2019 to just 2.44 per-

centage points in 2024. As the BJP-Congress contest has become tighter, the regional parties have lost out. The INLD fell from a 24.2% vote share in 2014 to 2.4% in 2019 before making a marginal recovery to 4.14% this year. The JJP, which made a splash in its poll debut, secured a respectable 14.8% vote share in 2019. But this year, it fell below even the INLD, its parent party, to a 0.9% vote share.

Haryana shows BJP's slide is overstated. In J-K, National Conference's resilience wins

Haryana is a small state. But the BJP's historic victory, for a third term, has significant consequences nationally. For one thing, this election is a massive shot in the arm for the BJP and a shock for Congress. There is a lot of local analysis to be done, and the mathematics of vote share-to-seat share conversion doubtless played a role in this election. Those kinds of tactical issues matter. But there is no getting away from a couple of large messages. The first is that predictions of the BJP's slide after the setback of June 4 are greatly exaggerated. Winning a third term in a state where the BJP does not have the kind of default cultural identification it has in Gujarat or Madhya Pradesh is no mean feat. It will give pause to those who were beginning to doubt the BJP's tactical acumen. To use Milan Vaishnav's phrase, the BJP-led Fourth Party System is still resilient.

By the same token, this defeat is a shock for the Congress. There has not been another state election where it has, in principle, had as clear a path to power as in Haryana. There was momentum be-

hind it. Even the BJP was conceding to challenges on a number of fronts: Corruption, unemployment, agrarian distress and urban dysfunction. To fritter this opportunity will hurt; it changes the momentum of Indian politics. It strengthens Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was beginning to look very shaky, and is indicative still of a large residual resistance to accepting Rahul Gandhi. It is a little unfair to make these judgements on every election. But confidence in the Congress's tactical judgements will be dented. Its impressive vote share suggests that Congress has the potential to consolidate anti-BJP sentiment behind itself. But its internal rivalries are still too close to the surface. Its two attempted master narratives, one on caste and the other on farmers, are not enough to consolidate an electoral strategy, and may even backfire under some circumstances. This is because both narratives fall prey to social determinism. They quite simply underestimate the churn in rural India. Both caste and class identities are more complicated. It is an unmistakable

trend that communities can now vote for different parties. They also underestimate the new contradictions this social churn produces.

It is harder to build broad social coalitions, when your pitch on farmers still operates within a paradigm that privileges old dominant castes over others. There is real agrarian distress. But the politics of those who claim to represent farmers has become a politics of preserving the status quo privileges of dominant farmers. In fact, insofar as there is a caste dimension in these results, the BJP has played the politics better, consolidating more anti-Jat votes. Congress cannot pretend that it can be the old Lok Dal, BSP and Congress all at once, without recognising that the material contradictions within the OBC and other marginalised communities are stronger. In the case of Haryana, perhaps, it conjured up the image merely of restoring the status quo ante in the form of the rule of the Hoodas, whereas the BJP reminded people of its promising early work in the Khattar administration. There is also an-

other lesson: That leaders like Hooda who stake their claim largely on one caste will always be more vulnerable than leaders who transcend their social base.

The Congress has to ask whether merely banking on the distribution of constrained state resources, like public sector jobs or reconfiguring reservations, creates more non-zero-sum conflict than help forge broad coalitions. The BJP's logic of religious division is dangerous. But it will not be countered by sharpening other social divisions, without a forward-looking agenda. In effect, while people see that the BJP has not quite tackled agrarian distress or unemployment or corruption, a crude focus on caste is equally untenable. The logic of social movements can translate into agitational politics where there is a clear focal point. It is not sufficient to build a claim to rule. It also has to be said, somewhat depressingly, that the election is also a vindication of the claim that Hindutva is consolidating as an identity for a significant number of voters; there is no penalty for communalising or coarsening politics.

TikTok designed to be addictive to kids, causes them harm: U.S. States' lawsuits

More than a dozen States and the District of Columbia filed lawsuits against TikTok on Tuesday (October 8, 2024), saying that the popular short-form video app is designed to be addictive to kids and harms their mental health. The lawsuits stem from a national investigation into TikTok, which was launched in March 2022 by a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general from many States, including New York, California, Kentucky, and New Jersey. All of the complaints were filed in State courts. At the heart of each lawsuit is the TikTok algorithm, which powers what users see on the platform by populating the app's main "For You" feed with content tailored to people's interests. The lawsuits note TikTok design features that they say addict children to the platform, such as the ability to scroll endlessly through content, push notifications that come with built-in "buzzes" and face filters that create unattainable appearances for users. "They've chosen profit over the health and safety, well-being and future of our children," California Attorney General Rob Bonta said at a news conference in San Francisco. "And that is not something we can accept. So we've sued." The latest lawsuits come nearly a year after dozens of states sued Instagram parent Meta Platforms Inc. in state and federal courts for harming young people and contributing to the youth mental health crisis by knowingly and deliberately designing addictive features that keep kids hooked on their platforms.

Keeping people on the platform is "how they generate massive ad revenue", District of Columbia Attorney General Brian Schwab said in an interview. "But unfortunately, that's also how they generate adverse mental health impacts on the users." The legal challenges, which also include Google's YouTube, are part of a growing reckoning against social media companies and their effects on young people's lives. In some cases, the challenges have been coordinated in a way that resembles how states previously organised against the tobacco and pharmaceutical industries. TikTok, though, is facing an even bigger obstacle, as its very existence in the U.S. is in question. Under a federal law that took effect earlier this year, TikTok could be banned from the U.S. by mid-January if its China-based parent company, ByteDance, doesn't sell the platform by then. Both TikTok and ByteDance are challenging the law at an appeals court in Washington.

A panel of three judges heard oral arguments in the case last month and are expected to issue a ruling, which could be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. In its filings on Tuesday, the District of Columbia called the algorithm "dopamine-inducing," and said it was created to be intentionally addictive so the company could trap many young users into excessive use and keep them on its app for hours on end. TikTok does this despite knowing that these behaviours will lead to profound psychological and physiological harms, such as anxiety, depression, body dysmorphia, and other long-lasting problems, the district said.

TikTok is disappointed that the lawsuits were filed after the company had been working with the attorneys general for two years on addressing the issues, a spokesman said. "We strongly disagree with these claims, many of which we believe to be inaccurate and misleading," the TikTok spokesman, Alex Haurek said. "We're proud of and remain deeply committed to the work we've done to protect teens and we will continue to update and improve our product." The social media company does not allow children under 13 to sign up for its main service and restricts some content for everyone under 18. But Washington and several other states said in their filings that children can easily bypass those restrictions, allowing them to access the service adults use despite the company's claims that its platform is safe for children. The District of Columbia alleges TikTok is operating as an "unlicensed virtual economy" by allowing people to purchase TikTok Coins – a virtual currency within the platform – and send "Gifts" to streamers on TikTok LIVE who can cash it out for real money. TikTok takes a 50% commission on these financial transactions but hasn't registered as a money transmitter with the U.S. Treasury Department or authorities in the district, according to the complaint.

Officials say teens are frequently exploited for sexually explicit content through TikTok's LIVE streaming feature, which has allowed the app to operate essentially as a "virtual strip club" without any age restrictions. They say the cut the company gets from the financial transactions allows it to profit from exploitation. The 14 attorneys general say the goal of their lawsuits is to stop TikTok from using these features, impose financial penalties for their alleged illegal practices and collect damages for users that have been harmed. The use of social media among teens is nearly universal in the U.S. and many other parts of the world. Almost all teens age 13 to 17 in the U.S. report using a social media platform, with about a third saying they use social media "almost constantly", according to the Pew Research Centre. High school students who frequently use social media more commonly have persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, according to a new survey from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention conducted last year in which about 20,000 teenagers participated. Also on Tuesday, 22 other States including Alabama, Colorado, Florida, and Michigan filed an amicus brief urging a Tennessee court to force TikTok to produce documents related to a multistate investigation that those attorney general offices say TikTok is withholding or destroying. When TikTok failed to produce the requested information last year, 46 States including Minnesota filed an amicus brief in support of Tennessee. The amicus brief they filed Tuesday supports Tennessee's continued efforts to compel TikTok's compliance. Last week, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton sued TikTok, alleging the company was sharing and selling minors' personal information in violation of a new state law that prohibits these



practices. TikTok, which disputes the allegations, is also fighting against a similar data-oriented federal lawsuit filed in August by the Department of Justice. Several Republican-led States, including Nebraska, Kansas, New Hampshire, Kansas,

Iowa, and Arkansas, also previously sued the company, some unsuccessfully, over allegations it is harming children's mental health, exposing them to "inappropriate" content or allowing young people to be sexually exploited on its platform.

Apple introduces new iPhone 16 series, available in India from Sep 20

Cupertino: Tech giant Apple on Monday introduced its much-anticipated iPhone 16 series with Apple Intelligence, larger display sizes, camera control, innovative pro-camera features and a big leap in battery life. Powered by the A18 Pro chip, iPhone 16 Pro and iPhone 16 Pro Max feature a new 48MP Fusion camera with a faster quad-pixel sensor that enables 4K120 fps video recording in Dolby Vision, the company said in a statement.

iPhone 16 Pro and iPhone 16 Pro Max will be available in black titanium, natural titanium, white titanium and desert titanium colours, in 128GB, 256GB, 512GB, and 1TB storage capacities. iPhone 16 Pro starts at Rs 119,900 and iPhone 16 Pro Max starts at Rs 144,900. Customers in India will be able to pre-order iPhone 16 Pro and iPhone 16 Pro Max beginning this Friday (September 13), with availability beginning September 20.

"Customers who are looking for the best possible iPhone will be able to take advantage of this huge step forward, whether they're applying edits to a photo without lifting a finger, rewriting meeting notes for a more professional tone, or using the advanced camera system to capture their next masterpiece in 4K120 fps in Dolby Vision", said Greg Joswiak, Apple's senior vice president of Worldwide Marketing. iPhone 16 and iPhone 16 Plus will be available in ultramarine, teal, pink, white, and black in 128GB, 256GB, and 512GB storage capacities.

iPhone 16 starts at Rs 79,900 and iPhone 16 Plus starts at Rs 89,900. Pre-orders will begin on September 13, with availability beginning September 20, said

the company. The tech giant unveiled Apple Watch Series 10, featuring a refined design and new capabilities. It also features new sleep apnea notifications, faster charging, water depth and temperature sensing and new health and fitness insights and intelligence in watchOS 11.

Apple Watch Series 10 is available in both aluminum and titanium, in an array of stunning colors and finishes. Jet black is a new polished aluminum finish that is distinctively reflective and sleek, while new titanium cases are available in natural, gold, and slate. The users in India can now pre-order Apple Watch Series 10, with availability in stores beginning September 20. Apple Watch Series 10 starts at Rs 46,900 and Watch SE is available starting at Rs 24,900. Apple Watch Series 10 is nearly 10 per cent thinner than Apple Watch Series 7, Series 8, and Series 9. The company also introduced Apple Watch Ultra 2 in a new black titanium finish and enhanced with features in watchOS 11 that make the most rugged and capable Apple Watch even better. Apple Watch Ultra 2 features most accurate GPS in a sports watch, the brightest display of any Apple product, and up to 36 hours of battery life with regular use or up to 72 hours in Low Power Mode. Customers can also pre-order AirPods 4 for Rs 12,900, with availability beginning September 20. They can also pre-order AirPods 4 with Active Noise Cancellation for Rs 17,900. AirPods Pro 2 are available for Rs 24,900, said the company. They can also pre-order AirPods Max with USB-C charging for Rs 59,900, with availability beginning September 20.

Congress loses pole position among allies in Maharashtra, Jharkhand

The Assembly election results in Haryana are “surprising, against popular sentiment and cannot be accepted”, the Congress said on Tuesday (October 8, 2024) after it suffered a shock defeat in the north Indian State for the third time in a row. Questioning the “integrity” of the counting process at a press conference, Congress general secretary (communication) Jairam Ramesh and his colleague, Pawan Khera, alleged that party candidates lost from constituencies where the batteries of the electronic voting machines displayed “99% battery life” as against 60-70%. There were 12 to 14 constituencies from where complaints were received and the party would take these up with the Election Commission, they added.

“The Congress has not lost, but was made to lose. One has not heard the last on the Haryana results,” Mr. Ramesh said, adding, “Under these circumstances, it is not possible for us to accept these results (in Haryana)... there are serious issues raised by our candidates which we will raise with the EC.” On the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) results, Mr. Ramesh said: “People have given a befitting reply to those who trampled upon J&K’s respect by taking away its statehood. The NC-Congress government will make all efforts for the restoration of J&K’s statehood.” But the shock defeat in Haryana and a below par performance in J&K, contrary to exit poll projections, raises questions about its immediate as well as long term political implications. The Haryana loss has put a pause to the narrative that the Congress, under the leadership of Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, is on the path of revival. Since 2018, Himachal Pradesh is the only State in north India that the Congress has won, and the latest setback will have an impact on the party’s poll prospects in Delhi and Punjab. But the most immediate fallout would be the party’s position within the Maha Vikas Aghadhi (MVA) before the Assembly polls in Maharashtra, where it emerged as the single largest party in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. Amid reports that the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena is looking to contest the maximum number of seats in the upcoming election and eyeing the chief ministerial position, the Haryana setback leaves very little elbow room to drive a hard bargain during seat-sharing talks. Shiv Sena (UBT) Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi pointed how the Congress once again lost against the BJP in a direct fight despite anti-incumbency in Haryana. “The coalition dharma says that allies should talk to each other and not through the media,” Mr. Ramesh responded. In Jharkhand too, where the Congress is part of the ruling alliance with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, the party would have to play a secondary role. The focus of Congress campaign on ‘kisan, jawan aur pehelewan (farmers, soldiers and wrestlers)’ to highlight the issues of farmers, opposition of the youth to Agniveer scheme in the armed forces and mishandling of protesting women wrestlers, failed to take off. Watch: Analysing the Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir Assembly election results “All these issues were also the issues of the Jat community and they didn’t



gain traction among the non-Jat voters,” said a senior leader, involved in the Haryana campaign. If the BJP gained from a perceived consolidation of non-Jat votes, reports that party veteran and Dalit leader Kumari Selja has been sidelined by former

Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda reinforced an image that the Congress was primarily a Jat party. Like Kamal Nath in Madhya Pradesh and Bhupesh Baghel in Chhattisgarh, over-reliance on Mr. Hooda’s leadership and complacency among party

workers cost the party. “It will not be business as usual in Haryana and I am sure the Congress high command would identify those who negated the efforts to bring the party to power after 10 years,” Ms. Selja told reporters.

Samsung workers continue strike at Sriperumbudur plant near Chennai

“The workers have not accepted the terms mentioned in the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) that was signed on Monday (October 7, 2024). This was signed by the workers’ committee, which favours the company. A majority of workers have not agreed to it and continue to strike,” said E. Muthukumar, Kancheepuram district secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU).

Since the beginning of the strike, the company has maintained it would communicate directly with its workers, and not engage with any unions. CITU, however, has demanded the recognition of the newly formed Samsung India Workers’ Union. “First, the union has to be recognised, and then we will discuss the terms,” Mr. Muthukumar added.

According to the MoA, the company shall, in consultation with the workmen committee, implement measures to enhance the competitiveness of wages. And as an immediate measure and recognising the current financial situation, the company will provide an interim special incentive by the name of ‘Productivity Stabilization Incentive’ equivalent to ₹5,000 per month, effective from October 2024 up to March 2025.

The modalities of the payment will be



A Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the company and the workmen committee on Monday, but a majority of workers have not agreed to its terms, says CITU

finalised in consultation with the workmen committee. This special incentive shall be considered with the annual increment in wages for the financial year 2025-2026, which will be finalised in consultation with the committee during the wage negotiations. Workers at Samsung India’s

manufacturing facility in Sriperumbudur have been on a strike since September 9, 2024, demanding recognition of their newly formed union and an increase in wages. The Samsung Electronics’ facility in Sriperumbudur has 1,800 workers, and 1,000 workers joined the protest.