Rise in online gambling addiction among adolescents fueled by high-speed internet

Hyderabad: One of the many unintended consequences of uninterrupted and affordable high speed internet is the rising instance of addiction to online gambling and betting, especially among adolescents.What starts as an innocent attempt at joining an online gaming group eventually carries the risk of turning-into a major addiction to betting/ gambling, capable of disrupting all aspects of life.While the traditional physical gambling is regulated by Public Gambling Act of India 1867, in the last few years, thanks to the complete domination of internet-related online gaming apps, online betting and gambling quickly outpaced this archaic law.Online gambling is also not considered as a public health issue, which is a challenge to quickly identify and initiate treatment."There is no denying that online gambling and gaming disorder is behavioral addiction. It starts with online games among young people, which eventually leads to complications involving social, emotional and physical health. These effects trigger mental and physical damage, violence, anger and social isolation," says general secretary, Indian Psychiatric Society, Dr Vishal Akula.The prevalence of gambling in the country could be around 7.4 percent, multiple studies suggested. Also, 5 to 10 people

are adversely affected for every person who experiences gambling problems. Gambling is associated with major community concerns, such as suicide, mental illness, debt, violence, poverty, and homelessness. Despite this, gambling has not received much attention from policymakers and public health experts in India, a report on gambling published in The Lancet (January, 2024), said.

"Many individuals engaging in online betting, gambling and even gaming, experience various kinds of mental health challenges that are comorbid to internet gaming disorder. Especially adolescents, if they get addicted, then they suffer depression, isolation and social anxiety, aggression and behavioural issues, PTSD and sleep disturbances," says Head, Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Jagtial, Dr Vishal.The senior psychiatrist, however, points out that there are pharmaceutical interventions that can play a supportive role in managing online gambling, betting gaming disorders when combined with behavioural therapies."There are specific drugs for treatment of depression and social anxiety, which is common among such addicts. There is enough empirical data indicating efficiency of specific drugs to manage aggression and behavioral issues, which are so common among ado-

lescents addicted to the internet. Families with such adolescents must recognize the problem, don't worry about stigma and accept mental health treatment," Dr Vishal added.Some statistics of internet gaming and addiction:• Prevalence of internet addiction varies from 1.5 % to 25 % worldwide• 18 to 24 years adults vulnerable to become gam-

ing/betting/ gambling addicts in India• Internet gaming disorder prevalence in India is 3.5 % among school children•

Addiction prevalence higher in makes than females• Another study indicates prevalence of online betting/gaming addiction among adolescents to 1.3 % to 19.9 % in India

KCR's vision sets Yadagirigutta temple tower to become tallest gold-plated in India

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri: When former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao announced the gold plating works for Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple Vimana Gopuram (temple tower), atop Yadagirigutta, he had actually laid foundation for making it the tallest gold plated temple tower in the

country.Once the works were done, Yadagirigutta Vimana Gopuram would be the tallest gold-plated tower. It would be taller than Sri Venkateshwara Swamy temple Vimana Gopuram at Tirumala, said Endowments Principal Secretary Shailaja Ramaiyer.

Compared to the Tirumala Vimana Gopuram, which is three floors, Yadagirigutta Vimana Gopuram has five floors. It stands over 50 feet tall, a bit taller than Tirumala Vimana Gopuram, she explained.About 60 kgs of gold was being used for the Vimana Gopuram gold plating works. All the gold was resourced from the temple and through the donations offered by devotees, she added.A Chennai-based agency was taking up the works. In the past, the agency had also executed the Dwajastambham (flagstaff) and Kalasha (finial) installation works at the temple.

Soon after announcing the government's decision to take up gold plating works at the temple in October 2021, former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao donated one kg and 16 tolas of gold for the purpose. He had also appealed to the people from different sections to donate gold for executing the works.Accordingly, many politicians, corporates, philanthropists, devotees and others had donated gold. Enthused with the donations, the government then had constituted a committee also to execute the works. Endowments Principal Secretary, YTDA Vice Chairman and others were part of the Committee.The Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple authorities are

taking up the gold plating works at brisk pace. At present, scaffolding is being installed at the gopuram for executing the works.Temple authorities have set February last week as the deadline for completing the works before the commencement of annual Brahmotsavamas at the temple in March.Vemulawada temple gold plating next in the pipeline

Once the gold plating of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple's Vimana Gopuram is completed, the State government would replicate the works at Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple in Vemulawada.Already, Endowments Minister Konda Surekha had initiated works towards this effect. Instructions have been issued to the officials to prepare the estimates for taking up the project.At a meeting with officials on Thursday, the Minister said with the approval of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, the project would be taken up with 16 kgs of gold and Rs.6 crore funds.Unlike the Yadagirigutta Vimana Gopuram, which covers nearly 10,000 square feet, the Vemulawada gopuram covers 3,200 square feet of space. Before taking up the gold plating works, officials have to take up copper plating works atop the tower and it takes about six months to complete this exercise.

India needs to leverage Trump's China antipathy

The electoral victory of Donald Trump, and his comeback as the United States (US) President, has led to speculation as to the contours of his administration's policies with respect to the Indo-Pacific region.US presidents are said to get more ambitious in their second term, and if the past is prologue, Trump 2.0 may have a profound impact on the US's China policy. This is because, in his first term, Trump changed Washington's fundamental engagement with Beijing. Since the normalisation of relations between the two nations in the late 1970s, cooperation in economic, scientific and cultural spheres flourished. Trump mooted de-coupling, meaning the gradual severing of the intertwining between the two.He also sought to address challenges in trade, geopolitics and security. The Sino-US trade war escalated on the back of the Trump administration levying tariffs on Chinese imports to reduce the trade deficit. Under the terms of the trade deal that China signed, it agreed to increase purchases of American products, address issues related to intellectual property, and give American financial institutions greater market access. The Trump administration labelled Xi Jinping's China as a strategic rival. Thus, national security concerns became paramount and led to curbs on Chinese investment in sensitive sectors, restrictions on Chinese majors like Huawei and ZTE, and a thrust on countering Chinese influence in telecom networks, cellphone app ecosystems, and cloud computing.The Biden administration has built on this foundation, constricting flows of sensitive technology, investment and human capital to China. It is also seeking to have its allies on board with the curbs on semiconductors. As Xi's China set much store by technology like electric vehicles, the US hit back with tariffs on the same. Thus, the political agenda across Republican and Democrat administrations has been to escalate measures that China perceives as seeking to contain it.

On the campaign trail, Trump sought to restore American primacy in manufacturing and zeroed in on Xi's China Manufacturing initiative that seeks to build dominance in important sectors like advanced information technology, high-end numerical control machinery, robotics, aviation equipment, maritime engineering technology, sophisticated rail equipment, energy-saving vehicles, electrical equipment, agricultural machinery, biopharmaceuticals and high-performance medical devices. He has called for higher tariffs on Chinese goods. Trump's China perception is also coloured by his notion that Xi's mishandling of Covid-19 led to his rout in the 2020 election. This antipathy may translate into a tumultuous relationship.

For China, Trump's return has stoked worries over its political and economic trajectories. Xi has expressed fears that there may be attempts to dislodge the Communist Party through regime change; this has found resonance even among the general public. Economists speculate that it may not achieve its intended gross domestic product (GDP) growth target of about 5%.

The economic slump and deteriorating relations between the US and China have taken the lustre off Beijing as an attractive investment destination for American firms. European businesses operating in China have voiced concerns that diminishing returns for capital invested did not justify the risks of operating in the Chinese market. They believe the problems in the Chinese market will linger unresolved, and they will have to rethink staying invested in China on account of regulatory issues, priority to state-owned businesses in government procurement, market-access hurdles, and overcapacity. This is also compounded by US tech companies exiting China amid geopolitical tensions.India should try to leverage the churn to its advantage. Prime Minster (PM) Narendra Modi has been one of the first leaders to connect with Trump after his win. Modi has sought to build on the relations developed during the first Trump presidency. The question is can India use the disenchantment of the West with China to attract more investment? Under the first Trump presidency, military cooperation flourished as evidenced by the signing of the foundational agreements. While India and China have taken steps to address the military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Delhi must improve its defence-industrial complex to bolster its deterrent potential. A defining feature of Trump's first term was the emergence of minilaterals in the Indo-Pacific. Under Trump, Quad was resurrected in 2017. As Pakistan goes under, and terrorism re-emerges in Kashmir, India must engage with Trump who was receptive to Indian concerns in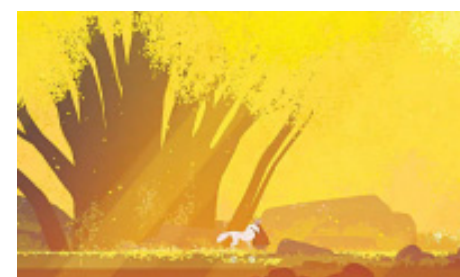 his first innings. There can be much closer cooperation between Washington and New Delhi on India's neighbourhood where divergences have been slowly emerging in the last few years.

A painted masterpiece

From the makers of 2018's Gris comes Neva, need I say more? To make a second game when your first sits, six years on, with a 10/10 rating on Steam and 4.5/5 on GOG is a daunting task, but Nómada Studio seems to be in a league of its own. With Neva, they show us just how magical games can be, how interactive journeys can embrace the metaphorical, their love for Monument Valley, and how breathtaking colours and their many hues can transform a world. Throughout my journey with Neva, I couldn't help but exclaim to myself – and to anyone who was listening – how unfairly perfect this game is. No updates, no day-one patch, no fixes, no bugs – just pure magic from start to finish."An hour with Neva, and nothing stood a chance – neither Europa nor Indus. This was all I was going to write about this week, come what may. If you don't believe me, take a look at the pictures.

Off the bat, Neva offers its players the opportunity to play the game either as an action game or in the form of an interactive story, I chose the former and I wasn't disappointed. With a series of wonderful puzzles, innovative, and ever-evolving hack 'n' slash combat, seamless combos with Neva (the wolf), and a demand for agility and quick thinking that rivals the best rogue-like games of this year (Tales of Kenzara, and Prince of Persia the Lost Crown).Neva is, without a doubt, one of the finest video games I have ever played. However, the combat, puzzles, and the game's demand to find creative ways to cross bridges and reach paths that seem just an inch out of reach is one half of the story. The other half is the relationship between Neva and the protagonist, Alba – and for that, I am at a loss for words.In terms of narrative, the game opens with a breathtaking cinematic sequence where Alba enjoys a peaceful meadow, hugging and petting a young Neva and its mother. However, darkness soon strikes, and Alba and Neva's mother join forces to combat it. During the battle, they fall, and Neva's mother succumbs to the darkness, leaving Alba to care for the young wolf pup.

Indian Olympic Medalists 2024 Felicitated with MG Windsors Recognizing the unwavering dedication, passion and determination that made India ??????

The Indian contingent at the 2024 Paris Olympics exhibited sheer resilience in gaining a respectable feat and paving the way for other aspiring future athletes. In recognition of their hard work and relentless pursuit of excellence, JSW Sports and JSW MG Motor India honored these sports stars with the MG Windsor, India's 1st Intelligent CUV that has created a disruption in the Indian Passenger Electric Car market. The Olympic medalists from India participated and won medals in various sporting events such as Javelin Throw, Pistol & Rifle Shooting, Wrestling and Hockey. These celebrated Olympians received the keys to their MG Windsors at an event in Chandigarh from company representatives. Among other dignitaries who graced the occasion were Parth Jindal, Managing Director of JSW Cement & JSW Paints, and Founder of JSW Sports, Rajeev Chaba, CEO Emeritus, JSW MG Motor India, Biju Balendran, Managing Director, JSW MG Motor India, Satinder Singh Bajwa, Chief Commercial Officer, Gaurav Gupta, Chief Growth Officer, JSW MG Motor India, JSW MG Motor India and various dealer partners of MG from across the country.

MG Windsor, India's 1st Intelligent CUV, has been receiving encouraging response since its launch from customers. Within a span of 24 hours from the booking's commencement, it garnered over 15,000 bookings and emerged as the best-selling

Passenger Electric Car in the month of October. The MG Windsor combines the comfort of a sedan and the expanse of an SUV offering a luxurious business-class experience to customers.

It is offered with futuristic aerodynamic design, spacious and opulent interiors, re-

assuring safety, smart connectivity, driving comfort, and many hi-tech features. In addition, customers are ensured complete peace of mind ownership experience through various initiatives such as Battery-As-A-Service*, a lifetime warranty on the battery for the first owner, assured 60% buyback after three years**, and one-year free charging at

public chargers using the eHUB by MG app. The MG Windsor is equipped with a 38 kWh Li-ion battery pack, which is IP67 certified, delivering an impressive performance of 100KW (136ps) power and 200Nm Torque through four driving modes (Eco+, Eco, Normal and Sport) that results in a 332 km*** ARAI certified range on a single charge.

JSW MG Motor India unveils Season 5 of 'MG Changemakers'

JSW MG Motor India launched the fifth season of 'MG Changemakers' initiative in partnership with 'The Better India'. MG Changemakers celebrates the extraordinary individuals who are dedicated to driving positive change and empowers underprivileged communities across India. This year's theme, '#UnchartedRoads - Fearless Women, Inspiring Journeys', honours women who have broken barriers, redefined limits, and mastered the unknown, driving positive societal change through their remarkable achievements. MG Changemaker shares the inspiring stories of pioneering leaders who have gone beyond traditional approaches to problem-solving. The initiative aims to motivate millions across the country to become agents of change in their own communities, galvanizing a groundswell of positive impact that can reshape the future of India.

Commenting on the Changemakers program, Biju Balendran, Managing Director, JSW MG Motor India, said, "The MG Changemakers program reflects our com-

mitment to diversity, innovation, community, and creating exciting experiences—the four brand pillars of JSW MG Motor India. Launched even before our first product, this unique initiative celebrates women trailblazers who have driven positive societal change. By honouring and celebrating the lives and achievements of these inspiring women, we aim to empower countless others to follow in their footsteps." The Founder and CEO of The Better India, Dhimant Parekh, added, "As the world's largest platform for changemakers, The Better India is proud to highlight stories that inspire impact nationwide. These women are breaking boundaries on uncharted roads—from mountaineering and racing to human rights—each redefining resilience. We're thrilled to partner with MG for Season 5 of MG Changemakers: #Uncharted Roads, showcasing stories that inspire progress and change. This partnership is of great significance to us, as we join forces to recognize those driving India's progress into the future." MG Changemakers has been a platform to celebrate remarkable women who

are breaking barriers and driving impactful change in their communities. For the past four seasons, the program has recognized numerous trailblazers. This latest season continues to shine a spotlight on inspiring women leaders, including Vasudha Madhavan, the founder and CEO of Ostara Advisors, India's first investment bank dedicated exclusively to electric mobility and sustainability, and Gitika Talukdar, first Indian woman sports photographer to cover

Olympics. Furthermore, the program also features pioneering women like Diana Pundole, the first Indian woman to win a national motorsports championship; Hasina Kharbhih, who saved 72000 lives from human trafficking; Niharika Nair, who helped 1200 tribal people get access to Govt. schemes, and crowdfunds solar cookers for tribal hamlets in forests; and Mala Honnatti, the 69-year-old mountaineer running marathons and scaling mountains globally.

Hubble Telescope captures dazzling display in galaxy NGC 1672

Hyderabad: NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has taken a stunning snapshot of the barred spiral galaxy NGC 1672, some 49 million light-years away in the constellation Dorado. The galaxy boasts an extraordinary display of light, with stars illuminating its spiral disk and large arms.

Red bubbles of hydrogen gas, fed by radiation from recently formed stars, contribute to the visual splendour. Located near the galactic nucleus, extremely hot, young stars residing in a disk of gas are emitting tremendous X-rays. Although at the nucleus itself
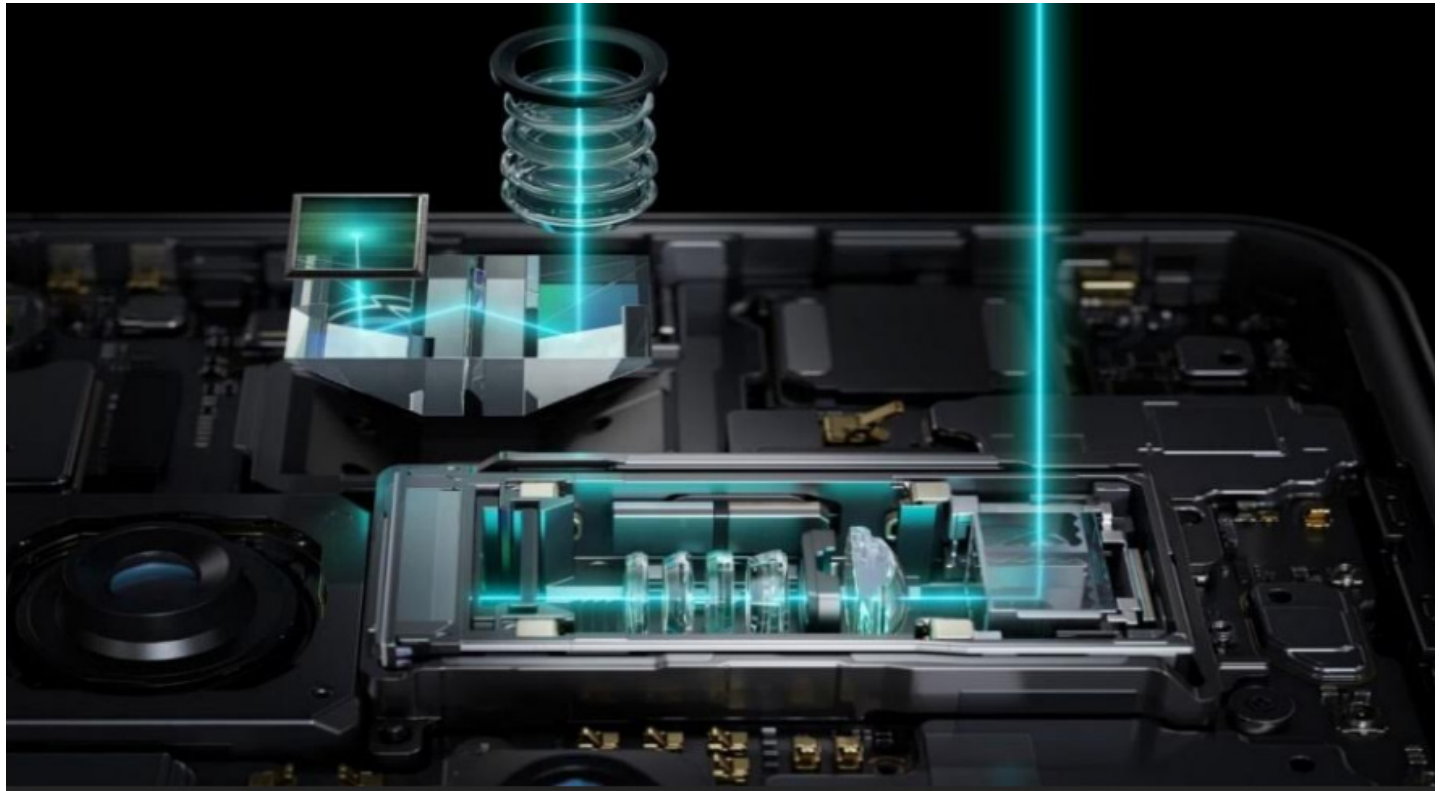

an active galactic nucleus powered by the supermassive black hole is producing more energetic X-rays, NGC 1672 has been classified as a Seyfert galaxy.

Engineering Excellence: The OPPO Find X8 Series

OPPO's Find X8 Series is not just a smartphone; it is a masterpiece of engineering and design. OPPO has balanced aesthetics, durability, and raw power to create a device that sets benchmarks in the flagship category by combining innovative engineering, cutting-edge battery tech, and advanced performance to deliver a premium experience.Design with PurposeAt its core, the sleek and sophisticated OPPO Find X8 Series underlines the brand's commitment to premium design, maximum functionality and attention to detail.

The Infinite View Display on both handsets boasts industry-leading thin bezels: 1.45mm on the Find X8 and 1.9mm on the Pro. For users, this means an authentic edge-to-edge viewing experience. The Pro model is just 8.2mm slim and weighs only 215g, while the standard version is a mere 7.98mm and tilts the scales at 193g to make both devices among the sleekest in their class. The Find X8 Pro's front and back sport quad-curved glass with an aluminium frame, while the Find X8 features a minimalist aesthetic with flat sides and contoured edges for improved ergonomics.On the back, the Cosmos Ring Camera Design takes centre stage. The symmetrical arrangement of lenses—with the Hasselblad branding bang in the centre—ensures a harmonious aesthetic. To fit two telephoto cameras in the Find X8 Pro, OPPO engineered a Triple Prism Design for its 3x camera and periscope lens arrangement for its 6x shooter to reduce the camera bump to just 3.58mm. Both these engineering feats allow

for DSLR-grade zooms to be fitted into a small camera bump without compromising on sensor size or camera quality. The same 3x Triple Prism Design is also implemented on the standard model to reduce the camera module to just 3.01mm for an overall sleek

look and pocket-friendly size.The Find X8 Pro's Pearl White variant uses a multi-layer celluloid texture to ensure no two devices look the same. A low-glow effect enhances its elegance. The Space Black variant—available on the Find X8 Pro and the standard

Find X8—features frosted AG glass with a precise 70-75% frost level to provide a matte finish that resists fingerprints. And for those who prefer subtlety, the Star Grey variant—on the standard Find X8—adds a modern metallic sheen with a minimalist touch.

Highness Raunaq Yar Khan, 9th Nizam of the Asaf Jahis, Hosts "An Evening on Stress Detox" at Brahmakumaris Shanti Sarovar

The Brahmakumaris Shanti Sarovar, under the esteemed patronage of Highness Raunaq Yar Khan, 9th Nizam of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty, organized a transformative event titled "An Evening on Stress Detox." This special gathering featured motivational leader Asha Didi Head of Brahmakumaris in New Delhi and focused on understanding and managing stress, while uncovering internal solutions for emotional well-being.Asha Didi delivered an inspiring session, discussing the multifaceted nature of stress—encompassing physical, mental, and emotional dimensions. She articulated the notion of stress as both a challenge and an opportunity for personal growth, urging attendees to heed the vital messages that stress may convey when approached with stillness and reflection.

"Every great person faces challenges, and stress is universal," Asha Didi stated. "By embracing meditation and fostering positive thinking, we can navigate life's hurdles and cultivate a more harmonious existence."The event was graced by the presence of Kuldeep Didi, Director of Shanti Sarovar, Incharge, BK centres, Hyderabad who thanked Highness Raunaq Yar Khan for being like a brother though presently attaining a lofty status of the present democratic Nizam & 9th Nizam of the Asaf Jahi Dynasty family. She profusely thanked Highness for hosting the talk & introducing so many dignitaries there for the first time in such large numbers including numerous noted & recognised members of the Asaf Jahi dynasty family.Among the attendees were Mr. Ajai Mishra(Chairman of Redcross Society), former Additional Chief Secretary of Telangana and some notable members of the Brahmakumaris organization, who contributed their insights on stress management and holistic living.

Why Australia is planning to ban social media for teenagers

The Australian government announced it will introduce legislation to keep children under the age of 16 off social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said last week that a bundle of "world-leading" measures would be introduced in Parliament soon. The proposed law will put the onus on social media platforms to show they take "reasonable steps" to prevent access to children, with no penalties for the users, he said.While the draft Bill is yet to be released, the announcement set off debates on such a ban's efficacy and need, as well as the larger impact of social media on adolescents.

What could the law propose?

Earlier this year, the state of South Australia undertook an independent study to examine the framework for a restrictive law. Former Chief Justice of Australia's High Court (its apex court) Robert French led the study, which proposed a draft law called the Children (Social Media Safety) Bill 2024. It could provide a basis for the nationwide law.The draft Bill put the onus on "providers of social media service" to prevent anyone under 14 years from accessing the platforms and allowed access to 14- and 15-year-olds only with parental consent.A regulator was also proposed for fining providers for non-compliance. The fines will constitute a Children's Online Safety Fund that can help in the implementation of the Act, discretionary payment to children who have suffered mental or physical harm, and other uses.

How can social media users' ages be verified online?

One of the biggest challenges in implementing such bans is age verification. While platforms like Instagram have age limits at present, they simply ask users about their date of birth and do not require verification. As a result, many children enter false information to access platforms. Country-specific age requirements can also be bypassed through Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), which can show the Internet being accessed from a different domicile.The South Australian report took note of age assurance methods already being used/tested by platforms in Australia. These include requiring details of government-issued IDs or credit cards and using facial recognition technology to identify potential underage users. However, with data related to minors being shared with companies, serious privacy concerns have been raised over these measures.

How does social media impact adolescents?

Studies say problematic social media use — inability to control usage, experiencing withdrawal and neglecting other activities to use social media — has been on the rise. It has been associated with lower mental well-being, higher levels of substance abuse and less sleep.Dr Yatan Balhara, a professor of psychiatry at AIIMS New Delhi, said, "Social media is not the problem, it allows people to connect with others… The challenge is that adolescents, whose brains are not yet fully developed, may not be interacting with it in the healthiest of ways." He added: "Many adolescents evaluate their worth based on what people say about them online

or how many likes they get." There is a fear of missing out, with constant social media use also making in-person communication difficult. "In that sense, there is a logic to restricting access and use of social media," he said.While the pandemic led to increased time spent online, problematic social media use was on an upward trajectory before it as well. "In fact, social media played a positive role in keeping people connected," he said. Online forums can also provide information and a sense of community for issues teens may struggle with, like mental health and understanding diverse gender or sexual identities, and have been cited to argue against outright bans.Dr Balhara said responsible use should be advocated for. Parents should be very mindful when allowing digital access to their children and discuss healthy use with them. Last year, US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy also released an advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health for various stakeholders:Policymakers: Age-appropriate health and safety standards should be developed, requiring higher standards of data privacy for children. Policymakers should pursue policies that limit access of children to social media and support the development of digital literacy curricula in schools.Companies: Social media companies were urged to be transparent and share potential risks of online interactions, take steps to prevent misuse, ensure default settings for children are set to the highest safety and privacy standards, and enforce age limits.Parents and caregivers: Create a family media plan, encourage children to foster in-person friendships, model responsible social media behaviour, empower kids to be responsible, and report any cyberbullying or online abuse.

Family feud or ideology, Ambegaon sets the tone

Travelling on the Pune-Nashik highway past the humongous industrial corridors that surround Pune city, one enters the agrarian and hilly areas of western Maharashtra, which has a more closely contested polity. Ambegaon, a constituency that traverses the agrarian and hilly areas with a few towns scattered in between, has been long held by Dilip Walse Patil of the Nationalist Congress Party, who has won uninterrupted tenures since 1990. This victory run has catapulted him to ministerial berths in several Cabinets; he is currently the Cooperation Minister in the Mahayuti government in Maharashtra.Mr. Patil won the 2019 Assembly election by a large margin — 35 percentage points — after garnering more than two-thirds of the vote. But much water has flowed down the Dimbhe dam on the Ghode river in Ambegaon since then. A long-time protege of Maratha and Maharashtra strongman Sharad Pawar, Mr. Patil faces a much closer contest than before after hitching his bandwagon to the NCP faction led by Mr. Pawar's nephew Ajit. Mr. Patil had started as Mr. Pawar's personal secretary, and it was the NCP founder who brought him into the electoral fray.In the 2024 Lok Sabha election, the NCP (Sharad Pawar) not only won the Shirur seat but also managed a significant lead of more than 11,000 votes in the Ambegaon Assembly segment

of the constituency. This indicates that the NCP will not have it easy in the Assembly election.Purva Patil, Mr. Patil's daughter, disagrees that her father's decision to join the Ajit Pawar faction will affect his chances drastically. She emphasises her family's enduring closeness with "Saheb" Pawar. Despite the split in the party, Mr. Patil remains a "manasa putra" (akin to a "godson") of Mr. Pawar. She highlights her father's work in the constituency — a fact corroborated by Maratha farmer-supporters of the NCP — and suggests that the Lok Sabha election was contested on grounds and issues not so relevant in the Assembly election.But the senior Pawar's supporters argue that the achievements that Mr. Patil is credited with are that of their leader as well. A farmer campaigning for Mr. Pawar — something the elderly man has been doing since 1978 — says the veteran had a major role in the development of the region having served as the Chief Minister of the State on four occasions. Supporters of the younger Pawar, who is now the Deputy Chief Minister, and Mr. Patil do not discount the senior patriarch's contributions, but suggest that the work done by Mr. Patil as an MLA weighs on their choice in the Assembly election.

With such reverence even among his opponents, the senior Pawar remains a for-

midable force to reckon with in Ambegaon. This was evident in a rally organised by the Maha Vikas Aghadi to introduce its candidate Devdutta Nikam, a sugar cooperative official and former associate of Mr. Patil. Featuring leaders from the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Bal Thackeray), the Congress, the Left and other civil society activists, the rally held in Manchar reflects the adoration for Mr. Pawar, who, even at 83, remains the key vote catcher for the alliance and for Mr. Nikam.Ravindra Padwal, an electro-mechanical engineer working in a multinational firm in Pune, avers that Mr. Pawar had played a major role in the industrialisation of the Pune-Pimpri-Chinchwad belt and that made him come all the way from Pune to attend the rally. Mr. Padwal sticks out from the crowd, which is largely comprised of shetkaris (farmers) and youth from mofussil and rural areas, but he matches their exuberance. The crowd gets into a frenzy when Mr. Pawar enters the stage — as does Mr. Padwal — and listens keenly to his speech (some are glued to the live telecast of his speech on the mobile phone). Mr. Pawar does not mince words about his former protege, Mr. Patil, betraying little bonhomie vis-a-vis his ex-associate and gives a clarion call to defeat him and others in his nephew's camp. The crowd responds enthusiastically.

Jharkhand: A hinterland full of rich history

In the popular imagination, Jharkhand is perceived as a hotbed of Naxalite-Maoist activities, it is known as well as the Ruhr of India, a reference to Germany's resource-rich area, with large mineral, coal and timber reserves. This lends the predominantly state to be plagued by a 'resource curse' i.e., where it contributes almost 40% of India's mineral resources, but lags far behind on key socio-economic indicators. Jharkhand is however rich in another lesser-known way too: as a hinterland of history, particularly of tribals, whose demand for recognition of their religious code, Sarna, has remained unfulfilled. The response of mainstream parties like the BJP to this tribal self-assertion reflects the apathy towards preserving indigenous histories and cultures. Rich tribal diversity

A relatively young state, Jharkhand was created as a consequence of a regional campaign for self-determination among adivasi and moolvasi groups in November 2000. Carved out of South Bihar, this land of 'jungle and jhari' (forest) has also been referred to as Vananchal (forested region) or, historically, even Kukura. Among the many ethnic groups that identify as belonging to the state, no single group can be said to be numerically or socially dominant in a given district. Lying between Bihar and Odisha, the state is home to over twenty tribes: the Santhals are the largest ethnic minority in North Chotanagpur, in Santal Parganas and parts of East Singhbhum. The Oraons populate southwest Kolhan, while the Mundas are found in south Chotanagpur. The Hos are numerous in West Singhbhum. The Asurs of Netarhat, a numerically small tribe at present, were expert iron smelters. Their eponym has been mentioned in Vedic and post-Vedic literature, first as a kind of God, and later as anti-Gods.

Tracing the state's political history According to historian Hari Shanker Pandey, we have "neither sufficient epigraphic or literary nor numismatic (evidence) at our disposal" to aid us in the reconstruction of the early political history of Chotanagpur and Jharkhand. The ancient dynastic history of this region is hard to establish because no major power was based here, although the Magadha kings exploited this mineral-rich land.

The exploitation continues even now with an added garb of exotification. This is evidenced by how we know so little about the cultural practices of these various tribes and show even lesser consideration for their self-determination and identity. Let's begin with name-making. KK Leuva writes in The Asur: A Study of Primitive Iron-smelters, "The word Munda which is the name of the famous Proto-Australoid tribe means 'headman'. The Munda, as a rule, do not call themselves Munda: this name has been given by others. They call themselves 'Horoko', or the men. Likewise, the Ho of Singhbhum calls themselves 'Horo" which is a contraction of 'Horoko'. The Santhal call themselves 'Hor' which means 'man'. The Oraon, who belong to the Dravidian speaking people of Chotanagpur, would like to be called 'Khurukh', meaning 'Sons of God'".In the Rigveda, the word 'Asura' has been used to shower praise and respect on the gods, and the Vedic god Varuna appears to be the first for whom the term is used.

It has also been proposed by scholars that the Asuras were vanquished by Aryan tribes and eventually driven deep into peninsular India. However, not all have agreed with this theory. "Dr PL Bhargava thinks it simply ridiculous to link the Asura with the aborigines in India who were there at the time of the incursion of the Aryans. These aborigines have been described according to Dr Bhargava as Dasas. He is of the opinion that the word Asura has a history of its own. In the beginning, the Asura was a synonym of god which changed later on as a synonym of demon. This change according to him is not accidental. In the Amarakosha, the Asura has been called Poorvadevah* meaning one who was formerly a god. He thinks that the Vedic and Epic struggles between Devas and the Asura are actually a war between the two sects of the Aryans. This theory can be easily challenged with the help of numerous hymns in the Vedas and other Post-Vedic literature which clearly indicate that the Asura were a distinct group who were earlier occupants of the Indus Valley," Leuva notes.

Archaeological sites In 1914-15, Sarat Chandra Roy, a noted archaeologist, reported the discovery of a copper hoard at what he called an Asurgarh (Asur Fort) near Ranchi. He reportedly discovered "heavy copper celts" and "copper bar celts" which he attributed to the mythical Asuras who he felt were the early predecessors of the modern Asur", write P. Yule and Monika Thiel-Horstmann in their paper, The Copper Hoard Artifacts in the S C Roy Collection. Presently, the Archaeological Survey of India's Ranchi Circle showcases six Asura sites in and around the Khunti district. They lie in almost the same state as they were first discovered by Roy in 1915 and re-studied again in the 1940s. Describing the importance of the Khuntitola site, the ASI writes, "While digging, Roy found graves with earthen jars containing bones of the dead. Some of these jars were found placed one over the other up to a maximum number of four at a time. Inside each larger jar, a small chukka (i.e. a jug, with a narrow mouth) and an earthen lamp were found. Some of the jars have other objects like copper ornaments and beads of stone and copper. The site belongs to the early centuries of the Christian era." The process of Aryanisation and Sankritisation in the last two thousand years has left us with only a few tribes still in a position to assert an independent identity based on nature worship. The rule of various Hindu and Muslim kingdoms (often with Hindu vassals) is reflected in inscriptions, temples and mosques built particularly over the last millennium. However, it is the tribal heroes—who fought against all oppressive regimes, be it Hindu, Muslim or British rulers—who are revered in Jharkhand. Birsa Munda, Sido Murmu (Santhal), Tilka Majhi, Nimalber and Pitamber (Kharwar) and numerous others continue to inspire tribal youth in the state, who are once again demanding the recognition of their Sarnaism as a distinct religion of India. In the 2011 Census, nearly 50 lakh tribals (both Christians and Hindus) reported they follow Sarnaism under the category of 'other religions and persuasions', the Census provides only six major Indian religions to choose from, these are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains. While tribals of Jharkhand have come together to demand a Sarna code, it's important to remember that tribals are not a monolith. Contrary to popular misconception they are not all alike and have had their own historical journeys, however, there's very little evidence that has either been found and studied or that has survived for us to reconstruct their pasts. Of the little that has been found much of it has remained unexcavated and reflects the collective indifference shown by post-independence Indian state and society towards the indigenous people of the subcontinent.

India leads in 6G following record 5G rollout: Experts

Mumbai: After a successful 5G rollout, the country is now taking lead in 6G as the 'Digital India' initiative transforms the economy, with the Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile (JAM) trinity emerging as a solid foundation block, experts said here on Friday.

Sumnesh Joshi, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Communications said that the country has seen one of the fastest roll out of 5G services across the world and has taken the lead in 6G.

Addressing an event organised by Assocham, Joshi said that today, everyone has a bank account creating a robust ecosystem for innovative services such as financial credit or micro credit, micro insurance, mutual fund and even share-related products."We have to leverage the ecosystem that we have created in our country. Today, we are even able to transact just 5 rupees, 10 rupees, 15 rupees. We can now think of making a payment without the smartphone, without the QR code. Aadhaar-based payments is the next logical step and the need of the hour is to connect all the systems," he told the gathering.

The ministry has taken effective measures to block international calls showing India numbers."This is an important step in dealing with fraudulent calls. There is a need for collaboration between the ecosystem partners for real-time data sharing, whether it is the fintech industry, communication or government of India, home affair, police, state government. So, we can take immediate action if anything is happening," Joshi added.

Canadian SDS Visa discontinued: Will the end of SDS Visa derail Indian students' Canadian dreams?

In a significant development, the Canadian government announced the discontinuation of the SDS visa in November 2024. This decision has far-reaching implications for Indian students, who have historically been one of the largest groups of international students in Canada.In 2022, India accounted for over 21% of all international students in Canada, with a staggering number of 222,450 Indian students choosing to study in Canadian institutions. Over 189,000 Indian students opted for the SDS visa that year, which significantly simplified their application process. For instance, while non-SDS applicants had an approval rate of 19 percent, SDS applicants enjoyed a 63 percent approval rate.

What is the Canadian SDS Visa?

The Canadian Study Direct Stream (SDS) visa was a streamlined pathway designed to expedite the study permit application process for Indian students. Introduced in 2018, it offered a faster processing time and reduced application fees, making it a popular choice among Indian students aspiring to pursue higher education in Canada. However, it also served students from other countries like Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, and Vietnam. The SDS visa was specifically tailored to offer several key benefits to international students:Faster processing times: One of the primary advantages of the SDS visa was its significantly reduced processing time. By meeting specific eligibility criteria, including a higher level of English language proficiency and a confirmed admission to a Designated Learning Institution (DLI), students could expect a quicker decision on their study permit application.Reduced application fees: The SDS visa also came with a lower application fee compared to the standard study permit application. This reduced financial burden was a significant benefit for many international students.Streamlined application process: The SDS visa simplified the application process by requiring fewer supporting documents. By adhering to the specific eligibility requirements, students could submit a more streamlined application, making it easier to navigate the immigration process.

Why was the SDS Visa discontinued?

The Canadian government's decision to discontinue the SDS visa program on November 8, 2024, was driven by a combination of factors aimed at addressing various challenges and concerns within the immigration system.In past on his X handle on September 19, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, "We're granting 35% fewer international student permits this year. And next year, that number is going down by another 10%. Immigration is an advantage for our economy – but when bad actors abuse the system and take advantage of students, we crack down." This, of course, refers to international applicants who applied for the SDS as an excuse to take a simple diploma course, hardly worth going abroad for, and then apply for a permanent residency, their ultimate goal.While the official reasons cited by the government focused on "strengthening program integrity, addressing student vulnerability, and giving all students equal and fair access to the application process," several underlying factors likely contributed to this decision.Housing crisis: Canada has been grappling with a significant housing shortage, particularly in major cities like Toronto and Vancouver. The rapid influx of international students, many of whom rely on off-campus housing, has exacerbated this issue.Resource constraints: The increasing number of international students has placed a strain on public services and infrastructure, including healthcare, education, and transportation.Immigration policy shifts: The Canadian government may be reassessing its immigration policies to better manage the inflow of foreign students and ensure that they contribute positively to the Canadian economy.By discontinuing the SDS visa, the government aims to regulate the number of international students, alleviate pressure on housing and resources, and implement a more equitable approach to student visa processing.

Impact on Indian studentsThe discontinuation of the Study Direct Stream (SDS) visa has undoubtedly had a significant impact on Indian students seeking to pursue higher education in Canada. This streamlined visa program was a popular choice for Indian students due to its faster processing times and reduced application fees. However, its discontinuation has introduced a host of challenges for aspiring Indian students.

One of the most immediate consequences of the SDS visa's discontinuation is the prolonged processing time for student visa applications. Before the SDS visa, the average processing time for student visas was significantly longer. With the removal of this expedited pathway, Indian students can expect to wait for a more extended period for their visa applications to be processed. This delay can disrupt academic plans and cause significant inconvenience.Additionally, the discontinuation of the SDS visa has led to increased application fees. While the exact fee structure may vary, it is generally higher for standard student visa applications compared to the SDS visa. This additional financial burden can be a considerable challenge, especially for students from lower-income backgrounds.Furthermore, the application process for standard student visas is more complex and rigorous than the SDS visa. Students are required to submit a wider range of documents, including proof of funds, language proficiency test scores, and detailed study plans. The increased complexity of the application process can be overwhelming and time-consuming, potentially leading to errors and delays.The direct impacts of the SDS visa's discontinuation have far-reaching indirect consequences for Indian students. Potential delays in study plans can disrupt academic progress and career aspirations. Students may have to defer their admissions or explore alternative study destinations, which can impact their overall educational journey.Moreover, the discontinuation of the SDS visa has created uncertainty about future immigration opportunities. The SDS visa was often seen as a stepping stone towards permanent residency in Canada. With this pathway no longer available, Indian students may face increased challenges in securing post-study work opportunities and ultimately immigrating to Canada.

Experts and stakeholders have expressed concerns about the discontinuation of the SDS visa and its potential impact on Indian students. Immigration consultants and education advisors have highlighted the increased processing times, higher application fees, and stricter eligibility criteria associated with the regular student visa process.Social media platforms have been abuzz with discussions, with many students expressing frustration and uncertainty about their study plans. One student, commenting on a popular education forum, lamented, "The SDS visa was a game-changer. It made the application process much smoother. Now, with its discontinuation, I'm worried about potential delays and increased costs." While the Canadian government has cited concerns about program integrity and equitable access, critics argue that the decision may deter talented Indian students from choosing Canada as their study destination.

What other options do Indian students have?

While the discontinuation of the SDS visa has presented challenges for Indian students seeking to study in Canada, there are still viable alternative visa options available. The traditional Student Visa remains a primary pathway for international students, including Indians. By meeting the eligibility criteria, such as proof of funds, language proficiency, and a Letter of Acceptance from a Designated Learning Institution (DLI), students can apply for a Student Visa. However, it's important to note that the standard Student Visa application process can be more time-consuming and requires a more comprehensive documentation package compared to the SDS visa. Additionally, students may face longer processing times and increased application fees.To enhance their chances of visa approval, Indian students should carefully plan their applications, submit all required documents on time, and consider consulting with immigration experts to navigate the complexities of the process. The longer processing times, higher fees, and more complex application procedures have created significant hurdles. Additionally, the indirect consequences, such as delayed study plans, increased financial burden, and uncertainty about future immigration opportunities further compound the challenges faced by Indian students.For Indian students considering studying in Canada, it is crucial to plan ahead and prepare thoroughly. Early application is key, as it allows ample time for processing and addressing any potential issues. Thorough documentation is essential to meet the stringent requirements of the regular student visa process. While the discontinuation of the SDS visa has presented challenges, it is important to remain hopeful for future changes or the introduction of alternative streamlined pathways for international students. As the Canadian government continues to evolve its immigration policies, new opportunities may arise for Indian students. By staying informed and taking proactive steps, Indian students can navigate the complexities of the Canadian immigration system and achieve their academic and career goals.

Canadian government discontinues SDS visa, impacting Indian students with longer processing times, higher fees, and complex procedures.

The electoral history of Maharashtra

Maharashtra, India's richest state in per capita GDP, and home to big business, Bollywood, and large sugar cooperatives, was a Congress bastion once. Today, its political landscape is a complex patchwork of parties and factions, whose shifting allegiances determine the shape and composition of its governments.The old Bombay province sprawled from Sindh (now in Pakistan) to northwestern Karnataka, and covered all of present-day Gujarat and about two-thirds of present-day Maharashtra (excluding a few princely states). Two Marathi-speaking regions — Vidarbha, a part of Central Provinces (later Madhya Pradesh), and Marathwada, a part of the princely state of Hyderabad — lay outside the province.The demand for a united Marathi-speaking state emerged in the 1920s, and gained momentum after Independence. In 1953, Marathi leaders signed the Nagpur Pact seeking to unite Bombay State, Vidarbha, and Marathwada, even as the State's Gujarati community led its own agitation for statehood.

The city of Bombay was caught between these two movements. Gujaratis had played the preeminent role in its rise as the country's economic nerve centre, but it was surrounded by Marathi-speaking districts. As the linguistic division of the state became increasingly likely, many believed that Bombay would be made a Union Territory. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru even made announcements to this effect.However, the States Reorganisation Commission recommended in 1956 that Bombay State should remain bilingual, since it was to the "mutual advantage" of the Gujarati and Marathi communities "to be partners in a great co-operative venture". It recommended granting Vidarbha statehood, but the Centre rejected this, making it a part of Bombay State, along with Marathwada, instead.Neither the Marathi nor the Gujarati side was happy with this outcome, and the agitation for statehood continued. The Centre finally agreed, and on May 1, 1960, Bombay State was bifurcated. The new states of Maharashtra and Gujarat got 264 and 132 of the erstwhile Bombay State's 396 seats.

In the years following Independence, the Congress was the only major political force in Bombay State — and in the first Assembly election held in 1951-52, it won 269 of the 317 seats in the Assembly. There were 268 constituencies in all — some constituencies sent more than one member to the legislature at the time. Nashik-Igatpuri was the only three-member (one General category, one SC, and one ST) Assembly constituency in the country.Morarji Desai became the first chief minister of Bombay in 1952. In 1955-56, as the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement raged, more than 100 protesters were killed in police firing in Bombay (Mumbai) city. In the face of intense criticism, Morarji, a Gujarati from Valsad, was moved to Delhi and made the Union Finance Minister in 1956. He was succeeded by Yashwantrao Chavan, an MLA from Satara. Under Chavan's leadership, the Congress won 234 of the 396 seats (339 constituencies) in the 1957 Assembly election.In the 1962 Assembly election, the first to be held after the creation of Maharashtra, the Congress won 215 of the 264 seats, and Marotrao Shambshio Kannamwar became Chief Minister. Following his untimely demise the

following year, the chief ministership passed to Vasantrao Naik, who remained in the post for almost 12 years.

In the 1967 elections, the Congress suffered setbacks in Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, and West Bengal. But its dominance in Maharashtra continued — under Naik, the party won 203 of the 270 seats in the Assembly.In 1969, the party split into two factions — the Congress (O) was led by the old guard of Morarji Desai and K Kamaraj, and the Congress R, where R stood for 'Requisitionists', by Indira Gandhi. The Congress (O), also known as the Syndicate, made inroads in many states — but failed to win even one seat in the Maharashtra Assembly in the 1972 election. Indira's Congress swept 222 of the 270 seats.In February 1975, weeks before the declaration of the Emergency, Chief Minister Naik was replaced by Shankarrao Chavan, a close ally of Indira and her son Sanjay Gandhi. Shankarrao remained Chief Minister through the Emergency.

In the 1977 Lok Sabha election, as an anti-Congress wave swept northern India, Indira's Congress won 20 of Maharashtra's 48 seats, one more than the Janata Party. Shankarrao took responsibility for the loss of seats and resigned. He was replaced by Vasantdada Patil, the MLA from Sangli.The Janata Party regime at the Centre dismissed governments in nine states, but did not touch the one in Maharashtra. However, ahead of the 1978 election in the state, the Congress suffered another split, this time led by the Karnataka leader Devaraj Urs. Urs's Congress (U) won 69 of the 288 seats, while Indira's Congress won 62, and Janata 99. With no party close to the majority mark, Vasantdada Patil became Chief Minister again, leading a coalition of the two Congress factions.This government, however, fell in less than four months. Sharad Pawar, only 38 at the time, left the Congress to form the Congress (Socialist) party — and joined hands with Janata to become the youngest Chief Minister of Maharashtra in July 1978.Meanwhile, the Janata experiment collapsed at the Centre, and Indira stormed back to power in January 1980. She dismissed Pawar's government soon afterward — and in the Assembly election that followed, the Congress won 186 seats and returned to power. In June, A R Antulay became Maharashtra's first and only Muslim Chief Minister.For the next decade-and-a-half, Congress leaders played a game of musical chairs for the Chief Ministership, even as the party remained in power in Maharashtra, winning 185 seats in 1985 and 141 in 1990. None of the eight CMs during this time — Antulay, Babasaheb Bhosale, Vasantdada Patil, Shivajirao Patil Nilangekar, Shankarrao Chavan, Sharad Pawar (twice after returning to the Congress in 1986), and Sudhakarrao Naik — completed even three years in office.This was a period dominated by corruption scandals, trade union unrest, the rise of criminal gangs in Bombay (Mumbai), and communal tensions.It was in this climate that the Hindu right grew in strength in the state. Political cartoonist Bal Thackeray had formed the Marathi nationalist Shiv Sena in 1966, and the party had its first MLA in 1972. The Shiv Sena was close to the likes of Vasantdada Patil in its early years; however, after the birth of the

The Congress once enjoyed a virtually unchallenged hold over Maharashtra. Today, multiple parties — and factions — are at play in India's richest state which goes to polls to elect a new Assembly on November 20.

BJP in 1980, the two parties moved closer together as natural allies.

In the 1985 Assembly election, the BJP won 16 seats, while the Sena did not open its account. By 1990, however, the two parties' tallies had risen to 52 and 42 seats respectively. The demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, and the communal riots and serial blasts that followed in Bombay (Mumbai) further fuelled the rise of the Hindutva right.In 1995, the Sena-BJP alliance came to power in Maharashtra, winning 73 and 65 seats respectively. Manohar Joshi of the Sena became Chief Minister, with the BJP's Gopinath Munde as his deputy. The victory was inspired by Sena supremo Bal Thackeray and the BJP's rising star Pramod Mahajan. The Congress' won 80 seats.Joshi moved to the Centre after the 1998 Lok Sabha election, and Thackeray chose Narayan Rane to succeed him. In 1999, after four-and-a-half years of Sena-BJP rule, early elections were called in the state.Meanwhile, Pawar had once again broken away from the Congress, quitting in 1999 after Sonia Gandhi became leader of the party. Along with P A Sangma and Tariq Anwar, Pawar formed the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

This made the 1999 Maharashtra Assembly election a three-way fight among the NCP, Congress, and the Sena-BJP combine. The NCP won 58 seats, Congress 75, Sena 69, and BJP 56. With the Sena-BJP alliance falling short of the majority mark, Congress and NCP came together to form the government. Vilasrao Deshmukh of the Congress became Chief Minister, with NCP's Chhagan Bhujbal as his deputy.This Congress-NCP coalition ruled the state for the next 15 years. During this time, Deshmukh became Chief Minister twice (1999-2003, 2004-08), while Sushil Kumar Shinde (2003-04), Ashok Chavan (2009-10), and Prithviraj Chavan (2010-14) enjoyed shorter stints.

Maharashtra in Modi yearsWhen Assembly elections were held in 2014, Thackeray, Mahajan, and Munde — three key political figures in the state — were no longer there. The BJP campaign was led by Nitin Gadkari and Amit Shah, and Bal Thackeray's son Uddhav was in charge of the Sena. The Narendra Modi wave sweeping through the country powered the Sena-BJP alliance to power in Maharashtra. The BJP alone won 122 seats, while Sena won 66. The BJP's Devendra Fadnavis, only 44 at the time, took oath as Chief Minister.By the end of this term, however, differences had begun to emerge between the partners. The parties shared a common Hindutva base, and the BJP's ambition to dominate the entire country was making the Sena insecure. Still, the partners won enough seats to be able to form the government after the 2019 election — the BJP got 105, and the Sena 56.Their differences, however, proved to be the deal-breaker. With the Sena declining to cooperate, Ajit Pawar, Sharad Pawar's nephew, promised to support Fadnavis on the floor of the House, and the former Chief Minister was hurriedly sworn into office. However, Ajit Pawar backed out, and Fadnavis was forced to resign merely five days later.A new formation — the Maha Vikas Aghadi — comprising the Shiv Sena, Congress, and NCP came to power. Uddhav was sworn in as Chief Minister, and Ajit became his deputy.But this government too was toppled after Eknath Shinde, an old Sena hand, broke away from Uddhav to ally with the BJP, and become Chief Minister himself. Fadnavis became his deputy. They were supported by Ajit, who broke the NCP and became Deputy Chief Minister alongside Fadnavis. This alliance remains in power today. Earlier this year, former Congress CM Ashok Chavan, the son of Shankarrao Chavan, joined the BJP.