

Is Telangana government on the back foot

Hyderabad: Is the government on a back foot over its plans to establish 10 pharma villages (clusters) across the State? Well, considering the widespread protests by farmers and residents over parting their lands for the pharma villages, it appears so. The fact that there have been many protests in Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's Kodangal constituency, is forcing the officials to reconsider the plans over establishment of pharma villages or go slow on the project. Further, when the High Court sought State government's clarification over the pharma city project, it assured that the project was very much in consideration. Ever since the government issued a notification for acquiring 71 acres at Polepally village in Dudyal mandal for establishing a Pharma Village in August this year, there have been widespread protests from farmers and residents' over parting their land. Before the attack on Vikarabad Collector Prateek Jain November 12 at Lagacherla, farmers and villagers staged protests at Rotibanda thanda and other villages under Dudyala mandal. Not just in Kodangal constituency, there have been protests in Sangareddy as well. Farmers in

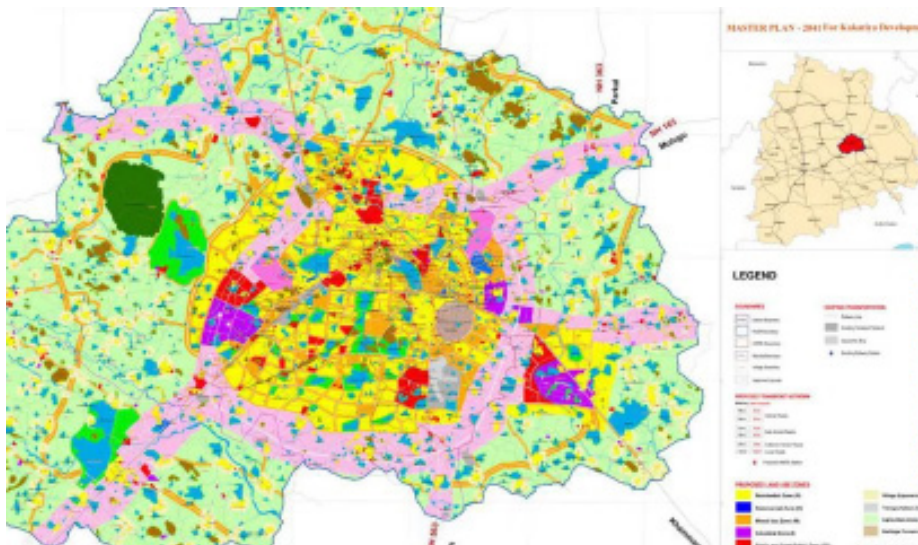
Dappur, Vaddy and Malgi under Nyalkal mandal are up in arms against the plans to set up a pharma village. They made their intentions very clear to the government. After announcing that the tailor-made land developed for setting up units at the Pharma City in Mucherla was scrapped, the State government in the name of decentralizing pharma industries declared its plans to set up 10 pharma villages across Telangana. Accordingly, notification was issued for land acquisition in Polepally and other villages in Vikarabad district. Similarly measures were intensified for land acquisition in Sangareddy also. But the status of other pharma villages is still unclear. Initially, the government had planned to set up them in Nalgonda, Medak and other places, including one at Mucherla. The Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC) is entrusted with the task of setting up the pharma villages. However, TGIIC officials are tight-lipped about sharing the locations of the proposed pharma villages, giving enough indications about the plans. Apart from farmers and villagers, the proposal to set up 10 pharma villages evoked mixed re-



sponse from industry as well. While a section of industrialists claim that the move would decentralize growth and provide employment in different areas, others are skeptical about the challenges involved in establishing new pharma clusters. They are appre-

hensive about time consumption for land acquisition and obtaining environmental clearances, not to mention about the legal hurdles. In the past, land owners had approached the courts opposing the government's plans.

State government approves Warangal Master Plan-2041



Hyderabad: The State government has approved the Master Plan-2041 for the Kakatiya (Warangal) Development Area. The Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department on Sunday issued an order in this regard. The plan, encompassing a 1,805 sq. km area across 181 revenue villages, aims to guide the urban development of Warangal and its surrounding regions for the next two decades. The Kakatiya Urban Development Authority (KUDA) prepared the Master Plan, which includes land use zoning and general development promotion regulations. The process

involved public consultations, inputs from technical review committees, and deliberations with district officials. The draft plan was notified in 2018, inviting objections and suggestions from the public over a 90-day period. The KUDA vice-chairman has been directed to ensure that a copy of the master plan along with land use zoning and general development promotion regulations should be kept open for inspection at the KUDA Office and prominent places. Although the draft master plan was approved by the Municipal Administration Department in March 2021, it was not approved by the government

due to other reasons. Due to all these issues there were hurdles in obtaining permits for huge projects. With the approval of the gov-

ernment for the new master mega plan, there is an opportunity to overcome all these hurdles.

LexLegis.ai Introduces Interact: A Game-Changing AI Solution for Legal Document Management

LexLegis.ai, a leader in legal technology and Large Language Models (LLMs), proudly announces the launch of Interact, a revolutionary feature designed to transform how legal professionals handle, analyze, and optimize document workflows. Building upon LexLegis.ai's reputation as a powerful legal research tool, Interact marks the platform's evolution into a comprehensive case management solution, integrating AI-driven capabilities to make legal processes smarter, faster, and more efficient. At the heart of Interact lies its ability to empower legal professionals with intelligent tools for document comparison, analysis, and insight extraction. With a single, intuitive interface, users can now Compare Legal Documents: Seamlessly conduct side-by-side comparisons of contracts, agreements, or case files to identify differences and ensure consistency. Extract Crucial Information: Leverage AI to extract key details from lengthy legal documents or scan text from PDFs and images, eliminating manual search efforts. Document Translation: Automatically

translate legal content across languages, facilitating cross-border cases and collaborations. Risk Analysis: Instantly identify potential risks or discrepancies within documents, providing enhanced decision-making support. "Interact takes legal document management to the next level," said Mr. Saakar S. Yadav, Founder of LexLegis.ai. "It's not just about faster research—this is about automating the labor-intensive tasks that often slow down legal workflows, allowing professionals to focus on strategic decisions and superior case outcomes." Addressing Key Challenges in Legal Workflows The Interact feature is designed to tackle some of the most persistent challenges legal teams face—particularly the time-consuming process of reviewing and analyzing large volumes of legal text. The tool provides instant insights, reducing manual review times while minimizing the risk of human error. This intelligent automation enables lawyers and legal teams to redirect their efforts toward high-value activities, such as case strategy, client engagement, and the development of effective legal arguments.

Craig McMillan: It's always been a strength of New Zealand sides, men's or women's — everyone chips in

"It was a tough period for the White Ferns leading into the World Cup, but I always felt that we were a dark horse and we were going to surprise people," says McMillan during an exclusive interview with The Hindu, at Ahmedabad, where New Zealand played India in a three-match ODI series, right after the World Cup triumph.

When the stars align "We have worked hard over a period of time, and we know the improvements they've made over the last 12 months. Sometimes the stars align, but you still have to be good to make the most of those stars aligning." Amelia Kerr was the biggest star for New Zealand at the World Cup. The leg-spinning all-rounder, who is the youngest cricketer — male or female — to score a double hundred in ODIs, was the player of the final and the tournament. She was the competition's leading wicket-taker. "She bowled beautifully," says McMillan, who played for New Zealand in 260 internationals across formats. "In the final, she stepped up when we needed her."

Kerr was the top-scorer in the final, with a 38-ball 43. She then took three for 24 to lead New Zealand to a 32-run win over the team that seems destined to suffer heart-break in every major match, for women or men — South Africa. McMillan, however, is quick to add that everyone contributed. "It has always been a strength of New Zealand sides, whether men's or women's — everyone chips in," he says. "Rosemary Mair did a great job with the ball, Lea Tahuu, who has been around a long time, picked up key wickets." New Zealand's fielding was also very good throughout the tournament. "That is so important in the T20 game," he says. "We had only one bad game against the West Indies, but apart from that, against India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and then in the final against South Africa, we took our catches, and that was crucial." He points out that the win against India in New Zealand's opening match was very important. "It was a very strong group, as Australia was also there," he says. "And we knew that we probably had to win one of those first two games to actually be able to go through to the next stage. So we really targeted those games. Against India it was almost probably our best performance. It got us off to a great start. And momentum is really important in the World Cup." All-round expertise As important, he feels, is the fact that the New Zealand women's team had several all-rounders. Some of them, like skipper Sophie Devine and Suzie Bates are, in fact, double internationals, in hockey and basketball respectively.

McMillan says playing multiple sports is something of a tradition back home and that helps, regardless of what sport one chooses as a career eventually. "I think it's really important that not only females, but males too, play as many sports as they can," he says. "I myself played a lot of football until 18 and then I had to make a decision. I was a tough centre-back. I used to cut strikers down. But I just think you get multi-skilled players when they play other sports. That helps them when they come and have to make a decision at some stage." Go, get a game! McMillan feels it's important to play as many sports as possible growing up — this produces multi-skilled athletes who can then excel at the sport they choose. | Photo



credit: Vijay Soneji Go, get a game! McMillan feels it's important to play as many sports as possible growing up — this produces multi-skilled athletes who can then excel at the sport they choose. | Photo credit: Vijay Soneji

McMillan believes women's cricket will grow further. "It will get stronger and stronger," he says. "I think even in the last two or three years, you have seen the development, with the WPL and all that. Those franchises play a big part in terms of the development of the players. But we are just seeing some really talented females who are given the opportunity to show how good they are around the world. It is important that it not only grows in Australia, England and India, but in all the countries." While the women's team was playing the ODI series at Ahmedabad, elsewhere in India the New Zealand men were making history, too, as they won the Test series, ending the host's 12-year unbeaten home record. And New Zealand was winning a Test series in India for the first time — after the maiden tour way back in 1955-56. "Obviously it was a great week for New Zealand cricket, winning the T20 World Cup for the women, and then the men securing the first-ever Test series in India," says McMillan. "I watched the boys playing on television. To outplay India like that was great." Looking back at his own career, he says he loved playing for New Zealand. He scored 3,116 runs from 55 Tests and 4,707 runs from 197 ODIs. He hit nine international hundreds, one of which came off 67 balls, in a 2007 ODI against Australia. It was a record for New Zealand at the time. In 2001, he had knocked off 26 runs off an over from Younis Khan in a Test against Pakistan at Hamilton. He had broken the world record with that effort.

Fond memories "I feel very fortunate that I was able to play for New Zealand for over 10 years," he says. "And we had a lot of good times. We had a good side through that period. We had some really good victories over those years. And, you know, we made the

semifinals of World Cups, but couldn't quite get over the line and get to a final. And then in 2015 and 2019, the New Zealand side took it to the next level." He recalls with pride New Zealand winning the 2000 ICC Champions Trophy, beating India in the final at Nairobi by four wickets with just two balls to spare. "It was a tough match, but before that we had to beat Pakistan in the semifinal. It was a very strong Indian side, with men like Sourav Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and Yuvraj Singh. And it was tough to beat India in those conditions. So it was great to

win our first trophy." The New Zealand women had to wait a while before they could celebrate their T20 World Cup win, though, as they had to fly to India from Dubai just a couple of days after the final. So didn't the administrators back home expect New Zealand to play the final when they made the schedule to travel to India for an ODI series? "I don't know," says McMillan. "You know, there's a certain amount of one-day games for the ICC championship that you have to get through. And the women's cricket calendar is also getting crowded these days."

Vistara flies into sunset as its last flight takes off to Singapore

New Delhi: After operating for nearly 10 years, full service carrier Vistara flew into the sunset on Tuesday early morning operating its last flight from the national capital to Singapore. Vistara — a joint venture between Tata and Singapore Airlines — has now merged with Air India, creating an enlarged entity that is now the country's largest international carrier and second-largest domestic carrier. UK115 flight from Delhi to Singapore was the last flight of Vistara with the code 'UK' while UK986 from Mumbai to Delhi was the carrier's last domestic flight.

Starting a new chapter in India's fast-growing civil aviation space, the merged entity operated its first flight with the code 'AI2286' from Doha to Mumbai. In the domestic sector, the integrated entity's first flight AI2984 took off from Mumbai to Delhi. All the four flights landed at their respective destinations early in the morning on Tuesday, according to information available on the flight tracking website Flightradar24.com.

According to an official, the two airlines have been merged, passengers are being issued Air India boarding passes and check-

in counters of Vistara at airports have become that of Air India. The code 'AI2XXX' is being used for Vistara flights that are being operated by Air India post the merger to help passengers identify the Vistara flight at the time of booking.

On Monday, an official said the integrated entity will be operating services on 103 domestic and 71 international routes. With the merger, first announced in November 2022, Singapore Airlines will have a 25.1 per cent stake in the integrated entity, which will operate more than 5,500 weekly flights on local and international routes. A formal announcement about the merger is expected later in the day. Tata Group has led the consolidation wave in Indian aviation with two major mergers in less than two months — AIX Connect was integrated with Air India Express on October 1 and now the merger of Vistara with Air India. Air India, Vistara and AIX Connect together had a domestic market share of little over 29 per cent in September, as per latest official data. Together, the Air India group has an operational fleet of 298 aircraft — around 208 with Air India and about 90 with Air India Express.

RAAM Group Celebrates Landmark Achievement with Mass Delivery of 100 MG Windsor EVs in a Single Day

RAAM Group proudly highlights a significant milestone in the electric vehicle (EV) segment with the mass delivery of 100 MG Windsor EV vehicles on 17th November 2024, marking an impressive total of 200 units sold just 50 days post-launch on 26th September. This achievement sets a record for the highest sales in a single dealership for an electric vehicle in India.

On this remarkable day, RAAM Group hosted a grand delivery event in Kompally, Hyderabad, where key attendees, including Mr. Sourav, South Zonal Sales Head from JSW MG, Mr. A. Abinand, CEO of RAAM Group, and Mr. Siva Teja Varma, CEO of MG, emphasized the growing demand for electric vehicles in the region. "We are thrilled to be leading the EV market, not only in Hyderabad but across India," said Mr.

Abinand. "With over 1800 current bookings and a maximum monthly delivery capacity of 300 cars, we foresee a bright future for Windsor EVs as we strive to meet the increasing demand." Mr. Sourav, South Zonal Sales Head of JSW MG, stated, "We are committed to delivering 800 to 1000 vehicles monthly in Telangana to meet the rising consumer demand for electric vehicles." In October, Windsor EV achieved the highest market share in the EV segment, reflecting the brand's growing popularity among consumers.

This exceptional response to the Windsor EV demonstrates a clear shift towards sustainable mobility solutions. RAAM Group, recognized as the largest dealership in Telangana, is set to lead the charge in the electric vehicle revolution.



Continental Hospitals Kids Health Carnival Brings Smiles, Health, and Creativity to Over 200 Families



Continental Hospitals hosted the much-anticipated Kids Health Carnival, marking a successful celebration of health, joy, and creativity for over 200 children and their families on 16th November, 2024. The event, designed to promote preventive healthcare for children while giving them a platform to celebrate Children's Day, was met with overwhelming enthusiasm from the community. The carnival brought together the vital aspect of health with a delightful array of activities, offering free pediatric, dental, and ophthalmic health checks. Recognizing the importance of early detection of critical illnesses, the event highlighted Continental Hospitals' commitment to preventive healthcare for children.

Dr. Guru N Reddy, Chairman of Continental Hospitals, graced the event, engaging with the children and awarding prizes to winners of the painting, essay writing, and elocution competitions. Encouraging the young participants, Dr. Guru Reddy said, "Children are naturally intuitive and innovative. It is our responsibility as parents and caregivers to nurture their independence and

let their imagination soar." The creative competitions on the themes of healthy food and healthy practices saw the little ones bring their vibrant imagination to life. Parents and children alike expressed their appreciation for the thoughtful integration of health and fun, which made the event truly memorable.

The focus of the carnival extended beyond healthcare. Fun games, activities, and dance performances added a celebratory spirit, bringing smiles to every face. The event reflected Continental Hospitals' commitment to being an integral part of the communities it serves—not just as a healthcare provider but as a partner in their overall well-being. "At Continental Hospitals, we are committed to going beyond medical care to truly connect with our communities. This event was a celebration of the health and happiness of our children, and we are proud to have brought families together for such a meaningful occasion."

The Kids' Health Carnival was a testament to Continental Hospitals' mission of fostering healthier and happier communities. With parents leaving the event inspired and

children cherishing the joyful memories created, the carnival underscored the hospital's role as a trusted and compassionate partner in health.

Aniq Unisex Beauty Salon & Tattoos opens its 61st Branch



Aniq Unisex Beauty Salon & Tattoos launched its 61st branch, located in Madhapur, Hyderabad. The new location was inaugurated by the popular television personality, Ms. Varsha (Jabardasth fame). Aniq is proud to offer a unique blend of services, combining a unisex salon with tattoo artistry and nail services, providing a complete beauty experience. At this new branch, clients can expect an extensive range of premium salon services tailored to meet the diverse needs of our community. We are dedicated to making high-quality beauty services accessible, ensuring luxury

is attainable for all.

In addition to our salon and tattoo services, the new Madhapur location features Trendy Tags, a one-stop shop to satisfy your fashionable cravings. Our curated collection includes premium clothing and accessories, proudly imported from Turkey and Vietnam. "All the products in our store are imported at competitive prices," stated Mr. Anil, owner of Aniq Unisex Beauty Salon & Tattoos and Trendy Tags, Madhapur. "This allows us to offer our customers high-quality items without breaking the bank, ensuring everyone can stay stylish and trendy."

Half of the Police Stations in Telangana Lack CCTV Cameras

In a recent inquiry by the Youth for Anti-Corruption has unveiled that nearly half of the police stations in Telangana are without CCTV cameras, a finding that raises serious concerns about transparency and accountability within the police department. The Supreme Court of India has emphasized the necessity of CCTV cameras in every police station, asserting that such measures are essential to understanding the interactions between law enforcement officials and citizens, particularly when seeking justice. The court has highlighted that CCTV footage is crucial for documenting every detail involving victims, ensuring fairness and transparency. In order to ascertain the number of police stations in Telangana and the extent of CCTV coverage, Youth for Anti-Corruption submitted a request under the Right to Information Act to the Public Information Officer at the Directorate General of Police (DGP) office in Telangana. The findings were subsequently revealed by

Rajendra Palnati, the founder of Youth for Anti-Corruption. Key findings from this inquiry include:- Police stations in Telangana equipped with CCTV cameras: 376

- Police stations pending CCTV installation due to ongoing construction: 2

- Number of police stations in the state without any CCTV cameras: 396

It is noteworthy that, despite the equipment being supplied, the installation process is still pending in a significant number of stations, raising concerns about implementation timelines and oversight. The information regarding the status of CCTV installations was provided by the IT and C Region Rachakonda Superintendent of Police. The Youth for Anti-Corruption organization calls upon the Telangana Police Department and state authorities to expedite the installation of CCTV cameras in all police stations to enhance transparency and ensure the trust of the public in law enforcement functions.



Can AFSPA and giving the Army a free hand help?

The Centre on Thursday (November 14) reimposed the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in six police station areas of Manipur. The Home Ministry's notification mentioned the "volatile" situation and "active participation of insurgent groups in heinous acts of violence" as the reasons. Most of these police station areas are in the Imphal Valley, from where AFSPA had been fully withdrawn last year, citing "significant improvement in the security situation". On Saturday, the Manipur government wrote to the Centre asking for a review and withdrawal of its decision. Parts of the Imphal Valley are under curfew after widespread arson and attacks on the homes of politicians, as ripples of the ongoing violence in the western Jiribam district reached the capital on Saturday. Jiribam has been tense since six members of a Meitei family went missing from a relief camp some days ago. Several bodies have since been found in the Barak river.

What is AFSPA?

AFSPA, which traces its roots to a colonial statute introduced in response to the Quit India Movement in 1942, was retained in independent India. The law was first brought as an ordinance, and then notified as an Act in 1958. Over the years, AFSPA has been imposed in the Northeast, Jammu and Kashmir, and Punjab (during the years of militancy). It remains in force in parts of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, and the entirety of J&K. AFSPA gives sweeping powers to the armed forces by providing military personnel blanket immunity for a range of actions. It allows the military to open fire — and even cause death — against any person breaking the law or carrying arms and ammunition. It also gives them the power to arrest individuals and

search premises without warrants on the basis of "reasonable suspicion". There can be no legal proceedings against armed forces personnel for these actions without prior approval from the Centre. AFSPA can be imposed by the Centre or the Governor of a state, on the entire state or parts of it, after these areas are declared "disturbed" under Section 3 of the Act.

What is AFSPA's history in Manipur?

AFSPA came to the Northeast in the 1950s in the wake of the Naga movement, and the creation of the Naga National Council (NNC). In Manipur, it was imposed in 1958 in the three Naga-dominated districts of Senapati, Tamenglong, and Ukhrul, where the secessionist NNC was active. It was imposed in the 1960s in the Kuki-Zomi dominated district of Churachandpur, which was under the sway of the Mizo insurgent movement, and extended to the rest of the state in 1979, when groups in the Meitei-dominated Imphal Valley began an armed insurgency. The statute has been controversial, with numerous allegations of excesses by the armed forces. The Malom massacre in 2000, and the killing and alleged rape of Thangjam Manorama led to its subsequent removal from the Imphal municipal area. In 2000, Manipuri activist Irom Sharmila began what would become a 16-year-long hunger strike against AFSPA. In 2012, the Extrajudicial Execution Victim Families Association of Manipur filed a case in the Supreme Court, alleging the security forces carried out 1,528 fake encounters between 1979 and 2012. The CBI is probing 94 such killings. AFSPA was lifted from 15 police station areas in the Imphal Valley in 2022, and in the remaining four in 2023. It remains in force in other parts of the state.

Why has AFSPA been reimposed?

The reimposition of AFSPA in six police stations in the Valley by the Centre is informed by a pattern of violence from Meitei and Kuki armed groups in these areas, and a push by the Army for statutory protection in order to effectively control the unrest, sources have told The Indian Express. Barring Jiribam, all the police station areas where AFSPA has been reimposed — Sekmai, Lamsang, Lamlai, Leimakhong, and Moirang — lie on the outer fringes of the Valley, next to the hills. Following the initial burst of violence in May 2023, and the subsequent withdrawal of Kukis to the hills and Meiteis to the Valley, most of the violence has occurred in these areas on the fringes. Despite the deployment of central armed police forces (CAPF) personnel and Indian Army soldiers in these so-called "buffer" zones, the Manipur administration has been unable to stem the violence. Sources said the Army is reluctant to unleash its full force without statutory protection. "You have to understand that the Manipur administration is currently deeply divided on ethnic lines. Even bona fide actions can lead to the registration of cases against officers. It is difficult for the Army to operate with full freedom under such circumstances," an Army officer posted in Manipur said.

What Impact will AFSPA have?

While the AFSPA will indeed grant greater freedom to the Army to use force, much will depend on the political will of the government to act — and to deal with the fallouts of strong action. Unlike in most conflict areas, the armed forces in Manipur are currently not only fighting militant groups but also a civil society that is armed to the teeth,

thanks in no small measure to weapons looted from police armouries. The government will be wary of the history of AFSPA in the Northeast, where alleged excesses by the armed forces (like in the early years of the Naga insurgency) only ended up strengthening insurgent movements. The ongoing ethnic violence has already provided a second wind to Meitei militant groups such as the PLA and the UNLF, which had been pushed out of the state in the past decade. "With or without AFSPA, if the forces know they have the government's backing, they will act. The recent attack on the CRPF camp in Jiribam is an example. When the forces needed to fire, they did, and 10 suspected militants are dead. There was no AFSPA there then," a senior Manipur security establishment officer told The Indian Express. Another officer, however, said the move may have some psychological impact. "It may create some fear among armed miscreants. But all will now depend upon how the Army takes it forward," the officer said.

Can tough action by the Army lead to an end to the conflict in Manipur?

In any conflict, reducing violence is a prerequisite to bring the warring factions to the negotiating table. But in a state with a long history of ethnic conflict, and competing political demands, more will need to be done.

The government will have to handle the political implications of its decision to impose AFSPA, something not likely to enthrone the Meitei population that views the Assam Rifles (which is under the Army's operational control) with suspicion. The move may appear as an olive branch to the hill tribes who have long demanded AFSPA in the Valley. So far, the government's intermittent efforts to start talks have not yielded results.

Why the assembly election in Maharashtra is not just about bringing in a new state government

On November 20, Maharashtra will vote to elect a new government for the state. Past few weeks have seen high decibel campaign by two main alliances--ruling Mahayuti comprising chief minister Eknath Shinde led Shiv Sena, BJP and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and opposition coalition Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) comprising Congress, Uddhav Thackeray led Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar led NCP (SP). MVA is Maharashtra's version of a national coalition of opposition parties, INDIA. The assembly election is not just about electing a new government for the state. It will decide the political future of five prominent leaders: NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray who lost their maximum MLAs as well as party names and symbols to rebels supported by BJP; for chief minister Eknath Shinde who faces a make or break situation; Ajit Pawar whose political future depends on the result of the election and deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis whose political career is at a crucial stage. The Maharashtra election is also a high-stakes battle because its outcome will have an impact on national politics: A victory for the BJP-led NDA would strengthen the position of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a major blow for the Congress after the rout in Haryana polls. On the other hand, if the MVA wins power in a crucial state such as Maharashtra, the INDIA alliance will get a much-needed boost. There are several factors at work and both sides are weighing various permutations and combinations. Here are the highlights of this electoral battle: Revenge drama Like a Bollywood pot-boiler, this election is also a revenge drama. Both Pawar and Thackeray are looking to settle scores with Ajit Pawar and Eknath Shinde respectively who hijacked their parties and BJP which actively supported this. Towards the fag end of his over five-decades-long political career, Pawar now 84, has been fighting probably the toughest political battle against his nephew Ajit whom he mentored, and the BJP, which has tried to finish him off politically. He has to win power in Maharashtra to decimate Ajit and regain control of his support base as he prepares to pass on the baton to his daughter and Baramati MP Supriya Sule.

For Uddhav Thackeray, 64, it is a tougher test to prove that his faction is the "real Shiv Sena". Unlike in the case of Pawar, his adversary Shinde managed to win a sizeable number of Lok Sabha seats and is looking to win most of the seats in traditional Sena strongholds. The fight between Thackeray-led Sena and Shinde-led Sena will decide which faction can claim the legacy of party founder Balasaheb Thackeray. For the BJP, it is time to finish what it started in 2019: It encouraged and helped Shinde and Ajit Pawar to walk away with most of the Shiv Sena and NCP MLAs and take over the party. It was done to "punish" Thackeray and Pawar for denying the BJP a chance to form a government though the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance had got a clear majority in the 2019 elections. Thackeray insisted on sharing chief ministership for two and a half years each, which BJP turned down.

Following the development, Pawar brought him and the Congress on board to forge the MVA coalition and form the gov-

ernment in the state. The Shinde-BJP combine pulled down Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government in June 2022. A year later, the BJP supported Ajit Pawar to split the NCP and include him in the government. Besides "teaching a lesson" to Pawar and Thackeray, the BJP also wanted to foil the MVA coalition, which was the first experiment to bring opposition parties together to keep the BJP out of power. Unlikely to be a repeat of the Lok Sabha elections in the Lok Sabha election, the MVA won 30 seats while the Mahayuti could win only 17. One went to a Congress rebel who won as an independent and later joined the MVA. Assembly elections are being held six months later but the mood is not exactly the same. The split into two parties, the Maratha reservation, the allegations that industries and investment in Maharashtra were being taken to Gujarat, unhappy farmers especially onion growers, the controversy over alleged attempts to amend the constitution and anti-incumbency were seen as reasons for Mahayuti's defeat in the state. It also had an impact on the NDA tally as it had won more than 40 seats in Maharashtra in 2014 and 2019 elections.

Learning quickly from its mistakes, the Mahayuti launched populist schemes to change the mood among the voters. Its 'Ladki Bahin Yojna' under which a cash handout of ₹1500 is given to poor women received a positive response from the women. Taking a leaf out of the BJP's Haryana experiment, the Mahayuti government took more than 100 decisions to appease various castes and communities with sops and other announcements. It has also tried to win over a section among the Dalits by proposing sub-categorisation of the Scheduled Caste category which was the demand of smaller castes in the category. How much of these efforts have changed the situation on the ground will be known only when the votes are recounted on November 23 but the ruling alliance is not leaving any stone unturned. Even the MVA leaders acknowledge that the sops announced by the ruling alliance may have some impact. Mahayuti leaders say the mood among Muslims and Dalits has also changed since Modi is not the face of the state BJP and the Constitution issue is over. The MVA leaders however point out that the slogans like "Batenge to Katenge" and "Vote Jihad" have revived the feeling of insecurity among the Muslims. Further, the controversy over the Constitution (Rahul Gandhi's re-coloured copy of the Constitution was linked to Urban Naxals" by BJP leaders) may revive the memories of the Opposition's campaign that the Modi government wanted to amend the Constitution. The caste factor

The Maratha community's agitation for reservation in government jobs and education led by Manoj Jarange-Patil damaged the prospects of the ruling Mahayuti in Marathwada, western Maharashtra and north Maharashtra during the Lok Sabha elections. Jarange-Patil's flip-flop over contesting elections has confused the community in the past few months. Mahayuti leaders hope that the sentiments against their parties have been diluted due to Jarange-Patil's changing stand. The ruling alliance has also fielded a large number of Maratha candidates in areas that are under the activist's influence. On the other hand, opposition MVA leaders were happy



when Jarange-Patil decided not to field the candidates in the assembly election. The MVA is hoping to benefit from the resentment in the Marathas community over the quota issue. The Mahayuti is focusing on local caste equations and the personal influence of its candidates. It has also been raising the issue of Hindutva by referring to Razakars—the army of Nizam that had committed atrocities on Hindus in the pre-Independence period. The BJP's attempts to mobilise OBC didn't work in Lok Sabha but there is some consolidation in Marathwada where Marathas are more aggressive. It is wooing the Dhangar (shepherds) community, which has a presence and influence in several constituencies in western Maharashtra and some other parts of the state. On the other hand, the MVA is trying to channel the anger among tribals who have opposed the demand of Dhangars to include them in the Scheduled Tribes category. The anger was so great that tribal MLAs from all parties came together and staged a protest at the state secretariat in south Mumbai a few days before the elections were announced. The BJP is also focussing on various smaller castes that can change the arithmetic in constituencies. In closely fought elections, even a few thousand votes could be decisive.

Vidarbha and Mumbai-Konkan belt could play a decisive role Maharashtra largely comprises five regions on the political map: Vidarbha (62 seats), western Maharashtra (58 seats) Marathwada (46 seats), North Maharashtra (47) and the Mumbai Metropolitan region-Konkan belt, which has 75 seats. In Lok Sabha, MVA dominated all of Vidarbha, Marathwada and western Maharashtra. It had an upper hand in the North as well though Mahayuti too bagged some seats. The Mumbai-MMR-Konkan belt saw the Mahayuti scoring over MVA. As such the ruling Mahayuti focused on this belt first. The buzz created by the opposition is visible in western Maharashtra and to a certain extent in the rest of the state but missing in the MMR-Konkan belt as the MVA failed to create an atmosphere in this region. Most of the seats here are being contested by Shiv Sena (UBT). It is assumed that the Mahayuti will have a clear upper hand here. MVA insiders say they have a favourable atmosphere in Vidarbha, Marathwada and Western Maharashtra which together have 166 seats. The north could be equally divided. However, the problem for them could be the Mumbai-MMR-

Konkan belt. It has 75 seats and they need to win at least 30-35 seats here unless they are sweeping the three favourable area. Mahayuti leaders are hoping to win 45-50 seats in the MMR-Konkan belt and need to win 90-100 in the rest of the state. The electoral fight in western Maharashtra could be closed due to the Pawar factor though they will do well in cities and the constituencies of established leaders. Rebels and independents About one-third of constituencies have rebelled. They will definitely damage both sides. Besides, there are at least a dozen seats where allies from the same coalition have fielded their candidates against each other which is being described as friendly fights. Besides, at least half a dozen smaller parties including Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi and Raj Thackeray's Maharashtra Navnirman Sena have fielded 100 to 150 candidates each. These smaller parties and rebels could spoil the show for a number of candidates. The past two decades have shown that in any election at least 20 to 30 independents and MLAs from small parties get elected. If none of the coalitions reaches the magic figure of 145 needed to form the government in the House of 288, the independents and small parties will be in demand and there could be intense horse-trading. BJP brings in hardline Hindutva as there is no strong narrative from either side. Initially, there was no strong narrative from either side in this election. Soon after the Lok Sabha election, the two sides began with sops versus Maharashtra pride narratives. Smarting from its defeat, Mahayuti came up with sops to reach out to several sections of society. The 'Ladki Bahin Yojna' created significant buzz but closer to the election, Mahayuti has realised it is not enough. The BJP has now started raising the hardline Hindutva. "The hardline on Hindutva will help us to score over MVA in cities that have more than 100 seats. The Dalit-Muslim support coupled with other local factors such as Marathas in Marathwada-western Maharashtra, tribals in the tribal belt, Kunbi community in Vidarbha and the Marathi manoo plank in Mumbai and its neighbourhood gave the MVA an edge over us. Hindutva issue can make a dent in this support base," said a senior BJP leader who asked not to be named. The MVA is focussed on Maharashtra pride as the central theme of its campaign with various issues such as agrarian problems, inflation and unemployment alongside.

What Trump's Elon Musk, Vivek Ramaswamy pick means to the U.S. government?

Story so far: The U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday (November 12, 2024) handpicked tech billionaire Elon Musk and biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy to lead his incoming regime's effort to cut down bureaucracy in the U.S. Federal government. Mr. Trump said in a statement that the duo will lead the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and pave the way "to dismantle Government Bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures, and restructure Federal Agencies." Messrs Musk and Ramaswamy are tasked to advise and guide the government from the outside. They will work with the White House and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) "to drive large scale structural reform, and create an entrepreneurial approach to Government never seen before."

Who are Messrs Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy?

Very few people in today's world may not know Tesla co-founder and CEO Elon Musk. Mr. Musk is a visionary businessman who fundamentally transformed ground transportation with electric vehicles. His company has sold over 2.3 million EVs as of 2021, per a report by InsideEV. Beyond EVs, Mr. Musk's business empire extends skywards. The Musk-owned SpaceX designs and makes rockets and spaceships. Its subsidiary, Starlink, makes low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellites that provide satellite-based internet connectivity in remote locations in several parts of the world. Mr. Musk's brush with the U.S. bureaucracy and politics began about three years ago when the multi-billionaire came in the crosshairs of the Delaware Chancery Court for not following through on his \$44 billion Twitter takeover bid. The company's shareholders sued the world's richest man for backing out from a deal that he initiated. The court ordered Mr. Musk to complete the deal, ending months of verbal mudslinging and a near miss trial.

Once Mr. Musk was at the helm of affairs at Twitter, he lost no time in downsizing the company, starting with the board and the CEO. He then re-inducted user accounts that were de-platformed, including president-elect Donald Trump's. Several Republicans celebrated the acquisition as they alleged the old guard censored conservative viewpoints. With Mr. Vivek Ramaswamy, the stars aligned a bit differently. Mr. Ramaswamy quit his hedge fund job in his late-twenties and started Roivant Sciences, an investment holding company. One of the subsidiaries went public at a \$2.2 billion valuation as it owned a much-hyped Alzheimer drug candidate. While that drug failed clinical trials couple years later, Mr. Ramaswamy reported millions of dollars in income that year, primarily through capital gains. Subsequently, he rebranded this subsidiary, and then sold five other abandoned drug candidates to Japanese pharma giant Sumitomo Dainippon for \$3 billion, reporting \$176 million in income on his tax return that year, per a Forbes report. After making money from business deals, Mr. Ramaswamy switched to an active role in politics. He was the youngest person to run for the Republican nomination, and rose to the third position in national polls. But a strong Trump wave drowned Mr. Ramaswamy's popularity. He



later dropped out and endorsed Mr. Trump.

Why did Mr. Trump handpick the duo?

Both Mr. Musk and Mr. Ramaswamy are ardent supporters of Mr. Trump. And the duo share the president-elect's views on cutting bureaucracy in government civil services. Mr. Musk, in one Trump rally in October, said the US government's budget can be cut by at least \$2 trillion, from \$6.5 trillion. He has also called for a leaner government with fewer civil services personnel. Mr. Ramaswamy, during his run for the Republican nomination, put forward plans to dismantle the federal agencies and proposed a reorganisation of intelligence units, including the FBI. He has been critical of the growth of government bureaucracy and regulatory capture, emphasising the need to remove unnecessary agencies and interventions that hurt American workers and manufacturers.

Have there been any efficiency drives like this in the past?

This is not the first time the U.S. gov-

ernment is going on an efficiency drive. In February 1982, President Ronald Reagan formed a group of business leaders, more commonly known as the Grace Commission, to identify and reduce inefficiency and waste in the U.S. Federal government. The commission was funded through private contributions and included 36 task forces. They put out a report two years later with 2,500 recommendations. Initially, the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs was tasked with tracking the implementation of the recommendations. A year later, the responsibility was transferred to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Most of the proposals required congressional approval, and so were not implemented.

How will DOGE be different from the Grace Commission?

While the announcement from the president-elect sounds grand, there isn't much the duo can do, except submit a Grace Commission-like recommendation, which

has to be followed through by the OMB, provided they get the approval from the Congress to cut down the power of Federal agencies. So, their work, which must conclude no later than July 4, 2026, will not directly result in Federal agencies being shut down or government employees losing their jobs. But, Mr. Trump could potentially dovetail the duo's work with his Schedule F initiative that would re-classify thousands of government workers and make it easier to dismiss any at the president's whim. This move could represent one of the most significant shifts in the U.S. civil service in recent history, as it would give the president direct control over positions traditionally insulated from political pressure.

While Mr. Trump's supporters argue that these changes are necessary to address what they call a "deep state" of career bureaucrats obstructing policy, critics warn that implementing Schedule F would dismantle the modern civil service, undermining its non-partisan foundation.

Breathless in the Capital

The two photographs of the Lotus Temple on the front page of this newspaper on Friday, one a clear shot taken in May and the other on a hazy November morning, painted a stark portrait of just how far Delhi has descended into its annual pollution abyss. For the third consecutive day, the city's two million residents awoke to a day of "severe" pollution, as calm winds and the arrival of winter amplified a familiar nightmare: A thick, choking haze of smog blanketing the city, laced with the acrid tang of pollution. At Thursday 4pm, the air quality index (AQI) recorded 424. The tragedy is that this is an annual feature. And, we already know what fuels this crisis, what damage it inflicts, and what could be done to curb it. Yet, every winter, Delhi endures the same pattern: Citizens struggle for breath and gov-

ernment agencies fumble. Those entrusted with addressing the crisis continue to shrug off responsibility, deflecting blame onto everyone else. The science, however, has always been clear. The local and external sources of Delhi's pollution are well-documented; experts even understand the exact proportions each source contributes to the toxic mix, a fact that should, theoretically, enable targeted interventions. But, the mounting scientific evidence only helps to underscore how inefficient the system has been in tackling the crisis. Year after year, the same players in government either remain passive or scapegoat one another, unwilling to act decisively.

Consider the case of stubble burning, a known villain in this saga. Courts have stepped in with stringent orders. Yet in fields

across Punjab and Haryana, smoke continues to billow. In recent days, the contribution of stubble burning to Delhi's pollution levels has surged from 17% to 30%. On Thursday, data from Punjab revealed that nearly half of the state's paddy fields remain unharvested, signalling that the peak season for these farm fires — and the pollution they bring — is still ahead. The plight of farmers, who feel compelled to clear their fields swiftly for the next crop, is understandable. Many lack the resources to invest in stubble management machinery. This is where State intervention could make a meaningful difference — through rental schemes, subsidies, or other support systems to encourage alternatives to burning. The fact is the government in Delhi has privileged political gamesmanship over meaningful engagement with neighbouring states.

‘Current political moment in Sri Lanka gives JVP a chance to rewrite history’

The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna [JVP or People's Liberation Front], which leads Sri Lanka's ruling National People's Power [NPP], could not have risen to power without widening its appeal and building a mass support base over the last few years, and the current political moment affords the party a chance to rewrite its history, general secretary Tilvin Silva said. "When you want to obtain power, you need a mass support base," he said on Friday (November 15, 2024), just as the NPP's resounding win in the November 14 general elections became evident. Speaking to The Hindu at the party's headquarters in Battaramulla near Colombo, Mr. Silva called the election win "a huge achievement". "In particular, the victory in Jaffna and in the upcountry area, where we were able to defeat deeply entrenched traditional parties and political families. This gives us a real chance to build a united country," he said, referring to the JVP's historic win in the Tamil-majority northern district.

The party that once vehemently opposed Tamils' political rights won three seats in Jaffna, outdoing traditional Tamil parties that were the community's main voice in national politics. In Nuwara Eliya district, in the central hill country that is home to Sri Lanka's famed tea estates and Malaiyaha Tamils who toil in them, the NPP won five seats and nearly 42% of the vote share. Barely two months after President Anura Kumara Dissanayake was elected President, the NPP fought Thursday's (November 14, 2024) election knowing it would win. "Even those who were sceptical of us earlier began seeing that we were very committed to rebuilding the country, its political culture and economy," Mr. Silva said. Broadening the base

"We began appealing to more people just in the last one and a half months." However, the NPP did not project a two-third majority, which is hard to obtain in Sri Lanka's proportional representation system. On election day, Mr. Dissanayake said he expected "strong representation" in parliament, and that two-thirds would not be necessary. Mr. Silva told local media on Friday (November 15, 2024): "We did not ask for a two-thirds majority. The public believed in us and gave us this power. Our responsibility is to carefully use this power and to safeguard their trust." Set up in 2019, the NPP is a broad social coalition rather than a conventional electoral alliance of different parties. It identifies as a "political movement", comprising 21 diverse groups, including political parties, youth and women's organisations, trade unions and civil society networks. The JVP remains its chief constituent, making up its political core. All the same, party general secretary Mr. Silva did not run in the elections, deciding to keep the party and government separate. President Anura's ruling coalition wins big "The main problem in our country was the political culture. The foundation of the grave economic crisis we suffered was this very political culture," he said, referring to political parties and groups "fighting bitterly" in the past for state resources, vehicles, "to enrich their own families". "If we want to defeat that culture, we felt it was important to keep that distinction between the party and the government." On the relationship among the party's influential politburo,

the NPP, and the government, he said: "It's not as if we're different political groups taking different decisions. We work as one unit [on policy matters]." Past vs. present

The JVP has seen considerable shifts in the last five decades. The party with Marxist-Leninist origins led two armed insurrections — in 1971 and in 1987-89. Its ideological emphasis changed from Marxism and redistributive justice in the 1970s to Sinhala chauvinism in the 1980s, when it resisted power-sharing with the Tamils. However, Mr. Silva contended that the party's history needed to be retold with context. "There is a wrong perception because our history was written by those who defeated us, the victors. Our path was not willingly chosen, it was forced upon us." Alluding to the allegations of brutal violence facing the JVP, he added: "It was not [our] action, but a reaction from our end. If the [state's] repression was armed, so was [our] response." In his view, the current political moment in Sri Lanka has opened up space to rewrite the story of not just the party, but also of the country, "without characterising some as terrorists who took up arms for no reason". "But we want to tell this story not with words, but with our action. The present context gives a chance to do



that." Queried on concerns among sections that the "Marxist party" might resist the Dissanayake government's efforts to take forward the ongoing programme of the International Monetary Fund aimed at addressing Sri Lanka's debt vulnerabilities, Mr. Silva pointed to "misconceptions" about Marxism. "It is not a set philosophy. Marxism is really

about providing answers to people's problems at a particular time and context. We are committed to doing that through development, eliminating rural poverty, rooting out political corruption, achieving social justice and national unity that is important for our country. We want to build a clean and beautiful Sri Lanka."

Assam by-polls outcome a test for three political bigwigs

The results of the by-elections to five assembly seats in Assam, held on Wednesday, will be a test for three political leaders active in the northeastern state. The Congress' Gaurav Gogoi and Rakibul Hussain and Asom Gana Parishad's (AGP) Phani Bhushan Choudhury were not among the 34 candidates who fought in the polls but when the counting's over on November 23, the outcomes will likely impact their political future. The five by-elections took place for the Behali, Samaguri, Bongaigaon, Sidli and Dholai seats, which became vacant earlier this year after the MLAs from those seats won in the Lok Sabha polls. Of the five seats, BJP put up candidates in three (Dholai, Samaguri and Behali) while its ruling partners United Peoples Party Liberal (UPPL) and AGP contested from Sidli and Bongaigaon respectively. In the 2021 assembly polls, the Dholai and Behali seats were won by the BJP while AGP and UPPL won the Bongaigaon and Sidli seats. The Samaguri seat was won by Congress. With the next assembly poll less than one and a half years away, the by-elections are being seen by many as a semi-final.

The son of three-time chief minister Tarun Gogoi, the 42-year-old successfully managed to outrun the strong and relentless campaign by the ruling BJP during the Lok Sabha polls and wrested the Jorhat seat from the saffron party. This was Gogoi's first electoral victory since his father's death during the Covid pandemic. The Congress making him the deputy leader of the party in Lok Sabha for the second consecutive term following his win has added to his stature both in the party and in his home state. For the by-election, Congress had cobbled up an

alliance of 16 opposition parties, which were expected to have a say in the candidate selection process. But despite the opposition platform opting for a candidate from CPI (ML) in the Behali seat, Gogoi threw his weight behind Jayanta Bora, a BJP turncoat. The Congress high command went with Gogoi's choice, which led to a collapse of the opposition alliance and put Gogoi in the crosshairs of former allies. Bora getting the ticket led to some heartburn within the Congress as well. But Gogoi actively campaigned for him with the hope of wresting the seat from the BJP. If Bora manages to win by defeating BJP's Diganta Ghatowar, it will boost Gogoi's stature further, making him a serious contender for the chief minister's post in 2026. But if his chosen candidate loses, differences within the Congress in the state could resurface and the chasm between the party and other opposition parties grow wider.

Rakibul Hussain The son of former Congress minister, Nurul Hussain, the 60-year-old has won from the Samaguri seat five consecutive times since 2001. The constituency is seen as his impregnable fortress. But despite his unwillingness, the Congress high command asked him to contest the Dhubri Lok Sabha seat this year instead of Nagaon, which he had preferred. Overcoming his initial reservations, Hussain trounced sitting Dhubri MP and All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) chief Badruddin Ajmal by a record margin of over a million votes. Five months following that triumph, Hussain faced another electoral battle, this time in his home turf of Samaguri where his son Tanzil was given the Congress ticket for the by-election.

Hussain's move from Samaguri to Dhubri, located around 370 km away, hasn't

gone well with some sections of voters who feel he has deserted them. The Congress's decision to give the ticket to Hussain's son also riled some voters. With the AIUDF deciding not to field any candidate from the seat where minority voters play a decisive role in the outcome, the ruling BJP, which fielded Diplu Ranjan Sarma, is hoping to win the seat for the first time targeting Hussain for neglecting Samaguri for over two decades and nepotism. The keenly contested seat witnessed incidents of pre-poll violence between both Congress and BJP supporters; journalists covering the campaign were also targeted. A win for Tanzil would mean the continuation of Hussain and his family's hold over the seat, but a loss would hurt his political career and ensure further inroads by the BJP into traditional Congress vote banks.

Phani Bhushan Choudhury No other politician in Assam has had such a long and successful electoral innings as AGP's Phani Bhushan Choudhury. The 72-year-old has won from the Bongaigaon assembly seat eight times since 1985. But despite his unwillingness to contest, the AGP leadership fielded him as its candidate from the Barpeta Lok Sabha seat this year. Choudhury continued his winning streak in the new seat as well but his home constituency became vacant for the first time in four decades. While AGP's local leaders in Bongaigaon wanted a change of face, the party leadership chose Choudhury's wife, Deeptimoyee, a political greenhorn, as their candidate for the by-election. This led to differences within AGP and 36 party leaders and workers from the district unit including president Bijay Singha and general secretary Shailen Sarkar resigning from the party.

The tale of timekeepers of Vizagapatam

As hard as it may seem to imagine for the current generation exposed to mobile phones and digital clocks from birth, until two centuries ago, only a few had the luxury of knowing the precise time of the day, and the majority had to wait for the hourly public announcement of time. However, the style of the public announcement is unique to the era, and those who were in their youth during the 70s and 80s must have heard about it from their elders. "Nearly two centuries ago, the people of Visakhapatnam had a different way of knowing time. Old records of Visakhapatnam mention that the Army unit at the fort (at Old Town) used to fire a time-gun every day at 9 p.m. to inform the public and all the ships at the port of the correct local time. Later, the time-gun firing location was shifted from the fort to the Dolphin's Nose Hill," says Vijjeswarapu Edward Paul, a history chronicler and a member of the Indian National Trust for Art, Culture and Heritage (INTACH).

Godey Venkata Jagga Rao, a local zamindar and a trained astronomer, built an observatory at the Dabagardens area in 1840 to conduct both astronomical and meteorological observations. He established the longitude and latitude of Visakhapatnam from his observations. For many years, the time recorded in the observatory was the local time for Visakhapatnam. He erected a flagstaff on Dolphin's Nose Hill to provide time signals for the public as well as for the ships to know the correct local time at 9 a.m. every day. The system adopted was to raise two flags together, one above the other on the flagstaff precisely at 8 a.m., which continued to fly till 9 a.m. They were lowered down precisely at 9 a.m. to indicate the time. After the death of G.V. Jagga Rao in 1856, his son-in-law Ankitham Venkata Narsinga Rao took over the observatory and continued the astronomical and meteorological observations. He continued the hoisting of time-flags, which his father-in-law had started. The time-gun being fired by the Army on Dolphin's Nose Hill was discontinued in 1871. At that time, A.V. Narsinga Rao offered to maintain the firing of that time-gun at his own expense to provide the correct time to the public and to the ships at Port. He also constructed a new flagstaff on Dolphin's Nose in 1886 for hoisting time flags. A public notification was issued by the Government to this effect, which is given hereunder.

It is hereby notified for the information of the public that A.V. Nursing Row has erected an expensive and durable flagstaff on the Dolphin's Nose, and the time signals are now hoisted on it under his orders every day between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. to indicate time. The flags are hauled down at 9 a.m. with great precision, and it is intended thereby to indicate the precise time of that hour not only for the information of persons whose distance from the Fort renders the report of the 9 p.m. time gun inaudible but also to afford the Shipping in the Roads the means of finding the error of chronometers and to indicate the error of the time gun. The clocks installed in the observatory, which were periodically corrected according to astronomical observations, kept accurate time. The time-gun and time-flags were regulated according to the observatory's time.

After the death of A.V. Narsinga Rao in 1892, his wife, the only daughter of G.V. Jagga Rao, continued the time-gun and time-flag for about two years. She is the same lady on whose name the present Mrs. A.V.N.

College was established. As wished by her father and her husband, she handed over the Observatory, the Flag Gun, and the Flagstaff on the Dolphin's Nose Hill to the Government in 1894 with an endowment of ₹3 lakh for permanent maintenance of the institution. The government managed the observatory and continued the time-gun and time-flag until it closed in about 1898. It appears that the time-gun and time-flag were discontinued after the observatory was closed. Records are not clear as to why the observatory was closed. "In the olden days, there was also a system of ringing hourly bells in Taluk and Collector's offices, striking a bell once at 1 O'clock, twice at 2 O'clock.....12 times at 12 O'clock to signify the time of the hour. It is not known when this practice was started in the State. The same system continued up to the mid-1960s in the Visakhapatnam Collector's office as remembered by some senior citizens," says Mr. Edward Paul. "Records show that notifying time in Visakhapatnam passed through different



stages like time-guns, time-flags, time-bells and clock towers and people used to look to those for knowing time. All these practices

of the olden days may appear very strange to the present generation. But these are all facts of history," he says.

Why men are lonelier in America than elsewhere

ARE ISOLATED men driving American women up the wall? A recent sketch on "Saturday Night Live", which refers to studies concluding that males in America are increasingly friendless, suggests that they are. A young woman, frustrated by her boyfriend's inability to open up to anyone else, takes him by the hand and leads him to a "man park" (like the dog version) where, after a shy start, he finds fellow males to make friends with. Some viewers disliked the likening of men to dogs, but the sketch, which went viral online, illustrates fresh concerns about an old worry: the loneliness of American men. As people in rich countries work longer hours, marry later and spend more time with their children, not friends, research suggests loneliness is increasing. A study by the University of Pennsylvania found a direct link between social-media usage and loneliness. More time spent online means less time building friendships. The problem may be particularly severe in America. A large international study by British academics found that people in individualistic countries (a measure on which America scores highest) reported greater loneliness. America also has one of the highest divorce rates; men may be more likely to lose mutual friends after a split. A strong work ethic and geographical mobility (meaning friendships are liable to be lost or weakened as people relocate) is likely to exacerbate the problem. A survey published in 2021 by the Survey Centre on American Life, part of the American Enterprise Institute, a think-tank, found that friendship groups have shrunk in the past three decades. The decline has been particularly marked among men. In 1990, 55% of American men reported having at least six close friends; today only 27% do. The survey found that 15% of men have no close friendships at all, a fivefold increase since 1990. Those who study male loneliness believe that a particularly American version of masculinity is in part to blame. Since 1990 Robert Garfield, a psychotherapist and author of "Breaking the Male Code", has run



"friendship labs", men's therapeutic groups, which have shown him that men crave emotional connection. But American boys, says Dr Garfield, who has also run such groups in Europe, are often taught that successful men exhibit particular traits—restraint, independence, competitiveness—at the expense of others. As women's and LGBT rights have advanced in recent decades, along with more emotional ways of connecting with others, "men are being asked to stretch themselves", Dr Garfield says. Over time, this is likely to have a positive effect on the way men relate to each other, but at the moment, "males are in a fighting phase". Marc Schapiro, a 24-year-old English teacher from Maryland, agrees. He says he was taught male friendship is "stoic and lacking outward affection". But now he sees a different portrayal of friendship on social media, particularly by women and LGBT people. He would love, he says, to be able to "show more affection and drop the constant snide comments and ribbing", but he finds the disconnect between what he grew up believing about friendship and how he sees other people relating to each other unsettling. The "quasi-socialising" he and his friends do online, via games and

various message boards, meets no real need, he adds. All this comes at a heavy cost. Suicide is more common among young men than young women. Niobe Way, a psychologist at New York University who studies adolescent male friendship and is the author of "Deep Secrets: Boys' Friendships and the Crisis of Connection", says it is no coincidence this divergence begins to happen around the age that many boys move away from close friendships. In childhood, she says, boys tend to be as open as girls about their need for friends. As they get older, they "feel they have to get into a gender strait-jacket" and define their masculinity primarily as not being feminine. By the age of 15, many boys start saying they don't need friends and worrying that close friendships will make them seem "girly". This "clash of culture and nature", Dr Way says, is much more marked among white boys than black ones. The effects are far-reaching. Research has linked loneliness to poor health. It can make men angry and violent. Male loneliness also affects women. Dr Garfield observes that two-thirds of divorces are initiated by women, many of whom complain their husbands are emotionally incompetent. "