

Cotton growers getting restive in Telangana

Hyderabad: The cotton outlook for the 2024-25 season that has just started unfolding in Telangana reveals a mixed scenario marked by significant challenges. The total area under cotton cultivation has decreased to 44 lakh acres from last year's 55 lakh acres. The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) procured up to 12.5 lakh metric tonnes, last year while private traders have procured 16 lakh metric tonnes. Much of the cotton produce has been moved to neighboring markets in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra, with some farmers even transporting their stock to Ahmedabad for better prices.

Despite the CCI announcing a 7% hike in the MSP this year, with rates set as Rs 7,121 per quintal for medium staple cotton and Rs 7,521 per quintal for long staple cotton, farmers are facing major challenges in marketing their produce. The CCI has been rejecting cotton with moisture content above 12%, forcing farmers to sell to private traders at lower prices, around Rs 6,660 per quintal. Nearly five percent of the crop area was affected by the September rains, which subsequently led to pest infestations, including the spotted bollworm and pink bollworm, causing substantial yield losses. Farmers in six districts, including Suryapet, Khammam, and Mahabubabad, are grappling with the adverse effects of these pests. Last year, the crop covered 55 lakh acres, yielding an overall production of 45 lakh metric tonnes. However, this year, the projected output is expected to be around 35 lakh metric tonnes. The market price for cotton has been fluctuating around Rs 7,000 per quintal. The rains have caused high mois-



ture content in the cotton, further complicating the situation. Farmers are facing difficulties as their produce is being priced lower than the MSP due to excess moisture levels. Discrepancies in market prices have led to unrest among farmers, with private traders offering lower prices compared to the CCI rates. In addition to these chal-

lenges, the Cotton Association of India (CAI) has projected a 7 per cent decline in cotton output this year due to reduced acreage and adverse weather conditions. The average yield this year is expected to be around 8 to 9 quintals per acre, compared to up to 12 quintals per acre in some pockets last year. The rain and pest impact has

forced some farmers to destroy the crop after the first picking and switch to maize cultivation. As the situation unfolds, the CCI is prepared to step in across major cotton-producing districts to ensure farmers receive fair prices, but farmers complain that a robust support system for the agricultural sector is still missing.

Zomato Hyderabad warehouse raid uncovers 'future packing date' on Mushrooms, CEO responds

New Delhi: After a food safety regulator's raid at Zomato's Hyperpure warehouse in Hyderabad allegedly found 90 packets of button mushrooms labelled with a "future packing date", the company's CEO Deepinder Goyal on Monday said it was due to a "manual typing error on the vendor's side". The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) team had identified 90 packets of such button mushrooms with incorrect packaging dates. Zomato's Hyperpure is a business-to-business (B2B) vertical.

In a post on X social media platform, Goyal said these button mushrooms were already identified by "our warehouse team and were rejected during an inward QC (quality control)". "This is not usual, and was due to a manual typing error on the vendor's side. Still, the concerned vendor has been delisted from our database. At Hyperpure, we have stringent inward guidelines and tech systems that helped our teams to identify this error in time," said Goyal. Goyal further said that they are com-

mitted to upholding industry food safety standards and are focused on not compromising on product quality at any stage of the supply chain.

"I am not sure why just these small number of mushroom packets worth Rs 7,200 (out of the crores of inventory in the warehouse), which were never going to make it to customers, are being talked about the media, while we got an A+ rating," said Zomato Co-founder. Last month, the Commissioner of Food Safety in Telangana had said in a post on X that its task-force team on October 29 conducted inspections at Zomato Hyperpure Private Limited, IDA, Kukatpally in Hyderabad and "Button Mushrooms (18kg) were found with future date of packing i.e., 30.10.2024 at the said premises." "Premises found open directly to the outside environment without proper insect proof screen. Houseflies were observed inside the premises. Few of the food handlers were found without haircaps and aprons," the Telangana food safety regulator said.



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Win or lose, it's Trump's world now

As the US approaches another pivotal presidential election, the influence of Donald Trump on American policies and global dynamics remains profound. Whether he secures a second term or not, Trump's imprint on key areas such as China relations, trade policies, and foreign wars is likely to persist. This upcoming election is widely regarded as one of the most consequential in recent decades, given the significance of the issues at hand and their potential ramifications extending far beyond American borders. The current political landscape in the US is marked by intense polarisation and deep-seated divisions within the American establishment. This fragmentation raises concerns about the likelihood of disputed election results, especially if the margin of victory is narrow. Although political momentum is in Trump's favour, the difference in the opinion polls between them is within the margin of error. Close results, particularly in swing states, could lead to legal challenges and court interventions, further straining the fabric of American democracy. A troubling American trend has emerged in recent years — the reluctance to accept electoral defeat. Trump faced widespread criticism for his refusal to formally acknowledge his loss in the 2020 election. However, it's worth noting that Democrats were politically hesitant to reconcile with Trump's unexpected victory in 2016. In the aftermath of that election, Democrats and liberal media outlets launched a campaign alleging Russian interference, attempting to undermine Trump's legitimacy from the outset of his presidency. This narrative on the "foreign hand" is clearly not unique to Indian politics; it's a tactic employed globally, including in America, to discredit political opponents. A recent example is the campaign highlighting Elon Musk's alleged "Russian links" as he uses his platform X (formerly Twitter) to boost Trump's candidacy and is now a major donor to the Republican campaign. Democratic presidential nominee and US Vice President Kamala Harris. (AP) Democratic presidential nominee and US Vice President Kamala Harris. (AP) The stakes in this election are high, with Democrats warning that a second Trump term could pose a threat to America's democratic institutions. Trump's supporters, however, view these claims as hypocritical, arguing that Democrats have weaponised executive agencies and the judicial system against Trump both during and after his first term. Those of us outside the US must look beyond the "horse race" and understand the unfolding structural changes in American politics. Despite extensive global media coverage, it's important to remember that we in India are observers, not participants, in this electoral process. The question of which candidate or party might be "better" for India is largely academic, as foreign entities cannot really influence the outcome.

Given the US's significant role in global economics and politics, even minor shifts in American policy can have far-reaching consequences for other nations. The international community, including India, must be prepared to engage constructively with whoever assumes the presidency in January, regardless of personal or ideological preferences. To effectively navigate the post-election landscape, it's

essential to understand the various factions within American politics: Liberals, conservatives, nationalists, internationalists, free traders, protectionists, globalists, America-Firsters, interventionists, and isolationists. The shifting coalitions among these groups will shape the direction of US policy in the coming years. Paradoxically, despite strong opposition to Trump and his policies, the Democratic administration under Biden has continued many of Trump's major initiatives from 2017-2021. This continuity is particularly evident in areas such as great power politics, globalisation, and foreign wars. This trend reflects a fundamental internal reassessment of America's global interests and priorities that transcends party lines. The Trump administration marked a significant shift in US foreign policy focus, moving away from counter-terrorism and nation-building efforts towards confronting strategic rivals, particularly China and Russia. This reorientation has largely been maintained under the Biden administration, indicating a bipartisan consensus on assessing the primary threats to US security and prosperity.

Trump's challenge to the established orthodoxy of free trade and globalisation has also left a lasting impact. The Biden administration has embraced aspects of industrial policy and promises to restructure the global economic order to benefit the American middle class. This shift represents a significant departure from decades of US-led economic liberalisation. The decline of economic multilateralism, symbolised by the diminishing influence of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), is another legacy of the Trump era that continues under Biden. This trend is likely to persist, with the potential for even more dramatic changes if Trump returns to office with plans for significant tariff increases. On matters of war and peace, there's a growing convergence between the two major parties, despite differences in rhetoric. If Trump had looked for a way out of Afghanistan, Biden decided to pull out within months after he took charge of the White House. Both Democrats and Republicans now favour avoidance of direct military involvement abroad, as evidenced by the increasing support for finding a resolution to the conflict in Ukraine. Regarding international alliances, while Trump and Kamala Harris may differ in their formal stances, both are likely to pressure allies for more equitable burden-sharing in collective defence arrangements. This reflects a broader shift in American thinking about the costs and benefits of its global military commitments. While Harris might be nice in making demands on allies and adversaries, Trump will be hard-knuckled.

America's evolving stance on great power relations, globalisation, and alliances is compelling other major powers to reassess their own positions. This pressure to adapt will likely intensify under the next president, regardless of party affiliation, as the US continues to redefine its role on the global stage. The upcoming US presidential election is not just a choice between two candidates or parties; it represents a critical juncture in the ongoing transformation of American politics and foreign policy. The enduring influence of Trump's ap-



proach, regardless of the election outcome, signals a fundamental shift in how the US engages with the world. As global observers and stakeholders, it is crucial to understand these changes and prepare for a new era of international relations shaped by an America that is more inward-looking, economically nationalist, and strategically focused on great power competition. The

challenge for the rest of the world will be to navigate this new landscape, balancing their own interests with the realities of a changing American outlook. For countries like India, this may present both challenges and opportunities, requiring astute diplomacy and a clear-eyed assessment of their strategic priorities in an increasingly complex global order.

'Bengaluru used to be a magical city for urban ecology, but not anymore'

At a nature camp in Bengaluru's Cubbon Park, when he was still a young boy, Dr. K.S. Gopi Sundar, now based in Belagavi, had two encounters that would transform his life. While walking through the park he saw the golden oriole for the first time through a pair of binoculars. Till then, he thought that birds like this only existed in the Amazon. Then, a few minutes later, he saw a pair of blue Indian wanderer butterflies. "My world changed," says Sundar, who joined Bangalore's Birdwatchers' Field Club soon after.

There was no looking back from there for the ecologist, who grew up in Bengaluru. Sundar completed a B.Sc. in Environmental Sciences at St. Joseph's College (now St. Joseph's University) and followed it up with a master's in Ecology at Pondicherry University. In 1998, he began working on the sarus crane, the world's tallest flying bird, as part of a project with the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. "I saw my first sarus on the train on my way there...close to Mathura," says Sundar, who, some years later, joined the University of Minnesota for a PhD in conservation biology. Today, Sundar is a National Geographic Explorer, the editor-in-chief of an international journal titled *Waterbirds: the International Journal of Waterbird Biology*, and the co-chair of the IUCN Stork, Ibis and Spoonbill Specialist Group, and is known for his research on large waterbirds, especially sarus cranes. He serves on several state wildlife boards and court-appointed committees related to conservation in India and has over 100 published papers to his credit. The most recent is a co-authored paper titled *Characteristics of Bird Niches in a Small Indian City: Effects of Migratory Status, Season and Environment Variables pub-*

lished in the *Journal of Urban Ecology* in September 2024.

In a recent interview with *The Hindu* in Bengaluru, he spoke about the new study and what he has learnt from his research about the coexistence of birds with humans in India. One of the things that came through in your recent paper is the need to reassess the assumption that urbanisation automatically leads to a reduction in bird diversity. Can you discuss how the study came about and some interesting trends you have observed? So, in Udaipur, we (Sundar and his wife Swati Kittur, a co-author on the study) bumped into a wonderful guy named Vijay Kohli, an assistant professor at Mohanlal Sukhadia University. He said he would like our help starting student work.

Along with a student, Kanishka, who was very interested in all manner of things, we thought of studying the birds of Udaipur because they're so little known. We thought it would also be of great interest to the ornithological community worldwide to know how an urban area like Udaipur, which is focusing a lot of attention towards tourism, is doing. As we found out, Udaipur is just an unbelievable city for birds. It has a centralised area where the lakes are there — the birds cannot use anything more than the lakes because there is construction to the edges — but as you start stepping out, there's a beautiful, myriad, massive diversity. There is agriculture, grassland, tribal lands, and the Aravalli Range right in the city. We measured variables in three broad aspects to understand how urbanisation affects birds. One is human-related: people walking, cars, cattle. We also recorded some stuff related to traditional nature: scrubland, trees, tree diversity, etc.

Canon Enhances RF Lineup with Three New Hybrid Lenses

The RF70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM Z, RF50mm F1.4 L VCM, and RF24mm F1.4 L VCM blend video-centric usability with classic focal lengths

Canon today announced the RF70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM Z, RF50mm F1.4 L VCM, and RF24mm F1.4 L VCM, a trio of hybrid RF lenses that will be an integral part of the hybrid shooter and video creators' toolkit. The lenses combine classic focal length and maximum aperture, and their EF mount predecessors have been popular among professionals for decades. The new hybrid lenses have: Large maximum apertures to create beautiful bokeh, enhance AF performance and flexibility in low light environments. 11 circular aperture blades that maintain beautifully round bokeh even at narrower apertures. An iris ring that enables smooth, seamless aperture changes while shooting videos. High-precision, quiet AF drive control that eases workflows, allowing creators to focus on creative aspects such as framing. An electronic floating focus control system designed to suppress focus breathing, minimising unexpected changes in composition. Bodies designed for easier use with rigs and gimbals. Unified external dimensions, filter diameters, and controls as other lenses in the same subseries (RF70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM Z and RF24-105mm f/2.8 L IS USM; RF50mm F1.4 L

VCM and RF24mm F1.4 L VCM with RF35mm f/1.4 L VCM), allowing better interchangeability when used together. These video-centric features can also be found on the previously released RF24-105mm f/2.8 L IS USM Z and RF35mm f/1.4 L VCM. As professional-grade L-series lenses, the three new lenses feature a durable drip-and dust-resistant design, smudge-resistant fluorine coating on the front and rear lens surfaces, and superior optics. These features provide beautiful colours and clean, sharp images even under challenging conditions such as back-light. Besides the video-centric features, the lenses have other technologies and specifications that will appeal to still shooters. Classic Telephoto Zoom Lens Upgraded for Video After the RF24-105mm f/2.8 L IS USM Z, the RF70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM Z is the second professional hybrid zoom lens that supports advanced, smooth motor-powered zoom control via the Power Zoom Adapter PZ-E2/PZ-E2B (sold separately). It supplements the RF24-105mm f/2.8 L IS USM Z with its longer 70-200mm telephoto focal range, capturing high-quality photos and videos of scenes

or subjects that are further away such as sports, news and events.

For scenes that require even further reach, the RF70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM Z can be used with extenders, which increase the lens' zoom range to 98 to 280mm at f/4 with Extender RF 1.4x, and 140 to 400mm f/5.6 with Extender RF 2x. Concurrently, it is also capable of close-ups of small objects – at its 200mm end, it has the closest focusing distance of 0.68m and a maximum magnification of 0.3x. Two Nano USMs (Ultrasonic Motor) in an electronic floating focus control system ensure swift, precise autofocus while delivering high image quality from close focus to infinity. The RF70-200mm F2.8 L IS USM Z's fixed-length barrel and internal focusing design retain the same centre of gravity during zooming, making it easier to use with a gimbal or rig. The RF mount's design flexibility also enables a more efficient build. The lens is approximately 25% lighter than the similarly built EF70-200mm f/2.8 L IS III USM. Its tripod mount can be easily attached and detached without tools to accommodate different setups and shooting styles.



JSW MG MOTOR INDIA RECORDS SALES OF 7045 UNITS IN OCTOBER 2024 WITH 31% YOY GROWTH



JSW MG Motor India today announced sales of 7,045 units in October 2024, a YoY growth of 31% over the corresponding month in the previous year (October 2023). The company's New Energy Vehicles (NEVs) remain a significant part of its overall sales, contributing over 70% of total volumes – the highest share of monthly sales by any passenger car manufacturer in the country - thereby demonstrating its commitment to promoting the adoption of NEVs. Marking yet another significant milestone in India's journey towards clean mobility, JSW MG Motor India electrifies the EV market by selling 3,116 units of the MG Windsor - the country's first

intelligent Crossover Utility Vehicle (CUV) - within the first month of its launch. These robust sales numbers are the highest among all other passenger electric cars which were sold during October 2024. The company remains committed to sharing its sales numbers on the VAHAN portal, in consonance with its announcement in the previous month. As reported on VAHAN, the carmaker's YoY growth was 34% (excluding Telangana) this month. The boost in sales during the festive season reflects the rapidly growing popularity of the company's electric vehicle portfolio. *Excluding Telangana**These are wholesale figures.

LIC hosts walkathon as part of Vigilance Awareness Week



Hyderabad: As part of the Vigilance Awareness Week with the theme "Culture of Integrity for Nation's Prosperity", the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), Hyderabad Zonal Office, organized a walkathon on Sunday in which nearly 450 employees and agents from all offices of Hyderabad and Secunderabad participated. The Vigilance Awareness Week (VAW) of LIC comprised of a series of events including taking Integrity Pledge, online quiz, online essay writing competitions and culminating with the walkathon on Sunday.

Puneet Kumar, Zonal Manager

flagged off the walk which passed through Telugu Talli flyover, Mint compound, Saifabad police station, Prasad's Imax, Lumbini Park and culminated at LIC Zonal Office.

All along the route placards displaying messages educating on vigilance awareness were displayed. R Sateesh Babu, Regional Manager, K Sunandan, Zonal Vigilance Officer, M Ravi Kumar, Uthup Joseph, G. Madhusudhan, Pramoda Kumar Sahoo and other senior officials participated in the walkathon. Police teams gave support in regulating traffic and helped in smooth conduct of the event.

Canon Ventures into Spatial Imaging with the RF-S 7.8mm F4 STM Dual

Creates high-quality immersive spatial 3D photos and videos that come alive when viewed with the Apple Vision Pro

Canon today announced the RF-S 7.8mm F4 STM DUAL, the third of its EOS VR System lens lineup. Currently supported by the EOS R7, the new lens provides a different mode of 3D visual expression from the recently released RF-S3.9mm f/3.5 STM Dual Fisheye. Realistic Scenes within Your Reach

While Canon's two recent dual fisheye lenses create 180° VR images that transport users into the virtual world within their images, the RF-S 7.8mm F4 STM DUAL captures a narrower field of view. This creates realistic spatial 3D stills and videos, thus bringing VR to users. When viewed on a compatible device like the Apple Vision Pro, subjects in an image appear to be right in front of you, making them lifelike enough for users to reach out. This realistic effect is further enhanced through a combination of the detailed, high-quality rendering of the lens and high-resolution image sensor of an EOS R system camera. See, Frame, and Shoot Weighing approximately 131g and staying compact at just 41.5mm long, the lens is as easy to carry around as the tiny RF50mm f/1.8 STM "nifty fifty". Users can document precious moments, scenes, and objects in new ways, providing a unique experience that will fascinate viewers and pique their curiosity. The 63° angle of view of each dual lens is the same as that of the popular and versatile 35mm lens on a full-frame camera, allowing easy framing of everyday scenes and objects even at a shooting distance as close as 15cm. Autofocus operates the same way as on conventional lenses, and users have the freedom to adjust camera settings for basic control over

the image. Shoot, Convert, and Export.

Shooting records a parallax image from each lens onto the camera's image sensor, and from there, users can simply convert the data in the EOS VR Utility software or Adobe Premiere Pro via the EOS VR plugin. After which, users can make edits if necessary and output the image or footage to their desired format for viewing. Available output formats are the MV-HEVC Spatial Video format supported by the Apple Vision Pro, VR 180° and the 3D SBS, a split image movie without metadata that appears 3D with VR glasses. The RF-S 7.8mm F4 STM DUAL is compatible with the EOS R7, and the two together, weigh approximately 743g (with card and battery). When shooting video in bright daylight conditions, a conventional 58mm screw-in circular ND filter can be attached easily to maintain proper exposure while keeping the same frame rates and aperture.

Pricing Details:

Name
Price (MRP `)
RF-S7.8mm f/4 STM Dual
`46 995.00/u (incl. of all taxes)

Product Specifications

Lens
RF-S 7.8mm F4 STM DUAL
Focal Length
7.8mm
Maximum Aperture
f/4
Minimum Focusing Distance



0.15m
Maximum Magnification
0.07x
Lens Construction
9 elements in 7 groups
Filter Size Diameter
Ø58mm
Aperture Blades

7
Projection Type
Center projection
Drive
Gear-type STM
Maximum Diameter and Length
Approx. 69.2mm x 41.5mm
Weight
Approx. 131 g

Harish Rao, BRS leaders arrested for protesting against arrests of former Sarpanches

Hyderabad: Former Minister and senior BRS leader T Harish Rao launched a blistering attack on the Congress government over the arrest and mistreatment of former Sarpanches who were staging peaceful protests, across Telangana. He condemned the arrests of sarpanches, and demanded that the Chief Minister and the Panchayat Raj Minister hold discussions with them to clear pending bills spent for village development. Learning about the arrests of former sarpanches who were planning to stage protests and submit a representation to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Harish Rao rushed to the Bolaram police station along with Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council S Madhusudanachari, MLAs Vemula Prashanth Reddy, Kotha Prabhakar Reddy, Kalvakuntla Sanjay and other BRS leaders. Attempting to stop a van in which the detained former sarpanches were being shifted, they tried to stage a sit-in protest.

After the arrested former sarpanches were shifted to the Trimulgherry police station, the BRS cadre led by Harish Rao held

another demonstration, demanding for immediate release of the detained former sarpanches. As the BRS cadre numbers swelled at the police station, the police arrested the protesting BRS leaders. With the police locking the police station gates to prevent the media from entering the premises, Harish Rao addressed them standing on the other side of the compound wall. Harish Rao criticised the Congress government for its partisan treatment of former sarpanches, who were burdened with debts incurred for village development projects.

"These former sarpanches have taken loans, sold family gold, and sacrificed their own finances, yet they remain unpaid," he stated, adding that the Centre released Rs 1,200 crore under MGNREGS, Rs 300 crore from the 15th Finance Commission and Rs.500 crore under NHRM towards gram panchayats, but were diverted by the Revanth Reddy government. Reminding the significant role of sarpanches in Telangana's rural development, the Siddipet MLA noted that their efforts under former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara



Rao's leadership that transformed Telangana's villages, earning numerous awards and improving the State's reputation in village welfare. "Why punish those who made Telangana's villages a role model of development?" he asked, questioning why the State has funds for expen-

sive projects like the Musi River rejuvenation but cannot clear dues of sarpanches. Rao lamented the financial burden former sarpanches are facing, with some of them selling properties and even attempting suicide due to outstanding payments. "Arresting them is not the solution.

Darkness of life can be dispelled only with the light of knowledge – Haryana CM



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), November 4: "Darkness of life can be dispelled only with the light of knowledge", said Haryana Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini on Monday, while inaugurating the 'Third Panchkula Book Fair', being organized at Indradhanush Auditorium, Sector-5 in Panchkula. He said that the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has said that where there is darkness, it is not forbidden to light a lamp. If we read even one book today, that one book will light a lamp. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that our culture and heritage are available in the books. The purpose of this book fair is also to enhance our knowledge.

Haryana Chief Minister, on this occasion, also inaugurated Sardar Patel libraries built in village Arunai, district Kurukshetra, village Bara, district Karnal and village Madana Kalan, district Jhajjar through video conferencing. He also went around the Book Fair and released several books. Nayab Singh Saini said that the Fair features thousands of books in various languages. Observing the large crowd gathered, he underlined the significance of books in our lives. "Anyone with an interest in a particular subject can find valuable knowledge in the wide selection available at this fair," he added.

The Chief Minister highlighted that Mata Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, is revered in schools and libraries. He emphasized that by learning under the

guidance of teachers and studying in libraries, we acquire in-depth knowledge of various subjects. He said that the Uttar Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (UHBVN) has established over 25 libraries in the past three years through its CSR initiatives. "Today, we inaugurated three more libraries, which serve as an inspiration for other departments," he stated. The construction of Sardar Patel Library by UHBVN in Bara village of Karnal, Arunai village of Kurukshetra and Madana Kalan village of Jhajjar has cost Rs 20 lakh each. Computer and internet facilities have been provided in these libraries. The youth of the nearby villages will also be largely benefitted from these libraries. Emphasizing the importance of libraries for preparing for recruitment and competitive examinations, CM Saini said that the BJP government has committed to providing 2 lakh jobs for the youth of the state. He added that District-level libraries are already operational at district headquarters, and the government is now upgrading digital libraries in colleges and schools. "The government is also opening libraries in villages, equipped with computer facilities," he said. "Online resources and e-books are being made available, allowing youth to access information about their subjects online." He said that for the past ten years, youth in the state have been securing jobs without the need for bribes or recommendations. "Now, instead of seeking recommendations, the

youth are preparing for their future by utilizing library resources," he added. The Chief Minister said that under the Mhara Gaon-Jagmag Gaon Yojana, 86 percent of the villages in the State are being provided 24-hour electricity. He emphasized that the state's power utilities have achieved self-reliance in the power sector. The Chief Minister also highlighted the Adarsh Gram Yojana, which aims to transform over 200 villages into model villages. Under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR),

support is being provided for various initiatives, including poverty alleviation, malnutrition reduction, healthcare, sanitation, environmental sustainability, pensions, education, improving the sex ratio, sports development, and contributions to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. He also acknowledged the significant support from private companies and industries during the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly assisted local communities through their CSR initiatives.

Army jawan from Bhadrachalam trampled to death by elephant in Assam

Kothagudem: An army jawan hailing from Bhadrachalam town in the district was trampled to death by an elephant in Assam. The 42-year-old jawan, Konga Saichander Rao, serving in the rank of Naib Subedar, belonged to Ashok Nagar Kotha Colony in the town. He joined the Indian Army 10 years ago. He was stationed at an army unit based at Thakurbari, Rangapara tehsil in Sonitpur district of Assam.

The incident occurred at section 16 of the Namgaon tea estate in Rangapara. Two army personnel from the Army Cantonment in Amribari were taking a walk in

the afternoon on Sunday when a wild elephant charged at them. While trying to escape from the elephant, Saichander Rao fell and was trampled upon by the animal leading to his instant death. He was survived by his wife, a son and daughter.

Saichander Rao visited his family six months ago and was expected to visit Bhadrachalam this December. His body was expected to be brought to Bhadrachalam at 2 am on Tuesday by the army officials. A pall of gloom descended on the town with the death of the jawan belonging to the town.

A car chase in Jharkhand, a panicky CM office, a detention, and an angry Chief Election Commissioner

It is rare for a “proposer”, whose job ends with signing poll nomination papers, to overshadow a candidate. That came to pass in Giridih, Jharkhand, on Sunday afternoon, as the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), apparently in panic over apprehension that the proposer of Chief Minister Hemant Soren was hobnobbing with the BJP, set off a chain of events that saw the Chief Election Commissioner step in. Amidst little clarity over what the proposer, Mandal Murmu, going to the rival side could mean for Soren’s candidature, Murmu’s vehicle was chased down and he was “detained” by the police, before the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) got involved. CEC Rajiv Kumar pulled up the Jharkhand Chief Secretary and DGP over the incident, during an inter-state virtual meeting related to the elections. A high-level source present at the meeting said: “The CEC asked how Mandal Murmu and the others were detained. He also pointed to the lacunae (in observing the Model Code of Conduct) as when the Giridih police stopped the vehicle, it did not video record the same or follow other procedures. Also, if a vehicle is stopped (during a poll check) and no illegal cash or liquor is found, the vehicle has to be released. But Murmu was detained temporarily and two other BJYM (Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha) leaders and the driver were taken to the Dumri Police Station.” CEO K Ravi Kumar told The Indian Express: “The process was not followed when Mandal Murmu was detained. Hence, we intervened.”

Compounding the JMM’s embarrassment, Murmu has denied its version of events. Admitting he met BJP leaders, he denied he was “abducted” or “was being forcefully taken somewhere”. “Just because I am a proposer for CM Soren, it does not mean I cannot travel or meet anyone,” he told The Indian Express. What adds another layer to this drama is Murmu’s own credentials, as a descendant of Sidho-Kanhu, a hero of the 1855 Santhal Mutiny against the East India Company – hence making him a valuable asset for both sides. The JMM nervousness had another reason. Till Sunday afternoon when the chase happened, the BJP had not announced a candidate for the Barhait seat from where Soren is contesting. The party did so only on Monday, naming Gamliyel Hembrom as its Barhait candidate.

It all began with the police tailing a vehicle in which Murmu was travelling on Sunday, forcing it to stop at Dumri, Giridih, and “detaining” the passengers. At a press conference, JMM spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya said: “During checking, police found that Mandal Murmu was being taken by some unknown persons somewhere. When the police asked them about their destination, there was no answer.” According to Bhattacharya, the person driving the vehicle then made calls to Jharkhand Chief Electoral Officer K Ravi Kumar, ADG, Operations, Sanjay Lathkar and IG, Operations, A V Homkar. “They threatened the Giridih district administration and police to let the vehicle go. What is the story behind this, we don’t know.” Godda MP Nishikant Dubey later posted a photo of Murmu with him on so-

cial media. Claiming it was shot earlier that day, Dubey said that the family of the hero of the 1855 Mutiny was coming to Ranchi to talk to BJP leaders “to fight Bangladeshi infiltrators”, but had been “arrested” by the police. The alleged infiltration by Bangladeshis into Jharkhand has been made a main poll campaign issue by the BJP. Murmu backed what Dubey said. “My forefathers were freedom fighters and I keep meeting politicians from across the spectrum. I met Nishikant Dubey on October 27 morning to discuss jobs and social issues, among other things. I was on my way to Ranchi for some personal work and to meet some central BJP ministers to apprise them of various issues, including infiltration,” he told The Indian Express.

Sticking to its guns, the JMM alleged a bid to “influence” Soren’s election. Bhattacharya said they had written to the Election Commission complaining that poll officials were in “cahoots” with the BJP. “This is a very dangerous situation and more such conspiracies will be hatched,” Bhattacharya said. BJP legal cell state coordinator Sudhir Shrivastava has submitted a memorandum to the CEO’s office against Bhattacharya’s press conference. “Mandal Murmu has submitted an application stating he was not kidnapped. Bhattacharya should clarify which official stopped Murmu, who was with him, whether any criminal case was registered against Murmu, and on whose directions he was stopped... Bhattacharya’s statements seem intended to intimidate officials involved in the election process,” said a BJP press release. Sources in the JMM admitted they might have jumped the gun



following rumours regarding Murmu’s “plans”. The Chief Minister’s Office feared that apart from the embarrassment a shift to the BJP by Murmu would cause, it could put Soren’s candidature under a cloud. A top-level source said: “Some officers and leaders said that if a proposer joins a rival

party or runs for election, this could happen. However, then others in the party assured that one’s candidature comes under question only if a proposer contests his or her signature on the nomination papers. It was not the case here, with everything on video.”

Lack of solar equipment manufacturing units makes solar installation costly

Hyderabad: With very few solar power equipment manufacturing units present in the State, solar modules and other equipment have become costly leading to a simultaneous increase in the cost of installation of solar panels in the State.

Since a majority of the manufacturing units related to solar power equipment are located in other States, the consumers not only get equipment at a higher price, but also there is a delay in executing solar projects in the State. Due to lack of availability of solar equipment on time, there is inordinate delay in implementation of Central schemes related to rooftop solar plants and other projects in the State as well.

According to the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) list of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Gujarat is the leading solar module manufacturing State with 32 solar enlisted module manufacturers, whereas Telangana has just six manufacturing units. As there are very few manufacturing units in the State, the suppliers and power plant executing companies have to heavily depend on companies having manufacturing units in other States. Due to this the



cost of solar equipment has gone up in Telangana, leading to an increase in the cost of installation of solar panels.

The demand for solar power had been growing rapidly in the State and to meet the demand, a large number of solar photovoltaic (PV) module manufacturing plants were needed in the State, hence the gov-

ernment should take initiative to set up solar equipment manufacturing units in the State. Telangana State Solar Energy Association president B Ashok Kumar Goud said. “If solar energy equipment manufacturing units are set up in the State, the demand of our State could be easily met. Consumers will get the equipment at affordable prices.”

As banks' AI 'scores' surge, why the RBI is flagging concerns of systemic risks

ICICI Bank, RBI, iPal, iPal omnichannel bot, artificial intelligence, machine learning, Reserve Bank of India, Indian express business, business news, business articles, current affairsCustomer facing bots: for fielding general banking queries from customers, helping users navigate within the bank's app or website or extending personalised product offers'iPal', an omnichannel bot fielded by ICICI Bank – the country's second largest private bank by assets – tackles general banking queries from customers, including transactions such as bill payments and fund transfers, helping users navigate within the bank's app or website or extending personalised product offers. 'iLA', SBI Cards' interactive live assistant, too can aid customers through the process of filling out a new application for a credit card, and assist in customers gaining access to reward points or deactivating international usage.Dovetailing artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) tools progressively into core operations, India's bank sector players are leveraging AI to improve customer experience, pare costs, manage risks and drive growth through chatbots such as 'iPal' and 'iLA'. In some cases, these tools are also being used for screening of potential customers for access to loans, something that lends itself to greater regulatory scrutiny, given how foolproof these evaluations are and the potential of inherent biases. But as lenders increasingly deploy these tools, the usage of AI related keywords in the annual reports of private sector banks has evidently shot up nearly six-fold in the 2022-23 reports as compared to 2015-16 levels, while even for public sector banks, the emphasis on technologies such as AI in their annual reports has increased more than three times between 2015-16 and 2022-23.

Does this rapid embrace of AI tools pose a risk? The Reserve Bank of India does seem to think so, with India's central bank governor asserting that "the heavy reliance of AI can lead to concentration risks, especially when a small number of technology providers dominate the market". Shaktikanta Das said at an industry event here on October 14 that the use of these tools could amplify systemic risks as failures or disruptions in these systems may cascade across the entire financial sector.While he did not elaborate on the specific trigger for the comments, Das did allude to the growing use of AI introducing new vulnerabilities, such as increased susceptibility to cyberattacks and data breaches and AI's opacity making it difficult to audit or interpret the algorithms that drive decisions, potentially leading to "unpredictable consequences" in the markets. "In the ultimate analysis, banks have to ride on the advantages of AI and Bigtech and not allow the latter to ride on them," he said.Currently, most Indian banks are using AI to primarily improve customer experience, and drive growth through chatbots and customised banking. In some cases, they are being put to use for screening of new customers for access to products such as loans. What is clear is that the use of AI in India's banking sector is primarily being



led by the private sector lenders, and among them, the larger institutions.An analysis of annual reports for 32 commercial banks for eight years, starting from FY16 to FY23, has showed that initially (FY16), public sector banks were proactively considering AI/ML and related technologies, showing a similar mention of AI related keywords (AI score) compared to their private sector counterparts. However, during the period from 2016 to 2021, the AI-related word count in the annual reports of private sector banks has picked up, the analysis by a team from the RBI's Department of Economic and Policy Research showed. This, according to the study, may be due to a combination of recognition of additional use cases of existing AI based technologies along with more agility in adopting the newer and advanced AI techniques and models.

The usage of AI related keywords in the annual reports of private sector banks increased around six-fold in 2022-23 reports as compared to 2015-16 level. Even in the case of public sector banks, the emphasis on new age technologies like AI in their annual reports has increased more than three times between 2015-16 and 2022-23. The word cloud distilled from the annual reports reveals interesting insights with most banks focussing on automation which may be due to a push for efficiency gains and reduce human interventions, with data analytics another major thrust area with possible usage in fraud detection and predictive analytics.Across all models, the RBI study has found that the AI score is positively related to the asset size of the banks as evident from positive and statistically significant coefficients, suggesting higher adoption by larger banks. Also, larger banks are likely to achieve higher net gains from adoption of such technologies and data integration, thereby increasing the motivation for adoption of AI, it said.

It may also be indicating that the adoption of technologies such as AI is relatively difficult for smaller banks due to larger fixed costs and absence of economies of scale.Analytics use in banksCustomer facing bots: for fielding general banking queries from customers, helping users navigate within the bank's app or website or extending personalised product offers

Pre-approved loans: Existing customers deemed eligible are informed through SMS/email and instant loans are sanctioned through internet/mobile banking

without need for documentation and even without visiting the branch.Eligibility tests: Transactions in existing accounts are scrutinised and qualifying customers identified. Preapproved offers are then sent through internet banking. If the customer accepts the offer, loan will be approved after minimal documentation.Early warning System: Indications of stress in standard accounts are identified early and alerts then sent to operating staff. Early identification helps bank to take corrective action and curb slippages, thus mitigating credit risk.

Apple continues to drive India's mobile manufacturing growth story

New Delhi: As India continues to break all previous records on local mobile manufacturing, tech giant Apple is on course to surpass the FY24 figures of exports from India, reaching over Rs 50,000 crore (more than \$6 billion) in the first six months this fiscal (FY25), according to latest industry data.

The iPhone exports from India surged to cross \$10 billion in 2023-24 from \$6.27 billion in 2022-23. Overall, the iPhone maker's India operations reached \$23.5 billion in value in the last fiscal (FY24).Apple assembled \$14 billion of iPhones in India in last fiscal, exported more than \$10 billion worth of devices.

This growth is set to explode in coming years as India's semiconductor market is set to cross \$100 billion in revenues by 2030, driven by government initiatives like production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme amid robust demand to build digital infrastructure across industries.

Mobile handset, IT and telecom seg-

ments are leading the semiconductor industry, contributing more than 75 per cent of its revenues, according to a latest report by the India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA) and Counterpoint Research. This growth is driven by the increased use of social media, OTT platforms, affordable prices, accessible data, and the expansion of the 5G network.According to industry experts, to achieve the goal of \$500 billion local electronics manufacturing by FY30, the industry must prioritise export growth to emerge as one of the top three global exporters in this domain by 2030, led by mobile manufacturing.

After Apple, Google is set to manufacture Pixel smartphones in India, with plans to export the devices to Europe and the US. The tech giant will soon begin commercial production through partnerships with Foxconn and Dixon Technologies' subsidiary Padget Electronics. The company has already started trial production in Tamil Nadu with Foxconn, a major maker of Apple devices.

Why this Census is crucial for delimitation, women's quota, what's the legal roadmap

The Centre has indicated that the much delayed Census could now start as early as next year — and be completed by 2026. There are two very important upshots of the exercise — the delimitation of constituencies, and the implementation of the reservation for women in elected bodies. Delimitation exercise THE PROCESS: Since senior government sources have said that the Census process is expected to be completed by 2026, it would imply that the government is hoping to wrap up the process in time for the 2029 Lok Sabha election. The timeline is significant since it also involves the delimitation exercise. Delimitation is the process of fixing or redrawing the boundaries of territorial constituencies. A Delimitation Commission is appointed for carrying out the exercise. Though the decadal Census has been conducted seven times since Independence (1951 to 2011), the delimitation exercise has been carried out only four times (in 1952, 1953, 1973, and 2002). The last delimitation, however, only readjusted the boundaries of constituencies based on population, and did not lead to an increase in the number of seats, which have remained constant since 1976. This was because the Constitution was amended in 1976 and 2001 to readjust the allocation of seats till the findings of the first Census taken after 2001 and 2026 respectively are published. The number of seats in Lok Sabha is currently 543, and in all state Assemblies taken together, 4,123. These numbers were decided on the basis of the 1971 Census for Lok Sabha and 2001 Census for state constituencies, when the country's population was 54.81 crore and 102.87 crore respectively. The numbers of seats are likely to increase substantially, going by the expected population of around 1.5 billion when the 2021 Census is eventually conducted.

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES: Article 82 of the Constitution calls for such readjustment of boundaries after each Census. "Upon the completion of each census, the allocation of seats in the House of the People to the States and the division of each State into territorial constituencies shall be readjusted by such authority and in such manner as Parliament may by law determine," the provision states. The 42nd Constitution Amendment brought in 1976 amended Article 170, and froze the delimitation exercise until the results of the first Census after 2000 were published. In 2001, this was further extended for 25 years. And now, delimitation will happen only after the results of the first Census after 2026 are published. Article 170 deals with the composition of legislative Assemblies, and contains an explanation to the provision defining the word "population" which is the basis for dividing territorial constituencies. The provision states: "In this clause, the expression "population" means the population as ascertained at the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published: Provided the reference in this Explanation to the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published shall, until the relevant figures for the first census taken after the year 2026 have been published, be construed as a reference to the 2001



Indications that the delayed Census of 2021 could be held next year have reopened the discussion on two very significant related exercises: the delimitation of constituencies, and reservation of seats for women. What is the legal and political roadmap on these?

census." Questions have been raised on whether the 2021 Census, taken in 2025 and published in 2026, can be the basis for the readjustment mandated under Article 82.

This provision will have to be amended to facilitate delimitation before the next Lok Sabha election. Apart from this, other provisions dealing with the composition of the Lok Sabha (Article 81); state Assemblies (Article 170), and President's election (Article 55) will also have to be altered. **POLITICAL CHALLENGES:** There are other challenges too, such as building consensus on the procedure to be followed for delimitation. So far, delimitation Acts passed by Parliament have said that readjustment is done on the basis of the Census, physical features, existing boundaries or administrative units, facilities of communication and public convenience. The same challenges that led to the readjustment being postponed in 1976 and 2001 remain today. Southern states that have fared better in controlling their population would lose out if the number of seats are to be increased on the

basis of only population, which has increased more in the North. The BJP's numbers in the House will also be crucial to carry out these amendments. While it had majorities of its own in 2014 and 2019, this time the party has 240 seats in Lok Sabha, and needs its allies, the Telugu Desam Party and the Janata Dal (United) to push through legislation. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu recently flagged the issue of declining young population, saying he was thinking of giving an incentive to families that have more than two children. Women's reservation In September 2023, Parliament amended The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Amendment) to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in Lok Sabha and state legislative Assemblies. A crucial provision in the law makes the implementation of women's reservation contingent upon the delimitation process.

It states that the quota "shall come into effect after an exercise of delimitation is undertaken for this purpose after the relevant figures for the first census taken after the commencement of The Constitution

(One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Amendment) Bill 2023 have been published, and shall cease to have effect on the expiration of a period of 15 years from the date of such commencement." This in effect will be the 2021 Census that, according to the latest indications, is likely to be published in 2026. One of the reasons women's reservation did not become a reality in the last 35 years was the fear among male politicians of having to let go of their seats. A 33 per cent reservation in the current 545-member Lok Sabha would mean 182 seats being kept for women. Only 363 seats would be available for men. The current Lok Sabha has 467 men. But delimitation could preserve the political fortunes of the current group of male politicians.

If, as a result of the delimitation exercise, the strength of Lok Sabha increases to 770, as some calculations suggest, 257 seats would be reserved for women, and the remaining 513 could be available for men to contest. This would mean that political parties would have to deal with fewer complications in accommodating the political interests of their male leaders.