

# State officials push for proactive approach to Kaleshwaram rehabilitation

Hyderabad: Though without much success, the State engineering authorities are pushing for the immediate formulation of a design and action plan for the rehabilitation of the Kaleshwaram barrages well before the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) submits its report. Officials argue that initiating the rehabilitation process now could expedite the resumption of pumping operations, ensuring water supply to Kharif farmers at least by June 2025. Without such an advance programme, it would be challenging to provide water even for Rabi 2025, potentially extending the rehabilitation schedule to 2026, which would be costly for the State and its farmers. Project officials have suggested in writing a proactive approach to the rehabilitation of the KLIS with multiple reminder letters to the ENC (General). However, the ENC is reportedly in a bind, with the government showing little interest in taking up any advance activity. According to officials, the government is inclined to wait for the NDSA report, expected by the end of December. This report might be further delayed if the recommended studies are not completed in time.

Central organizations, such as the Central Water and Power Research Institute (CWPRI), have been engaged in critical studies on the impacted structures of the Medigadda barrage, a key component

of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP). Tasked with conducting geophysical and geotechnical investigations as recommended by the NDSA, CWPRI's efforts were interrupted by the onset of the monsoon season, which brought significant inflows to the barrages. CWPRI's studies, which began earlier this year, were only halfway complete when the monsoon rains began and the investigations continued ever subsequently. To finalize their studies, CWPRI requires the Medigadda barrage to be free of water storage for at least a couple of weeks. The current inflows are expected to recede only towards the end of November, potentially delaying the completion of the studies.

According to official sources, the CWPRI team is committed to speeding up the necessary investigations to ensure the structural integrity and safety of the barrage. The findings from CWPRI's studies will be instrumental in guiding any necessary repairs and ensuring the long-term stability of the barrage. The state engineering authorities are keen on not waiting any longer and emphasize the need for an immediate action plan. It is expected to minimize the wait time for water supply resumption and to support the farmers relying on the Kaleshwaram project. In a recent development, critical questions were raised regarding the need for a tail pond at



Medigadda to manage the high-pressure force released from the gates of the barrage during flood. Extension of the apron of the barrage by at least another 45 metres was recommended. A sampling study conducted by L&T revealed that the non-construction of a tail pond below the Medigadda barrage has led to significant soil erosion and the formation of large potholes, which have gradually caused sand to slide under the foundations of the barrage. To address these issues, the Irrigation

Department has decided to construct a tail pond to absorb the pressure and prevent damage to the downstream area. Ramagundam Chief Engineer of the Kaleshwaram Project, K. Sudhakar Reddy, has written to the Irrigation Department ENC (General) G. Anilkumar and impressed upon him the need for a proactive approach. The construction of the tail pond is considered a crucial step in ensuring the safety and stability of the barrages which aimed to draw 240 tmc of water from Godavari.

## PhonePe & Bharat Connect partner to launch easy contributions for National Pension System



PhonePe, today announced the launch of contributions to NPS (National Pension System) as a new savings category under Bharat Connect (earlier known as BBPS), on its platform. With this launch, PhonePe enables millions of users to now make seamless, secure and easy contributions to their NPS account through the PhonePe app.

NPS is a highly effective tax saving instrument for personal retirement planning. This scheme not only provides significant tax savings but also comes in handy as a retirement corpus, thus helping users secure their financial future. Previously, users could only make contributions towards their NPS accounts through the websites of PFRDA, NSDL, CAMs, KFinTech and Banks. However, the launch of this feature will allow users to contribute conveniently

using the PhonePe app, allowing previously under-served populations to experience the ease and advantages of digital payments. Commenting on the launch, Noopur Chaturvedi, CEO, NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited, said, "Integrating NPS category on the Bharat Connect platform is a significant step towards enabling individuals to manage their investments for retirement planning seamlessly. With this advancement, PhonePe users can now effortlessly contribute to their NPS accounts directly through the app. This initiative underscores our commitment to making financial services more accessible and inclusive for citizens across India." Sonika Chandra, Chief Business Officer - Consumer Payments at PhonePe, added, "We are very excited to partner with Bharat Connect to launch contributions towards NPS. This partnership between PhonePe and Bharat Connect significantly enhances the utility and convenience of making NPS contributions by offering a secure and user-friendly payment solution to millions of our users. We believe the future holds substantial potential for growth and innovative partnerships such as this make the process of payments and savings much more simple

and inclusive for all." Here's how users can avail this feature on the PhonePe app: Click on 'View All' under the 'Recharges and Pay Bills' section on your PhonePe app home screen. Click on 'National Pension System' under the 'Financial Services and Taxes' section and enter the following details: Your 12-digit PRAN or 10-digit

mobile number Date of Birth Tier Contribution Amount Tick the checkbox to agree to the Terms and Conditions and tap 'Confirm' Review the NPS investment details and the breakup of the amount Tap 'Proceed to Pay', select your preferred payment mode, and complete the payment.

## 340 Paddy Purchase Centres functional in Nalgonda: DS Chauhan

Nalgonda: Civil Supplies Commissioner DS Chauhan on Tuesday urged farmers to bring their paddy to government procurement centres without any hesitation. He conducted surprise inspection of paddy procurement centres set up by the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies in Nalgonda district. Addressing concerns, he advised farmers not to fall prey to middlemen's false promises and assured them that the paddy brought to the purchase centres without impurities and

excessive moisture, will be purchased immediately and payments will be credited within three to four days. In Nalgonda district alone, 340 procurement centres have been set up, including 80 specifically for fine paddy, and 15,000 metric tonnes of paddy have already been procured. More paddy is expected to arrive this month, he said, adding that an estimated 143 lakh metric tonnes of paddy was expected statewide this year, with 80 lakh metric tonnes of it being from fine varieties.



# Why the goal to arrest global temperature rise to 1.5°C is unrealistic

As it happens in the run-up to the annual climate change conference every year, several assessments and reports have been published over the last few days, recording the progress made in the fight against climate change. Like every year, they have had little excitement to offer. Global emissions are still on the rise, and concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere touched new record levels in 2023. There is no real hope to arrest global rise in temperatures within 1.5 degree Celsius from pre-industrial times, even though some theoretical possibilities are still being discussed. The 2030 emissions reduction targets are going to be missed by a wide margin. In two weeks, countries are assembling for this year's climate conference in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. During the summit, the most important item on the agenda will be the finalisation of a new agreement on finance that would enable more ambitious climate actions in the coming years.

Financial matters have always been the toughest part of climate negotiations, leading to a stalemate in most situations. This year, countries are aiming to finalise an overarching agreement that is supposed to allocate financial resources for all kinds of needs for climate action. Lack of adequate money has been one of the biggest hurdles to more ambitious climate action. Thus, any hopes of countries making more efforts to fight climate change in the coming years hinge heavily on the success of the Baku meeting.

More than 20 years after countries began attempts to reduce their emissions, and nine years after the Paris Agreement, global emissions are still on the rise. This year's Emissions Gap Report, an annual publication of the UN Environment Programme, says emissions in 2023 reached 57.1 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, about 1.3 per cent higher than the 2022 levels. There might be some correction in this figure at a later stage, since exact emission data take several years to calculate. But global emissions have spiked every year except in 2020, which registered a small dip due to the economic disruption brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the Paris Agreement targets, the world needs to keep the rise in temperatures below 2 degree Celsius — preferably 1.5 degree Celsius — compared to pre-industrial levels. To meet these goals, global emissions should peak by 2025 and begin to decline steadily after that, dropping to a level that is at least 43 per cent below that of 2019. The Emissions Gap Report said if current trends of deployment of clean energy sources continued, and some additional effort was made to cut the non-carbon dioxide emissions such as methane, there was "a 70 per cent chance that emissions will decline in 2024". "If this materialises, 2023 could mark the peak of global GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions, though this can only be verified after several years of steady emissions decline... Peaking before 2025 remains possible but hinges on the acceleration of the energy transition and curbing of fossil fuel supply and demand," the

report said. No quick relief from warming

But even if emissions peak in the near future, and hopefully begin to go down after that, the problem of global warming is not going to go away immediately. The warming effect on the planet is caused not by the amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted, but by their accumulated stock in the atmosphere. These gases do not go away immediately — for instance, carbon dioxide, the main pollutant, can remain in the atmosphere for hundreds of years before disintegrating. As a result, their concentrations would continue to increase for several years, even after the annual emissions begin to reduce. The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) last week reported that the concentrations of greenhouse gases in 2023 had touched new peaks. Carbon dioxide concentrations have now reached 420 parts per million, more than 150 per cent of pre-industrial levels. Concentrations of other gases, methane and nitrous oxide, are also at record levels. The increase of carbon dioxide concentration in 2023 was higher than that of 2022, though lower than three years prior to that. Missing the targets

The rising concentration of greenhouse gases has led to a rise in global temperatures. Last year was 1.45 degree Celsius hotter than pre-industrial times, the hottest year so far. Average global temperatures in the 2014-2023 decade have been 1.2 degree Celsius higher than pre-industrial times. The WMO has estimated that the average annual temperature was almost certain to breach the 1.5 degree Celsius threshold in the next couple of years. Even the decadal averages are likely



to exceed that threshold within five to ten years. To prevent this eventuality, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body that advances scientific knowledge about climate change, recommended at least a 43 per cent reduction in global emissions over 2019 levels in 2030. That is supposed to be the first milestone on the road to achieving global net-zero status by 2050. The 2030 milestone is almost certain to be missed. All the climate actions that countries are taking, or plan to take, are projected to reduce emissions only slightly by 2030, according to a new assessment by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat. Therefore, global emissions in 2030 are

likely to be 2.6 per cent below 2019 levels, nowhere close to the required 43 per cent reduction (Table). However, this is still a marginal improvement over the projections made in a similar assessment done last year. That assessment had put 2030 emissions to be about 2 per cent lower than 2019 levels. This small improvement is a result of some new climate actions promised by a few countries, or better than expected progress on some of these actions. The minimal progress made in the period up to 2030 would leave countries with the task of making deep cuts at a later stage. But that is exactly how the world has been tackling climate change till now — doing the bare minimum, or even less, in the present, and leaving the bulk of the work for some other time.

## Low-sugar diet in pregnancy cuts adult disease risk: Study

New Delhi: A in pregnancy, which if continued in the first two years of life can meaningfully reduce the risk of chronic diseases in adulthood, according to a new study. The study led by the US and Canadian researchers provides compelling new evidence of the lifelong health effects of early-life sugar consumption.

Children who had sugar restrictions during their first 1,000 days after conception had up to 35 per cent lower risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. It can also reduce as much as 20 per cent the risk of hypertension as adults, revealed the study published in the journal Science.

Diabetes and hypertension (high blood pressure) are the most common non-communicable diseases driving a significant health burden across the globe. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends no added sugars for children under two and not more than 12 teaspoons (50g) of added sugar daily for adults. Notably, exposure to sugar restrictions in utero alone was enough to lower



risks, but disease protection increased postnatally once solids were likely introduced.

If followed this can save costs, extend life expectancy, and, perhaps more impor-

tantly, quality of life, said the researchers from the McGill University in Montreal, and the University of California, Berkeley, who examined how sugar rationing during World War II influenced long-term health outcomes.



# Haryana Congress: Will Rahul Dare to Kick Out the Black Sheep?

The Haryana Congress party, which was flying high after winning half the seats in the Lok Sabha elections, is stunned by the results of the Assembly elections held just six months after that were highly contrary to its expectations. The Congress was not even dreaming of getting anything less than a two-thirds majority. The supporters of a Haryana leader had started sleeping with the Chief Minister's seat in their lap. 'That leader' himself had also started speaking every word of his address in the manner of a Chief Minister. But the tables turned and the statement given by the then and BJP's declared future Chief Minister, Nayab Saini, -- 'We have made all the arrangements for the victory', shown a thumb to all the hopes and imaginations of the Congress by securing an absolute majority. Now the situation is such that the Congress, which has been defeated by an unexpected seat margin, is not even able to decide the name of the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Assembly even after almost a month has passed. People have started jokingly saying that if God forbid it had got the majority, would they have decided the name of the Chief Minister? The problem is not that it does not have the desired number of MLAs, but the problem is that to take this decision has become a noose around the neck of the weak high command. The repeated wrong decisions of the high command have axed the feet of the high command itself, paralyzing its decision-making and control power and has left it as a puppet in the hands of only one person in the state.

Who is that person, in front of whose aura the light of the high command fades? What is the reason that the high command is not able to come out of the state of indecisiveness? Why has this person become so powerful?

To find the answer to all these questions, political analysts consider the initial step taken by the Congress high command, buoyed by the massive victory in the 2005 assembly elections, to hand over the Chief Minister's throne to Bhupinder Hooda, a Jat leader, by thrashing Bhajan Lal, the leader of non-Jats. In this election, which was fought under the leadership of former Chief Minister Chaudhary Bhajan Lal, the Congress had won 67 out of 90 seats. The high command, worried about the growing stature of Bhajan Lal, handed over the throne to a person, Bhupinder Hooda, who could be directed by the high command as per its desire, to cut Bhajan Lal's wings. From the very beginning, the Congress had been getting support from all castes and classes. Although the Brahmin community remained dominant there, the Dalit and backward classes also considered the Congress as their well-wisher. The Jats had accepted the farmer leader, who emerged in the form of Chaudhary Devi Lal, as their umbrella leader, taking advantage of which Bhajan Lal expanded his sphere of influence by starting Jat-non-Jat politics. As, the Jats had started moving away from the Congress, so to reunite them and to narrow down the growing circle of Bhajan Lal, the congress high command used Hooda, an alternative Jat leader, as a weapon. The Congress high command

did not realize at that time that the weapon they were sharpening to cut Bhajan Lal would one day weaken the high command itself and force it to bow down.

And the results of this move started coming in the very next assembly elections. Though Bhajan Lal was ignored by the Congress party and forced to leave the party, his supporters were infuriated by this decision of the high command and the 2009 elections, which were fought under the leadership of Hooda, gave a glimpse of the result of this move by squeezing Congress to only 40 seats out of 90. Although Bhajan Lal's own separate party, Haryana Janhit Congress (HJC), won 7 seats and kept Congress below the majority mark, but a few power-hungry MLAs, who are usually readily available all the time in Haryana, snubbed the Haryana Janhit Congress (HJC) and supported Congress to facilitate Hooda back to power. The move of the Congress high command to reinstate Hooda further angered the non-Jat community and in the 2014 assembly elections, which were again fought under Hooda's leadership, the Congress was restricted to 15 seats. The high command began to realize its mistake and re-inducted Bhajan Lal's political heir Kuldeep Bishnoi in 2016 to bring the angry non-Jat community to its side. This also had an impact and in the 2019 assembly elections, the Congress's seats increased from 15 to a respectable 31, but the Congress's move to separate Dalit community leader Ashok Tanwar from the Congress under pressure from Hooda's strategy also alienated the Congress from a particular community. To attract this class again, Congress made Kumari Selja take charge of the state Congress, which Hooda did not like and he slowly started reducing Selja's stature too and finally, by preventing Selja from being sent to Rajya Sabha again, he got his own son Deepender Hooda nominated and by removing further Selja from the post of president, he got his own yes man Uday Bhan crowned and strengthened his hold on the state party. Hooda's next target was former Chief Minister late Chaudhary Bansi Lal's daughter-in-law Kiran Chaudhary, he not only deprived her of the post of Congress Legislature Party leader and got himself seated on this chair, but also forced her to leave the Congress. Before this, Bhajan Lal's son Kuldeep Bishnoi was also forced to leave the party again. Now only Randeep Surjewala and Kumari Selja are left as the opposing voices of Hooda in the state party. To prevent Surjewala from being made a Rajya Sabha candidate from Haryana, Ajay Maken, who is close to the high command, was made the party's nominee, but the neglected Kuldeep Bishnoi and Kiran Chaudhary gave Hooda a hard blow and Hooda's candidate Maken had to face defeat despite having the sufficient number of MLAs. Later, the high command had to send Surjewala to Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan. In the recently held assembly elections, Hooda alone grabbed 72 out of 90 tickets to keep Kumari Selja and Surjewala away from claiming the Chief Minister's chair in the state. Neglected in ticket distribution, Selja sat in 'Kopbhavan' (dissociating from election campaign) for 10 days during the assembly election battle

and showed her displeasure to the high command, but the high command did not pay any attention to Selja's indifference for 10 days. And this indifference of Selja showed the Congress its true colours. Either the high command was unaware of this matter or was pretending to be unaware and not giving any attention to Selja, but the question here is whether the high command was so confident that it could see a huge victory in Haryana even without Selja or was the high command under someone's pressure and was forced to overlook Selja's indifference? In both the cases, the high command's weakness and powerlessness in decision making is clearly indicated.

Why the name of the leader of the legislative party not being decided?

The Congress high command felt that the slogan of 'Kisan- Pehlwan- Agniveer' would give it a majority on the ground. Political thinkers believe that so much ruckus was created by the influential Jat community of Haryana that the high command felt that the Jat leader Hooda would conquer the stronghold. Hooda too, taking the sloganeering of the Jat voters as support for the Congress, was making arrangements to secure his seat as the Chief Minister and was engaged in a way to defeat his rival group instead of defeating BJP. It was appearing throughout the election as if the Congress party had turned into Hooda Congress, this election was not being fought for the party but for the personal interests. As the Jat community getting more preference repeatedly, the OBC and the Dalit community turned away from the Congress due to Selja's indifference. On the other hand, seeing the factionalism in Congress, the Jat community also put aside their animosity towards BJP and gave 30% votes to the BJP. As a result, Congress was left helpless and BJP got win. Ground level political thinkers analyse that the Jats are always a divided house. While voting they never use their verdict unitedly in favour of a single candidate, rather they vote according to their village level politics, which never allows them to unite. BJP has understood this fact, whereas congress failed as its booth level roots have become defunct due to non-functioning of its organisational wings. The political analysts suggest that if the congress wants to regain its past glory in Haryana, it must have to woo its old-time core supporters such as



OBC and SC categories voters by giving them a freehand representation as Leader of Opposition (LoP) and State Party President. Better they appoint a strong Ahirwal leader as state chief to get the strength in OBC, especially Yadav community and an SC leader as LoP.

After the big blow in Haryana assembly elections, now the high command felt that the local leaders of the party have ruined the party. Rahul Gandhi himself had to say – In Haryana, the leaders ignored the party's interest and gave importance to their own interest. But what's the use crying over the spilled milk. If Rahul Gandhi has recognised the Black Sheep, 'Will He Dare to Kick Them Out?'

Now the high command is facing a situation of snake and shrew. They neither can shake Hooda off nor embrace him. On one hand, there is a fear of the spark of disintegration in the party and on the other hand, there is a fear of losing non-Jat votes. If Hooda is again made the leader of the legislative party, then there is a danger of the non-Jat community, especially the Dalit community, getting alienated and if Hooda or the person nominated by him is not made the leader of the legislative party, on the strength of the numbers of his supporting MLAs, Hooda may divorce the Congress and become the leader of the legislative party himself and as a result of this development in Haryana, the Congress may lose access to power in Maharashtra also. In this state of confusion, the Congress is keeping the name of the leader of the legislative party hanging. This is a very difficult situation for the Congress and the gains and losses of this decision are now reflecting not only in the state but also in the politics of the country. Let us see which way the wind blows!

## Elderly woman kidnapped, sexually assaulted in Ameerpet

Hyderabad: Three persons allegedly kidnapped and sexually assaulted a woman at a house in Madhuranagar, Ameerpet in the city on Monday night. The victim, aged around 50 years, was waiting for a bus at HiTec city bus stop when the trio approached her and asked her whether she could wash clothes at their house.

The woman agreed after they promised to pay her Rs. 500 for the task. The trio

took the woman to their room in Om Nagar of Madhuranagar and confined her. "They sexually assaulted the victim and when she raised an alarm, the neighbour rushed and rescued her. The suspects escaped from the house," said G Srinivas Varma.

On a complaint, a case is registered and the woman sent for medical examination. The police are making efforts to nab the suspects who are natives of Uttar Pradesh.



# Brighter Diwali for Bharat Families: Shopsy Unveils its Big Diwali sale

Building on the festive spirit, Shopsy by Flipkart, India's fastest-growing hyper-value e-commerce platform, is delighting its customers once again with its Big Diwali Sale that will continue till 29th, 2024. Following the success of its Grand Shopsy Mela, The Big Billion Days sales, and 'Diwali Swagat Sale,' this ongoing festive sale promises an exceptional selection of curated deals. With over 2 million festival essentials, shoppers can discover exclusive offerings that reflect the vibrant and varied traditions of Bharat. This Diwali, Shopsy is committed to delivering an unparalleled shopping experience that truly celebrates the spirit of the season. Since the start of the festive season, the platform has recorded a significant 70% boost in visits. As Bharat prepares for the joyous Diwali festival and the surrounding festivities, this period is marked by family celebrations, gifting, and shopping. Shopsy's Diwali Swagat Sale, which began on October 13, set the stage for an exciting shopping experience, leading up to the Big Diwali Sale. This mega sale aims to enhance the festive experience for its cus-

tomers, catering to family needs for regional festivities like Dhanteras, Karwachauth, Bhai Dooj, Govardhan Pooja and more. The extensive collection of products, with over 50% off, ranges from fashion to home decor to festive essentials. Shoppers can enjoy great deals of the season on popular festive categories across fashion, cleaning, gifting, home, and much more. Shopsy will be offering 10,000 Shagun deals daily to customers, starting at Rs. 11/-, Rs. 51/-, Rs. 101/- and more. Users will also stand a chance to win Gold and Silver coins by participating in the Gold Utsav challenge on the app. Prathyusha Agarwal, Business Head, Shopsy, shares, "India's rich festive calendar, from Rakhi to Diwali, plays a major role in shaping shopping trends. According to a recent report by Redseer Strategy Consultants[1] India's e-commerce sector is projected to experience a 20% year-on-year surge during the festive season, particularly benefiting the 'big three' categories: mobiles, electronics, and fashion. Understanding the diverse needs of our customers, Shopsy continuously adapts its product range to cater to every

**shopsy**

**BIG DIWALI SALE**

**OCTOBER 19 - 29, 2024**

- ₹11 SHAGUN DEALS**  
10,000 Shagun daily deal starting from Re. 11/-, 21/-, 51/-, 101/-
- GOLD UTSAV**  
Win gold and silver coins
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Over 50% off
- DIWALI JHATPAT DEALS**  
Limited time deal Starting from Re. 1/-

key moment. With each week of the festive season bringing new micro-occasions, we're committed to offering the right prod-

ucts for every celebration, ensuring that our customers always find exactly what they need.

## BharatBenz conferred with 'Well-Known Trademark' status by the Intellectual Property Office, India



BharatBenz, the flagship brand under Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Daimler Truck AG, Germany, has been officially presented with 'Well-Known Trademark' status by the Intellectual Property [IP] Office India. This 'Well-Known Trademark' status signifies BharatBenz's remarkable brand value, solidifying its standing as an iconic player in the Indian market, widely recognized by customers and society alike. Satyakam Arya, Managing Director & CEO, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles, commenting on this momentous achievement, said, "We are immensely proud to achieve this prestigious recognition as a 'Well-Known Trademark.' As a young and dynamic brand, BharatBenz has made a significant impact in the Indian commercial vehicle market. This status highlights our brand's journey and reputation since launch and reflects the deep trust our customers and partners place in us. Over the past 12 years, BharatBenz has played a vital role in nation-building, securing a strong market position through an unwavering commitment to performance, innovation and safety."

Entering a predominantly cowl-based truck market, BharatBenz distinguished itself by introducing advanced safety standards, including fully factory-built, air-conditioned metal cabins that reflect the brand's commitment to road safety in India. This pioneering approach underscores BharatBenz's dedication to safety and efficiency, with each vehicle engineered to deliver optimal performance and minimize Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). Reaffirming the brand's safety commitment, Satyakam added, "Today, BharatBenz continues to meet global safety standards, including Europe's ECE R29-03, providing enhanced protection for drivers in the event of a crash, and setting a new benchmark for safety and reliability in India. We believe it is essential to foster greater awareness of safety in the Indian market, and we are proud to be at the forefront of driving this change." Designed to meet the needs of diverse industries, BharatBenz's extensive range of trucks and buses combines innovative Indian engineering with German DNA. In 2020, BharatBenz led the industry by becoming the first brand to introduce BSVI-compliant vehicles, strengthening its

commitment to environmental standards and technological advancement. Achieving 'Well-Known Trademark' status provides BharatBenz with greater legal protection under the Trademark Act, reinforcing its

trust and recognition among consumers. This designation assures customers of the brand's commitment to quality, fostering loyalty and enhancing its presence both domestically and internationally.

## CICI Prudential Life tops Claim Settlement Ratio at 99.35% in Q1-FY2025

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has declared a claim settlement ratio of 99.35% for Q1-FY2025, the highest amongst all life insurance companies in the country. Notably, the average claim settlement turnaround time was just 1.2 days. Also, during this period the total value of death claims settled by the Company was at Rs. 381.24 crore.

Mr. Amish Banker, Chief Operations Officer, Customer Service, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance said, "Life insurance is a product which ensures the financial security of the family in case of loss of the earning member. Therefore, we process every claim with utmost sensitivity and quickly. For Q1-FY2025 we had an individual death claim settlement ratio of 99.35% and the average time taken to settlement a non-investigative death claim was just 1.2 days. We believe our claim settlement ratio is the best in the best in the industry. For this same period, we settled claims totalling Rs. 381.24 crore.

We have a history of consistently having an industry leading claim settlement



ratio. For instance, in Q1-FY2024 it was 97.94%, for Q2-FY2024 it stood at 98.14%, in Q3-FY2024 it was 98.52% and for FY2024 it was 99.17%. Our 'Claim For Sure' service initiative promises to settle all eligible death claims in one day after submission of all required documents. Specifically, under this initiative we settled claims amounting to Rs. 68.74 crore in Q1-FY2025.

Technology solutions implemented have enabled us to significantly reduce claim processing time besides offering convenient touchpoints such as WhatsApp, Mobile app, Website to lodge and track claims. Life insurance is a promise we make to our policyholders to ensure their families have financial security in their absence."



# JSW MG Motor India Partners with HSBC India to Strengthen Channel Finance Solutions

Tailored financing solutions offering competitive and flexible terms for dealers

JSW MG Motor India has announced a strategic partnership with HSBC India, to provide comprehensive channel financing solutions for its dealer network. This collaboration will offer JSW MG Motor India dealers access to comprehensive dealer financing solution at competitive terms. Leveraging HSBC India's expertise will provide easy access to working capital for JSW MG Motor's dealer network. With varied and customised financing options on offer, this collaboration will enhance operational efficiency, promote business sustainability, and foster long-term growth opportunities for the dealer partners. Commenting on the partnership, Satinder Singh Bajwa, Chief Commercial Officer at JSW MG Motor India, said, "Our collaboration with HSBC marks a significant step in empowering our dealer partners. This strategic partnership is a testament to our ongoing efforts to provide the best resources and support to our dealer partners, thereby driving mutual success. HSBC's global expertise and strong geographical presence in India makes them an ideal partner in our growth journey." Gaurav Sahgal, Country Head Business Banking, HSBC India, said, "Our partnership with JSW MG Motor India represents a strategic step forward in delivering financial solutions for the all-important channel partners. Our aim is to facilitate seamless access to financing and fostering a conducive environment for them to respond more effectively to market demands. It is another milestone to further strengthen our long-standing relationship with JSW MG Motor India."

About JSW MG Motor India

SAIC Motor, a global Fortune 500 company with a presence in over 100 countries and JSW Group (India's leading conglomerate with interests across B2B and B2C sectors) formed a joint venture - JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. in 2023. The joint venture aims to build a smart and sustainable automotive ecosystem while continuing to stay focused on developing a diverse portfolio of vehicles to give car buyers better access to advanced technologies and futuristic products with attractive value propositions. JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. is committed to introducing world-class technology, strengthening the manufacturing landscape, best of innovation across its business operations, and generating significant employment opportunities through extensive localisation.

About Morris Garages

Founded in the UK in 1924, Morris Garages vehicles were world-famous for their sports cars, roadsters, and cabriolet series. MG vehicles were much sought after by celebrities, including British Prime Ministers and even the British Royal Family, for their styling, elegance, and spirited performance. The MG Car Club, set up in 1930 at Abingdon in the UK, has thousands of loyal fans, making it one of the world's largest clubs for a car brand. MG has evolved into a modern, futuristic, and innovative brand over the last 100 years. Its state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Halol, Gujarat, has an annual production capacity of 1,00,000 plus vehicles and 6,000 direct and indirect employees. Driven by its



vision of CASE (Connected, Autonomous, Shared, and Electric) mobility, the innovative automaker has augmented across-the-board 'experiences' within the automobile segment today. It has introduced several 'firsts' in India, including India's first Internet SUV – MG Hector, India's first Pure Electric Internet SUV – MG ZS EV, India's first

Autonomous (Level 1) Premium SUV – MG Gloster, the Astor- India's first SUV with personal AI assistant and Autonomous (Level 2) technology, MG Comet – The Street-Smart Car, and MG Windsor – India's first Intelligent CUV.

Website: [www.mgmotor.co.in](http://www.mgmotor.co.in)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MGMotorIN>

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## Continental Hospitals Secures Fourth JCI Accreditation, Setting a New Benchmark in World-Class Healthcare Excellence

Continental Hospitals is privileged to announce a significant milestone with its fourth consecutive Joint Commission International (JCI) Gold Seal of Approval®, a prestigious certification recognized globally as the benchmark for healthcare quality and patient safety. This distinguished honor underscores Continental Hospitals' steadfast commitment to clinical excellence and patient-centred care, elevating the standard for advanced medical care in Hyderabad and across India. With this elite accreditation, Continental Hospitals establishes its position as a leader in pioneering world-class healthcare that inspires confidence and trust among patients and the community.

Over the course of one week, the esteemed JCI surveyors conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the hospital's departments, ensuring adherence to the highest international standards. The team comprised Charles Welborn, MD, Dianne DeVoll, MSN, FNP-RNC, CNM, and Jonathan M. Carretas, JD, RN, BSN—each bringing their expertise and dedication to the assessment process. Their thorough review affirmed that Continental Hospitals consistently meets and exceeds the quality and safety expectations established by JCI. Continental Hospitals is among a select group of healthcare organizations worldwide, being one of only five hospitals in Hyderabad and 53 nationwide to achieve Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation. In order to guarantee that patients receive the best possible safety, quality, and compassionate care,



this achievement highlights the hospital's leadership in providing healthcare that complies with the highest international standards. To ensure that patients receive the highest standards of safety, quality, and compassionate care, this achievement underscores Continental Hospitals' leadership in providing healthcare that meets and exceeds international benchmarks. Dr. Guru N. Reddy, a renowned gastroenterologist and the Founder & Chairman of Continental Hospitals, stated, "At Continental Hospitals, we are incredibly proud to receive JCI accreditation for the fourth time." This milestone is a testament to our relentless dedication to quality, safety, and continuous improvement in every aspect of patient care. Our outstanding team of healthcare professionals works tirelessly

to uphold these values, delivering patient-centered care that inspires trust and confidence. Following the announcement of the certification, JCI members participated in a celebratory cake-cutting event alongside Dr. Guru N. Reddy and Dr. Raghu N. Reddy, Director of Continental Hospitals. This joyous moment marked the culmination of their week-long evaluation and served as a testament to the hospital's commitment to excellence. The hospital's fourth JCI certification highlights its ongoing efforts to enhance healthcare practices through constant innovation, advanced medical technology, and a patient-first approach. With cutting-edge diagnostic tools, a highly skilled multidisciplinary team, and internationally trained specialists, Continental Hospitals continues to set new standards in healthcare.



# Importing a toxic work culture into India

An Indian woman in her twenties, working in Pune for a major consultancy firm, died one day after returning home from work. Her mother believes that this had resulted from exhaustion due to overwork at the office. While the deeper cause would be difficult to ascertain, her parents have spoken publicly about their daughter informing them about the long hours she faced at work and the stress she endured from unreasonably close deadlines for reports. Moreover, soon after the news of her death broke, at least one former employee has written or spoken in the public domain regarding the work culture that they experienced at the same company, which led him to leave. Ironically, on the website of the firm's 'India Office' the first entry is a banner declaring that the company's purpose is "building a better working world"

An American imprintThe firm concerned is a so-called multinational. This term is somewhat of an oxymoron, reflected in the reality that every multinational company has a distinct national affiliation, and national governments avidly work to further the prospects of their own multinationals (MNCs). Thus, when United States President Bill Clinton visited India in 2000, where he was mobbed by our parliamentarians in the Lok Sabha, he had come with a posse of American CEOs seeking opportunities. Most of the world's multinationals are American. This explains their work culture, the essential part of which is an emphasis on long hours apart from the relentless pressure to fulfil stringent targets, whether of sales or, in the case of accounting/consultancy firms, commissioned reports for clients ranging from for-profit firms to governments.

It is useful to understand the provenance of the work culture found in multinationals. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. came to have an outsized influence on global affairs, and its economic architecture, including the work culture, came to be seen as the gold standard. From accounting practices to what is considered normal when it comes to hours of work, 'the American way' became the norm. Now, the culture of the multinationals came to possess the cachet of being of American origin even if the company itself may not be. This culture has a history. The German sociologist, Max Weber, showed how the reformation of Christianity in northern Europe altered the view of work. Protestantism, especially Calvinism, doctrinally supported worldly activities dedicated to economic gain, seeing them as endowed with a moral and spiritual significance that was equal to working for the Church, which Catholicism had privileged. Weber identified the protestant ethic as a driver of early capitalism. As America was founded by northern Europeans intent on establishing a community based on Protestant beliefs, it is not difficult to see where the glorification of work that came to define the American way of life came from. Weber relies on the writings of the American thinker, Benjamin Franklin, to make his case. The point of all this is to see that the work culture at

MNCs is not based on ergonomics or organisational psychology but is actually of religious extraction.

A country comparison of work, productivity

For the economist, it remains pertinent to ask where the American obsession with work has got Americans. I shall base my investigation on data issued by the International Labour Organisation. If we were to make a global comparison of national per capita incomes, a standard measure of the standard of living of a population, we would find that hard work has got the U.S. quite far for sure but not as far as others without the same approach to work. In 2023, the U.S. was the 12th globally in terms of GNP per capita. If we take Guyana out of this list — it was only barely ahead — 10 countries were ahead of the U.S. These were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland. Note that apart from a tiny Asian country, the rest of the list is exclusively of western European countries. There is, though, an aspect of the comparison just made that needs mentioning. As productivity measures are based on value, the country that makes more valuable goods would tend to rank higher even if its physical productivity is not higher across all goods. So as to avoid relying on a comparison of value-based productivity levels alone, we may compare how the value-based productivity measure grows over time across countries. When we do this for the period of half a century from 1970, we find that U.S. GNP per capita has grown faster than only Switzerland's, and that too marginally (paucity of data meant that Austria and Singapore had to be excluded from the exercise). So, we find that neither is the population of the U.S. the richest in the world nor is its productivity growth faster. A further assessment of the economic value of hard work is conveyed by the following indicator.

In the above sample, except for Singapore, the average hours worked per person in a year were lower than that in the U.S. in every other country listed above. So, we can see that it is possible to get richer than the U.S. even when working less. There appears to be a difference between working, a creative mental and physical engagement, and just labouring, as defined by hours worked. However, talk of national cultures glorifying work can go only this far in accounting for the long hours allegedly worked by employees of multinationals, such as the employee who died. As observed by Karl Marx a 150 years ago, the length of the working day is a factor determining profits under capitalism. When only a part of a day's labour by the worker is needed to pay for their maintenance by way of the wage, the rest accrues to the capitalist as profit. As competition among capitalists lowers the rate of profit, capitalists strive to recoup profits by increasing the length of the working day or getting workers to do more and more faster. For



consulting firms such as the one in question, the latter would mean producing more reports in less and less time.

An add-on to foreign investmentIt is useful to remember that the work culture allegedly existing at the firm was not always present in India. It came along with the foreign investment that was courted as part of the liberalising reforms of 1991. Foreign investment was seen as a route to raising capital formation and bringing along global best practices in management. As for the promised global best practices, the incident involving the Pune firm is at least one data point by which to gauge outcomes. Whatever may be the actual benefits for India of having kept an open house for them, the multinationals seem to have done quite well for themselves since.

It has been reported that during 2017-22, the 'Big Four' among the global consulting firms bagged 305 assignments from

the Government of India. The same source reports a figure so large for the revenue that accrued to them from India that I thought it wise to ascertain it before citing it. But in all these cases, it would be of interest to know if expertise as good was not available in India. There is also a record of the governments of some southern States favouring external consultants over local experts who are far more knowledgeable on economic matters. An upshot of the incident at Pune is that the working hours and practices in the multinationals working in India must be regulated by the government. So should the working hours at the Indian companies directly serving offshore entities, where stress-induced suicides have been reported recently. That these companies, which serve a global clientele, would require them to run shifts that cater to different time zones to ply their business is well understood, but they would have to adhere to Indian norms.

## ISRO launches India's first analog space mission to study extraterrestrial challenges

New Delhi: The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) on Friday announced the launch of its first analog space mission, to study the challenges of extraterrestrial conditions that will help in future space missions. The mission, which includes a compact, inflatable habitat named Hab-1 will simulate life in an interplanetary habitat. It is being held in Leh, in Ladakh.

Even as India plans to launch several space missions, the new mission will help understand the challenges that future astronauts may encounter on missions beyond Earth. "India's first analog space mission kicks off in Leh!" ISRO said in a post on X.

"This mission will simulate life in an interplanetary habitat to tackle the challenges of a base station beyond Earth," the space agency added.

Hab-1 is equipped with essentials like a hydroponics farm, kitchen, and sanita-

tion facilities. It provides a self-sustaining environment, offering valuable data as India is planning long-duration space missions to the Moon, Mars, and beyond. The mission is a collaborative effort by the Human Spaceflight Centre, ISRO, AAKA Space Studio, University of Ladakh, IIT Bombay, and is supported by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.

Ladakh was chosen as the place for the mission due to its unique geological characteristics that closely resemble Martian and lunar landscapes. Its cold, arid conditions and high altitude will provide an ideal environment for testing technologies and strategies necessary for long-duration space missions.

During the mission, the scientists will test new technologies, robotic equipment, vehicles, habitats, and communications. They will also seek to understand power generation, mobility, infrastructure, and storage during the analog mission.



# SC ruling on child marriage: why it's important to go beyond just punishment

The judgment in *Society for Enlightenment and Voluntary Action v. Union of India*, delivered by the Supreme Court earlier this month, has moved the focus in cases of child marriage from penalising criminal actions to addressing the “harm meted out to the victim”. The judgment underlines that comprehensive efforts to address child marriage should go beyond prevention and prosecution, and must include substantial measures to help those already in child marriages reclaim their agency. According to National Family Health Survey data, the percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married before 18 declined from 47.4% in 2005 to 26.8% in 2016, and further to 23.3% in 2021. Nonetheless, the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of eliminating child marriage entirely by 2030 appears ambitious. The institutional response has focused mostly on prevention and, of late, prosecution — such as the mass arrests of men in Assam whose wives were minors when they married.

What is the law on child marriage?

Under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA), a “child marriage” is one in which either the husband is under 21 years of age, or the wife is under 18. Such a marriage is “voidable”, that is, the party that was a child at the time of the marriage has the option to annul it — until such annulment occurs, the marriage is valid and subsists. In Karnataka and Haryana, as state-specific amendments have made all child marriages void from the beginning.

Is annulment the same as divorce?

Annulment is different from divorce — when a marriage is annulled, it is as though it had never occurred, and the individuals involved are considered unmarried. In contrast, divorce acknowledges that a marriage existed for a period before being dissolved, leaving the parties with the legal status of divorcees. Divorce requires proving specific grounds — such as cruelty or adultery — depending on the personal law applicable. For annulment under the PCMA, the individual needs to only establish that a child marriage took place, and that they were within the legal age limit to apply for nullification. PCMA also provides for other civil remedies such as maintenance, residence orders, and return of gifts exchanged at the wedding.

Why are there concerns about using criminal action to tackle child marriage?

Although the child marriage itself subsists unless it is annulled, various activities related to child marriage are criminalised. Under the PCMA, performing or promotion of child marriage, and a male adult marrying a minor are criminal offences. Sexual activity with a minor, including within a child marriage, is an offence under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO), and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS). Applied together, the criminal provisions of PCMA, BNS, and POCSO create the possibility of criminal action against the girl’s entire family — her parents, husband, and in-laws — which could leave her in a

vulnerable position without preparation or support to survive independently. It may also create barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare, as seeking such services could inadvertently trigger criminal action against her family. A study of 73 judgments from 2008 to 2017 by the Delhi-based legal resource group Partners for Law in Development found that the criminal provisions of PCMA were used twice as often in cases of self-initiated marriages than arranged marriages. A 2024 study by Bengaluru-based Enfold Proactive Health Trust and Civic Data Lab based on 174 PCMA judgments from Assam, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu, showed 49.4% of these marriages were self-initiated. These trends suggest that criminal action can overlook complexities involved in the issue, and cause unintended harm to adolescents seeking autonomy. In many cases, underage individuals choose to marry to escape difficult situations such as neglect, abuse, or the prospect of a forced marriage. These child marriages involve young people asserting their agency in a patriarchal society, using elopement as a way to legitimise their relationships.

Why is the SC judgment significant?

Exiting a child marriage can attract social and economic sanctions. The SC judgment directs the introduction of a special scheme for skill development, voca-



tional training, and economic stability for women who leave child marriages, rehabilitation services, monitoring and follow-up support to ensure reintegration, and a call to consider compensation for these women under victim compensation schemes. Some women may not want to exit the marriage, but may need help to claim agency within the marriage. They require tools to strengthen their ability to advocate for themselves in decisions involving reproductive rights, employment,

and education. The SC judgment’s emphasis on sex education for adolescents can empower those in such marriages with the skills and information to effectively navigate their relationships. When implemented with an understanding of the evolving nature of child marriage — especially trends involving young people eloping — these measures offer a more holistic and agency-affirming approach to eliminating child marriage than an over-reliance on criminal prosecution.

## What are melanistic tigers? | Explained

The story so far: A tigress from the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra, was sent 800 km away to the Similipal Tiger Reserve on Sunday (October 28, 2024) so as to diversify the genetic pool of the tiger population in Odisha. She is part of a plan by the Odisha government to tackle inbreeding in the tiger population that has resulted in increasing numbers of the once elusive black tigers or pseudomelanistic tigers. Aged two years and seven months, the tigress was released into an enclosure where she is kept for observation. She will be later released in the South Division of Similipal. According to Susant Nanda, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), the presence of so many melanistic tigers in Similipal is not a cause of concern. However, he stressed that the tigress will bring in different genetic matter which would remedy the inbreeding situation.

What are pseudo-melanistic tigers?

As far as appearances go, pseudomelanistic (pseudo: false; melanistic: dark coloured) tigers appear to have a black coat with white and orange stripes occasionally peaking through. Their pelt looks almost the inverse of a normal tiger. Till the 1700s, these tigers were considered mythical. One of the first pieces of evidence of a black tiger was a watercolour painting by a

British artist and writer named James Forbes.

Identifying the genetic basis of pseudomelanism in captive tigers. (A) Normal tiger (Left) versus pseudomelanistic tiger (Right). An increase in the surface area of the coat covered by darker stripes gives the pseudomelanistic tiger a darker, blotchy appearance. (B) The pedigree of the captive tigers sampled for this study. Identifying the genetic basis of pseudomelanism in captive tigers. (A) Normal tiger (Left) versus pseudomelanistic tiger (Right). An increase in the surface area of the coat covered by darker stripes gives the pseudomelanistic tiger a darker, blotchy appearance. (B) The pedigree of the captive tigers sampled for this study. | Photo Credit: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Even two centuries later, there were only sightings recorded by locals and British hunters. This is until 1970, when a tigress at the Oklahoma City Zoo gave birth to a cub with bizarre patterns. The cub was killed soon after by the mother. In the 1990s, an unusual tiger pelt was seized from poachers in New Delhi which finally confirmed the existence of this rare tiger. The pseudo-melanistic tiger is a colour variant of the Bengal tiger. Its strange coat is a result of a mutation in a particular gene. This genetic quirk cause their stripes

to widen and spread across the orange or tawny coat and at times give the appearance of being completely black.

Distribution of the genotyped individuals. A total of 428 individuals were genotyped at the Taqpep c.1360C > T mutation site. Wild tigers are shown with a circular marker, and captive tigers (NKB, AAC, and Mysore Zoo) are shown with a square marker. The size of the square/circle indicates the number of individuals genotyped from a given area. In addition to the 399 Bengal tigers shown on the map, we genotyped 12 Amur, 12 Malayan, and five Sumatran tigers from Armstrong et al. Distribution of the genotyped individuals. A total of 428 individuals were genotyped at the Taqpep c.1360C > T mutation site. Wild tigers are shown with a circular marker, and captive tigers (NKB, AAC, and Mysore Zoo) are shown with a square marker. The size of the square/circle indicates the number of individuals genotyped from a given area. In addition to the 399 Bengal tigers shown on the map, we genotyped 12 Amur, 12 Malayan, and five Sumatran tigers from Armstrong et al. | Photo Credit: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences A comparison between tiger populations showed that apart from the Similipal population, the mutation of the gene is extremely rare or even non-existent.



# U.S. Elections: History and evolution of U.S. immigration policy

With the U.S. elections to be held on November 5, both the Democrats and the Republicans have amped up their respective campaigns. Considered one of the most significant elections in U.S. history, tensions are high as the nation battles a cost-of-living crisis while simultaneously arming and aiding two wars happening in different parts of the world. One of the major issues on which voters are deciding their mandate is immigration policy. A study by the Pew Research Centre showed that about six-in-ten voters (61%) today say immigration is very important to their vote. It is of particular importance to Republican voters specifically, as 82% of Donald Trump supporters say it is a very important issue compared to 39% of Kamala Harris supporters who think the same. A look at how immigration policy has evolved in the U.S. over the years. U.S. Presidential elections 2024: Key dates and events to note

Before U.S. independence in 1776, the country was a colony of the British Empire. The U.S. War of Independence was mainly against the regressive policies of King George the Third who restricted trade and free movement. Thus, the U.S. Declaration of Independence, signed and ratified on July 4, 1776, states that King George "has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands". Therefore, the 'population of states' and 'migrations hither' are the foundations of the U.S. and intrinsic to its development and economic progress. Moreover, the image of the U.S. as a beacon of light for people of all origins with the desire to make their own fortunes or require a safe haven from persecution, chaos or poverty in their home countries, has been emphasised over and over again. The Statue of Liberty, situated in New York, symbolises this sentiment. In its Museum, it is inscribed, "Give me your tired, your poor/ Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free/ The wretched refuse of your teeming shore". These words gain added significance when one realises that it is through the port of New York that a lot of immigrants from the 'Old World' entered into the 'New World'.

Post U.S. independence, keeping true to the spirit of the Declaration, free movement across borders was encouraged. Migration of labour was a necessity as the U.S. embarked upon its nation building project. However, while borders were open, in order to be recognised as a U.S. citizen, a certain set of rules were established, the first of them codified through the Naturalization Act of 1790. This Act was limited to only free White Christian men. It excluded women, indentured servants, non-whites, and slaves. Thus, while migration was encouraged, the privilege of citizenship was often withheld from a majority of groups. Even Native Americans,



the indigenous people of the land, were not given citizenship till the Treaty of the Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830.

The U.S. experienced its first wave of mass migration in the 1850s, with the crippling potato famine in Ireland and the advent of the gold rush in California. While the sudden influx of primarily Irish and German immigrants did give way to anti-immigrant and especially anti-Catholic sentiment in some parts of the U.S., (the most famous manifestation of this being the Know Nothings party formed exclusively around these xenophobic views), their fervour did not last long. Parallely, during the Gold Rush in the 1850s, a lot of Chinese immigrants also entered the nation. These workers, often poor and vulnerable, were taken advantage of by industrial bosses and made to work in unsafe conditions for meagre wages. They were considered cheap labour and found employment as farmhands, domestics, laundry workers, and most famously, railroad workers. It was the Chinese Americans who built the Transcontinental Railroad in the U.S., one of the biggest reasons for its growth as an economic superpower. However, the fact that Chinese immigrant labour was preferred due to their willingness to work for cheap caused direct competition with white labourers. This led to rioting and protests by the white labour class and trade unions who said the Chinese immigrants were taking their jobs. To quell the riots, the U.S. government in 1882, for the first time, brought in an immigration policy specifying a particular nationality — the Chinese Exclusion Act. It mandated a ban on Chinese immigration for 10 years. Post the 1870s, after the U.S. Civil War, the country witnessed yet another wave of migrants attracted by the rapid industrialisation. These migrants were

mostly from the poorer countries of southern and eastern Europe such as Italy, Poland and Slovenia. As labour competition increased, native-born Americans were worried about the rising poverty and lack of education within these groups. These migrants were seen as reluctant to 'assimilate into American society'. Thus, competition in the labour market with Chinese and European immigrants, and fears of cultural isolation led to the U.S. Congress passing the Immigration Act of 1924. The Act introduced a quota system where visas were granted for 2% of the total number of people of each nationality in the U.S. as per the 1890 census. It introduced literary tests for incoming immigrants and increased the taxes collected from them upon arrival. The Act also banned immigration from Asia.

The period after the quota act severely restricted migration to the U.S. It was finally in the 1960s, with the advent of the Civil Rights movement, that the quota system for immigration was finally abolished with the Immigration and Nationality Act, 1965. It took out the nationality clause and opened the doors again for Asian immigration. Post 1965, immigration to the U.S. increased, particularly from Latin American and Asian nations. It also increased the number of illegal immigrants. On September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda carried out four coordinated terrorist attacks on U.S. soil which killed 2,977 people. Subsequent investigations following the attack found that most of the 9/11 hijackers were able to obtain a visa from a U.S. consulate without detection. Moreover, some were in the country at the time of the attack with expired visas. This presented the U.S. government with the task of addressing both failures in intelligence and gaps in domestic immigration law. After the attack, U.S. Congress made significant changes to immigration

law and policy. In 2002, the Congress passed the Homeland Security Act, which created the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) by absorbing the Immigration and Naturalization Service as well as Customs. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was then formed under the DHS. It is the ICE that now primarily deals with border control and security vulnerabilities in immigration. Here we see both policy and perspective shift on immigration and more specifically illegal immigration. What was earlier a matter of economics, as illegal migrants were seen as burdening the State exchequer, had now entered the realm of national security. Such a conflation of one's undocumented status with being a threat to domestic security can be understood by the remarks of former Attorney General John Ashcroft at a conference after the attacks, "Let the terrorists among us be warned: If you overstay your visa — even by one day — we will arrest you.... We will use all our weapons within the law and under the Constitution to protect life and enhance security for America." The 9/11 attacks can be seen as the beginning of the current hysteria around immigration to the U.S. Images in the media of 'hoards' or 'swaths' of immigrants at the U.S.-Mexican border often categorise them as criminals and within other undesirable categories. This is followed by claims of immigrants 'stealing jobs', 'refusing to assimilate', 'free-loaders' and so on; claims that we now know are not in any novel accusations. The U.S. as a nation has become an economic superpower because of its immigration policy. Be it from William Colgate to the Chinese immigrants who built the Transcontinental Railways to Elon Musk, immigrants have made their mark in various fields and speeded up the process of industrialisation in the U.S.