

BRS Gurukul Bata pushes Congress Govt into damage control mode

Hyderabad: The deteriorating conditions in welfare hostels across the State have dented the government's image considerably. With disillusionment spreading among the student community and their parents left distressed, the BRS had launched a massive campaign, "Gurukul Bata," to expose the government's failures. With the campaign hitting it further, the government has now embarked on a damage control mission. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who also holds the education portfolio, has faced criticism for the worsening state of affairs in welfare hostels. In an effort to address these issues, he has initiated a series of visits to welfare hostels across the State, aiming to stir the official machinery into action. This exercise is viewed by many as a late awakening. Since the Congress party took office, there have been numerous tragic incidents involving hostel students. According to sources, 51 students have died in welfare institutions, with causes ranging from food

poisoning and ill-health and other suspicious circumstances. Of these, 42 deaths have been attributed to gross negligence in managing residential welfare schools.

Reports of substandard food, including worm-infested rice, watery dal, and contaminated snacks, have become alarmingly common, leading to cases of food poisoning and hospitalization. Telangana's residential schools currently house approximately 1,39,290 students. These students rely on the government for their education and well-being, making the recent issues even more concerning. The recent deaths and ongoing health concerns have sparked widespread outrage and people started demanding for accountability.

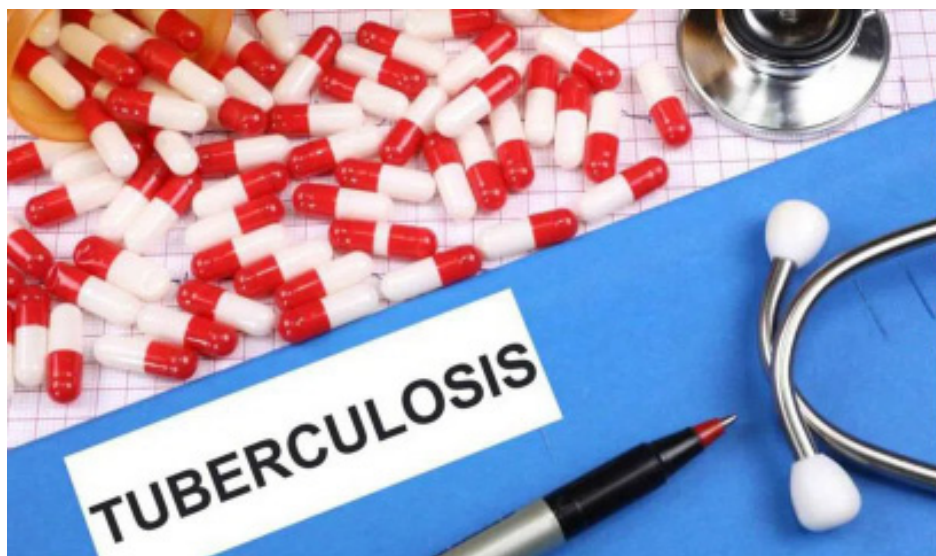
They are calling for better living conditions, nutritious meals, and a safer environment for their children. The government's move to inspect the hostels is a step towards addressing these demands, but the public remains skeptical about the effective-

ness of these visits. A fact-finding team led by senior BRS leaders, including R.S. Praveen Kumar, Errolla Srinivas, Anjaneya Goud, and Gellu Srinivas Yadav, visited various Gurukula schools and welfare hostels. They interacted with students and parents, documenting their grievances and highlighting the lack of basic amenities such as clean water, quality food, and proper facilities. The team reported that some schools even prevented them from meeting the students by locking the gates, which they condemned as an attempt to hide the issues. During the BRS regime, welfare hostels were known for their facilities and student community thriving in studies and extra-curricular activities with students competing for seats in Gurukula schools. Under the current Congress administration, the situation has worsened. BRS working president, K T Rama Rao said the students from welfare hostels were now competing for hospital beds. He said that the Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and his team



should focus on implementing immediate corrective measures to prevent further tragedies.

Eradication of TB: Telangana government struggles to meet yearly targets



Hyderabad: Notification of tuberculosis (TB) cases is a major obstacle for eradication of the disease in Telangana State. As a result, the Health Department in-charge of the TB eradication programme in Telangana is struggling to meet its yearly targets. In 2024, between January and October, a total of 62,722 TB positive cases were reported while last year 74,994 were reported in Telangana State, TB reporting data presented in Lok Sabha by Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, J P Nadda on Friday, said.

While there is a months left i.e. till December, 2024, for the TB department to meet

its targets, the fact remains that ensuring private healthcare establishments notify TB cases is a perennial difficulty to deal with for the TB Health Department in Telangana State. Based on the updated TB reporting data (till December 13, 2024) in the Nikshay portal, which was not part of the data presented in Lok Sabha, the overall target for Hyderabad this year was 10,050 TB cases out of which 7,498 were reported, indicating a 14 per cent deficit. The drop in reporting of TB cases, based on the Nikshay portal, is consistent across all the neighboring districts of Hyderabad. In Ranga Reddy district, this year's target for TB cases was 2,650 of which 1,313 cases have been reported, a

drop of nearly 50 per cent. In Medchal-Malkajgiri, the target was to report 2,850 cases of which 1,991 cases have been reported, which is a 14 per cent drop. Is TB eradication in India possible by 2025? Answering to this query raised in the Lok Sabha on Friday, Union Minister for Health JP

Nadda said that the incidence rate of TB in India has shown 17.7 per cent decline from 237 positive cases per 1,00,000 population in 2015 to 195 in 1,00,000 population in 2023. Overall, in India, TB deaths have reduced by 21.4 per cent from 28 lakh population in 2015 to 22 lakh population in 2023.

MCEME holds convocation ceremony in Hyd

Hyderabad: A total of 49 officers including foreign officers were awarded BTech degrees during the convocation ceremony of Degree Engineering Course-105 & Technical Entry Scheme Course-42 at the Military College of Electronics and Mechanical Engineering (MCEME) here on Tuesday. The GOC-in-C ARTRAC trophy for the best all round student officer of TES-42 was presented to Lt Mudit Gupta and the gold medal for standing first in the overall order of merit of EMEODE-105 was awarded to Maj Amrit Yadav.

Participating in the ceremony, Governor Jishnu Dev Varma lauded the exemplary training standards at MCEME in nurturing the best battle-ready technicians for the field army.

The Governor praised the graduating officers for their hard work, perseverance and pursuit of excellence, emphasizing the vital

role of engineers in nation-building and technological advancement. He reminded the graduates that their education is not merely an achievement but a responsibility to contribute meaningfully to the armed forces and nation.

MCEME Commandant and Corps of EME Commandant Lt Gen Neeraj Varshney stressed upon the requirement of hard work, resilience, integrity and a positive attitude to succeed in life and military career. He also stressed upon the emerging technologies being used in warfare and the importance of enhancing technical knowledge for all EME officers.

The highlight of the event was the exhibition of innovative projects designed and developed by the MCEME officers in the areas of artificial intelligence, drones, autonomous robots and machine learning for use cases of the field army.

Wounding the spirit of the Constitution of India

We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic, republic, and to secure to all its citizens justice, liberty, and equality and promote fraternity among all, have been witness to a mockery being made of our constitutional compact, in full public view, at an event organised within the precincts of a constitutional court, the Allahabad High Court. Distancing ourselves would be a disservice. We have witnessed a sitting judge brazenly challenge the spirit and letter of the Constitution of India, in a speech that is nothing but a dog whistle that guarantees impunity to the mobs that will act on his words and views — and have been acting on words such as his emanating from the seats of power. The venom that Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, judge of the Allahabad High Court, spewed on the precincts of the court, has been widely reported in the media. Members of Parliament in the Opposition have initiated an impeachment motion against the judge, the Supreme Court of India has called for a report, and concerned citizens have written to the Chief Justice of India.

None of this, however, captures the sense of collective shock, dismay and grief that it is even possible for this level of public humiliation, violent, incendiary, genocidal street-talk to emerge from a seat of justice under the Constitution. For that is what it is. And it is really time to seek remedies against an incitement to violence of this nature as a part of our solemn affirmation as citizens who gave to ourselves this Constitution. The 'sludge' that was passed as learned judicial speech is an assault on the citizens of India and not an attack on Muslims or minorities or urban naxals or protesters or just any particular group that has become the latest target of mob violence/public incitement. This is not Justice Yadav's views on Muslims, nor is this a case of just one rotten apple. In distancing ourselves from his comments, we do profound disservice to our autonomous and independent determination of the terms on which the collective 'we' is constituted in this country called India that is Bharat.

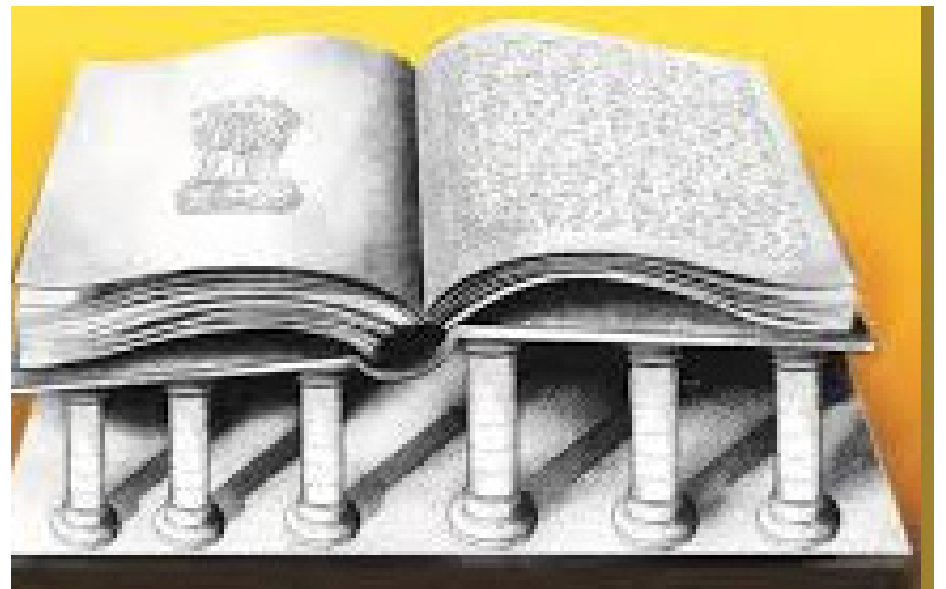
Justice Yadav's speech is an act of wounding. It is a speech that inflicts deep harms on all of us: in terms of how we experience the life of the mind, knowledge, convivial living and spiritual fulfilment in a shared space, the boundaries of which are not determined by narrow walls and fences of bigotry. and in terms of the injuries that religious bigotry inflicts on shifting targets — on people, our lived lives, our dwellings, our worksites, our neighbourhoods and our places of worship. We have also seen the disastrous effects of soft bigotry as a trigger to mob/state violence, especially in the case of places of worship. Let us not read down Justice Yadav's speech and allow it to pass as something that is inconsequential. It is not something that can be adequately answered by the High Court that offered the space and the possibility for this — a High Court that did not rise in one voice to condemn and censure a member of the Bench for speaking genocide and atrocity. This is a court that ought to have written to the Chief Justice of India condemning Justice Yadav's speech long before the Supreme Court demanded a report in response to the petitioning and the protests by citizens who took note of the speech and mobilised action given the exceedingly slow wheel of the law. It calls for a different order of collective judicial accountability. Nor can

this act be adequately redressed by subjecting it to the low, anodyne chiding that is whispered by the judicial fraternity alone within court halls that allow restricted entry. We have seen the consequences of dog whistles of this kind over the past decade and the irreparable harms they bring in their wake. We also know that mobilising around the Constitution and its core values together as ordinary citizens, elected citizens and judicial citizens, speaking a shared language across vernaculars and faiths, is the only way of effectively affirming our collective and individual human dignity and the unity and integrity of this country — India that is Bharat. A commons

This writer has long argued that the Constitution of India, and our rights and responsibilities as citizens, take shape through a deep connection between the intellectual history of constitutionalism and a grounding of that history in our evolving present-futures. Neither constitutional interpretation nor the delineation of our rights need be shackled by narrow reference to precedents and prior judicial wisdom alone, since the spirit of the Constitution (and indeed the Constitution itself) is not judicial property, but is a commons. It is urgent that we think of the Constitution-as-commons — that a shared ownership and shared understanding govern its use to further the common good which is set out in the Preamble and in the philosophy of civil disobedience of various hues. Satyagraha is our collective inheritance — Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, Maulana Azad, Jaipal Munda, Dakshayani Velayudhan, Anis Kidwai, A.K. Gopalan.... It is not just rulers but when people who sit on judicial seats speak the undisguised tongue of rulers and the mobs, disobedience is the constitutional route to recuperation. If norms of 'judicial propriety'

New Delhi: Drowning remains a major public health concern globally with a recent report published by the World Health Organisation's (WHO) saying at least 7.2 million people, mainly children, could die by drowning by the year 2050, if current trends continue. This is when the UN health body's report mentions there has been a reduction in the rate of deaths globally over the years. In fact, the report reveals a 38% drop in the global drowning death rate since 2000, terming it a major global health achievement. However, more needs to be done to prevent further deaths.

WHO estimates say at least 30 people drown every hour and 300,000 people drowned to death in 2021; almost half of all drowning deaths occur among people below the age of 29 years, and a quarter occur among children under five. Children without adult supervision are at an especially high risk of drowning. "The significant decline in drowning deaths since 2000 is great news and proof that the simple, practical interventions that WHO recommends work," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, during the report launch. "Still, every drowning death is one death too many, and millions of people remain at risk. This report contains crucial data for policy-making



have come undone, Justice S.K. Yadav of the Allahabad High Court has scripted its ruination. In the resulting crisis that 'judicial propriety' finds itself in, the only resurrection is through the grammar of civil disobedience. Inquiries, explanations, reports, and measured censure will amount to nothing. Impeachment is a good move, but is only symbolic; it is destined to fail when Justice Yadav's political masters have a brute majority in Parliament, unless of course we have an unprecedented and unlikely action by members of the ruling alliance standing with the Constitution.

The outlines of a response is of course a sad comment that S.K. Yadav, as a judge, has political masters. This alone should trigger some deep reflection and public discussion by citizen judges, since the barrier be-

tween judicial and political speech (and space) has been breached. Taking this further, in reinstating the dignity compass and rejecting public humiliation in judicial conduct and speech, we need to think through public and judicial action that will draw on the well-springs of our inheritance of civil disobedience and satyagraha. We must craft tactical resistance by refusing to allow a person who speaks this language to judge our cases or judge with us. The 'We' that opens the Preamble to the Indian Constitution is not a 'we' that is a motley group of people identified randomly (with or without their consent) as Hindu. The 'We' is a constitutionally constituted people. A non-denominational, plural, dizzyingly heterogeneous, and diverse beyond measure people who believe in the spirit of the Constitution and its core values.

Deaths due to drowning a public health concern

ing and recommendations for urgent action to save lives."

Progress in reducing drowning has been uneven, according to the report. At the global level, nine in 10 drowning deaths take place in low and middle-income countries. The WHO European Region saw a 68% drop in the rate of drowning deaths between 2000 and 2021, yet the rate fell by just 3% in the WHO African Region, which has the highest rate of any region with 5.6 deaths per 100,000 people. "This may be influenced by the levels of national commitments to address the issue: within the African Region, only 15% of countries had a national strategy or plan for drowning prevention, compared to 45% of countries in the European Region," read the WHO statement.

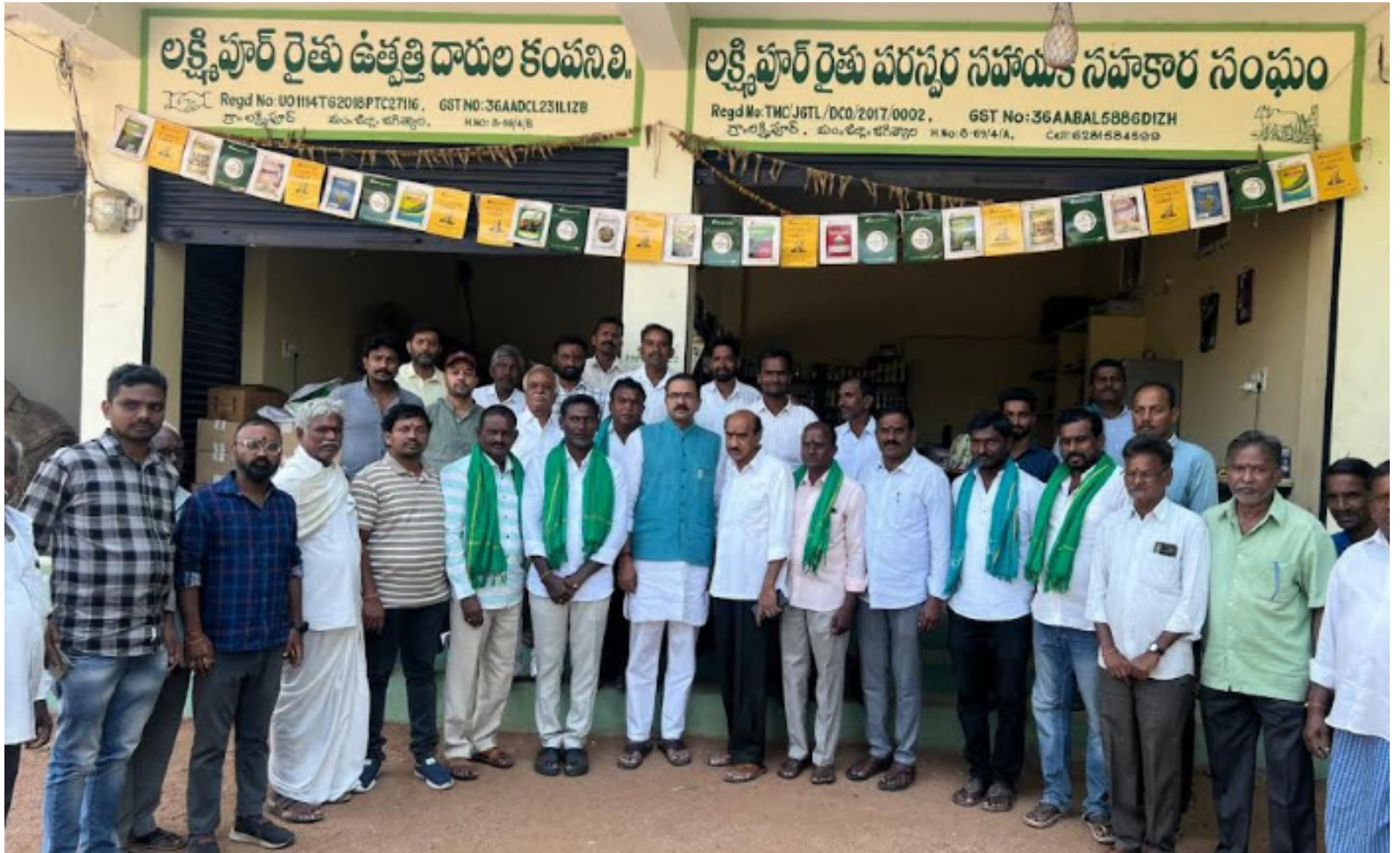
India also launched 'Strategic Framework for Drowning Prevention', last year. According to the government data, 38,000 cases of drowning were reported in the country in 2023, which is a significant number and to prevent these cases, Union ministry of health and family welfare has initiated programmes to generate mass awareness, especially in rural areas that primarily report cases. The framework document focuses on promoting multi-sectoral collaboration,

strengthening public awareness of drowning through strategic communications, establishing national and state drowning prevention action plan and researching to generating evidence to inform contextually relevant action for drowning prevention form critical action pillars for creating a safer environment around water bodies and saving countless lives.

WHO recommends a series of community-based actions for drowning prevention, which include: the installation of barriers to prevent child access to water; provision of safe places away from water for preschool children, teaching school-aged children basic swimming water safety and safe rescue skills; training people in rescue and resuscitation; strengthening public awareness on drowning; setting and enforcing safe boating, shipping and ferry regulations; and improving flood risk management. Deaths due to drowning can be prevented, if concerted efforts are made. As the WHO report sums up, "...drowning prevention requires a coordinated, whole-of-society response. Through increased collaboration and investment, those most vulnerable to drowning can be protected to ensure the promising trends currently observed are experienced uniformly and equitably."

Former CBI Joint Director Lakshminarayana Emphasizes the Divinity of Farmers During Visit to Lakshmipur Village

Youth for Anti-Corruption Organization Celebrates the Contributions of Farmers and Villages to National Development



Hyderabad: In a powerful recognition of the contributions of farmers, former CBI Joint Director V. V.V. Lakshminarayana stated, "In this world, the true God is the farmer. There is no VIP greater than farmers," during his visit to Lakshmipur Village in Jagityal District on 17th December, 2024. Addressing a gathering organized by the Youth for Anti-Corruption organization, he underscored the vital role that farmers play in society and the economy. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's words that a country's development is intrinsically linked to the development of its villages, the Youth for Anti-Corruption organization annually honors village panchayats that exemplify progress while upholding ethics and integrity. This year, they recognized farmers who are embracing organic farming techniques and modern agricultural practices. The Lakshmipur Farmers Mutual Aid Cooperative Society, established in 1999 with just 20 members, has grown to over 500 members, incorporating farmers from four villages. These farmers cultivate a variety of crops, including Turmeric, Paddy, Chili, Groundnuts, Sesame, and Corn, while also producing a range of vegetables and horticultural products. Through their cooperative society, they receive vital financial support, enabling them to thrive in their agricultural endeavors. During his speech at the cooperative society, Lakshminarayana high-

lighted the importance of unity among farmers, stating, "Success can be achieved when farmers work together in unity." He expressed pride in the cooperative's growth, stating, "Having 570 members from 14 villages is a matter of pride. Crop rotation is essential for farmers to gain profits." He further urged the transition to organic farming and the importance of food processing, advocating that what is produced locally should

be enjoyed globally. "Without farmers, there is no country, there is no world," he asserted, calling for legislative changes to support the agricultural community. The event also included distinguished attendees such as Ashok Kumar - Retired Agriculture Assistant Director, Govt of Andhra Pradesh, Youth for Anti-Corruption founder Rajendra Palnati, YAC media secretary G Jayaram, Komati Ramesh Babu, Pradeep Reddy, G.

Hariprakash, B. Rajesh, Formers Producers Organisation Chairman Pannala Tirupati Reddy, Ganga Reddy, various members of the YAC team and Lakshmipur villagers. As the meeting concluded, Lakshminarayana committed to advocating for Lakshmipur village in future discussions, encouraging representatives from around the world to recognize and appreciate the vital role of farmers in shaping a sustainable future.

Security vulnerabilities hinder AI adoption in India, reveals Deloitte report

New Delhi: As many as 92 per cent of Indian executives view security vulnerabilities as the foremost challenge to responsible AI adoption, highlighting a pressing need for robust governance frameworks to foster trust and mitigate risks in an increasingly AI-driven landscape, according to a recent report by Deloitte. The 'AI at a crossroads: Building trust as the path to scale' report by Deloitte Asia Pacific, which surveyed 900 senior leaders across 13 markets revealed that while enthusiasm for AI is high, significant barriers remain.

"...about 92 per cent of Indian execu-

tives identify security vulnerabilities, including hacking and cyber threats, as a primary concern in AI adoption, while 91 per cent express significant concern about the privacy risks related to sensitive data in AI usage. "Additionally, 89 per cent highlight complexities resulting from regulatory uncertainties, citing evolving compliance requirements as a challenge towards AI integration," it said.

The urgency for effective AI governance is further underscored by the alarming statistic that over half of technology workers do not believe their workplaces are equipped to

address AI-related risks.

"For Indian organisations, the imperative must be to integrate AI seamlessly into existing systems, addressing both technical and knowledge gaps to ensure sustainable adoption...the journey requires continuous upskilling and cross-functional collaboration."

"By fostering trust through robust frameworks and ethical practices, businesses can mitigate risks and unlock AI's potential to drive innovation, enhance reputation and deliver value with confidence in an increasingly AI-driven landscape," Jayant Saran, Partner, Deloitte India, said.

India's asset-less, ageing population with poor health is a crisis in the making

India's population has reached its demographic prime. Around 67.3 per cent of our population is between 15-59 years of age, a demographic advantage which will persist for another three decades. Approximately 26 per cent of the population is below 14 years, and just 7 per cent above the age of 65, as against 17 per cent in the US and 21 per cent in Europe. By 2030, India's working age population will reach 68.9 per cent, with a median age of 28.4 years and a dependency ratio of just 31.2 per cent. In absolute numbers, India, with 1.04 billion working age persons, will constitute the largest workforce in the world. But these large demographic numbers can translate into dividends only with high productivity that drives wealth creation, mainly through high technology, innovative information technology, high-end new-age services, R&D driven innovation, healthcare and life sciences. Does our demographic dividend presently have capacity to achieve this high productivity and wealth creation and achieve our \$7 trillion GDP target by 2030? Clearly, this capacity can only develop with right education and skills, which require cognitive power and physical health. Both start developing at foetal stage and continue developing through childhood and adolescence into adulthood, with proper health, nutritional and educational care. Only then can the demographic dividend have the capacity for higher learning, superior skills and qualifications to fit contemporary job requirements. As per NFHS 5, among our present demographic dividend (15-49 years), only 41 per cent women and 50.2 per cent men have 10 years plus schooling; 57 per cent women and 25 per cent men are anaemic; and 18.7 per cent women and 16.2 per cent men have Body Mass Index below normal. Not surprising therefore, that despite several ongoing skilling programmes, employers are unable to find the skills they want, and unemployment rates of "educated" youth remain high.

Our immediate demographic dividend, 15-19 years adolescent girls and boys, will constitute India's work-force for the next three decades. Among them, only 34 per cent girls and 35.9 per cent boys of age 15-24 have completed 12 years or more education; 59 per cent girls and 31 per cent boys are anaemic, and only 54.9 per cent girls and 52.6 per cent boys have normal BMI. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) (Rural) 2023, found that nationally, only 77 per cent in the 17-18 years category could read Class 2 textbooks, and 35 per cent could do division. Learning trajectory over Grades V, VI, VII and VIII was relatively flat, meaning that there was little difference in learning levels within these grades. This is our demographic dividend for the next three decades.

It's not a very bright picture about our future demographic dividend either — our children, who will enter the workforce after a decade or two. As per NFHS 5, 35.5 per cent children below five years are stunted, 19.3 per cent are wasted, 32.1 per cent are underweight; and 67.1 per cent children between 6-59 months are anaemic. (Figures for the two poorest quintiles are almost 50 per cent higher) But most shockingly, only 11.3 per cent children aged 6-23 months receive minimal adequate diet, improved from 9.6 per cent as in NFHS 4. The founda-



tion of our demographic dividend for the next three decades lies here. Medical science confirms that 90 per cent of a child brain development happens before the age of 5, and lays the physical, mental, and emotional foundations for future life. Optimal brain development therefore becomes the first casualty of the 88.7 per cent children under two, not receiving minimal and adequate diet. India's routine dietary deficit is well documented in national surveys. Not surprising therefore that the resultant under-nutrition, poor health and morbidity, prevents children and adoles-

cents from achieving their complete cognitive and physical potential, and thereafter prevents them from acquiring the education and skills required for emerging higher end job market. India will start ageing with each passing year after 2030 with the workforce population declining and the ageing population increasing. A growing skill-less, asset-less, ageing population in poor health can become India's greatest future burden. It is unlikely that a large population will strengthen our economy through high consumption — more likely a large population with low edu-

cation/skills will increase unemployment, and have little disposable income for high consumption. The expected flight of human capital from weaker sections to foreign lands with scarce secondary labour is hardly a solution. The time for a serious real-time situation analysis of our immediate and future demographic dividend and a redesign our policy framework to strengthen it through the life cycle is now. A sound foundation of better nutrition, health and education will enable our demographic dividend to capitalise future economic and job-market opportunities.

Deepening India's steps as a key space-faring nation

India has set ambitious goals for its space programme in the next two decades. These goals hinge on powerful, reusable rockets such as the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s upcoming Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV). In addition to the NGLV, India must tap into its private sector to develop more such rockets in order to secure strategic autonomy in its access to outer space. ISRO's road map from an infant space programme in the 1960s, India has grown into a powerful space-faring nation. Preparations for the Gaganyaan mission are underway. Gaganyaan will take an Indian crew to space for the first time, demonstrating Indian human-spaceflight capability. By the end of the next decade, India aims to have a more sustained presence in space by having its own space station in orbit around earth. It also aims to expand its human-spaceflight capabilities to the moon. Realising these objectives effects a road map that consists of multiple uncrewed missions to the moon, mastering human-centric technologies for space travel and

developing powerful new rockets. These rockets have to carry heavier payloads to support humans in space. They should also be financially viable as it will take many test flights to reach the safety and the reliability standards for human-spaceflight to the moon. ISRO is fulfilling these requirements with its upcoming NGLV, which has been recently approved for development by the Union Cabinet. The significance of the NGLV lies in its heavy lift capability and reusability. The NGLV will triple the payload capacity of the LVM3 (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mk III), which is India's most powerful rocket. This comes with numerous benefits. Heavy lift rockets ease restrictions related to weight and volume. It frees up the focus of engineers and scientists that would otherwise have to be spent on miniaturisation or weight reduction. It greatly increases the potential of space-related missions. The possibilities increase exponentially. In contrast to all of India's existing rockets which are expendable as they are built for one-time use, a major part of the NGLV will be reusable. Reusability requires that the rocket keep

some of its fuel for controlled descent back to the earth's surface. This reduces the capacity of the rocket to carry heavier loads but offers massive cost savings. Reusability has become necessary for rockets to remain competitive. The immediate need The NGLV's development phase will last for the next eight years. In the meantime, the need for heavy lift capability is already felt. India's next uncrewed moon mission is slated to use not one, but two rockets. Two LVM3s will carry the requisite modules. They will then be assembled in space to form one composite vehicle that will go to the moon. In another instance, GSAT-N2, a communication satellite built by ISRO, was launched on SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket. It weighed 4,700 kg while the maximum weight that an LVM3 can carry to the Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO) is 4,000 kg. A reusable Falcon 9 from SpaceX, a U.S. company, can carry up to 5,500 kg to the Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO). Foregoing reusability, an expendable Falcon 9's capacity increases to 8,300 kg.

OBC research scholars in the lurch as govt chokes fund flow

Research scholars under the National Fellowship for Other Backward Classes (NFOBC) have been put in a lurch due to persistent delays in disbursement of their fellowship funds by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. While some scholars say they have not received their funds from June 2024, some say have not received them for the entire academic year beginning from January 2024. Currently, 2499 scholars fall under the scheme. The All-India Research Scholar Association (AIRSA) in a letter dated December 6, 2024, has written to Amit Yadav, Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, to address the issue. "While we appreciate the Ministry's efforts in supporting higher education for marginalised communities, the prolonged delays in stipend payments have significantly impacted the financial stability, mental well-being, and academic progress of scholars", the letter said. This is, however, not the first time the NFOBC fellows have faced non-payment of funds as scheduled. Megha, (name changed), from Trivandrum, started her PhD in January 2023. "I only got my first amount in the August of that year, which was eight months into the programme", she said.

These are full-time scholars not allowed to engage in any other means of earning. A Senior Research Fellow in his fifth year on the condition of anonymity said, "These funds are all we have for sustenance. We dedicate all our time to the research, so it directly affects our livelihood". The letter also states that there is a certain disparity with NFOBC fellows as other fellowships like the ones for SC students, NFSC are being disbursed consistently. "The delay in NFOBC stipends is creating unnecessary inequality among scholars", the letter said.

Tapesh Kumar, a research scholar, says that fellowships to SC/ST students are granted under the same Ministry and their payments are regular. "Sometimes they release after four months and give an amount for a limited time. Without money is there anything that we can do?" he says. AIRSA also says there is a lack of communication from the Ministry as scholars have not been provided with clear timelines or updates regarding fund releases, further exacerbating their distress. Four demands by AIRSA: Immediate release of all pending fellowship dues, including arrears; an increase in the annual budget allocation for the NFOBC fellowship to ensure uninterrupted funding; regular and transparent communication regarding fellowship disbursement schedules; and establishment of a grievance redressal mechanism for scholars to address concerns promptly.

What is the fellowship?

The main objective of the schemes is the educational empowerment of OBC students by way of awarding fellowships in obtaining quality higher education. The scheme is designed to provide a total number of 1,000 Junior Research Fellowships per year to undertake advanced studies and research leading to M.Phil./Ph.D. degrees, those who have qualified in the National Eligibility Test - Junior Research Fellowship (NET-JRF) of UGC for Humanities/Social Sciences, and for the UGC-Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (UGC-CSIR) NET-JRE. The



scheme covers all universities and institutions recognised by the University Grants Commission (UGC). These 1,000 slots are over and above the number of OBC students selected under the normal reservation policy of the Government for UGC Fellowship. Out of 1,000 slots available under this scheme, 750 are allocated for the subjects under NET-JRF and the remaining 250, UGC-CSIR NET-JRF. OBC students pursuing a regular and full-time M.Phil. or Ph.D. course of a University or research Institution are eligible. Candidates once considered eligible for the fellowship are not entitled to any other benefits from the Central or State Government or any other body like the UGC offering similar benefit.

Fellowship amount increasedThe fellowship amounts were revised from 2023 on approval by the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment. The amount for JRF fellows was increased from ₹31,000 per month to ₹37,000 per month. for two years. The amount for SRF fellows was revised from ₹35,000 per month to ₹41,000 per month for their remaining tenure. According to an official release, ₹40.11 crore has been released during 2023-24. Transfer from UGCIn a letter dated November 7, 2022, the University Grants Commission (UGC) announced the transfer of three fellowships from UGC to other ministries. Since then the nodal body for the NFOBC has been the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The scheme is now implemented by the Ministry through the designated Central Nodal Agency, the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) under the control of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Kumar says the disbursement issues have magnified after this transfer. The All India OBC Students Association (AIOBCSA) tweeted in October 2023: "The decision to transfer fellowship implementation to the National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC) in October 2022 brought a sig-

nificant change in the disbursement of funds for NFOBC scholarships. Instead of monthly disbursements, the Social Justice Ministry now releases funds on a quarterly basis. This subtle policy shift has wreaked havoc on the peace of mind of researchers, as their finances were meticulously planned around the monthly disbursements of the fellowship." An RTI reply dated October 8, 2024, states that the NBCFDC raises de-

mands in advance from the Ministry on a quarterly basis. But the disbursement of funds depends on funds provided by the Ministry from time to time.

The Ministry has cleared payments till June 2024 through funds received from their previous demand. The request for release of payments till September 2024 has been raised by the corporation and is pending with the Ministry.

Sandhya Theatre Stampede Case: Injured boy's health condition continues to be critical, say doctors



Hyderabad City Police Commissioner C. V. Anand and Health Secretary Dr. Christina at the KIMS Hospital on behalf of the State government to inquire about the health of Sritej

Hyderabad: The health condition of Sritej, the nine-year-old boy who was injured during the premier of Pushpa-II movie at Sandhya theatre, continues to be critical, according to attending paediatric specialists from Krishna Institute Medical Sciences (KIMS) Cuddles, Secunderabad, Dr Chetan R Mundada and Dr Vishnu Tej Pudi on

Tuesday. "Child Sritej continues to remain in PICU needing mechanical ventilation with minimal support of oxygen and pressures. His fever is reducing and on minimal inotropes, his vital parameters are stable. He is tolerating feeds well. In view of static neurological status, tracheostomy is being planned to facilitate weaning from ventilator," the health bulletin said. Meanwhile, Hyderabad City Police Commissioner C. V. Anand and Health Secretary Dr. Christina visited KIMS Hospital on behalf of the State government to inquire about the health of Sritej.

Jaladam Valley, home to the Konda Reddi tribe, offers a glimpse into a centuries-old way of life

Hidden in the rugged hills of Jaladam Valley in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada district lies Gillaram village, home to the Konda Reddi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). Isolated from the modern world, the Konda Reddis rely on age-old traditions to sustain their livelihoods. Their survival strategies reflect a vanishing way of life. The Konda Reddi tribe's way of life largely revolves around the cow, which is a source of sustenance for them. The traditional houses of the Konda Reddis have retained their unique architectural look over the centuries. Reaching Gillaram is an arduous journey, involving a four-km trek over weather-beaten trails and crossing two hills. Located 15 km from the temple town of Annavaram, the village's remoteness leaves its 30 families — around 130 people — dependent on makeshift solutions for emergencies, such as being carried on 'dolis' during health crises. Cow dung banks in Gillaram village, the cow is central to survival. Every family owns a yoke and at least one pair of oxen for agriculture, as well as cows to augment their income.

"Our family owns 30 cents of land, and we use oxen to plow it," says Gomu Venkata Lakshmi, a mother of two. "The dung serves as manure for our crops and keeps our farming costs low. It is used as an alternative to fertilizer for all our crops," she says. In the village, every family maintains a 'dung bank' by storing the dung in a designated place to be used for agricultural purposes. "Our dependence on pesticides and fertilizers is minimal due to the availability of cow dung manure," says Ms. Venkata Lakshmi. The cow dung manure improves soil fertility. In the rural pockets of Andhra Pradesh, use of cow dung manure is rare except for organic farmers.

The Konda Reddi tribals of Gillaram village would grow paddy only in the Kharif season as streams would run dry by the middle of the Rabi season, precisely by March. All of them are small farmers who own a maximum of half an acre that supports crops, primarily paddy. Another Konda Reddi tribal farmer Gomu Malleswara Rao and his three brothers hold 1.2 acres of land which they have distributed among themselves to grow paddy. "All the families in our village grow paddy only to meet the requirement of the family in a year. The maximum paddy yield per holding (below half an acre) is barely eight bags, each weighing 75 kg. The prime purpose of paddy cultivation is to feed the family," said Mr. Malleswara Rao, a tribesman at his field in the village. Due to lack of irrigation facility, paddy is grown once a year, only to meet the requirements of the family. However, the Konda Reddi tribals are aggressive in the cultivation of commercial crops such as cashew, niger, chilli and cotton under Podu cultivation method, in which the forest is cleared to make way for the cultivation. Cashew requires less input cost while cotton demands huge input costs. The extent of land of a family depends on the number of years dedicated by it to clear the forest for the Podu cultivation. In the Eastern Ghats, the size of the Konda Reddi tribal family is arguably the biggest compared to any forest-dwelling tribe. In the Godavari Valley, the Konda Reddi tribals still prefer to have more than ten children as per the available official records. 'Bhunga'-style houses

The tribe has adopted a unique circular-shaped architecture for housing. The houses, built with circular mud walls and thatched roofs, resemble the Bhunga architecture of Gujarat's Kachchh region. In Gillaram village, families typically build two houses. "One house serves as the permanent residence. The second one, locally called as Seni Paaka, is built at the field, where farm implements are stored, apart from serving as a watch room for guarding the paddy fields during the day against monkeys and wild boars," says Chellayamma Satta. The thatched Seni Paaka is built with mud walls as its base. Accompanied by her two children, Ms. Chellayamma spends most of her time at the Seni Paaka during the Kharif season to guard the paddy field. The tribals also erect fences with used sarees to protect the paddy from monkeys and wild boars. Conservation

The Konda Reddi tribe conserves their traditional mud-walled houses by applying cow dung paste which keeps the house warm during winter and cool during summer, a practice that has been handed down for generations. "It is a mandatory practice for every family to apply cow dung paste on the mud walls of our houses to keep them clean and withstand the rain. The cow dung gives the walls a unique colour, and it also keeps the house free of insects and mosquitoes," says 35-year-old Chadda Balamani, a young mother. This simple yet effective technique ensures the longevity of their mud-walled homes, which can last up to a decade. "Cow dung is available in our village itself. We have been applying cow dung on our traditional house walls for generations and it requires no further investment in conservation and maintenance. A mud-walled house can last for at least a decade", says Ms. Balamani.

Scheduled Area The Gillaram village (Routhulapudi Mandal) is one of the 56 tribal habitations that have been fighting to include them in the '5th Schedule Area' to be eligible to be brought under the administrative purview of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA-Rampachodavaram). Only 'Scheduled Area' (5th Schedule of the Constitution) comes under the jurisdiction of the ITDA. The 56 tribals habitations in the 10 Gram Panchayats of Shankavaram, Prathipadu and Routhulapudi Mandals in Kakinada district were earlier part of erstwhile East Godavari district. All of them are now falling in the Kakinada district. An estimated population of the tribes of Konda Reddi (PVTG), Manne Dora, Konda Dora and Konda Kammara in the 56 habitations is around 25,000. According to Kakinada District Panchayat authorities, Grama Sabhas have been scheduled in 2019 and cancelled in many panchayats due to various administrative hurdles. The ITDA-Rampachodavaram has proposed to recommend these 56 habitations to be included in the 'Scheduled Area' based on the resolutions passed by the Grama Sabhas. The hill range, in which the group of tribal pockets including Gillaram village is located, is home to laterite deposits. On December 23, 2024, Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Tribes Commission Member Vadithya Sankar Naik conducted a meeting in Gillaram village to identify their challenges. This Correspondent was present in the meeting. The Konda Reddis of Gillaram village have shared their



woes to get access to safe drinking water, power, road connectivity, and basic medical and health care. "The revenue and other officials are preparing a proposal for road connectivity, solar-based water tank and ensure the arrival of medical and health staff once a month given the challenges to reach the Valley", said Mr. Sankar Naik. The Gillaram village does not have a designated burial ground, forcing the Konda Reddi tribals to bury in the forest. Gomu Venkata Lakshmi and Chadda Balamani have stated; "Access to safe drinking water during summer and timely access to medical and health services

are our primary needs. Our lives are more challenging during the monsoon". The village is yet to see the school but the government is running a mini Anganwadi centre. No suffix The irony is that the Konda Reddis of Gillaram village have abandoned 'Reddi' as a suffix to their name as they came in contact with the non-tribals over the decades. In the Godavari Valley, the Konda Reddis are known by their name which has Reddi in their suffix. The village has also lost contact with their fellow tribals in the Godavari Valley as they never attend any gatherings due to cut-off by road and terrains.

Ultra-processed foods may make you age faster, shows study



New Delhi: Love to binge on ultra-processed food (UPFs) like chips, biscuits, sausages, burgers, soft drinks, and instant noodles? Beware, these can make you age faster biologically, warned a study. A person's biological age is a relatively new way of measuring a person's health. It refers to how old a person seems based on various molecular biomarkers.

A person with a healthy lifestyle may have a biological age younger than their chronological age, while poor lifestyle choices, such as a diet high in UPFs, can accelerate biological ageing, said researchers from Monash University in Australia. The study, published in the journal *Age and Aging*, involved 16,055 participants from the US aged 20-79 and showed that for every 10 per cent increase in UPF consumption, the gap be-

tween biological and chronological age widened by approximately 2.4 months.

Participants in the highest UPF consumption quintile (68-100 per cent of energy intake in their diet) were biologically 0.86 years older than those in the lowest quintile (39 per cent or less of energy intake in their diet). Nutritional biochemist Dr. Barbara Cardoso, a senior lecturer in the University's Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food said the findings underlined the importance of eating as many unprocessed and minimally processed foods as possible. "The significance of our findings is tremendous, as our predictions show that for every 10 per cent increase in total energy intake from ultra-processed food consumption there is a nearly 2 per cent increased risk of mortality and 0.5 per cent risk of chronic disease over two years," .

The fallacy of natural birth: Safeguarding mothers and newborns in modern times

The recent case of an infant death in Pudukkottai district in Tamil Nadu shocked the health authorities. A pregnant woman, despite repeated offers of modern healthcare services, chose to deliver her child at home. Her decision is rooted in the belief in living “naturally”. It left both mother and child in a precarious state, and the infant’s life snuffed out, completely avoidable. This refusal to accept evidence-based medical care not only endangered her life but also violated the right to the health of the unborn child. Such incidents force us to confront a troubling reality—how deeply misplaced beliefs can jeopardize lives in an era where medical science offers safety. The idea of natural childbirth, outside the safety net of hospitals, is often romanticised as a return to simpler, more harmonious times. It carries the false allure of a past where childbirth was supposedly safer, and maternal health was ideal. Yet, data tells a starkly different story. Maternal and infant deaths were heartbreakingly common in the past. Women frequently succumbed to infections, haemorrhages, or prolonged labour, leaving families devastated. What remains of those times are stories of survival, giving rise to a dangerous survivorship bias—the flawed perception that the methods of the past were successful because a few lived to tell the tale. It is human nature to overrate the past and underrate the present. Evolutionary burden

Childbirth is unique for humans among mammals. Despite their advanced standing, humans remain one of the few species requiring assistance during delivery. This peculiarity stems from the very trait that defines humanity—our upright posture. Two hundred thousand years ago, when humans evolved to walk on two legs, the structure of the pelvis narrowed to accommodate bipedalism. This evolution happened rapidly, and women did not have time to develop a broader pelvis. This narrowing came with a price. It restricted the passage through which a baby was delivered. Simultaneously, the head of newborn that harbours the brain grew in size, making childbirth even more challenging. As a result, human babies are born at a much earlier stage of development compared to other mammals, making them completely dependent on external care. This evolutionary compromise—narrow pelvis and large head—shaped human society in profound ways. Childbirth and rearing became a communal responsibility, necessitating the support of families and tribes. Over time, this reliance laid the foundation for civilizations. But the burden of this evolutionary trade-off fell squarely on women. For them, what should have been a natural and physiological event like in other mammals became fraught with danger, leading to death or disability more often than it should. Story of Choices

Despite that some narratives glorify childbirth as an untouchable natural process to be endured without intervention. This misplaced idealization leads to dangerous decisions, like the one made by the mother, who rejected institutional delivery. While childbirth is indeed a natural process, it is not without risks. Modern medical care doesn’t pathologise pregnancy—it safeguards it. A pregnant mother is not a patient until complications arise, but when they do, access to timely interventions can mean the difference



between life and death.

Why human childbirth is difficult

Human childbirth reflects a delicate balance between two evolutionary pressures: the need for a narrow pelvis to support efficient bipedal locomotion and the requirement to accommodate a large-brained baby. Unlike most mammals, humans have a disproportionately large foetal head relative to the dimensions of the birth canal, increasing the risk of obstructed labour. The human pelvis is adapted to walking upright, resulting in a narrower pelvic inlet and outlet. Moreover, the curvature and length of the human birth canal make delivery more complex, requiring the baby to navigate through rotations. In contrast, quadrupedal mammals like cows, elephants, and dogs have wider pelvic outlets and straighter birth canals, reducing the mechanical challenges of delivery. Even in primates such as monkeys, the birth canal is relatively less restrictive due to their broader pelvis and smaller relative foetal head size. India’s

healthcare system is caught in a striking paradox. In remote and rural regions, the cry often resounds for accessible and adequate healthcare, with government initiatives struggling to bridge the gap. Yet, in urban centres, where healthcare facilities are abundant and diverse, a contrasting challenge emerges. Rejection of modern medical interventions, swayed by personal beliefs, cultural norms, or mistrust in the system. This duality of unmet need in one sphere and voluntary abstinence in another reflects the complexity of India’s healthcare landscape. While strides have been made to ensure access to antenatal care through schemes like Janani Suraksha Yojana, cases like this remind us that awareness and education must go hand in hand with accessibility. The foundation of human civilization owes to the narrow pelvis, a consequence of evolution that enabled the cognitive ability of humans to make advancements that built cities, conducted revolutions, and sent humans to space. Women who have borne the brunt of this evolutionary compromise deserve ev-

ery possible safeguard during childbirth. The rejection of evidence-based medicine, or institutional deliveries, is rooted in a misplaced belief. Denying healthcare services not only endangers the mother but violates the unborn child’s fundamental right to live. The health authorities are powerless as they can only request or persuade an adamant mother and her relatives. The judiciary needs to intervene by invoking the doctrine of Parens patriae and empower the health authorities to provide newborn care for the unborn. Fantasising the past does not bring back its hardships.

It blinds us to the progress we have achieved. Self-denying institutional deliveries under the pretext of natural living is a dangerous illusion. We stand in the golden era of maternal health, with the highest chances in history for mothers and their children to survive and thrive. To squander this progress on baseless ideals is not just a tragedy—it is a betrayal of the very civilisation that has enabled us to overcome the perils of childbirth.

Haldiram's expands dairy product range with sugar-free Shrikhand

Hyderabad: After ‘Chamcham’, ‘Burfee’, ‘Rasgulla’ and other dairy based sweets, Haldiram’s has now a new offering – a sugar free Shrikhand. Made with high-quality ingredients, this guilt-free indulgence is perfect for dessert lovers, Haldiram’s said in a press release. The traditional and widely consumed dessert in Gujarati and Maharashtra cuisine is priced affordably at Rs.80 in a 250 gm package.

Sushil Agarwal, Director of Haldiram’s Food International Pvt. Ltd., said for over 80 years, their brand has been known for traditional taste and age-old recipes. “The same recipes, the same taste and the same qual-

ity have run through each product, whether its a packet of namkeen or a box of kaju katli. With our sugar-free Shrikhand, we want to cater to every Indian palate and maintain the same level of satisfaction they got while trying our other desserts,” he added. With the introduction of Shrikhand, Haldiram’s strives to blend tradition with innovation to cater to evolving consumer’s tastes and preferences.



Another day, another tantrum. How to manage your child's anger and stubbornness

Every parent knows the struggle when their child throws a fit after being told 'no'. It's frustrating, and while you know this behaviour isn't healthy, how should you handle it? Dealing with kid's tantrums If kids have been rewarded for acting out in the past, this behavior is reinforced, making them more likely to repeat it

When you have a child around, it's common to see them get upset or angry when they don't get what they want. A simple wish can quickly turn into a tantrum, with crying and howling when it's unmet. But when their desires are fulfilled, their faces light up with a big grin. Parenting isn't easy, and parents often find themselves criticised no matter what they do. If they give in to their child's demands, they're accused of spoiling them. If they refuse, they're labelled as heartless or uncaring. But the question here is: should parents give in to their child's stubbornness and anger, or is there a better way to navigate these moments? The loud display of anger Dr Sarthak Dave, an Ahmedabad-based psychiatrist, tells India Today that kids become stubborn and express their anger loudly because they absorb behaviours from their surroundings and consider them normal. If they frequently observe their parents displaying anger or reacting loudly, they learn to replicate this behaviour, believing it to be acceptable. He explains, "At a young age, their id—the instinctual drive to fulfil their desires—is very strong, while their ego (logical reasoning) and superego (moral understanding) are still underdeveloped and grow with age and experience. When children want something, they struggle to think logically or anticipate the consequences of their actions. If they don't get what they want, they feel distress and express it in ways they've learnt from their environment."

Additionally, if they've previously received what they wanted by acting out, this behaviour gets reinforced, encouraging them to repeat it. Further, Riddhi Doshi Patel, a Mumbai-based child psychologist and parenting counsellor, tells us that kids can be stubborn or loud because they don't yet have the words or skills to express their emotions or because they feel ignored or misunderstood by adults. She mentions that these outbursts are their way of coping with emotions they can't fully control or explain. According to Patel, while kids do learn from their environment and often replicate their parents, stubbornness is also a natural part of development as children learn to assert themselves. It doesn't always mean parents are at fault.

What does this stubbornness say about your kid?

A child's stubbornness, anger, and loud reactions are often ways of acting out due to their limited ability to handle emotions and distress. "These behaviours indicate that the child may not yet be developing the emotional tools needed to cope effectively. If such reactions are not addressed or discouraged, they can become ingrained as primitive defence mechanisms, suggesting that the child's emotional growth is not progressing as it should," says Dr Dave. Meanwhile, Patel feels that stubbornness and anger are signs that a child: Is seeking attention, understanding, or control. May be feeling overwhelmed, insecure, or unsure how to handle a situa-



tion Is in a stage of development where they're learning to test limits and establish independence. Impact on mental health According to the experts, if left unchecked, constant anger and stubbornness can lead to issues such as difficulty managing emotions later in life, strained relationships with peers and family, and increased feelings of frustration or anxiety.

What should you do as a parent?

Dr Sajeela Maini, senior consultant, department of psychiatry and behavioural sciences, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi, states that parents should not give in to their child's stubbornness and anger, as this will only make the child more stubborn, and their anger levels will increase multifold. Parents should make sure they are not rewarding such behaviour. By rewarding them, you are feeding stubbornness and anger, and this will only increase the tantrums. While Riddhi Doshi Patel agrees, she mentions that this doesn't mean parents should ignore their child's feelings. Instead, they should acknowledge their child's emotions, set clear and consistent boundaries, and stay calm while avoiding engaging in a power struggle. To this, Dr Sarthak Dave adds that parents should prioritise guiding their children toward healthier ways of expressing their needs and help them move from immature defence mechanisms to more mature ones. Teaching effective and constructive communication methods is vital for their emotional development. To manage a difficult situation, you must... Stay calm: Children often mirror your emotions. Responding with calmness can help de-escalate the situation. Acknowledge their feelings: Show empathy by saying, "I see you're upset. Do you want to talk about it?" Set clear boundaries: Be consistent with rules and consequences. Children feel safer when they know what to expect. Offer choices: Giving children small choices helps them feel in control, reducing the need for stubborn behaviour. Teach problem-solving skills: Encourage them to use words to express their feelings or brainstorm

solutions together. Model healthy behaviour: Show them how to handle frustration calmly.

For example, say, "I feel frustrated too sometimes, and I take deep breaths to help."

New study says Paracetamol leading to many health complications, deets inside

New Delhi: Paracetamol, a common over-the-counter medication, may increase the risk of gastrointestinal, heart- and kidney-related complications among adults aged 65 and above, a new study has found. Taken commonly for treating mild-to-moderate fever, paracetamol is also the first drug recommended for treating osteoarthritis — a chronic condition causing pain, stiffness and swelling in the joints due to wear-and-tear — as it is considered effective, relatively safe and accessible.

However, some studies have provided evidence to contest the effectiveness of paracetamol in relieving pain while others have shown increased risks of gastrointestinal side effects, such as ulcers and bleeding, from prolonged use. The latest study, conducted by researchers from the University of Nottingham, UK, found that paracetamol use was linked to a 24 per cent and 36 per cent increase in risk of peptic ulcer bleeding (bleeding due to ulcer in the digestive tract) and lower gastrointestinal bleeding, respectively.

Taking the drug may also increase the risk of chronic kidney disease by 19 per cent, heart failure by 9 per cent and hypertension by 7 per cent. "This study shows a significant incidence of renal, cardiovascular and gastrointestinal side effects in older people, who are prescribed acetaminophen (paracetamol) repeatedly in the UK," the authors wrote in the study published in the journal Arthritis Care and Research. "Due to its perceived safety, paracetamol has long been



recommended as the first line drug treatment for osteoarthritis by many treatment guidelines, especially in older people who are at higher risk of drug-related complications," said lead researcher Weiya Zhang from the University of Nottingham's School of Medicine.

"Whilst further research is now needed to confirm our findings, given its minimal pain-relief effect, the use of paracetamol as a first line pain killer for long-term conditions such as osteoarthritis in older people needs to be carefully considered," Zhang said. For their analysis, the researchers looked at health records of 1,80,483 (1.80 lakh) people repeatedly prescribed paracetamol (more than two prescriptions within six months). Their health outcomes were compared to those of 4,02,478 (4.02 lakh) people of the same age who were never prescribed paracetamol repeatedly. Data from the Clinical Practice Research Datalink-Gold was analysed for the study. The participants were aged 65 and over (average age 75) and had been registered with a UK general practitioner for at least a year between 1998 and 2018.