

Major hospitals struggle with severe shortage of senior doctors

Hyderabad: A tertiary hospital the size of Gandhi Hospital with nearly 2000 inpatient beds and over 1000 daily outpatients has only two radiologists for training PG specialty medical students and oversee diagnostic tests of patients. At Osmania Medical College and General Hospital, there is no dermatologist (Professor) to teach dermatology PG medical students and treat patients. Similarly, at Gandhi and Osmania General Hospitals, senior cardiologists of Professors and Assistant Professors cadre are not available for patients and PG medical students, although speciality PG medical seats were allocated based on the availability of senior faculty. Till a few months, Niloufer Hospital did not have a radiologist to teach PG medical students and evaluate diagnostic tests of patients. Recently, a junior radiologist was roped-in on contract basis to provide these services. Months after the unplanned and hasty transfers, that were

taken-up by the State health department at the behest of the State government, patients and PG medical students continue to suffer due to absence of senior doctors. "There is no need for Professors or Associate Professors of more than 30 years experience to be stationed at remote district teaching hospitals. A senior resident is enough to fulfil the responsibility at remote government hospitals. In tertiary hospitals at Warangal and Hyderabad, such senior doctors are needed, as they could be more effective," OGH Professors said. At present, there is a clear imbalance between demand and supply, as patients do not have access to senior Professors at State-run tertiary hospitals in Hyderabad. In contrast, Professors of Nephrology, Cardiology, General Surgery, Dermatology and Radiology, who were posted at remote locations, have very less number of PG students and patients to deal with. "The State government should have undertaken



a proper study before taking-up transfers. Now, clearly patients and PG medical students are suffering and nobody is bothered. The earlier BRS government had ensured

all senior faculty and doctors were available at major tertiary hospitals to ensure quality of speciality health care," senior doctors familiar with the issue said.

Alarming situation at Srisaillam Dam, says Telangana; Warns NDSA of potential catastrophe



Hyderabad: An alarming situation is emerging at the Srisaillam Dam as major deterioration in the plunge pool area downstream of the spillway threatens the structural integrity of this vital infrastructure. In an urgent communication given to the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA), Telangana State Committee on Dam Safety (SCDS) chairman and Engineer-in-Chief (General) N. Anil Kumar has sounded an alarm, urging immediate action to prevent a potential catastrophe.

Constructed in 1981 across the Krishna River, the Srisaillam Dam is a crucial multi-purpose project that serves as a lifeline for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. It provides hydroelectric power with an installed capacity of 900 MW for Telangana and 770 MW for Andhra Pradesh. Additionally, it supports

irrigation and drinking water supply to vast regions in both states and is integral to the Telugu Ganga Project, which supplies drinking water to Chennai. The dam also plays a pivotal role in flood control. Alarming deterioration

Recent inspections, coupled with reports from print and electronic media, reveal that the unprecedented discharge during the 2009 floods – approximately 25 lakh cusecs against the dam's designed capacity of 14 lakh cusecs, caused substantial scouring and created a large void in the plunge pool area downstream of the spillway. This has raised serious concerns about the dam's safety and stability. Studies conducted by the National Institute of Oceanography, commissioned by the Andhra Pradesh Government, indicate severe erosion. If left unaddressed,

this could compromise the overall stability of the dam, which stands at a maximum height of 143.26 metres from its deepest foundation level.

Experts warn that a breach at the Srisaillam Dam would unleash an enormous volume of water, potentially causing massive flooding in downstream areas across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The cascading effects could be catastrophic, with widespread destruction to power and irrigation infrastructure, disruption of water supplies, and severe humanitarian impacts on lakhs of residents. Threat of breach The threat extends beyond the immediate vicinity of Srisaillam. A breach could also jeopardize the safety of other critical infrastructures, including the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, Pulichintala Dam, and Prakasam Barrage. The potential conse-

quences include extensive resource losses in irrigation, power generation, and drinking water supply systems that support Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and even Chennai through the Telugu Ganga Project. In his letter, the SCDS chairman urged NDSA to depute an expert team to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the plunge pool damage and review the structural integrity of the dam. Stressing on even immediate temporary measures, he wanted the NDSA to explore solutions such as the use of interlocking tetrapods to enhance energy dissipation and prevent further scouring during the upcoming rainy season. He also called for a coordinated action plan to initiate both immediate temporary measures and long-term rehabilitation strategies to safeguard the dam.

Smuggled PDS rice from Telangana gets recycled in Maharashtra, returns to State

Mancherial: Rice grains meant for the Public Distribution System (PDS), smuggled from Telangana to Maharashtra, are being allegedly recycled in the neighbouring State and then being sold to millers back in Telangana.

It is an open secret that the PDS rice grains are being smuggled from different parts of Telangana to Sironcha, Wirur and Podsa and other towns of Maharashtra. The smugglers are procuring the grains from dealers of fair price shops and middlemen who purchase the rice from beneficiaries of the food security scheme. On February 14, offi-

cials of the vigilance wing from the Civil Supplies and a task force jointly seized 615 quintals of PDS rice being smuggled by two lorries and a truck from Telangana to Maharashtra in Chennur town. A dozen persons were arrested for allegedly smuggling PDS rice grains at an inter-state check-post at Hudkili village in Sirpur (T) mandal on February 11. This rampant diversion of PDS rice is not only affecting objectives of the initiative, but helping the smugglers to mint money. The smugglers reportedly are able to commit the crime by offering huge bribes to police, revenue and civil supplies officials every month.

In Ranthambore, tigers and humans struggle for space and survival

On the morning of November 2, on a hillock adjacent to Uliyana village, the rhythmic bleating of goats suddenly went silent. Over the next few hours, the village, situated in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district, witnessed the discovery of a corpse, flying axes and improvised low-intensity devices, a protest, and later in the night, the carcass of a 12-year-old tiger. Bordering the over 1,500-square-kilometre Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, the village has often seen Royal Bengal Tigers descend from forested hillocks to the low-lying agricultural fields in search of easy prey like cattle. However, on that Saturday, the tiger was allegedly found sitting next to the mauled body of a villager, Bharat Lal Meena, 50. The tiger had one paw on the corpse, say villagers. Later, he was identified as Chirico, or T-86, the Forest Department's 'file name' used for tracking purposes. According to government data, from 2019 to 2024, five human beings have lost their lives in tiger attacks, and over 2,000 cattle were killed by tigers in the same period. While the Forest Department records the number of tiger-related deaths, there is no record of them being killed.

A few days after the incident, there were reports in the media about the Forest Department recording that 25 of Ranthambore's 75 tigers were "missing". Officials clarified that 14 tigers had been missing for less than a year; 11 for over a year. An official says there could be many reasons for this: tigers not caught in the monitoring cameras, migration, death due to old age, and even poaching. Soon, 10 of the 14 were tracked. The National Tiger Conservation Authority, which conducts a tiger census every four years, has asked the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau to look into the matter. A village mourns

In Uliyana, a shroud of grief surrounds the newly constructed house of Bharat Lal's family. Prasathi Meena, his wife, is surrounded by women relatives in one corner of the house. "There was a lot of commotion; then someone said my husband had been attacked by a tiger. What happened after that is a blur now," says Prasathi in a hushed tone from beneath a ghoonghat (veil) that covers her face and neck. Prasathi, who villagers say fainted seconds after receiving the news, recalls that her husband had stepped out to take his goats to graze in the buffer zone between the tiger reserve and their village. There are walls built around villages, but there are breaks, and many require repair. "My husband would step out every day around 10.30 a.m. On that day too, he had his meal and left with the goats around noon," Prasathi says, her voice drowning amid the heavy, synchronised wails of women mourning around her. She never imagined that the tiger would take him. "Why did the tiger not take the goats and spare him?" she says. Babu Lal, the sarpanch of Uliyana, who was at the forefront of the attempted rescue mission, recalls seeing the tiger sitting next to the body of Bharat Lal. "We weren't sure what his condition was, but the chance of him surviving a tiger attack was slim," he says. The low-lying buffer zone, which separates the agricultural land of the village from the lush green tiger terrain in the hills, soon saw the rise of a mob. Instinctively, villagers threw tote



(countrymade bombs used to break stones), axes, stones, and every sharp object they had at the tiger, Babu recounts. "I had called the Forest Department and the police, but they did not come immediately and we had to try and save our brother," he says.

Chirico retreated into the forest and the villagers rushed to Bharat Lal, who had grievous injuries. Angry and frustrated at the lack of a proactive approach by government agencies, the villagers carried his body to Sawai Madhopur-Kundera Road, almost 5 km away. "Over 1,000 people sat in protest on the road, blocking it for passers-by. The mob refused to hand over the body for post-mortem until the family was paid ₹15 lakh," a senior Forest Department official says. Twenty-one hours later, State Agriculture Minister Kirodi Lal Meena met the angry villagers on the road that connects villages in the district. "The villagers handed over the body and cleared the road only after the Minister assured them of compensation," recalls the official. Years of anger and distrust towards the Forest Department officials is not new, says Dharmendra Khandal, a wildlife biologist with Tiger Watch, a non-profit organisation involved in wildlife conservation in Ranthambore. "Fateh Singh Rathore [who went on to become Ranthambore's Field Director] was attacked by the villagers of Uliyana in the 1980s. The villagers had broken both his legs. His life was spared only because his driver managed to come between him and the angry mob," says Khandal. Rathore, who founded Tiger Watch and is often called India's 'Tiger Guru', was one of the members of the first Project Tiger started in 1973 to conserve tigers in the country. "The vil-

lagers were angry that they were being displaced by Rathore to give better structure to the tiger reserve," Khandal says. The belief among villagers today is that the reserve is being maintained to attract international tourists at the cost of the lives of people who live in the forest, he says.

The day after Bharat Lal died, the Forest Department formed a search party to look for Chirico. "We could not enter the village as the residents were still agitated, and from what human intel we had received, the tiger was badly injured after he was attacked," says the official. The department sent drones around the forest bordering Uliyana and spotted the tiger's carcass about 500 metres from the spot where the villagers had found Bharat Lal's body. "Chirico has often preyed on cattle in the nearby villages but not on any human. Contrary to what locals are saying, he was not a man-eater," he says.

The official adds that the tiger had old injuries on his front legs and chest from a fight for territory with another tiger in the forest. "The post-mortem report has shown that those wounds were healing. He died primarily due to traumatic injury on his face and back from sharp objects," he says. A retired Forest Department official says contrary to the perception of the villagers, a majority of Ranthambore's tigers are not man-eaters. "A man-eating tiger is one that has been compelled through stress of circumstances to resort to preying on humans," the official says. These circumstances are usually beyond the tiger's control. "Mostly wounded, old tigers resort to becoming man-eaters, but human beings are not their natural prey," he says. Anoop K.R., Field Director, Ranthambore, says it is possible that T-86

had wanted to attack the cattle, but since the man was a barrier, the tiger attacked him instead. Changing patterns Despite villagers coexisting with tigers and other wildlife in the area, increased human-animal conflict has forced people to make changes in their ways of living and working. In Khava village in the same district, Bhatti Lal says his brother was mauled and killed by a tiger last year when he took his goats out to graze not far from the boundary wall that separates the village from the forest. "He was sitting in the hilly area while the goats were grazing. The tiger attacked him from behind and dragged him into the forest," says Bhatti. Since then, the pastoralists in the area have started making loud sounds when they take cattle to graze, he adds. Hanuman Meena, another resident of Khava village, says most villagers are selling their livestock at a loss. "A grown goat can be sold for more than ₹10,000, but now fearing for our lives, most of us are selling them at ₹4,000-₹5,000," says Hanuman. This has also deprived them of a livelihood from dairy products. Most villagers in the area depend on growing wheat, jowar, or bajra. A few are employed in the tourism industry. Cattle rearing communities around Ranthambore National Park are selling their goats and cattle in apprehension of its loss. News of Bharat Lal's death also reached the neighbouring villages like Padli. Here, in 2019, a woman was attacked by a tiger while defecating in the fields. While in Uliyana and Khava, tigers had attacked villagers on the periphery of the forest, in Padli, Munni Devi was killed about 6 km from the forest area, say villagers. According to her neighbour, Rekha Devi, tigers often roam in the village's guava patches, but it was for the first time that it had attacked a human. "

From unexpected twists to non-stop laughs — 5 reasons to watch Janaka Aithe Ganaka on Tata Play Telugu Cinema

Hyderabad :Some movies make you laugh, some make you think, and some do both effortlessly. Janaka Aithe Ganaka falls right into that sweet spot. Directed by Sandeep Reddy Bandla and starring Suhas as Prasad and Sangeerthana Vipin as his wife, this film is a delightful blend of humour, emotions, and social commentary. With its fresh concept and relatable characters, it's more than just a comedy—it's an entertaining family drama that will have you laughing, crying, and reflecting on life's little ironies. Get ready to catch it every day in February only on Tata Play Telugu Cinema, service 1402. So, what makes Janaka Aithe Ganaka a must-watch? Here are the top reasons you'll want to tune in:

An ensemble cast that elevates the story

Suhas delivers a standout performance as Prasad, effortlessly blending humour and emotion. Sangeerthana Vipin adds warmth and depth as his supportive wife, while Vennela Kishore's impeccable comic timing keeps the laughs coming. Rajendra Prasad and Murali Sharma elevate the courtroom

drama with their seasoned presence, making the ensemble cast a major highlight. Highly appreciated Direction and Cinematography Director Sandeep Reddy Bandla masterfully balances humour with social commentary, keeping the narrative engaging and relevant. Cinematographer Sai Sriram enhances the film's lively tone with vibrant visuals, capturing picturesque locations across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, making the storytelling even more immersive. Relatable and gripping storyline

A middle-class man taking a condom company to court over an unexpected pregnancy is as quirky as it is relatable. The film brilliantly captures the struggles of everyday life, weaving in humor, family dynamics, and a gripping courtroom drama that keeps the audience invested till the end. The soul-stirring song 'Nuvve Naku Lokam' 'Nuvve Naku Lokam,' composed by Vijai Bulganin and sung by Karthik, beautifully conveys the film's emotions. With its heartfelt lyrics and soothing melody, the song has struck a chord with listeners, gaining massive popularity and trending across social media.



MG Reinstates its Legacy of Land Speed Records; MG Cyberster achieves the fastest 0-100 kmph Acceleration at Sambhar Salt Lake

Hyderabad :JSW MG Motor India's newly launched luxury brand channel, MG SELECT, added yet another record to MG's rich legacy of innovation and excellence. The MG Cyberster – the World's Fastest MG Roadster, created the first-ever record at Salt Lake in India. Building on its heritage, the Cyberster with electric scissor doors, set the record for Fastest 0-100 kmph (acceleration) in just 3.2 seconds at the Sambhar Salt Lake in Rajasthan. This feat has been acknowledged and verified by Asia Book of Records and India Book of Records. Set by Mira Erda, first Indian Female Racer to win internationally in Formula 4, the record builds upon MG's established legacy of innovation and excellence. The first record breaker – the 'Magic Midget' set a land speed record in 1931 and became the first 750cc car to exceed the speed of 100mph, hitting a speed of 103.13 mph. In 1957, the EX181 (based on the MG A) with 1489 cc engine achieved a top speed of 245.64 mph at the Bonneville Salt Flats.

Later EX181 returned to create another top speed of 254.91 mph at the same place with an enhanced 1506 cc supercharged, twin cam engine in 1959. With lightning-fast acceleration and a sleek silhouette, the MG Cyberster's iconic design pays homage to MG's storied heritage while redefining the modern roadster standard. Featuring an aerodynamic Kammback design, the electric vehicle comes with the slimmest 77 kWh battery pack, with a thickness of just 110 mm. MG Cyberster is a powerhouse of elegance, sportiness, and innovation. Seeking inspiration from the iconic two-door MG B Roadster of the 1960s, the MG Cyberster blends power, precision, and style to redefine sportscars for the discerning Indian customers. Tuned to perfection by former Ital-

ian F1 engineer Marco Fainello, the MG Cyberster delivers exhilarating acceleration and deceleration, this roadster is a testament for elegance, performance, and innovation, setting new benchmarks while embodying the perfect balance of sophistication and sportiness.

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 prod-

ucts 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 localization.

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 India's first Intelligent CUV, MG Windsor.

Megastar Chiranjeevi dismisses speculations about his mother Anjanamma's health

Hyderabad: Megastar Chiranjeevi quashed the rumours regarding his mother Anjanamma "being unwell and hospitalized". He clarified to his fans, followers and everyone that Anjanamma is hale and healthy, and is doing very well. For the last few days, rumours have been circulating in the media that Anjanamma had been admitted to the hospital due to health concerns. These rumours eventually reached the megastar, who immediately denied them.

My attention is drawn to some media reports claiming our mother is unwell and is hospitalised. Want to clarify that she was

a little indisposed for a couple of days. She is hale and hearty and is perfectly alright now.

Taking it to social media, Chiranjeevi tweeted, "I have come across certain media reports suggesting that our mother is unwell and hospitalised. I want to clarify that she was slightly indisposed for a couple of days. She is hale and hearty and is perfectly fine now."

He further added, "I request all media outlets to refrain from publishing speculative reports about her health. Your understanding is appreciated." Fans who were initially



worried after hearing the rumours felt relieved after receiving confirmation from Chiranjeevi himself.

Continental Hospitals Performs First Ever Natural Orifice Specimen Extraction (NOSE) Robotic Procedure for Colon Cancer using SSI Mantra Platform

Hyderabad: Continental Hospitals performed a ground-breaking cancer surgical procedure that is set to redefine colon cancer surgeries in the twin states of Andhra & Telangana. The Robotic Anterior Resection with Natural Orifice Specimen Extraction (NOSE) Procedure was performed on a 74-year woman patient, with the help of the SSI Mantra Robotic Surgical Platform and removed a large tumor from the patient's colon without any abdominal external incision. This first-of-its-kind robotic surgical procedure is a significant milestone in colorectal cancer treatment and offers remarkable benefits for the patients. This is a virtually painless surgery, leaving only minimal scars, aiding an early hospital discharge, and allowing for early return to normal activities while reducing future complications such as abdominal hernia, incision-related complications and others.

The procedure was performed by Dr Kaushik Rao and he was assisted by Dr Madhusudhan Reddy, both Surgical Oncologists at Continental Hospitals. The patient had a history of rectal bleeding and

was confirmed to have cancer in the left-sided colon. She had earlier undergone a hysterectomy and also had complaints of hypertension. Given her age and previous surgical history, Dr Kaushik opted for an innovative robotic NOSE approach to minimize surgical trauma and enhance recovery. The tumor, after robotic resection, was removed through the vaginal opening, eliminating the need for any abdominal incision. Dr Kaushik Rao underlined the fact that surgery remains a cornerstone of curable colon cancer treatment, traditionally requiring abdominal incisions. However, with this groundbreaking advancement, these surgeries can now be performed in minimally invasive mode, particularly for women. Continental Hospitals Chairman Dr Guru N Reddy expressed his immense pride in achieving this milestone in cancer surgery and lauded the team of cancer surgeons who performed this surgery with great skill and precision. "At Continental Cancer Centre, we are committed to delivering cutting-edge treatments that not only offer the best outcomes but also enhance recovery of patients," added Dr Reddy.



Is there a right to take offence?

The popular YouTube show 'India's Got Latent' has sparked controversy after criminal proceedings were initiated against its creators and participants over allegedly obscene remarks in one of its episodes. On February 18, 2025, the Supreme Court granted interim protection from arrest to podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia, one of the participants named in the FIRs. This has reignited the debate on whether stringent criminal sanctions are justified for contentious speech. Is there a right to take offence? Justice Gautam Patel and Dushyant Dave discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Aaratrika Bhaumik. Edited excerpts:

Is there a right to take offence at any form of speech?

Gautam Patel: No such right exists. The reasonable restrictions on free speech under Article 19(2) of the Constitution do not recognise offensive speech as a distinct category. Instead, the restrictions are narrowly defined and include security of the state, public order, decency, morality, and other specific grounds. Therefore, the notion of a right to take offence lies beyond the ambit of constitutionally permissible limitations. While the language used in the show is highly objectionable and unpalatable, it does not necessarily amount to a violation of decency or morality under Article 19(2). Dushyant Dave: The right to free speech is always subject to certain exceptions, including decency and morality. However, these standards vary across jurisdictions and evolve over time. While I agree that the language used in the show was highly inappropriate, I have serious reservations about whether it meets the legal threshold to constitute a criminal offence. In reality, such language is widely used in everyday discourse and has become common parlance in society. Thus,

the outrage surrounding it seems misplaced.

Should laws be paternalistic, or restrict speech only when it poses an imminent risk of public disorder?

Dushyant Dave: I believe that speech should remain unrestricted, except when it is seditious and incites violence. The Constituent Assembly debates reveal strong opposition to the restrictions imposed on free speech under Article 19(2)-19(6), with many members arguing that the government should not have the power to curtail expression. However, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar maintained that in the larger interest of the nation, some restrictions were necessary as long as they remained narrowly defined. However, the irony is that politicians routinely engage in hate speech, yet constitutional authorities fail to take any action. Given this, I would rather grant citizens greater latitude to express themselves than condone such reprehensible conduct from our political leaders. Gautam Patel: The freedom of speech under Article 19(1)(a) can be restricted only by the limitations explicitly prescribed in Article 19(2). While the right to free speech is expansive, the restrictions on it remain narrowly defined. Therefore, the state cannot impose restrictions beyond these constitutional limits. More importantly, speech cannot be curtailed through executive action — such restrictions must be imposed solely through duly enacted legislation.

Is constitutional morality a vital safeguard against the moral convictions of the majority?

Dushyant Dave: Constitutional morality upholds the spirit of the Constitution by reinforcing values like social justice and equality. However, restrictions on free

speech are governed by statute law. Any evaluation of whether speech constitutes an offence must be confined to these narrowly defined legal parameters, rather than the shifting moral sentiments of the public. That said, society has every right to condemn the remarks made on the show. It can express discontent through criticism or boycotts. However, criminal sanctions are never the solution. Moreover, the increasing trend of filing multiple FIRs for the same offence constitutes harassment. It not only prejudices the accused but also undermines their right to a fair defence. Gautam Patel: Constitutional morality is a nuanced and evolving concept. It is not an inherent sentiment but one that must be cultivated. There is also ambiguity regarding its application to constitutional processes. For instance, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar believed it was wiser to entrust the legislature with prescribing forms of administration rather than embedding them in the Constitution. That said, I agree that whether a form of speech qualifies as an offence is a matter strictly governed by substantive law.

Can profane speech necessarily be considered "obscene" speech?

Gautam Patel: A speech laced with profanities is not necessarily obscene. This understanding has evolved over five decades of judicial interpretation. In 1964, the Supreme Court in *Ranjit D. Udeshi v. State of Maharashtra* applied the Victorian-era *Hicklin* test to ban *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence. It defined obscenity as anything with a "tendency to deprave and corrupt" those susceptible to immoral influences. Fifty years later, in *Aveek Sarkar v. State of West Bengal*, the Court embraced the "community standards" test, a more contemporary approach. However, community standards

are amorphous and hard to define. Does it mean that discussions about sex in public discourse must be prohibited? If so, what does that imply for our ancient art and sculptures? These standards continue to evolve. Today, few would deem *Lady Chatterley's Lover* obscene rather than a literary masterpiece. Dushyant Dave: Obscenity is not explicitly defined under criminal law or the Information Technology Act 2000. Instead, its determination is a matter of degree, shaped by society's evolving moral standards. Looking at the erotic art of Khajuraho and Konark. It seems that rather than becoming more progressive, our society has regressed over time. Justice Krishna Iyer captured this dilemma in *Raj Kapoor & Ors. v. State* (1979), where the court quashed criminal proceedings against the makers of the film *Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram*. He observed: "The relation between reality and relativity must haunt the Court's evaluation of obscenity, expressed in society's pervasive humanity, not law's penal perspective." A recent study by the research group India Hate Lab found a 74.4% surge in hate speech against minorities by politicians in 2024. Is the relentless targeting of comedians a case of misplaced priorities? Dushyant Dave: Yes, definitely. Politicians continue to spew hate speech with impunity. During the Lok Sabha elections, several politicians, including the Prime Minister, made blatantly divisive remarks against minorities. Yet, the Election Commission and the State Police remained silent spectators. Opposition parties also failed to challenge these violations in court. Meanwhile, mainstream television journalists amplify hate speech daily. This should alarm every member of society. Comedians are targeted across political lines because they expose uncomfortable truths. Politicians perceive them as a threat.

What's next for Arvind Kejriwal?

A new power occupies the throne in Delhi. On February 20, Rekha Gupta was sworn in as Delhi's new Chief Minister, ushering in a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government in Delhi after a 26-year long hiatus. She succeeds Atishi Marlena, who in turn was tapped to be a temporary replacement for AAP party supremo Arvind Kejriwal. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had hoped for a resurgence in the Delhi Legislative Assembly elections, but found itself out of power when votes were counted on February 8. It won only 22 of the total 70 seats, as contrasted with BJP's 48. When votes were counted on February 8, 2025, several major leaders of the party, including Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and Saurabh Bharadwaj found themselves among the list of defeated candidates. Mr. Kejriwal lost his New Delhi seat to BJP's Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, outdone by a margin of 4,098 votes. The former CM now finds himself out of the Vidhan Sabha after a decade-long stay. The bureaucrat-turned-activist-turned politician had a multiphase journey to his current notoriety. Along the way he picked up new foes and made enemies of former allies, such as senior advocate Prashant Bhushan and anti-corruption activist and mentor Anna Hazare. Following his former disciple's defeat, Mr. Hazare said, "I have been saying it for a long that while contesting the election - the candidate must have a character, good ideas and have no dent on image but they (AAP) didn't. They got tangled in liquor and money." Mr. Hazare further said he had refused to be a part of the party when it was initially discussed during the anti-corruption movement. With the former Chief Minister and MLA no longer spearheading the administration in the national capital, we try to trace his meteoric rise, the steep fall and what lies ahead. Early years and formation of AAP

Arvind Kejriwal was born on August 16, 1968, in Siwani, Haryana. He attended the Campus School in Hisar before graduating with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur in 1989. After a short stint in Tata Steel, he cracked the civil services exam and entered the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) in 1995. There he won acclaim for launching an anti-bribery campaign in his own department. He founded the organisation Parivartan in 2000, aiming to bring in transparency to the tax department, launching protests and even filing a Public Interest Litigation to this end. He also lobbied for change using the Right to Information Act as a powerful tool, particularly to improve the lot of residents in Sundernagari, a New Delhi slum. Mr. Kejriwal transitioned to activism as a full-time vocation in 2006, and resigned from the IRS. The same year, he received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Emergent Leadership. In 2011, Mr. Kejriwal joined the India Against Corruption movement, led by noted social activist Anna Hazare. The movement sought the enactment of the Jan Lokpal Bill to tackle corruption in government. It was in 2012 that Mr. Kejriwal founded the Aam Aadmi Party. At a time when the Centre was racked by multiple scams and instances of high-level corruption, AAP seemed like a promising alternative, touting transparent governance for the public good. Praveen Rai of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi wrote in the Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) in 2017, that the AAP as an alternative was dif-

ferent from earlier experimentations for it appeared to be rooted in a mass movement and wedded to the Gandhian philosophy with a vision of achieving 'Swarajya'. "AAP's baptism in the anti-corruption movement provided it the foundation to build a sustainable organisation bottom-up with a primary focus on removing corruption from public life and writing a new grammar and syntax of democratic politics in India," the political analyst wrote. The Aam Aadmi Party contested the Legislative Assembly elections in Delhi for the first time in 2013, and won 28 out of 70 seats. It formed the government with the external support of the Congress. Mr. Kejriwal became the Chief Minister of Delhi, putting a definitive end to Sheila Dikshit's 15 year tenure as the Chief Minister of Delhi. But he resigned in 49 days, citing as his reason his inability to pass the Jan Lokpal Bill.

In the general elections of 2014, the Aam Aadmi Party contested in more than 400 parliamentary seats. Arvind Kejriwal himself contested against Narendra Modi in UP's Varanasi, an unsuccessful bid. The party too did not make substantial progress in most constituencies, however, in Punjab, it "surprised psephologists by winning four out of the 13 Lok Sabha seats and emerged as a major political player therein," Mr. Rai notes. In 2015, AAP notched a stunning victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, winning 67 of 70 seats and Mr. Kejriwal was sworn in as Chief Minister. AAP's next major success came during the Punjab Assembly elections in 2017 where it emerged as the main opposition. The same year, it launched its 2019 Lok Sabha campaign from Ayodhya, also seeking to lead the Opposition block and allying with the Trinamool Congress. However, it failed to have any impact - managing to win only one seat. Till then a strident voice in Opposition, in August 2019, AAP broke from other parties in supporting the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government during the controversial abrogation of Article 370 from the Indian Constitution. This scrapped the special status accorded to the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir. It also expressed support for the Supreme Court judgement on the Ram Mandir, and Mr. Kejriwal was seen making references to Ram Rajya in Delhi. In the 2020 Delhi Assembly elections, AAP returned to power, albeit with a reduced mandate. Mr. Kejriwal became Chief Minister for a third term, scoring a hat-trick victory from his Vidhan Sabha constituency of New Delhi. During its time in power, Aam Aadmi Party was credited with ensuring a focus on education, health, electricity, and water supply. The government also launched Mohalla Clinics, providing affordable healthcare to the Delhi populace. Its welfare schemes also entailed providing free water up to 20,000 litres per month per household. Furthermore, it subsidised electricity and improved public transportation. For education, the Kejriwal-led regime embarked on upgradation of infrastructure in public schools and the introduction of entrepreneurship in school curriculums. Notably, Mr. Kejriwal launched the Odd-Even scheme for vehicles, in an effort to combat air pollution. These measures were popular with the public, as was the party's core tenet of anti-corruption and embracing of simplicity. For example, he declined the official bungalow and security accorded to the Chief Minister. However, the regime faced several challenges, including allegations of scams and a face-off with the Centre over the role of the Lieutenant



Governor. Issues plaguing his term

Early on during his term, Mr. Kejriwal's government found itself at odds with the Union government and the Delhi Lieutenant Governor, who is appointed by the Centre. The crux of the dispute was a tussle over who had the power to administer Delhi, including the right to make public appointments and whether the L-G was bound to heed the recommendations of Delhi's Council of Ministers. Mr. Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party were also criticised as moving away from the party's founding ideals as an anti-corruption, grassroots level party, instead embracing certain elements of Hindutva and nationalism. AAP distanced themselves from the anti-CAA protests in Delhi's Shaheen Bagh in 2019. In 2022, AAP was criticised for inaction after communal riots racked Jahangirpuri in North Delhi. The most controversial issue plaguing Kejriwal's term, however, is the alleged scam pertaining to Delhi's liquor excise policy, which led to the arrest (and later release) of Mr. Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia. It is alleged that there was corruption in the formulation of the policy, enriching private individuals at cost to the state exchequer. AAP denounced the charges as politically motivated. The case is still being investigated. Additionally, AAP Minister Satyendar Jain was arrested for alleged involvement in a money laundering case. After being released on bail in September 2024, Mr. Kejriwal resigned as the Chief Minister, saying that he would prove his innocence in 'Janata Ki Adalat' (the people's court). Atishi was appointed as Delhi's interim Chief Minister; she reportedly ruled with his modhas (shoes) on the chair, firmly believing that he would return to the helm. During the campaign for the Delhi Legislative Assembly elections, Mr. Kejriwal made headlines for controversial remarks. Prominent among them: he accused the Haryana government of polluting Yamuna water, sparking a blame game with the BJP-led State government. He also came under fire for his remarks about the alleged manipulation of electoral rolls and the registration of fake voters from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. BJP alleged that he was insulting 'Purvanchalis' - people from eastern UP and Bihar.

Mr. Kejriwal was also targeted by the BJP for his official residence. The national party accused him of having spent more than ₹45 crores to "build a Sheesh Mahal" for himself instead of furthering public good. The AAP countered with questions about the Prime Minister's residence, dubbing it "Raajmahal" (king's palace). New Delhi's

continuing battles with catastrophic pollution and frustration with civic infrastructure also did not endear the party to the public. The NDA christened the party an "AAPda" (disaster) for the city. The poll debacle and road ahead The former Chief Minister is now also a former MLA. Earlier in February, Mr. Kejriwal, conceding defeat, said in a video: "We accept the mandate of the people with great humility. I congratulate the BJP for this victory, and I hope they will fulfil all the promises for which people have voted for them." He also said that AAP would be a constructive opposition and continue to serve the people of Delhi. Further, in a post on X, Congress communication chief Jairam Ramesh, and an INDIA alliance member, asserted that rather than a vindication of the Prime Minister's policies, the results were a "rejection of Arvind Kejriwal's politics of deceit, deception, and vastly exaggerated claims of achievement." Noting that AAP had won in 2015 and 2020, when BJP was in power at the Centre, Mr. Ramesh said that this vote reflected a wish to oust AAP rather than electing the BJP. For now, Arvind Kejriwal remains at the helm of the AAP. However, it is a shaky road ahead. The party's loss in Delhi may have political ripple effects in Punjab, as well as Gujarat and Goa. Further, Mr. Kejriwal, who is still out on bail, has to manage legal proceedings relating to the alleged liquor excise policy scam. Investigation is still ongoing. On January 7, Delhi's L-G had authorised a raid by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Mr. Kejriwal's residence. It also searched the homes of AAP leaders Sanjay Singh and Mukesh Ahlawat. In an additional legal headache for Mr. Kejriwal, the Haryana government too has filed a case against him for his remarks about the Yamuna's cleanliness. Most recently, Mr. Kejriwal invited criticism for changing the official CMO handle on X to 'Arvind Kejriwal at work.' This caused an outcry from the BJP, with Delhi BJP unit head Virendra Sachdeva accusing Mr. Kejriwal of digital loot. This has now been altered. After Ms. Gupta was sworn in, with Parvesh Verma as part of her cabinet, Mr. Kejriwal congratulated her from a different handle on X and expressed the hope that she would fulfill the promises made to Delhi's public. "We will support her in every work for the progress and welfare of the people of Delhi," he added. Amid the maelstrom of criticism and an uncertain future, it may offer some comfort to Mr. Kejriwal that, as former Chief Minister, he will have certain government facilities at his disposal, such as accommodation, transport and healthcare.

How do lightning rods prevent lightning strikes from reaching people?

Climate change is making lightning strikes around the world more common and deadlier. Every year, around 24,000 people around the world are killed by such strikes; in India, lightning strikes killed 2,887 people in 2022. There have been petitions to declare this phenomenon a natural disaster in India so that its survivors can access institutional mechanisms for protection and rehabilitation. Against this backdrop, lightning rods are important for their ability to keep lightning away from people.

What is lightning?

Lightning is an electrical discharge between charged particles in a cloud and the ground. Objects can be classified as electrical conductors or insulators, but this depends on the electrical energy acting on the object. For example, the air around us is an electrical insulator: it doesn't transport electric charges. But if it is subjected to a high voltage of around 3 million V/m, its insulating properties break down and it can transport a current. Lightning strikes are possible because electrical charges can build up in a cloud beyond the ability of air to keep resisting their movement.

What is a lightning rod?

While a lightning strike occurs between a cloud and an object on or near the ground, it takes the path of least resistance, which means it moves towards the closest object with the highest electric potential. "The reason lightning strikes the rod has to do with its shape. Lightning rods are pointy and pointed things create stronger electric fields near them," IIT Kanpur assistant professor of physics Adhip Agarwala said. "It's like saying the flow of water speeds up near a nozzle. The electric field is the force that acts on molecules of air, so it becomes strongest near the lightning rod. This force ionises the air near the rod first and provides a route for the current to flow." Think of a lightning strike as the extended hand of someone who wants to be pulled out of a pool. If there are many hands offering to help, the lightning's hand will reach for the strongest one. A lightning rod is an electrical conductor that takes advantage of this fact with one addition: engineers install it on building-tops in a way that it's the first hand the lightning encounters on its way down. This is also why it's risky to stand under trees in an otherwise open field, like a farm.

Where does the current in a lightning rod go?

Heat energy always flows from a warmer object to a cooler object. Liquid water flows from a place with a higher gravitational potential to a lower one. Similarly, an electric current flows from a place with higher electric potential to a place with lower electric potential. Fortunately, we have an abundant source of lower electric potential: the earth. The lightning rod is connected to a wire that drops through the length of the building into the ground, where it dissipates its electric charges into its surroundings. The idea here is that electrifying the earth will need virtually infinite amount of charges, so it's treated as a bucket that will never fill up. However, some parts of the bucket may still be better at receiving the charges than others. If a strike induces a large current in a grid-connected electrical system, engineers

connect the wire to a line that allows only high currents, thus diverting them away from devices that can handle only low currents. Such setups are called lightning arresters.

Can lightning evade a lightning rod?

A lightning strike may evade a lightning rod if the rod is installed at the wrong height or angle or too close to another structure, isn't properly grounded, if there are multiple thunderstorms in an area, if it has a flawed design, or if it has become misshapen and/or corroded due to lack of maintenance. It can also fail if an electrical discharge ascends from the ground to meet a descending strike, risking bypassing the rod, or if a strike is more attracted to the side of a tall building than to the top. Over the years engineers have devised new incentives for lightning to prefer a lightning rod over other structures nearby. Among others, they make sure a lightning rod is available for lightning to strike within the minimum distance the strike travels in each step it takes towards the ground.

What dangers does a lightning rod pose?

The lightning rod and the components connected to it are designed to carry a lightning strike into the ground. This means catching the strike and safely transporting it. If the wire bends in a U shape at any point, the



two arms of the U should be far apart to prevent the current from arcing across and shorting the conductor. The charges should also not be able to arc through any other objects nearby.

Engineers also bury the grounding wire in a part of the crust with higher electrical conductivity so that the wire dissipates charges faster. In the 1960s, a U.S. engineer named Herbert Ufer developed a system later called a concrete encased elec-

trode: it has the properties of a good grounding material, including better electrical conductivity than soil.

The International Electrotechnical Commission publishes standards that specify the design limits and points of failure engineers can consider when installing lightning rods, and the priorities that planners and policymakers should adopt — informed by technical considerations — when estimating risk and liability.

Mpox clade Ia has evolved to jump from humans to humans: new study

Since the world eradicated smallpox in 1980, scientists have known that the battle against poxviruses was far from over. Of the multiple types that exist, scientists have been wary of one in particular: mpox. In fact, one of the points in the World Health Assembly's post-eradication policies was the "continuation of monkeypox surveillance in West and Central Africa, at least until 1985". In the 2022-2023, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the then global outbreak of mpox a 'public health emergency of international concern'. In August this year, the WHO declared mpox to be a public health emergency for the second time in two years. (Note: In 2022, the WHO designated "mpox" as a preferred synonym for "monkeypox" disease. The virus is still called "monkeypox" according to the International Committee on the Taxonomy of Viruses. For uniformity's sake, this article will use "mpox" to refer to both the disease and the virus clades.) New cause for worry

The declaration ensured multiple countries would pledge vaccines to the 15 African nations affected by the outbreak, six of which had never reported a single case of mpox before. But the paucity of doses has forced countries to prioritise their campaigns. Barely two months since these countries started their targeted vaccinations, scientists have a new cause for worry. A preprint paper uploaded on Virologica, a scientists' discussion forum online, on October 24 reported evidence that yet another strain of the mpox virus appeared to have achieved human-to-human transmission. There are two clades

of mpox: I and II. Clade I viruses have been shown to cause more severe disease in the mouse model, but that doesn't mean the same may be true for humans. Both clades are classified into two subclades, making a total of four known variants: Ia, Ib, IIa, and IIb. Of these, clade IIb was responsible for the 2022 outbreak, which is still continuing in certain parts of Africa. Clade Ib, discovered towards the end of 2023, is the primary cause of infection in central Africa. Researchers believed these two clades to be the primary contributors of the present mpox problem. They know very little about clade IIa except that it causes infections in western Africa.

When viruses make 'mistakes'

Clade Ia, on the other hand, is the oldest known variant of the mpox virus. It has been known to cause sporadic infections in humans, mostly children, since 1970. But these infections were always limited to a few families or communities and the transmission was always from animals to humans. There was no proof of sustained human to human transmission — until recently. The preprint posted on Virologica reported evidence that the DNA of clade Ia viruses sequenced from the present outbreak bears clear signs of human-to-human transmission. Viruses evolve by introducing changes to their genetic material. Each time a virus infects a new host, an enzyme known as a polymerase makes multiple copies of the virus's genetic material (DNA or RNA), which is then packed into new viruses. But sometimes the polymerases make a

mistake. These mistakes, called mutations, could have a positive, negative or no impact on the virus, meaning the virus can get better or worse or be the same at its job. The rate at which the polymerases make mutations is different for different viruses. Generally, viruses that have RNA as their genetic material, such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and influenza, make mistakes much more frequently than those that have DNA, like the human papillomavirus (HPV) and adenoviruses. This error rate is even lower in some DNA viruses, like the members of the pox family, which also have an error-correction mechanism built into them. This mechanism, called proof-reading, ensures few mistakes are made: around one mistake every three years in a circulating viral strain.

The APOBEC family However, viral polymerases are not the only source of mistakes in a virus's genetic material. The immune system also has a mechanism to introduce random changes in foreign DNA. A family of proteins called APOBEC — short for 'apolipoprotein B mRNA editing enzyme, catalytic polypeptide-like' — can introduce changes to the viral DNA while it is being copied in the cells. By doing so, APOBEC proteins force mistakes, some of which can be lethal to the virus. Importantly, of the four bases that DNA is made of, namely adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine, viral DNA polymerases can make a mistake anywhere, but APOBEC's activity is usually limited to changing a cytosine to a thymine. In a 2023 paper that appeared in Science.

Lagacharla row in Telangana: Pharma dreams face farmers' defiance

The approach to Lagcherla village, nearly 130 km from Hyderabad, is under lockdown-like security. Multiple police checkpoints have been set up along the Tunkumetla-Kosgi road, where vehicles are stopped, and identification is meticulously scrutinised before allowing further access. The intensified measures follow the November 12 attack on Vikarabad District Collector Prateek Jain, Kodangal Area Development Authority (KADA) Special Officer K. Venkat Reddy, and other government officials by locals during a contentious public hearing. The hearing, held to discuss land acquisition for a proposed 'Pharma Village' project by the Telangana government, turned chaotic when residents, mainly from Roti Banda thanda and Pulicheru thanda — now part of Roti Banda thanda gram panchayat — allegedly attacked the officials. The incident, the first of its kind on this scale in Telangana, has sparked outrage among government officials and ministers alike. Collector Jain downplayed the attack as a 'sort of confrontation', amid demands from officials for strict action against the perpetrators.

Lagcherla, a sleepy village 17 km from Tunkumetla in Kodangal Assembly constituency represented by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, now resembles a war zone. Police personnel and barricades dominate the landscape, and tensions, though under control, linger. This village is home to around 3,000 people of various communities, including upper castes. Official sources say the acquisition plan involves 1,358 acres of land, including 547 acres of assigned land, 90 acres of government land, and 721 acres of private holdings. Around 800 farmers, mainly from poor and tribal communities, stand to lose their land and are seeking compensation of ₹30 lakh per acre, citing loss of livelihood and generational land. The area is considered one of the more backward regions of the State, plagued by arid climatic conditions. Government officials, for their part, reportedly proposed a Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) package that includes financial aid of ₹10 lakh per acre, a house under the Indiramma housing scheme, and a 125-square-yard plot for every acre of land surrendered. However, farmers argue that the compensation undervalues their land and does not account for the socio-economic impact of displacement. But officials maintain the project is crucial for industrial development and employment generation, with promises of further negotiations to address farmers' grievances. These talks, however, ended in chaos, with farmers attacking officials during a public hearing. For over eight months, landowners from Lagcherla, Roti Banda thanda, and Pulicheru thanda had been opposing the project. Their resistance peaked during the planned boycott of the November 12 public hearing, marked by a 'Vanta-Vaarpu' protest — a symbolic form of agitation reminiscent of the Telangana statehood movement. "When the Collector arrived without police protection, protesters began chasing and attacking him with sticks. People of our village were not involved; it was mainly those from nearby thandas and outsiders," an elderly resident says.

Patolla Ravinder Reddy, ex-member of the Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency, attributes the turmoil to dissatisfaction with the compensation package. "Landowners

were offered ₹10 lakh per acre and 125 square yards of house site per acre, but the market value is ₹25 lakh even in the village, while roadside land is valued at ₹30-₹60 lakh per acre. Many would be willing to part with their land if the government offered ₹15 lakh per acre," he said, accusing officials and local Congress leaders, including the Chief Minister's brother, A. Tirupathi Reddy, of 'mishandling' the situation. Protests escalated into violence when a mob attacked officials near a tent, 2 km from Lagcherla village. Police said KADA Special Officer Venkat Reddy, Additional Collector Lingya Naik, and Vikarabad DSP Srinivas Reddy were severely injured. Subsequently, authorities arrested several suspects, including former Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLA from Kodangal Patnam Narender Reddy and local BRS leader Bogamoni Suresh Raj, both accused of inciting violence for political gain, allegedly at the behest of BRS working president and Sircilla MLA K.T. Rama Rao. Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy claimed individuals from neighbouring villages had been brought in to stir unrest. So far, 24 persons, including members of the Lambada tribe, have been arrested, and police are identifying more suspects. Cases have been registered under various sections, including attempted murder and obstruction of official duties, at Bomraspet police station. IGP Multi Zone-II V. Satyanarayana revealed that 19 of the 50 suspects identified do not own land in the village.

Meanwhile, Additional DGP (Law & Order) Mahesh M. Bhagwat has launched an inquiry into the incident. On November 16, he held discussions with district police officials at the Vikarabad District Police Office, accompanied by Vikarabad SP Narayana Reddy and other senior officers. Bhagwat also met the Collector to assess the situation, while special teams ramped up efforts to apprehend those involved. The government transferred Pargi DSP Karunasagar to the DGP office due to his alleged failure to prevent the incident. A senior police officer notes that the DSP could have stopped the officials from leaving their tents, and his absence during the attack was cited as a major lapse. Farmers and villagers have expressed frustration over alleged provocation, inadequate compensation, and police excesses. Rathod Laxmi, 67, a farmer from Roti Banda thanda, says, "Compensation of ₹10 lakh per acre is insufficient when even half an acre cannot be purchased for that amount." The unrest has drawn the attention of rights activists, Opposition leaders, the State SC/ST Commission and the National ST Commission, who have called for action against alleged police brutality and demanded justice for the affected villagers. On November 18, National ST Commission member Jatoh Hussain Naik visited the area to hear the villagers' grievances. The villagers claimed they were unaware of the Collector's presence during the protest and alleged police misconduct, including harassment and indecent behaviour during midnight searches.

Political colour The agitation against land acquisition intensified on October 25, when Congress Mandal president A. Shekhar was locked in the gram panchayat office by villagers. He was accused of threatening residents of Roti Banda thanda to part with their



lands in exchange for 'paltry' compensation. Shekhar is said to be a key supporter of the CM in Kodangal constituency. The mention of Rama Rao in the remand report of ex-MLA Narender Reddy has intensified political tensions. The report alleges that the latter, under Rama Rao's direction, masterminded the attack on November 12, describing it as 'criminal conspiracy'. Police claim Narender Reddy confessed to receiving assurances of protection from a 'prominent party leader'. However, both the BRS and legal experts have dismissed the claims as politically motivated. BRS has accused the Congress-led government in the State of exploiting unverified confessions to malign Rama Rao's reputation. Further, concerns have been raised over the inadequate police presence at Lagcherla, despite rising tensions over land acquisition for the proposed pharma village. Congress leaders, including CM Revanth Reddy, have openly blamed the BRS for the incident, and accused them of being "anti-development" for obstructing the project. In contrast, BRS leaders, including Rama Rao, led delegations to New Delhi to meet with the ST Commission and other statutory bodies.

Meanwhile, tribal farmers, accused of attacking the Collector, met with Telangana State Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes chairman Bakki Venkataiah, accompanied by MLC Satyavathi Rathod. They alleged police brutality during their arrests and urged action against the personnel involved. Venkataiah assured the farmers of justice, condemning the actions of the authorities. He termed the forced acquisition of tribal lands for the pharma village as unjust and expressed concern over impact on tribal families dependent on land for their livelihood. He also promised to visit the affected villages and take action against the guilty officials while Rathod called for registering cases against police officials under the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, accusing the government of mishandling the situation and unfairly targeting tribals. The BJP has also condemned the incident. Telangana BJP president and Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy has demanded action against the culprits, while ensuring protection of farmers. Malkajgiri MP Eatala Rajender has raised the issue with the National Human Rights Commission, alleging third-degree torture of farmers in police custody. He also criticised the Congress-led government for continuing the land acquisi-

tion policies of the previous BRS administration. He further pointed out discrepancies in the compensation being offered to the affected farmers.

Land acquisition vs industrial growth Land acquisition for projects remains a sensitive issue, regardless of the project's purpose or promises of a relatively higher compensation and job opportunities for families relinquishing their land. Hyderabad Pharma City is not the first project in Telangana to face opposition in recent years, but what sets it apart is the government's focus on developing an at-scale, integrated, and one-of-its-kind facility. The project's features helped fuel interest among prospective investors and also contributed to stoking opposition, especially given the pharma industry's reputation as a polluter and a few research studies holding it responsible for anti-microbial resistant bacteria in water bodies near Hyderabad. Thus, it came as no surprise when Rama Rao, as then Industries Minister ahead of the first public hearing for the project in October 2017, stressed that "utmost care" will be taken to safeguard environment and handle pollution "very efficiently". "We are setting ourselves up for scrutiny," he had declared, outlining the project's scope — spread over 19,333 acres, with ₹64,000-crore investment and direct job creation for 1.7 lakh people. However, the road to implementation has been fraught with challenges, including legal disputes over land acquisition, the COVID-19 pandemic, and inadequate financial support from the Centre, all of which delayed its rollout ahead of 2023 State Assembly elections. The Congress party, which had opposed the ambitious project, wasted no time scrapping it after coming to power.

However, with thousands of acres already acquired by the previous BRS government, fully abandoning the project proved challenging for the new administration. As a result, the Revanth Reddy-led government scrapped the Pharma City but unveiled plans to establish a clutch of smaller pharma clusters across the State. It was decided to call those Pharma Villages, as 'city' implied scale. "These [pharma villages] will be smaller in size and decentralised in different parts of the State and in all directions," Special Chief Secretary for Industries and IT, Jayesh Ranjan says. The objective behind this shift is to avoid concentrating the pharma industry in one area, which could exacerbate pollution.

Why has Gautam Adani been indicted in the U.S. over alleged \$250mn bribery scheme?

The story so far: Federal prosecutors in New York on Wednesday (November 21, 2024) indicted Adani Group Chairman Gautam S. Adani, his nephew Sagar Adani, and six others on multiple counts of fraud. The charges stem from an alleged multibillion-dollar scheme to bribe Indian officials in exchange for favourable terms on solar power contracts, which were projected to generate over \$2 billion in profits. "This indictment alleges schemes to pay over \$250 million in bribes to Indian government officials, to lie to investors and banks to raise billions of dollars, and to obstruct justice," a press release issued by the US Attorney's Office, Eastern District of New York, said quoting U.S. Deputy Assistant Attorney General Lisa Miller. The individuals named as defendants, alongside Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani, include Vneet Jaain, CEO of Adani Green Energy Ltd; Ranjit Gupta, who served as CEO of Azure Power Global Ltd from 2019 to 2022; Rupesh Agarwal, who was with Azure Power from 2022 to 2023; and Cyril Cabanes, an Australian-French dual citizen, along with Saurabh Agarwal and Deepak Malhotra — all of whom were affiliated with Canada-based pension fund Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ). Solar power plant project at the heart of the indictment

The indictment alleges that Gautam Adani and his associates paid over \$250 million in bribes to Indian government officials between 2020 and 2024. These payments were reportedly made to secure contracts projected to generate \$2 billion in profits over 20 years and to develop India's largest solar power plant project. The U.S. prosecutors have claimed that the seeds of the bribery scheme were sown between December 2019 and July 2020 when Adani Green Energy and another renewable energy company listed on the New York Stock Exchange secured contracts from the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a state-owned entity dedicated to promoting renewable energy adoption across the country. At the time, Adani Green Energy proclaimed in a press statement that it had won "the world's largest solar award". According to the indictment, the \$6 billion investment was projected to yield over \$2 billion in post-tax profits over 20 years. However, the project encountered an unexpected setback — its high energy costs made it unaffordable for Indian States, leaving the SECI grappling to attract customers to sign on. Between 2021 and February 2022, several States including Odisha and Jammu and Kashmir agreed to participate in the solar power initiative. Around the same time, more individuals joined the bribery scheme, including former employees of CDPQ — Cyril Cabanes, Saurabh Agarwal and Deepak Malhotra. Violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act

The indictment accuses Adani and his associates of conspiring to bribe Indian officials to secure energy contracts in a purported violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). Although enacted in 1977, the law has been more stringently enforced in recent decades resulting in substantial fines for major companies, including Germany's Siemens, Brazil's state-owned Petrobras, and a subsidiary of Halliburton, the oil services giant. President-elect Donald

J. Trump reportedly wanted to strike down the legislation in his first term since he considered it "unfair" to American companies. Another prominent critic of the law, Jay Clayton, whom Trump appointed as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, contended in a 2011 paper that U.S. anti-bribery policies disproportionately burdened American companies in international transactions, thereby undermining U.S. competitiveness. The prosecutors alleged that the defendants meticulously tracked their bribes and offers to Indian officials using messaging apps, phones, and PowerPoint presentations, often employing "code names" in their communications. It was further claimed that two of the defendants even engaged in discussions to delete "incriminating electronic materials, including emails, electronic messages and a PowerPoint analysis." Gautam Adani, Sagar Adani, and Vneet Jaain are accused of conspiring to deceive investors by issuing bonds supported by falsified and misleading financial data. According to the indictment, the scheme involved employing fraudulent tactics, such as withholding crucial information and fabricating corporate resolutions, to attract U.S. investors to their bond sales. The indictment outlines that Adani Green Energy Ltd. attempted to raise funds from U.S. and international investors in connection with a 2021 bond offering by making false and misleading claims regarding the company's anti-corruption and anti-bribery measures.

The defendants also face charges of conspiring to commit wire fraud by making false promises and fraudulent claims to secure loans and investments for their energy ventures. According to the indictment, Adani and his nephew lied to investors when their businesses took out a \$1.35 billion loan and issued \$750 million in bonds in 2021. Additionally, they are accused of withholding information from investors regarding ongoing U.S. investigations into their business practices in 2023 and 2024. Obstruction of justice Former employees of CDPQ — Cyril Cabanes, Saurabh Agarwal, and Deepak



Malhotra — have been accused of obstructing an investigation into the bribery scheme by deleting emails and agreeing to provide false information to the U.S. government. CDPQ, a shareholder in Adani companies, invests in infrastructure projects. In response to the indictment, CDPQ issued a statement saying, "CDPQ is aware of charges filed in the US against certain former employees. Those employees were all terminated in 2023 and CDPQ is co-operating with US authorities. In light of the pending cases, we have no further comment at this time." Civil lawsuit The US Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) has filed a parallel civil lawsuit against Gautam Adani, Sagar Adani, executives of Adani Green Energy Ltd., and Cyril Cabanes. The SEC alleges that the bribes were paid to "secure [the Indian government's] commitment to purchase energy at above-market rates that would benefit Adani Green and Azure Power," two renewable energy companies in India. The SEC filed the complaints in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York.

What happens next? If proven, the charges could invite hefty financial penalties and a ban on the defendants from holding directorial or executive positions in compa-

nies that fall under US exchange regulations. The case will now proceed to the "arraignment" stage where the concerned judge will formally communicate the charges to the defendants and decide whether to grant bail or not. The defendants will then be required to enter a plea — either guilty or not guilty. If they plead not guilty, the case will move forward to a jury trial. The indictment risks reigniting a reputational crisis for the Adani conglomerate, which had been previously accused of "brazen accounting fraud, stock manipulation and money laundering" by Hindenburg Research, a small investment firm in New York. Although the Adani Group denied those claims, its stock price plummeted following the release of the report. On Thursday, Adani Green Energy Ltd, the company at the heart of the allegations, cancelled a \$600 million bond sale, the proceeds of which were intended to repay a foreign-currency loan. Several Adani Group shares, including those of the flagship firm Adani Enterprises, also suffered massive losses and hit their lower circuits in early trade. An Adani Group spokesperson has denied the allegations as baseless and maintained that the conglomerate is fully compliant with existing laws.

Study reveals the 'most aggressive sign' of colon cancer in younger patients

Colon cancer, traditionally considered a disease of older adults, is increasingly affecting younger people, with a noticeable rise in cases globally. New research has shown that individuals under 50 are not only at risk but often present with different symptoms and are diagnosed at more advanced stages of the disease compared to older patients. This trend is concerning, as early diagnosis significantly improves treatment outcomes. A study led by researchers from Taiwan's Chang Gung Memorial Hospital found that younger colon cancer patients, especially those under 50, are more likely to overlook early warning signs, which leads to later diagnosis and more advanced cancer stages. Typical and most aggressive symptoms in younger patients include rectal bleeding, changes in bowel habits, and abdominal pain. These symptoms are often mistaken for less severe conditions, delaying crucial medical

evaluation. The research also revealed that colon cancer in younger people is rising steadily, with annual increases of 3.2% in colon cancer cases and 3.3% in rectal cancer cases. This sharp increase points to a need for greater awareness and vigilance among young adults, who may not consider themselves at risk for a condition traditionally associated with older age. Dr Bharath G, Consultant in Surgical Oncology at Fortis Hospital, Nagarbhavi, stresses the importance of recognising key symptoms, particularly rectal bleeding, which can be alarming but not always cancer-related. While haemorrhoids, anal fissures, and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) are common causes of rectal bleeding, persistent or worsening symptoms should prompt immediate medical attention, he said. Lung cancer While younger people may not consider themselves at risk, staying vigilant about their

health and recognising potential symptoms can lead to earlier diagnosis and better treatment outcomes. (File photo) Symptoms to watch for in younger people In addition to rectal bleeding, Dr Bharath said, young people should be aware of the following symptoms that could indicate colon cancer: Colon cancer in younger patients tends to be more aggressive, with cancers such as signet-ring cell and mucinous adenocarcinoma occurring more frequently, the study also found. These forms of cancer are often diagnosed at later stages (III and IV), making treatment more challenging. Why early detection matters Early detection is critical to improving colon cancer survival rates. The American Cancer Society now recommends starting regular colon cancer screening at age 45, earlier than previous guidelines suggested. However, if troubling symptoms persist, especially those mentioned above.