

Realtors urge Telangana government to alter base year to 2024 to register for LRS

Adilabad: Realtors here are asking the State government to consider the base year of 2024 in place of 2020 to register unauthorised plots under the Layout Regularisation Scheme (LRS). The State government had announced the LRS for plots developed in unauthorised layouts developed till August 26, 2020. It allowed buyers of the plots to register their assets by paying regularisation and pro-rata open charges by March 31. It said 90 per cent of charges would be refunded if an application was rejected. Mancherla district Real Estate Developers Association president V Venkata Samy and general secretary Neeli Srinivas said they had requested that the State government consider 2024 as the base year instead of 2020 a few days ago. They reasoned that the government would be able to earn more income than that recorded with registrations of assets up to 2020. The realtors disclosed that they had represented to Ministers and top bureaucrats requesting the government to alter the base year. Pointing

out that the assets were already registered, they said buyers were interested to pay the charges required for regularisation of the property. The buyers were ready to lose lands for wider roads if required, a realtor stated.

They regretted that they were undergoing an unprecedented financial crisis due to stalling of registrations of plots in illegal layouts for over a year. They stated that they were paying interests for loans availed from informal sources to develop projects. They would be bailed out only if the government reviewed its decision. Stamps and Registrations officials said the erstwhile Adilabad district registered a steep decline in registrations of house sites from January to December in 2024. For instance, an office of Sub-Registrar in Mancherla was recording around 600 registrations per month now as against 1,500 till 2023. Evidently, erstwhile Adilabad district saw a revenue of Rs 174 crore by way of registering house sites, apartments, mortgaging of assets, marriages, firms and other



services from January 1 to December 12, 2024, as against income of Rs 205 crore earned in 2023 and Rs 213 crore in 2022.

The data showed that income dropped by around 15 per cent when compared to that of 2023 and 2022.

Telangana faces man-made water crisis; farmers forced to abandon Rabi crop



Hyderabad: Despite experiencing a year of adequate rainfall, Telangana's agricultural sector is facing a severe crisis, triggering a distressing rise in farmer suicides. The previous year, marked by deficient rainfall and poor inflows into major rivers, had led to crop holidays and financial strain on farmers. This year, although rainfall and river inflows were sufficient, the agrarian situation remains dire, primarily due to mismanagement of available resources. The crisis can be attributed to multiple factors, including dwindling irrigation support, poor water resource management, erratic power supply, lack of capital support, and scarcity of fertilizers.

The State government's failure to ensure remunerative prices and timely procurement has also left farmers in despair. The sudden rise in cost of agricultural operations and inadequate investment support further added to the travails of the peasant community. The farming community in the State is facing a man-made crisis, with many farmers pushed to the brink. The State-level Committee for Integrated Water Planning and Management (SCIWAM) had planned to extend irrigation support to nearly 43 lakh acres during the Rabi season (2024-25). But at least half of it did not get full-fledged irrigation support. The Irrigation Department had planned to make 350 TMC of water available to the Yasangi command under major and medium irrigation projects in both the Krishna and Godavari basins. The department had planned to source it from major irrigation projects to support Rabi in 30 lakh

acres. They planned to extend irrigation under medium irrigation projects to 2.9 lakh acres, minor irrigation projects to 7.2 lakh acres, lift Scheme of the IDC to 1 lakh acres. But all its plans were upset with the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme being left abandoned for the second consecutive year. Rabi operations that commenced in mid-December will last till mid-April. Before the closing of the irrigation canals for the season, tanks should be filled to support the drinking water supply for the rest of the summer. The State has to sustain irrigation support for nearly another 45 days before ensuring the final wetting for crops. But the crucial wetting seems uncertain under major projects, their storage levels fast depleting. The SRSP is left with only 31 TMC as its present storage as against a gross storage of 90.31 TMC while the Sripada Yellampalli project has only 12.98 TMC as against the gross storage of 20.18 TMC. The project is expected to retain up to 15 TMC to meet drinking water needs.

In the Krishna basin, both the Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects have been left with 74 TMC and 163 TMC respectively. But the net drawdown level is hardly 60 TMC to be shared by both Telugu States. This raises serious concerns about the fate of the Rabi crop in Telangana. The State has a cultivable (Rabi) command of 27,67 lakh acres under 30 odd major and medium projects including Sriramsagar (Stage I and Stage II), Nizam Sagar, Kaddam, Jurla, Srisailem, NSP and AMR projects.

Are militants in Manipur using Starlink satellite internet? | Explained

The story so far: Billionaire Elon Musk has denied claims that his space company SpaceX's satellite internet technology Starlink is being used by militants in Manipur. This came after the Indian Army and police seized weapons and what looked like a Starlink-branded satellite router and antenna. Starlink is still pending regulatory approval in India, though it will be starting in neighbouring Bangladesh and Bhutan in 2025. However, the discovery of the Starlink devices in Manipur raises questions about whether or not militants and other non-state actors can bypass geographic restrictions on the Starlink technology.

What is Starlink and how does it work?

Starlink uses an extensive low Earth orbit satellite constellation to deliver broadband internet that has high speeds and low latency. This means that rather than restricting users to essential or emergency functions, they can also stream content, play games online, make video calls, or carry out other high data rate activities, per the company. It is a popular choice for users worldwide in remote areas, sea vessels, disaster-struck regions, or places where oppressive regimes have throttled access to more mainstream internet services. There are thousands of satellites in the Starlink system, and they orbit Earth at around 550 km. Though they cover the entire globe, per SpaceX, the company is not authorised to provide its services to users in some regions. "Additionally, if a vessel strays into the waters of a country which prohibits Starlink from operating within it, our satellites will be unable to communicate with it effectively," said Starlink on its website.

What is the controversy surrounding Starlink?

The Spear Corps of the Indian army on December 16 shared photos on Elon Musk-owned X of guns, ammunition, and country-made mortars that Indian army and police units had seized in Manipur. X users spotted a small satellite device and router, with the latter bearing the SpaceX logo. In response to an X user who claimed that Musk's technology was being used by terrorists, the billionaire replied, "This is false. Starlink satellite beams are turned off over India." The Starlink device also had "RPF/PLA" written on it, which refers to a Myanmar-based Meitei extremist group that is banned in India. Per Starlink's website and coverage map, the service date for Myanmar is unknown. However, this is not the first time SpaceX has become embroiled in controversy in India. Last month, smugglers originating from Myanmar were caught by the Andaman and Nicobar islands police with over 6,000 kg of meth and a Starlink device that was allegedly used for navigation and communication, despite service being prohibited in Indian waters. Furthermore, in August this year, Starlink equipment was seen being sold on the B2B platform IndiaMART.

Can Starlink satellite internet be controlled or intercepted?

International borders are not solid and it is not easy to refine satellite internet coverage to such a precise degree that service is activated or halted exactly in line with a nation's border. An additional complication is that many international borders are con-

tested or unclear, while satellites moving above them are continuously transmitting encrypted signals. This encryption stops satellites from being hacked by militants or other malicious actors trying to intercept the service. The key question is whether militants in Manipur can effectively use Starlink satellite internet within India. "If these [Starlink] boxes have been purchased from outside of India, by whatever means, they can be used because then, that box is authorised. The only thing is, do they have a position location feature? In that case, yes, if you buy a [Starlink] terminal in the U.S. and bring it to India, because of the geographical location change, it might not work. But that is provided the terminal has a built-in geographic location identifier," theorised former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) engineer, Arup Dasgupta. Starlink supports VPNs that use TCP or UDP, per the company website, though this can affect the app's performance. So, can users buy foreign Starlink terminals and then use VPN services in order to access satellite internet in India? "It depends on the internals of the Starlink hardware," Dasgupta explained. To help visualise how Starlink stops users in prohibited regions from accessing its satellite internet, Dasgupta used the analogy of a set-top box that does not let TV watchers access some channels while others who have access can watch these channels.

Musk in February this year also strongly trashed news reports claiming that Starlink devices were being sold to Russia, and later explained on X that Starlink satellites would not close the link in Russia. However, this did not allay concerns of Starlink being used by the Russian military in occupied regions of Ukraine. With regards to seized Starlink devices, Dasgupta pointed out that by tracking the unique identification code of the Starlink terminal, it might be possible to find the buyer. However, this too could prove difficult due to dummy organisations or shadow companies obfuscating the trail of likely illegal buyers. In essence, more information is needed from SpaceX and Musk to understand how the company ensures that Starlink satellite internet does not reach the countries yet to allow Starlink, while enabling service for neighbouring countries or waters that do allow Starlink service. The Hindu was also able to download the Starlink app from the Google Play Store in India and go through the set-up process up to the point a plugged-in Starlink device was needed. The app may collect users' approximate and precise locations for functionality reasons but these are optional, per the app's profile. This is in stark contrast to banned apps like TikTok, which are unavailable on the app store.

How are militants in Manipur using Starlink?

This is not yet known, as more information is needed both from Musk's SpaceX as well as the Indian authorities. Musk has said that satellite beams for India were never on in the first place, but there are questions about the cross-border use of Starlink devices over land, sea, and air. It is also not yet confirmed whether the seized satellite equipment in Manipur was actually functional. Starlink this year said that if it finds out about its terminals being used by sanc-



tioned or unauthorised parties, it can take action to deactivate the terminal after an investigation.

What does Indian law say about Starlink usage?

India strictly regulates and restricts the use of satellite-based communication devices, even by Indian civilians and citizens in conflict-free zones. Everyday gadget users within the country would have noticed that even key satellite-based emergency features on premium phones that are easily available for users overseas are not enabled for use in India. Under section 6 of the Indian Wireless Act and Section 20 of the Indian Telegraph Act, the use of thuraya/iridium satellite phones is illegal in the country. Indian

embassies worldwide warn both Indian and foreign travellers that they cannot carry satellite phones into the country and may face confiscation of the devices and legal action if they do so without official permission. These restrictions are in place largely to combat militancy and terrorism. In 2022, Indian officials reported that evidence of iridium satellite phone usage was discovered in the Kashmir Valley. Starlink is currently trying to enter the Indian market, but finds itself in competition with billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance. The latest discovery of the Starlink hardware in Manipur could further affect SpaceX's entry, due to doubts over its compliance with Indian regulations and possible misuse by non-state actors.

Vishno Devi Shrine Board approves tripartite MoU to address landslide, rockfall risks on track



Jammu: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) has approved a tripartite MoU to identify and mitigate areas prone to landslides and rockfalls along the tracks that lead to the sacred cave shrine in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district. Several landslides and rockfalls along the tracks have resulted in several casualties and injuries over the last three years. This year, on September 2, three pilgrims died in a landslide en route to the shrine.

The Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, who chaired the 73rd meeting of the board, approved the Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU), a board spokesperson said. The agreement involves collaboration with the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and THDC India Limited (THDCIL) to identify and stabilize vulnerable slopes along the yatra route between Adhkuwari and Bhawan, he said. The initiative aims to ensure pilgrim safety by mitigating risks associated with unstable terrains, the spokesperson said.

The LG directed the board to conduct detailed analyses of services, security, and disaster management measures. He also emphasized the need for improved mobile connectivity and an enhanced pilgrim feedback mechanism.

Teach For India Announces Final Deadline for 2025 Fellowship Aspirants can apply for the cohort of 2025 by 9th March, 2025

Hyderabad :Teach For India, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing educational equity, has announced the final deadline for its 2025 Fellowship. Aspiring fellows have the opportunity to make a lasting impact on the future of children and inspire the leaders of tomorrow. The final deadline to apply is March 9, 2025.

The Teach For India Fellowship is a two-year, full-time, paid program that brings together individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Fellows are selected from more than 500 universities, colleges, and over 300 companies across the

country. The Fellowship application process is very rigid, and receives applications from India's brilliant and most promising individuals. Once selected, fellows will teach full-time in affordable private schools or English-medium government schools, where they will focus on guiding students through the challenges of India's inequities. The program also provides fellows with invaluable leadership training, focusing on emotional intelligence skills such as empathy, active listening, and relationship-building, which contribute to both personal and professional growth.



To date, over 670 fellows have joined the 2024 Cohort, united by a common goal: to build a more compassionate and equitable India through education. The fact that differentiates the Teach For India Fellowship is the unique opportunity to significantly re-

shape the education landscape and drive meaningful change. Don't miss your chance to apply for the Teach For India Fellowship 2025 | Final Deadline: March 9, 2025 Apply For the Teach For India Fellowship 2025 | How To Be a Fellow

A grand celebration of Telugu Cinema: 'Pushpaka Vimana', 'Kshana Kshanam', 'Happy Days', 'Nene Raju Nene Mantri', 'Manmadhudu', 'Aditya 369' and more on the big screen at Red Lorry Film Festival: Parallel Verse in Hyd



of the most celebrated works from across the world and Indian cinema, offering a rare opportunity to experience these masterpieces on the big screen once again. 'Mayabazar' (1957), the legendary fantasy epic by K. V. Reddy, continues to be one of the most cherished films in Indian cinematic history, weaving mythology with mesmerising storytelling. Adding to this esteemed collection is 'Missamma' (1955), L. V. Prasad's poignant yet humorous narrative that seamlessly blends social commentary with timeless entertainment, making it a treasured masterpiece for generations. Speaking about his father's film, Ramesh Prasad said, "I remember watching my father meticulously craft each scene of Missamma, balancing religious harmony with romantic comedy in ways that were revolutionary for the 1950s. Seeing this cherished family legacy featured at Red Lorry Film Festival is a reminder that his intuitive understanding of human nature created characters that still appeal to new generations." 'Pushpaka Vimana' (1987) and 'Aditya 369' (1991) will spotlight the extensive line-up, paying tribute to the renowned director Singeetham Srinivasa Rao at the film festival. 'Pushpaka Vimana', the silent classic celebrated for its innovative storytelling and satirical undertones remains a cinematic feat that continues to inspire filmmakers. It stands as one of Indian cinema's boldest experiments - the silent black.

Fire breaks out at a house in Hyderabad's Yakutpura

Hyderabad : South Indian cinema, known for its rich storytelling and artistic excellence, is set to captivate audiences as the groundbreaking Red Lorry Film Festival: Parallel Verse, makes its spectacular debut in Hyderabad from March 21st to 23rd, 2025 at Prasads Multiplex. This extraordinary celebration unveils a grand lineup of over 70 exceptional titles, showcasing the festival's passionate commit-

ment to cinematic diversity and unparalleled quality. Movie enthusiasts will be treated to a dazzling array of global and Indian films, with a special spotlight on the vibrant world of Telugu cinema, offering everything from beloved classics that defined generations to cutting-edge contemporary masterpieces that push the boundaries of filmmaking. The second edition of Red Lorry Film Festival is brought to

you by BookAChange, by BookMyShow Foundation, empowering emerging artists through the transformative power of cinema. As a tribute to some of the best of filmmaking, the film festival will feature dedicated categories such as 'Timeless Tales' and 'Legacy Rewind', each designed to offer cinephiles a nostalgic journey through the most influential films, some from South Indian cinema as well. The category's lineup includes some

Hyderabad: Household articles were gutted down when fire broke out at a house at Yakutpura in old city on Tuesday afternoon. According to fire officials, the fire started at a house located at Yakutpura bada bazaar around 2 pm. On information a fire tender from Yakutpura fire station rushed to the spot and doused the fire. Household articles were damaged in the fire suspected to have started due to a short circuit.

Women Achieving Success in All Fields

"Where women are respected, divinity resides."

Hyderabad :On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Rachakonda Commissionerate and Rachakonda Security Council organized a grand celebration at PBR Convention Hall, Nagole. Women police officers and staff from various departments participated in the event. Rachakonda Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu attended as the chief guest. In his speech, he emphasized the determination and resilience of women, stating that they have the strength to achieve anything. He acknowledged the challenges and discrimination women face in their lives and praised them for overcoming these obstacles to excel in all fields. He highlighted that women in India are excelling beyond men in various professions, including law, policing, engineering, medicine, science, and education, contributing significantly to the country's development with their knowledge and skills. He also stressed that respecting women is a cherished value in the Indian subcontinent, noting that not only in India but also in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, women have held prestigious positions as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

Dignitaries in Attendance:

Several senior officials and women police officers from Rachakonda Commissionerate attended the event, including:

DCP Malkajgiri Padmaja
DCP Yadadri Rajesh Chandra

DCP LB Nagar Praveen Kumar
DCP Admin Indira
DCP Maheshwaram Sunitha Reddy
DCP Road Safety Manohar

DCP Traffic 1 Malla Reddy
DCP Traffic 2 Srinivasulu
DCP Women Safety Usha Vishwanath
DCP Cyber Crime Nagalakshmi

Chief Coordinator Savithri

Along with them, several women police officers and staff from Rachakonda Commissionerate also took part in the celebrations.



OPPO Announces Enhanced AI Strategy to Deliver Next-level Mobile AI Experiences at OPPO AI Tech Summit during MWC25

Hyderabad :OPPO announced its enhanced artificial intelligence (AI) strategy, positioning itself as a leader in AI experiences by delivering comprehensive, secure, and continuously evolving AI solutions at OPPO AI Tech Summit during MWC2025.

Billy Zhang, President of Overseas Marketing, Sales and Services at OPPO "When it comes to AI, the user experience is ultimately all that matters," said Billy Zhang, President of Overseas Marketing, Sales and Services at OPPO. "Smartphones are not just a vehicle for AI – they are the engines that power the best possible AI experiences. As a global leader in smartphones, OPPO is driving in-house innovation and open collaboration with industry partners to bring our users these unparalleled AI experiences." Collaboration with Google to deliver new advances in system-level and secure AI. Matt Waldbusser, Managing Director for Global Solution and Consumer AI, Google Cloud "As applications of AI continue to evolve, OPPO is advancing its AI experience from functional-level to system-level AI. This in turn is placing new demands on the extent of AI integration and security required on devices. OPPO is further integrating Google AI experiences across its smartphones, and Google Gemini can soon take action across native OPPO apps, such as Notes, Calendar, and Clock. These new capabilities will work alongside existing support for Gemini 1.5 Pro and Gemini 1.5 Flash on OPPO AI Phones to unlock unprecedented levels of performance



and responsiveness. The two companies are working closely to bring the latest Gemini 2.0 to OPPO Phones soon. To protect user security and privacy when accessing these deeply embedded AI features, OPPO is also implementing Private Computing Cloud (PCC) built with Confidential Computing from

Google Cloud. Starting from AI Recording Summary, AI features including AI Search, AI Studio, AI Call Summary will be integrated with OPPO Private Computing Cloud this year. "We are excited to collaborate with OPPO to shape the future of mobile AI by bringing together Google technologies with

OPPO's exceptional hardware and software," said Matt Waldbusser, Managing Director for Global Solution and Consumer AI, Google Cloud. "Through our extensive partnership spanning apps, AI models and cloud solutions, we are unlocking immense potential to redefine the mobile AI experience."

The latest film **"LYF - Love Your Father"**, jointly produced by Manisha Arts & Media Pvt. Ltd. and Annapareddy Studios, is all set to captivate audiences. Directed by Pawan Ketharaju, the film stars Sri Harsha as the hero, Kashika Kapoor as the heroine, and renowned singer S.P. Charan as the hero's father.

Recently, the song **"Hey Madhumathi"** was released at Malla Reddy Engineering College, Main Campus, by Chamakura Shalini. Speaking on the occasion, she said, **"Our student Sri Harsha has acted in this film. I hope this movie brings him great recognition."**

Director Pawan Ketharaju expressed his happiness about the film, stating, **"This movie has turned out wonderfully and will hit the silver screen by the end of March."** Hero Sri Harsha added, **"Music composer Mani Sharma has given exceptional music for this film. It is a movie that can be enjoyed with the entire family."**

The film also features Bhadram, Shakalaka Shankar, Nawab Shah, Raghu Babu, Praveen, Chhatrapati Shekhar, and Jabardasth Shanti Kumar in key roles. The technical team includes cinematographer Shyam K. Naidu, music director Mani Sharma, and producers Kishore Rathi and A. Samrajyam. **"LYF - Love Your Father"** is a heartwarming family drama that beautifully portrays relationships and love. Set for release at the end of March, the film is expected to win the hearts of the audience.



Newlyweds struggle for food security cards in Hyderabad



Hyderabad: Newly married couples are running from pillar to post to apply for a food security card, which is issued by the Telangana government. The State government had asked people, who don't have food security card (ration card), to apply at Meeseva centres or Praja Palana Seva Centres. **"When we visit the centres to apply for new ration card, we are being told already our names exist in the records that are linked to our parents. We are asked to get it deleted from the record and apply for new card,"** says Mohd Saif, a resident of Falaknuma.

With the hope of getting some benefits after obtaining the ration card, people are queuing up in front of the offices of the Assistant Civil Supply Officer of respective local circle. A two page form is sold for Rs 20

each and is available with the local broker who sits outside the circle offices. The agents then collect Rs 50 to fill up the form. The form should be submitted at the office along with a set of documents. **"After applying, we are making rounds of the office to check if the names are deleted or not. Its more than a fortnight and the names are not deleted,"** said Mansoor Ali, a resident of Falaknuma. Couples who are from two different districts in the State are suffering a lot. They have to apply for deletion of names from the local circle office where the card was issued and get it removed from records. **"There are rumours that the website will closed anytime. It is here the brokers are coming into picture and charging between Rs 500 and Rs 700 to speed up the process of deletion of names,"** alleged S Q Masood, a

social activist. Syed Nabi, another social worker said a majority of the people applying for ration cards are newly married couples.

"In some cases it is taking up to 40 days for deletion of names and for fear of losing the opportunity people are paying up money," he said.

Beware of plastic sheets in steaming Idlis: FSSAI advisory

Hyderabad: The next time when you walk into your favorite 'bandi' to have piping hot idlis for breakfast, better make sure the owner has not utilized plastic sheets to steam the idlis, which is an alarming trend and carries a serious health risk. Traditionally, a cloth is utilized in the steaming process of idlis by bandi owners and even by small eateries and restaurants. However, in a recent alarming trend, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) came across instances where plastic sheets were utilized in the steaming process of idlis in Bengaluru.

The use of plastic sheets in steaming idlis at high temperatures poses a significant health risk, because hot plastic tends to leach harmful chemicals into the food items. Apart from steaming idlis, even serving hot food on plastic sheets can be quite risky, as harmful chemicals in the plastic can leach into the food items. In a recent public alert, the FSSAI stated **"low-grade plastic can release toxic substances such as bisphenol A (BPA), phthalates, and other chemicals when exposed to high heat and can leach into food items, potentially causing adverse health effects"**.



The practice of using plastic sheets raises significant food safety concerns due to the potential leaching of harmful chemicals from plastic into the food. The use of low-quality or non-food-grade plastics in food preparation, particularly under high temperatures, poses a serious health risk," the FSSAI made it clear. To prevent eateries and restaurants from taking-up such practices, the FSSAI said that it is working closely with State Food Safety officials. The top food regulator made it clear that food-grade materials and hygienic practices are crucial in food preparation. The process of steaming idlis should be as per convention or approved food-grade materials that do not pose a risk of chemical contamination.

We make stories and stories make us

"Nobody likes me. I am unlikeable." "I am going to die alone." "I don't deserve to live." How do the stories people tell themselves reach this dead-end of despair? Did it start with abuse at home for not living up to the family's expectations? Or maybe it was the ridicule by teachers for not being fast enough? Each "not enough" being notched in the scorecard shaping their sense of who they are, their identity. Until they reach a point in their life when the burden of these problem-saturated stories is too heavy to carry. Others might look at them and wonder, "What's wrong with them?" When the question is really, "What have they been up against and what are the adversities they have faced that have shaped their stories of themselves?" Human beings are meaning-makers. Stories we tell ourselves help us provide structure for meaning-making. A father gives the child an angry look and the child reckons, "I have done something bad." The father looks at the child with anger most of the time and the child reaches the conclusion, "I am bad." Our meaning-making is influenced by the cultural soup of 'not enoughness' we live in. The normative ideas of worthiness, and success that we constantly measure ourselves against.

"I keep feeling that there is something wrong with me. I am pathetic" Vani shared this with me with hunched shoulders and a trembling voice. She was 11 years old and was already talking about being a "disappointment to my teachers and a burden on my parents." She was neurodivergent and did not fit in with the ableist pedagogies drilled out in schools. So the inevitable stories she was telling herself were what she had been told. The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voices and the way we talk about them, and subsequently, they talk to themselves become their life stories. What stories were told about you when you were growing up and what are the stories you are telling about yourself to yourself now? These might be affirming narratives where you describe yourself as vivacious, caring, and funny alongside dismissive ones of being lazy, irresponsible or even shaming ones of being a failure, a loser etc. They can all co-exist but there is always a dominant story that starts shaping the way we see ourselves and the way the world sees us too. This story is influential as it shapes our identity. That is the reason it becomes so significant for us to examine this dominant story as at times, like for Vani, it can become very restrictive and damaging. If Vani's storyline of her life continues to be, "I am unworthy" as she grows and becomes an adult then that will hold her back from having faith in her abilities, seeking meaningful friendships and having a sense of agency in her own life. She might end up spending most of her life feeling ignored, isolated and invisible.

How can we reclaim the storytelling rights of our lives?

Characterise – Reflect on one problem story that might be defining your life. In this exercise, it becomes very important that we create distance between ourselves and this problem story. Since when has it been around? What situations do you feel it makes its presence felt? What name would you give it (e.g. anxiety, inadequacy, loneliness etc)? Maybe go one step further and give it a colour, a shape, a voice. If it was a cartoon character what would it look and sound like? How convincing is it? What language does it

use to push these identity conclusions on you? How does it compare you to others? What predictions does it make about your future? Do you see how the problem story that you have internalised is due to the insidious pressure we all face to fit into normative ideas of success and worthiness? What if we could build mindfulness that reminds us that the "problem is not me, it is the pressure of fitting in society's standards." What if we could locate the problem where it belongs? Inner compass – I came across a compelling set of questions. "What breaks your heart, what heals it and what steps can you take to be part of the healing?" What breaks my heart is injustice towards children and the steps I can take towards this healing is to amplify the message of "Children First" in whatever I do through therapy, teaching and my writings. It shakes me up, pains me, sustains me and restores my faith in humanity. At every step. What would your inner compass be and what are the micro-actions you can take to sustain you in this journey? Alternate voice – There will be times when the problem story will try to take charge and bring in self-doubt, inadequacy, fear, etc. That is inevitable. The turning point for us is our act of reclamation of our lives by making space for an alternate voice or story to emerge. We can give it a name, a character, a shape, a tone too. In my conversations with people, this voice has taken various names – Courage, Joy, Curiosity. Rahi, a 12-year-old lived in a home where there was a lot of violence and blame directed to him. When I met him, he had internalised the vio-



lence at home as, "Something wrong with me and I am to blame." We externalised the blame through characterisation and then explored how much he valued compassion and care. He preferred to see the alternate voice as of a caring parent who would gently keep him safe when violence broke out at home. At times people prefer to give it a name from mythology or an inspiring character from a book or movie. Vani preferred to call her alternate voice Durga. Every time the problem story of "You are pathetic," chimed

in, she would gently remind herself of Durga's voice and tell herself, "You are strong, I am with you, and you can do it." In time, her parents also started believing in Vani and became her staunch advocates.

We all have to stand alongside each other if we have to bring about change. It is not an individual responsibility but a collective one. In the words of late Aunty Barbara Wingard, First Nations Australian Narrative Practitioner, magic happens in, "Telling our stories in ways that make us stronger."

Why an India-made Chikungunya vaccine is good news

Serum Institute of India will manufacture Valneva's anti-Chikungunya vaccine for India and select Asian markets, addressing a major public health issue. The Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) and France-based Valneva SE on Thursday announced that they have signed an agreement under which SII will manufacture the latter's anti-Chikungunya vaccine for the Indian market and a few other Asian countries. Under the agreement, both the companies will conduct a technology transfer of the current drug product manufacturing process. Valneva will supply its chikungunya vaccine drug substance to SII, which will complete manufacturing and be responsible for seeking and maintaining regulatory approval of the vaccine in India and other countries in Asia.

Chikungunya virus (CHIKV) is a mosquito-borne viral disease spread by the bites of infected Aedes mosquitoes that causes fever, severe joint and muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and rash. Joint pain is often debilitating and can persist from weeks to years. The vaccine can prove to be a boon for India as the disease is a major public health concern here. According to the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control data, the disease is endemic in almost all states with thousands of cases reported each year. The Centre, which is under the Union ministry of health and family welfare, reported 11,477 cases last year, and 12,587 this year so far. "In 2006 Chikungunya



re-emerged in the Country. Almost all states are affected by Chikungunya," said the centre in a document on the disease situation in the country. In the past, a Chikungunya epidemic fever was reported in 1963 (Kolkata), 1965 (Pondicherry and Chennai in Tamil Nadu, Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, and Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh; Sagar in Madhya Pradesh; and Nagpur in Maharashtra), and 1973, (Barsi in Maharashtra). Thereafter, sporadic cases also continued to be recorded especially in Maharashtra state during 1983 and 2000. Nearly 100,000 confirmed cases have been reported from across the country and hundreds of thousands of suspected cases

in the past five years, according to government data. In 2004, the disease began to spread quickly, causing large-scale outbreaks around the world. Since the re-emergence of the virus, CHIKV has now been identified in over 110 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. Valneva's chikungunya vaccine is the world's first and only licensed chikungunya vaccine, currently approved in the US, Europe, and Canada for the prevention of disease caused by the chikungunya virus in individuals 18 years of age and older. Regulatory reviews to expand the age range to individuals 12 years of age and older are currently ongoing, said Valneva in the statement.

Trump threat to BRICS over ditching the dollar: what he can do, what it will mean for US, India

Ever since the US chose to weaponise the global financial infrastructure by throwing Iran (in 2012) and Russia (in 2022) out of the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), key to international financial transactions, countries across the globe have been looking to reduce dependence on the US dollar as well as the US-led global financial system. Perceiving these growing attempts as a threat to the US dollar's domination, US President-elect Donald Trump has threatened Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS nations) with 100 per cent tariffs if they create a new BRICS currency or back any other currency to replace the US dollar as the world's reserve currency. "The idea that the BRICS countries are trying to move away from the dollar while we stand by and watch is OVER. We require a commitment from these countries that they will neither create a new BRICS currency nor back any other currency to replace the mighty U.S. dollar, or they will face 100 per cent tariffs and should expect to say goodbye to selling into the wonderful U.S. economy. They can go find another 'sucker!' There is no chance that the BRICS will replace the US dollar in international trade, and any country that tries should wave goodbye to America," Trump said in a social media post on Saturday.

This comes after Russian President Vladimir Putin at the BRICS summit in October said: "The dollar is being used as a weapon. We really see that this is so. I think that this is a big mistake by those who do this." However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the summit said that BRICS should not acquire the image of one that is trying to replace global institutions. India's efforts towards rupee internationalisation Trump's threat comes at a time when US sanctions on Russia resulted in Russian oil being redirected from Europe to Asia. In an effort to reduce reliance on the US dollar and to internationalise the Indian rupee, the Reserve Bank of India allowed invoicing and payments for international trade in Indian rupees in 2022, after sanctions were imposed on Russia amid the Ukraine war.

Notably, foreign exchange market turnover (daily averages), as per the BIS Triennial Central Bank Survey 2022, shows the US dollar is the dominant vehicle currency, accounting for 88 per cent of the global forex turnover. The rupee accounted for 1.6 per cent. The survey stated that if rupee turnover rises to equal the share of non-US, non-Euro currencies in global forex turnover of 4 per cent, it will be regarded as an international currency. However, India's trade with Russia in domestic currency remains low due to Indian banks' fear of US sanctions and an unbalanced trade relationship between the two countries. While there has been a multifold rise in India-Russia trade after the Ukraine war, it has been firmly in favour of Russia. India's exports to Russia stood at \$4.2 billion in FY24, but increasing oil imports from Moscow have widened the import bill to \$61 billion. As a result, Russia has a huge pile of rupee reserves that it has not been able to use to settle bilateral trade using domestic currency, and is instead using it to invest in Indian stocks and bonds. On the contrary, bilateral trade between Russia and China in domestic currency has jumped. A more balanced Russia-China trade has



helped transactions using the yuan and rouble. China-Russia trade in 2023 crossed a record \$240-billion mark. The Russian government said that over 90 per cent of the bilateral trade settlement is now in Russian roubles. "Not trying to target the US dollar" External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in October said that while India is pursuing its trade interests, avoiding the use of the US dollar is not part of India's economic policy. Jaishankar said US policies often complicate trade with certain countries, and India is seeking "workarounds" without intending to move away from the dollar, unlike some other nations. However, the minister added that a multipolar world will eventually be reflected in "currencies and economic dealings".

"What I will say is that we have a natural concern. We often have trade partners who lack dollars for transactions. So, we must decide whether to forgo dealings with them or find alternative settlements that work. There's no malicious intent towards the dollar," Jaishankar said in response to a question at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an American think tank in Washington, during an interaction in October. "Threats impractical and counterproductive" International trade experts said that while the US dollar dominates global trade—accounting for over 90 per cent of transactions—it is not the only currency used internationally. Other convertible currencies like the Japanese yen, the euro, and the British pound are also integral to global commerce, and the United States has not objected to their use. The proposed BRICS currency is simply an extension of these existing alternatives. "It is the actions of the United States that have pushed many countries to seek alternatives to the US dollar. The US has a history of leveraging its influence over global financial systems, such as the SWIFT network, to impose unilateral sanctions. SWIFT is essential for secure and standardised international financial transactions. By blocking countries like Russia and Iran from accessing SWIFT, the US has effectively weaponised the global financial infrastructure, forcing other nations to find alternative payment mechanisms to continue legitimate trade," former trade officer and head of think tank Global Trade Research

Initiative, Ajay Srivastava, said. Srivastava said that a 100 per cent tariff on BRICS countries could backfire. "Imports into the US would simply shift to third countries, potentially increasing costs for American consumers without bringing manufacturing jobs back home. The US has become less competitive in manufacturing labour-intensive goods due to higher production costs, and tariffs are unlikely to reverse this trend," he said. "China keen to dominate" Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General & CEO Ajay Sahai said that while supporting local currency initiatives, India should ensure the framework does not disproportionately favour China, given the asymmetry in economic power among BRICS nations. "China is very keen to assume a dominant role to use the bloc against the US, though India, Brazil, and South Africa are more keen to work with the US and settle the differences amicably through negotiations," Sahai said. He said that India should engage diplomatically with the US to explain its position, emphasising that diversifying trade mechanisms is not anti-American but a move towards multipolarity and financial stability. "We should accelerate the development and internationalisation of its digital currency (CBDC) and financial platforms like UPI to take a leadership role in BRICS currency initiatives. Trump's threat might amplify geopolitical tensions, but it is unlikely to deter BRICS nations from pursuing alternatives to the US dollar. For India, the best course is a

balanced approach: supporting financial reforms within BRICS that align with its interests while maintaining strong ties with the US to safeguard its broader strategic and economic priorities," he said. Meanwhile, the IMF's Currency Composition of Official Foreign Exchange Reserves (COFER) points to a gradual decline in the dollar's share of central bank and government foreign reserves. However, the reduced role of the US dollar over the past two decades has not been matched by corresponding increases in the shares of the other "big four" currencies—the euro, yen, and pound, according to the IMF. "Rather, this has been accompanied by a rise in the share of what we refer to as non-traditional reserve currencies, including the Australian dollar, Canadian dollar, Chinese renminbi, South Korean won, Singaporean dollar, and the Nordic currencies," the IMF said. The IMF in July this year said that one nontraditional reserve currency gaining market share is the Chinese renminbi, whose gains match a quarter of the decline in the dollar's share. "The Chinese government has been advancing policies on multiple fronts to promote renminbi internationalisation, including the development of a cross-border payment system, the extension of swap lines, and piloting a central bank digital currency. It is thus interesting to note that renminbi internationalisation, at least as measured by the currency's reserve share, shows signs of stalling out," IMF said.

After US indictment, Adani Group stocks shed Rs 2.45 lakh cr market value

New Delhi: After US prosecutors charged billionaire Gautam Adani over his role in an alleged years-long scheme to pay \$250 million bribe to Indian officials in exchange for favourable terms for solar power contracts, the Adani group stocks faced heavy drubbing during the morning trade on Thursday, with the combined market valuation of all the listed firms getting eroded by Rs 2.45 lakh crore. The stock of the group's flagship firm Adani Enterprises plunged 22.99 per cent, Adani Ports dived 20 per cent, Adani

Energy Solutions tanked 20 per cent, Adani Green Energy plummeted 19.53 per cent and Adani Total Gas tumbled 18.14 per cent on the BSE. Shares of Adani Power slumped 17.79 per cent, Ambuja Cements cracked 17.59 per cent, ACC fell 14.54 per cent, NDTV dropped 14.37 per cent and Adani Wilmar declined 10 per cent. Some of the group firms also hit their lowest trading permissible limit for the day. The combined market capitalisation (mcap) of all the ten listed group firms eroded by Rs 2,45,016.51 crore during the morning deals.

The transformation of Koraput's tribal food basket

Koraput, a district in Odisha, is a beautiful landscape, rich in biodiversity and home to a predominantly tribal population. But there is also a paradox. There is rampant poverty and undernutrition. There is no dearth of government schemes, in the form of direct feeding programmes or schemes for livelihood activities. Yet, undernutrition levels remain high. According to an estimate based on the National Family Health Survey-5 data (2019-21) 43% of children under five years of age are stunted (low-height-for-age) and 33% are underweight. Only 17% are fed an adequate diet. More than 50% of women are anaemic. Between 2013 and 2022, the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) embarked on a community-based model of nutrition literacy in order to empower tribal communities to take action in diversifying their household food basket with nutritious foods. The aim was to facilitate a transformative process, spearheaded by the community, to move towards nutrition security. As it is an agricultural population with small and marginal land holdings and engaged in subsistence farming, a nutrition-sensitive farming approach to maximise and diversify food production was adopted along with sanitation hygiene and Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices (IYCF). Since transformation begins at the individual level, it was decided to build the capacity of a core group of adult men and women through a residential training programme.

The first step was to sensitise the community to its own nutritional status. This involved assessing the nutritional status of women, children, adolescent boys and girls by taking their height and weight, consolidating secondary data and presenting them to the community. After subsequent discussions, villagers agreed to select a few men and women from every village, representing various caste groups, to undergo a residential training programme on key nutrition concepts, such as a balanced diet, IYCF practices, the role of dietary diversity, sanitation and hygiene, and enabling nutrition sensitive agriculture that included crop diversity, backyard poultry and, wherever possible, pisciculture. A few residential training programmes, each about two and a half days long, were held at periodic intervals over six months. These were activity based and included group work, discussions, role play followed by an analysis of the situation and possible solutions. The approach was to engage participants in a dialogue to discuss theoretical aspects from the perspective of their own knowledge rooted in the social, cultural, economic and political context. Participants discussed how caste, class and gender dimensions affected nutrition security of different family members at the household level. They compared the new learning with their existing knowledge and were satisfied when some of their existing knowledge was reiterated. Their perception of dietary diversity was based on the 'dish count' rather than the 'food group' count. As one participant remarked, 'we never thought about having both dhal and vegetables in the everyday diet. So long as one was there as accompaniment to rice we were satisfied.' They were happy to know that they were the custodians of a variety of traditional rice

varieties. While social spaces are usually hierarchically determined, the residential training gave them an opportunity to engage with people from other villages and with both genders. They planned how they could introduce and cultivate more nutritious crops on different types of land and in their home gardens. They explored the advantages of collective decision making and action rather than individual efforts in demanding government entitlements, and realised that their efforts to improve household nutrition security would have to go beyond the boundaries of their own villages to the panchayat level. Messages and songs were created and composed by the participants on various themes such as a balanced diet, dietary diversity, hygiene, sanitation and support to women. While they were aware of a few government entitlements, they were eager to learn about many more.

More than 200 men and women from over 70 villages were trained in the residential training programmes, becoming the 'community champions' in transforming themselves and their communities. They identified further training needs mainly to improve agricultural production covering seed treatment, vermi-compost use, the use of organic fertilizers, mushroom production, post-harvest technology and value addition. These training programmes were organised in the villages. Over 10 years, about 1,000 men and women were trained in various aspects of agriculture, animal husbandry and pisciculture such that a community resource base for nutrition security was created to address underlying issues of undernutrition through household nutrition security. The community champions shared various health and nutrition messages with their families, friends and fellow villagers when engaged in agricultural work, on their way to the market, in women self help group meetings, or while at a tea shop or even during festival events. They also convened village meetings to discuss creating hunger-free villages.

They led by example. They undertook a range of activities, both individually and collectively. Those who had upland began cultivating a variety of crops. Many of them started growing more vegetables and fruits. Home gardens were revived and the diversity of crops increased from about four crops at the beginning of the programme to nine crops at the time of completion. One woman champion got her land back from lease in order to resume agricultural activities. Another, who was landless, took a piece of land on lease to grow food crops. Another landless woman began growing vegetables using the foundation of the house she was constructing. Paddy fields that had been kept fallow after harvest were now used for pulse cultivation, making use of the residual moisture. Diversity in crop production was seen in Mothpera and Deragida (names changed) panchayats in Boiparida block. While earlier, 71% of households were cultivating only two to three varieties of crops, more than 60% were cultivating four to five varieties of crops at the end of the project. About 90% of households had operational home gardens for about five months at the start of the programme. Towards the end, in



more than 50% of households, home gardens were operational for more than seven to nine months. From growing four varieties of crops earlier, households began growing nine to 11 varieties. Household dietary diversity improved. There was a significant increase in the consumption of pulses, leafy vegetables, tubers, fruits, poultry, fish and wild food. Some prepared biocompost and used it for their home gardens. Most of the male champions began to make decision on agricultural decision along with their wives. Women champions worked closely with Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) and Anganwadi workers to spread nutrition messages.

Sanya of Maligad village (name changed) said, 'I give my daughter leafy vegetables and ripe fruits, dhal, egg because she is anaemic and was recently discharged from hospital.' Facilitating change Villagers also monitored the direct feeding programme under the Integrated Child Development Services. In Lecha (name changed) village, there was no anganwadi centre. The com-

munity women champions organised village meetings and spoke about the need for one. The villagers passed a resolution for the sanction of an anganwadi in their village and the male champions followed this up with the block office till the centre was sanctioned. They supervised the building construction, and upon completion organised an inauguration. They also revived defunct village structures for nutrition security such as the community grain bank, discussed their village situation in the gram sabha (village council) meetings and developed an overall plan for hunger-free villages.

The wheels of change have been set in motion in Koraput's villages with the people pursuing their health and nutrition security. Rama Narayanan is Senior Fellow, Nutrition, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Akshay Kumar Panda is Senior Development Coordinator, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Jeypore, Odisha. D.J. Nithya is Nutrition Scientist, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Volunteers distribute 'iftar' at mosques across Hyd

Hyderabad: With an aim of helping the rozedars, the ones who fast, during the Ramzan month, a city based social organization 'Terminate Hunger Welfare Association' is distributing fruits for 'iftar' – the evening meal for breaking fast – at different mosques in the city. The organization is distributing around 2500 boxes containing date, water melon, banana, papaya, musk melon, guava, grapes and other fruits along with a bottle of water. "Over a 100 volunteers in rotation distribute the iftar boxes at mosques in the city. The highest numbers of boxes are distributed at the Mecca Masjid in the city," said Imad Ali, president of Terminate Hunger Welfare Association.

The volunteers are students who are pursuing their education from different educational institutions in the city. "The fruits are cut into pieces and packed by women at an office in Malakpet and later transported to the



city," said Imad Ali. On any day over 3000 people gather at the Mecca Masjid to break the fast during the month of Ramzan. The number swells when shoppers from different districts and neighbouring States of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra visit the city for Eid shopping. The Telangana government provides only date and a few quintals of Bengal gram to the Mecca Masjid management to distribute to the rozedars.