

Confusion over progeny, enumeration form ahead of SIR

Hyderabad, Nov 3 Ahead of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in 12 states and Union Territories (UTs), confusion prevails over progeny and the filling of the enumeration form.

Although filling most of the form is simple, people are confused over which details from the previous SIR to include.

In the enumeration form, electors can either give details of themselves or their relatives from the previous SIR.

Giving either detail will help in linking or mapping. However, the confusion is over who will be considered a relative for the sake of the form.

The form mentioned, "Details of the relative, whose name is given in previous column, in the last SIR". However, chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar during the press conference held recently said that details of father, uncle or anybody from the generation can be filled.

On the other hand, the BLO apps shared by many on YouTube state that only son, daughter, paternal grandmother, paternal grandfather and transgender can be added as progeny.

It may be noted that even for establishing citizenship, for those who are born between 1987 and 2004, documents of ei-



ther mother or father are needed; however, in the case of the progeny option, even maternal grandmother and maternal grandfather are reportedly missing.

The last SIR in the state was held in 2002 and the data has been made available on the official website of Telangana CEO (click here).

Those whose name or a relative's name (progeny concept) is not listed will be asked to submit documents at a later stage of SIR. The individual needs to sub-

mit one of the following 11 documents:

Any Identity card/Pension Payment Order issued to a regular employee/pensioner of any Central Govt./State Govt./PSU.

Any Identity Card/Certificate/Document issued in India by Government/local authorities/Banks/Post Office/LIC/PSUs prior to 01.07.1987.

Birth Certificate issued by the competent authority.

Passport

Matriculation/Educational certificate issued by recognised Boards/universities

Permanent Residence certificate issued by competent State authority

Forest Right Certificate

OBC/SC/ST or any caste certificate issued by the Competent authority

National Register of Citizens (wherever it exists)

Family Register, prepared by State/Local authorities.

Any land/house allotment certificate by Government

For Aadhaar, Commission's directions issued vide letter No. 23/2025-ERS/Vol.II dated 09.09.2025 shall apply.

Extract of the Electoral Roll of Bihar SIR with reference to 01.07.2025.

However, the demanded documents for SIR will be based on the date of birth for all voters in Hyderabad and other Telangana districts. Those who were born before July 1, 1987 need to submit any of the listed documents of themselves.

On the other hand, those who were born on or after July 1, 1987 and on or before December 2, 2004 need to provide a document for self and a document of father or mother.

Police raid 39 farmhouses in Hyderabad; seize alcohol, hookah

Hyderabad, Nov 3 The city police, on Saturday, November 1, conducted surprise checks at 39 farmhouses located in Mudimyal and Tolkatta villages of Moinabad, Ranga Reddy district, and found several violations, including the consumption of alcohol and hookah.

In Tolkatta village, police raided Azeemuddin Farmhouse, where illegal consumption of hookah was discovered. In Pranava Villa Hills, 18 beer bottles, including one whisky, were seized.

Police busted an unauthorised event at 12 Farm, where 29 people were found consuming alcohol amid loud music and firecrackers. A drug test was conducted, but none tested



positive, officials said.

Another unauthorised event was

raided at Rithika Farmhouse located in Mudimyal village. The event was attended by 150 students of Slate

School Children who were ferried in ten school buses. A few members allegedly consumed alcohol, police said.

Besides the farmhouse raids, police conducted drunk driving checks on 120 four-wheelers, 30 three-wheelers and 15 two-wheelers. Three vehicles were booked and fined Rs 30,000.

Police have registered four cases against the organisers and farmhouse owners for the violations.

The farmhouse managements were cautioned to obtain prior permission for any events and to secure necessary excise approvals if liquor is to be served. Authorities warned that strict action would be taken against any violations.

Man hacked to death over suspicion of sorcery in Asifabad

Hyderabad, Nov 3

A 50-year-old man was hacked to death in Telangana's Asifabad district.

The deceased, Hanumanth Rao, was attacked with an axe by the accused Sidam Vinod following an argument. While Rao died on the spot, his wife, Boiju Bai, sustained injuries when she tried to intervene. Her condition is said to be stable.

Based on a complaint filed by Rao's family, the Thiryani police registered a case and initiated an investigation.

In April this year, a 37-year-old man was hacked to death by his father in Nirmal district. The victim was identified as Govardhan Reddy. The victim was attacked while he was asleep at 3:00 AM. He was found dead on his bed with severe head and neck injuries.

Upon receiving information, police arrived at the scene and began collecting evidence. Initial investigations suggest that long-standing disputes between the father, Erranna, a daily wage farm labourer and his son may have led to the crime.

60-year-old Telangana ASI dies after being hit by water tanker

Hyderabad: Nov 3

In a tragic incident, an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) attached to the Basheerabad police station in Vikarabad district, Telangana, died after being hit by a water tanker.

The incident occurred on Saturday, November 1, when 60-year-old ASI Devising was stationed at the PSE Gar-



dens.

CCTV footage shows the officer standing by the roadside when the tanker passed by and accidentally hit him. Other police personnel rushed to his aid, but Devising died on the spot.

A case has been registered against the water tanker driver

Telangana farmer brings 'Tiger' to protect field from monkeys, dogs

Hyderabad, Nov 3

Farmers often rely on scarecrows and fences to keep wild animals away from their crops. But farmer Gaddam Chinna Reddy decided to take things up a notch – he placed a giant 'tiger' in his field to scare away monkeys.

Reddy, from Choulamaddi village in Jagtial district, was tired of monkeys and dogs ruining his crops. The menace was not restricted to his fields but was prevalent in the market yard in Mettapalli, where he kept his fresh harvest.

He decided to try out the stuffed-tiger idea, and lo and behold! No monkeys and no dogs. The life-sized replica, seated amid the crops, looks real enough to make anyone think it is a real wild cat. He says the trick is working.

In a similar incident in 2022, a farmer of Siddipet district placed a 'sloth



bear' to protect his maize and vegetable crops from monkeys.

The idea stemmed after the farmer was unable to find scarecrows and man-

nequins. He then approached a costume supply vendor and wanted him to stitch a costume of a sloth bear. The 'bear' cost him Rs 10,000, but in the long run, it only heaped profits, as the trick worked.

Unhygienic kitchens, rodent infestations found at highway dhabas in Telangana

Hyderabad, Nov 3

Food safety officials carried out inspections at 12 highway dhabas in Telangana along NH-65 (Hyderabad–Vijayawada), NH-163 (Warangal–Hyderabad) and NH-44 (Kurnool–Hyderabad), and found major violations like expired or spoiled food, synthetic colours and overall unhygienic conditions.

According to food safety officials, serious violations were observed at The Palace Hotel in Rudraram, Sangareddy, like an unhygienic kitchen, pest and rodent infestation, uncovered/unlabelled food, clogged drains, improper segregation of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, and suspected synthetic colours.

In response, officials suspended their license under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and discarded 107.5 kg of unsafe food, such as prawns, fish, chicken, paneer, and gobi fry. The outlet shall remain closed until further orders.

Other outlets that were inspected were also found with poor hygiene, had unlabeled food, expired ingredients and were reusing cooking oil. Officials lifted 7 samples and issued 8 notices.

At Athidhi Restaurant located in Koyalagudem village of Choutuppal, officials discarded 8 kg of spoiled chicken and meat, 5 kg expired dry fruits, 10L spoiled sauces, 12 kg other spoiled food, and 1.5 kg synthetic colours.

Similarly, 16 kg of stored meat and seafood, 3 kg of butter, 20 kg red gravy, 10 kg manchurian, 3 kg chicken lollipops and 15 kg coloured food were discarded from Utsav Restaurant, located in Pedda Kaparathi village of Chityala mandal.

Another outlet on NH-65 in Choutuppal's Koyalagudem village, called Sangam Hotel, was found to have 2 kg of synthetic food colours and 8 kg of cooked food that had been stored for a long time without use-by labels.

A notice was issued to the Taj Palace restaurant in Gadwal for operating without a valid license, and 8 kg of stale raw chicken and 3 kg of boiled vegetables were dis-



carded at the outlet.

Another restaurant in Gadwal, called Athidhi Restaurant, was found to have stale biryani pieces and cooked chicken in the refrigerator, which was also discarded.

Twelve litres of expired cool drinks and 2 kg of gravy, which had been stored for a long time, were discarded from Hotel Vivera.



Unable to get daughter married, Warangal SI dies by suicide

Hyderabad, Nov 3

Unable to arrange money for his daughter's marriage, a 50-year-old sub-inspector (SI), working in the special branch in Chennaraopet of Warangal district, Telangana, died by suicide by consuming poison.

Mohammed Asif was rushed to the MGM hospital where he passed away on Saturday, November 1.

According to his brother, Mohammed Asif had four children- three daughters and a son. "Asif's two daughters are married and his son is an MBA

student. He was under extreme stress over the thought of being unable to get his third daughter married. The family was also under financial debt," his brother, Mohammed Akram, said.

Mohammed Asif joined the police as a constable and rose to the rank of sub-inspector. In 2017, he received a certificate of appreciation from the then Warangal district collector on Republic Day.

Mohammed Akram has appealed to higher officials to help his deceased brother's family.



Gurukul students attack female constable in Rangareddy

Hyderabad, Nov 3

A female constable was attacked by Gurukul students in Telangana's Rangadreddy district on Sunday, November 2, while protesting against their principal.

The students staged a sit-in on the main road protesting against Principal Shailaja, demanding her suspension. Holding placards and raising slogans against the principal, they accused her of corruption charges and irregularities, including misappropriation of mess supplies and collecting money from students.

On information, police were called, and chaos erupted. Local reports suggest that the woman constable allegedly tried to manhandle the agitated students, leading to a physical scuffle with her hair being dragged and an exchange of blows.

Schools in Hyderabad collect excess fees for SSC exams: Report

Hyderabad, Nov 3

Many private schools in the city are reportedly charging excess fees for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) public examinations 2025-26, from the prescribed fees of Rs 125.

According to a report in The New Indian Express, several private institutions in the city are violating the School Education Department's norms, by charging extra amount, citing additional services like special exams, classes and notes.

The report alleges that the schools are asking students to pay somewhere between Rs 1,000 to 5,000.

Recently, the School Education Department had reportedly issued a circular directing all schools not to collect any money beyond the prescribed fees and also to issue a receipt for the collected amount.

How the live bangle-making trend lighting up Hyderabad's Laad Bazaar

Hyderabad, Nov 3

There seems to be a change in the air in the west lanes of Charminar. Laad Bazaar, most popular for shiny bangles, pearls, and khada dupattas, is now

mer, stonework and durability. It is the newer trend of hot lac that has brought the process to the forefront.

Memory Khan Seminar



"Lac is a natural resin that is derived from trees like ber and kusum. It is extremely hard and turns soft only when heated, allowing artisans to shape it into different bangles," says Mohammed Ahmed, owner of 60-year-old shop Zubair Bangles.

abuzz with another new element: live bangle-making stations. Enter the market, and you will immediately find groups of crowds scattered outside chudi shops, their attention (and cameras) fixed on craftsmen skillfully shaping molten lac into colourful bangles.

This newfound interest can largely be credited to social media. Over the past few months, Instagram has been flooded with reels showing Laad Bazaar's artisans at work, twirling wooden rods over glowing flames and creating glittering bangles. What was once a craft practised behind the corners and hidden workshops has now become a visual experience, drawing tourists and influencers to capture the process.

The art of bangle making

Lac bangles have been a part of Hyderabad's cultural fabric for generations. Traditionally, artisans worked behind closed doors, crafting thanda lac bangles that are known for their shim-

Ahmed explains that Hyderabad has earned its reputation for thanda lac, stone-studded varieties, while it is in Jaipur that live bangle making is more popular. "While I am not sure of its history and when it came to Hyderabad, I have been seeing the hot lac bangles being made here for the past 40 years."

Visually, thanda lac bangles often have a glossy, embellished look with stones and metallic detailing. Hot lac, on the other hand, looks simple and more rustic, showcasing the natural sheen of enamel paint and the charm of hand craftsmanship.

Each bangle is carefully shaped using wooden tools, as artisans roll and stretch the softened lac over small wooden rods heated by coal. The lac is mixed with rangoli or enamel paint, locally called minawar, which gives them their vibrant, glossy finish. "We sell around 150 to 200 bangles per day, with prices starting from Rs. 50," Ahmed tells Siasat.com.

AIMIM is BJP's 'B-Team', vote splitter: Mohammad Ali Shabbir

Hyderabad, Nov 3

Telangana Government Advisor for SC, ST, BC, and Minority Affairs Mohammad Ali Shabbir's statement during the Bihar election campaign has created a political storm in Telangana.

While campaigning in Bihar, Shabbir referred to AIMIM as the "B-Team of the BJP" and a "vote splitter", a remark that has gained wide attention in the media.

The controversy comes just a day after Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, during a campaign in the Jubilee Hills by-election, had highlighted his friendship and close association with Asaduddin Owaisi, appealing to Muslim voters to support Congress candidate Naveen Yadav.

However, after Shabbir's remarks in Bihar, the media began portraying Congress-AIMIM relations as contradictory and even "laughable."

According to reports, Shabbir made these comments while campaigning in Kishanganj constituency, where AIMIM's Bihar State President Akhtarul Iman is contesting against Congress candidate Qamarul Huda. Shabbir accused the AIMIM of dividing secular votes by fielding candidates against the Congress.

In contrast, in Jubilee Hills, AIMIM MLA Kauser Mohiuddin, along with MLCs and party leaders, has been campaigning for the Congress and appealing to voters to support Naveen Yadav.

Following Shabbir's statement, questions are now being raised about the AIMIM's stance in the Jubilee Hills by-election, as his comments in Bihar directly accused the AIMIM of helping the BJP. Political analysts believe Shabbir's remarks reflect his growing dissatisfaction with the Telangana government. Some leaders, however, argue that the Jubilee Hills alliance with AIMIM is Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's strategy, whereas in Bihar, the Congress has consistently opposed AIMIM's inclusion in the Mahagathbandhan alliance, largely due to pressure from Shabbir and other senior leaders.

Reports suggest that Congress national leaders have supported Shabbir's stand, though it has caused embarrassment for the Telangana government, as several English newspapers have highlighted the contradiction, describing the situation as "Rivals in Bihar, allies in Telangana."



Heaps of garbage seen near Chaderghat after heavy rains in Hyderabad



Hyderabad: Nov 3

Heaps of garbage and debris lie scattered around the Chaderghat area in the Old City of Hyderabad. Hordes of plastic bags, clothes and miscellaneous pieces of junk line up, unattended.

The area had witnessed massive flooding in late September, forcing thousands of residents to evacuate. A Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) cleanup drive followed soon after, but the latest images show the problem has only worsened. This week, Cyclone Montha triggered an unusual spell of heavy rains towards the end of October, bringing up even more debris from the river, which as of now lines the banks of Musi.

As the government has sanctioned Rs 5,641 crore on the first phase of the Musi River Development Project, such incidents highlight the need for a permanent solution to the recurring problem, or at least prompt clean-up drives from authorities that will reinstate the public's faith in Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's vision of a rejuvenated Musi.

Jagga Reddy accuses HYDRAA officials of working to malign Congress government

TPCC working president T. Jagga Reddy alleged that some HYDRAA officials were acting to defame the Congress government and aid the BRS. He accused the opposition of using the agency to target

Congress candidate V. Naveen Yadav in the Jubilee Hills bypoll.

Hyderabad: Nov 3

TPCC working president T. Jagga Reddy on Monday raised concerns over the conduct of certain officials in HYDRAA and alleged that they were attempting to defame the Congress government.

"I feel a few over-enthusiastic HYDRAA officials are working to defame the Congress government and benefit the BRS party," he said in a statement.

He said false propaganda was being spread against the government due to the actions of these officials and demanded disciplinary measures along with an inquiry.

"Opposition parties are using HYDRAA as a tool to defeat Congress candidate V Naveen Yadav in the Jubilee Hills by-election. I will personally take up this issue with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and the TPCC," Jagga Reddy added.



Congress splinter group wins Karimnagar urban bank polls with BRS, BJP help

Karimnagar: Nov 3

The panel led by former chairman Karra Rajashekhar emerged victorious in the Karimnagar Cooperative Urban Bank elections, the results of which were announced on Sunday. Polling for 12 director posts was held across Karimnagar and Jagtial.

Out of 9,287 registered voters, 4,114 cast their votes at 24 polling stations in Karimnagar and seven in Jagtial. Rajashekhar's panel won 10 out of the 12 director posts, securing a clear majority.

karimnagar Parliament constituency in-charge Velchala Rajender Rao managed to win two director positions, while the panel led by outgoing chairman Gaddam Vilas Reddy failed to open its account. In a setback, Vilas Reddy himself lost the election.

Although the Congress party did not officially field a panel, three party leaders, Rajashekhar, Rajender Rao and Vilas Reddy, floated their own groups and campaigned vigorously.

Rajashekhar is said to have formed his panel in coordination with BRS and BJP leaders, while Rajender Rao and Vilas Reddy teamed up with Congress activists. Reacting to the results, Rajender Rao said his panel achieved a 'moral victory' despite narrow defeats. He alleged that Rajashekhar's win was 'illegal' and claimed the victory was secured through an 'unethical alliance with BRS and BJP'. He stated he would lodge a complaint with the Congress high command against Rajashekhar.

Dip in yield forces farmer to end life in Asifabad

Kumram Bheem Asifabad: Nov 3
A 34-year-old farmer died by suicide, distressed by poor cotton yield at Wankidi mandal centre.

Police said that Butle Sudhakar from Wankidi mandal headquarters attempted to take his life by consuming pesticide. He breathed his last while being shifted to a hospital. He was disheartened by a dip in yield of his cotton crop raised by borrowing money from local moneylenders. Sangeetha, wife of the farmer lodged a complaint with the police. A case was registered. Investigations are underway.



Telangana deploys paddy huskers to streamline paddy procurement

Karimnagar: Nov 3

To curb irregularities and simplify the procurement process, the State government has decided to introduce modern technology in paddy procurement by deploying paddy huskers at procurement centres.

Officials said the paddy husker machines would be used to determine the fine variety of paddy. At present, staff at procurement centres test the quality of paddy manually by removing the shell from grains manually.

The new machines will automate this process, once a handful of grains is placed in the machine, the shell is removed automatically, allowing officials to measure the length, width and

percentage of grains using a grain caliper (dial micrometer).

Grains with a length of more than 6 mm and width less than 2 mm will qualify as fine variety, eligible for a Rs 500 bonus. Each paddy procurement centre (PPC) is expected to be equipped with two paddy husker machines.

Special arrangements are also being made for identifying fine variety paddy. Bags containing fine paddy will be stitched with red thread and marked with the letter 'S', while normal paddy bags will be stitched with green thread.

Tenant farmers must obtain approval from Agriculture Department officials before selling their produce at

PPCs. Farmers selling below 50 bags require clearance from Agriculture Extension Officers, while those selling above 50 bags need permission from the Mandal Agriculture Officer.

With the State government offering a Rs.500 bonus for fine variety paddy, most farmers are switching to cultivating the premium grain. PPC organisers will procure crops based on tokens issued by AEOs.

Farmers are required to carry their Aadhaar card, bank passbook and pattadar passbook while selling crops and must verify their details in the Online Procurement Management System (OPMS).

Jubilee Hills RWAs demand civic fixes amid election heat

Hyderabad: Nov 3 Voters of gated communities in the Jubilee Hills assembly constituency have voiced demands for uninterrupted water and power supply, along with an effective sewerage system.

Many voters in the area expressed concerns about frequent disruptions in essential services, stating that these issues affected their daily lives. The community members urged the authorities to address these problems promptly to ensure a better quality of life.

According to the United Federation of RWAs (UFERWAS), an apex body of RWAs in Greater Hyderabad handling civic issues of 4,500 RWAs, there are 270 RWAs in the Jubilee Hills assem-

bly constituency. Jubilee Hills, Shaikpet, Vengalrao Nagar, Madhura Nagar, Kalyan Nagar Phase-1, Phase-2 and Phase-3, Somajiguda (part), Ameerpet, Erragadda, S R Nagar (part), Rahamath Nagar, Rajeev Nagar and Mothi Nagar are key areas managed by these RWAs.

As the election campaign was in full swing on Sunday, with political parties BRS, BJP and Congress vying for voters' attention, Telangana Today spoke with several RWAs in the assembly constituency. For these major parties, residents of gated communities were seen as crucial to securing victory.

"We are 100 percent taxpayers, but

deprived of basic needs. For instance, power supply. During the BRS government, we did not see power outages, except during heavy rains. But in the Congress government, we are experiencing outages three times a day," said Raj Kumar, a member of Vengalrao Nagar RWA.

A Madhura Nagar RWA secretary, Hari Krishna, demanded uninterrupted water supply. He said HMWSSB is proposing either maintenance or replacement of the water supply infra at least once every month, resulting in no water supply and delays in the supplies. "We never experienced interruptions in the water supply during the BRS regime," he said.

Trump refuses to negotiate, says he 'won't be extorted' by Democrats as shutdown enters sixth week

Washington: President Donald Trump says he "won't be extorted" by Democrats to reopen the government, making clear that he has no plans to negotiate as the government shutdown will soon enter its sixth week.

In an interview on CBS's "60 Minutes" that aired on Sunday, Trump said that Democrats who are demanding an extension in health care subsidies "have lost their way" and predicted that they will eventually capitulate to Republicans who have said they won't negotiate until they vote to reopen the government.

"I think they have to," Trump said. "And if they don't vote, it's their problem." Trump's comments signal that the shutdown could continue to drag on for some time as federal workers, including air traffic controllers, are set to miss additional paychecks and as there is uncertainty over whether 42 million Americans who received federal food aid will be able to access the assistance.

Senate Democrats have now voted 13 times against reopening the government, insisting that they need Trump and Republicans to negotiate with them first on an extension of Affordable Care Act subsidies that are set to expire at the end of the year.

Instead of negotiating, the president reiterated his pleas to Republican leaders to change Senate rules and scrap the filibuster. But Senate Republicans have rejected that idea, arguing that the rule requiring 60 votes to overcome any objections in the Senate is vital to the institution and has allowed them to stop Democratic policies when they are in the minority.

"Republicans have to get tougher," Trump said in the CBS interview. "If we end the filibuster, we can do exactly what we want." With the two parties at a standstill, the shutdown, now in its 33rd day, appears likely to become the longest in history. The previous record was set in 2019, when Trump demanded that Congress give him money for a US-Mexico border wall.

A potentially decisive week

Trump's push on the filibuster could prove a distraction for Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-SD, and Republican senators who have opted instead to stay the course as the consequences of the shutdown have become more acute.

Republicans are hoping that at least some Democrats will eventually give them the votes they need as moderates have been in weekslong talks with rank-and-file Republicans about poten-

tial compromises that could guarantee votes on health care in exchange for reopening the government. Republicans need five additional Democrats to pass their bill.

"We need five with a backbone to say we care more about the lives of the American people than about gaining some political leverage," Thune said on the Senate floor as the Senate left Washington for the weekend on Thursday.

Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine, a Democrat, said on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday that there is a group of people talking about "a path to fix the health care debacle" and a commitment from Republicans not to fire more federal workers. But it's still unclear if those talks could produce a meaningful compromise.

Far apart on Obamacare subsidies

Trump said in the "60 Minutes" interview that the Affordable Care Act, often known as Obamacare because it was signed and championed by former President Barack Obama, is "terrible" and that if the Democrats vote to reopen



the government, "we will work on fixing the bad health care that we have right now."

Democrats feel differently, arguing that the marketplaces set up by the ACA are working as record numbers of Americans have signed up for the coverage. But they want to extend subsidies first

enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic so that premiums won't go up for millions of people on January 1.

"We want to sit down with Thune, with (House Speaker Mike) Johnson, with Trump, and negotiate a way to address this horrible health care crisis," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said last week.

Agricultural drones are taking off globally, saving farmers time, money

East Lansing: Drones have become integrated into everyday life over the past decade – in sectors as diverse as entertainment, health care and construction. They have also begun to transform the way people grow food.

In a new study published in the journal *Science*, showed that the use of agricultural drones has spread extremely rapidly around the world. Social scientists studying agriculture and rural development set out to document where agricultural drones have taken off around the world, what they are doing, and why they have travelled so far so fast. It also explored what these changes mean for farmers, the environment, the public and governments.

Just a few years ago, agricultural drones were expensive, small and difficult to use, limiting their appeal to farmers. In contrast, today's models can be flown immediately after purchase and carry loads weighing up to 220 pounds (100 kg) – the weight of two sacks of fertiliser.

Their prices vary from country to country due to taxes, tariffs and shipping costs. In the US, a drone owner can expect to spend US\$ 20,000 to US\$

30,000 for the same equipment that a farmer in China could buy for less than US\$ 10,000.

However, most farmers hire service providers, small businesses that supply drones and pilots for a fee, making them easy and relatively affordable to



use.

Agricultural drones are now akin to flying tractors – multifunctional machines that can perform numerous tasks using different hardware attachments.

Common uses for drones on farms include spraying crops, spreading fertiliser, sowing seeds, transporting produce, dispensing fish feeds, painting greenhouses, monitoring livestock locations and well-being, mapping field to-

pography and drainage, and measuring crop health.

We estimated the number of agricultural drones operating in some of the world's leading agricultural countries by scouring online news and trade publications in many different languages. This effort revealed where agricultural drones have already taken off around the world.

Historically, most agricultural technology – tractors, for example – has spread from high-income countries to middle- and then lower-income ones over the course of many decades.

Drones partially reversed and dramatically accelerated this pattern, diffusing first from East Asia to Southeast Asia, then to Latin America, and finally to North America and Europe.

Their use in higher-income regions is more limited, but is accelerating rapidly in the US.

China leads the world in agricultural drone manufacturing and adoption. In 2016, a Chinese company introduced the first agriculture-specific quadcopter model. There are now more than 250,000 agricultural drones reported to be in use there.

Hyderabad's Mir Alam Tank and its Mysore connection

The silent waters of MirAlam Tank mirror the stories of the past, even as Hyderabad's skylines are changing rapidly. The tank, built over two hundred years ago by Diwan Mir Alam with funds from the Mysore war, is set to get a facelift. The government's decision to construct a 2.5 km-long cable bridge across the tank in the Bahadurpur area of the old city deserves appreciation. Once completed, the Mir Alam Tank bridge will be the second suspension bridge in the city after the iconic Durgam Cheruvu bridge near Jubilee Hills.

According to reports, the government also plans to develop the tank and its adjoining area into a tourist attraction, with three island zones modelled on the lines of Singapore's gardens. The proposed development includes convention centres, adventure parks, artificial waterfalls, resorts, and hotels. The project is expected to be taken up in a public-private partnership (PPP) mode. A bird sanctuary, similar to the Jurong Bird Park in Singapore, and an amphitheatre have also been planned near the tank, along with a musical fountain, touted as a star attraction of the project.

Located south of the River Musi, the Mir Alam Tank was the main source of drinking water for Hyderabad before the construction of Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar reservoirs during the reign of Mir Osman Ali Khan, following the recommendations of Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya after the catastrophic 1908 Hyderabad floods.

Constructed between 1804 and 1806, the tank features several unique technical and architectural elements, including 21 semicircular masonry arches that extend approximately 1.5 km in length, forming a structural foundation for the large reservoir. These arches make it an engineering marvel of its time, combining functional water storage with an aesthetic and structural innovation still admired today.

It is said that the tank was designed by a French engineer, Michel Joachim Marie Raymond (not to be confused with his namesake, who built the Gunfoundry). Though there was a considerable decline of French influence in Hyderabad after the signing of the Subsidiary Alliance introduced by Wellesley in 1800, French personnel continued to influence the military, social, and cultural life of Hyderabad. No wonder Mir Alam engaged a French planner to build his tank. The tank covers an area of 260 acres and has a capacity of 21 million cubic metres of water, fed by numerous streams and springs from the nearby hills.



Nizam's favourite drink

The water of Mir Alam Tank was said to be so sweet that Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, the VIth Nizam (1869-1911), insisted on drinking water only from this tank. When he travelled to Delhi for the 1877 Durbar, large steel containers filled with the tank water accompanied him aboard his luxury train 'Palace on Wheels'. The specially made containers were procured from London. It is believed that the Nizam preferred water drawn from a particular spot in the middle of the tank, where an underground spring gave it a distinct sweetness. His attenders would row out daily to that spot to fetch his drinking water.

Ally of the British

Mir Alam Bahadur, the builder of the tank, was a prominent nobleman and the Prime Minister (Diwan) of Hyderabad State from 1804 to 1808 during the reign of Sikander Jah, the third Nizam (1803-1829). Construction of the tank began in July 1804, and it was completed in two years, being commissioned by Mir Alam himself in June 1806. He drafted engineers and craftsmen at great expense for its construction.

He was instrumental in aligning Hyderabad state closely with British interests, which had lasting implications for the region's political dynamics. His leanings towards the British also weakened the autonomous military power of the Hyderabad state and enabled the rise of British influence in the Nizam's territory. Mir Alam had very cordial relations

with the British East India Company administration and utilised it to fix his political rivals and also to further his personal gains. His most notable rivalry was with Arastu Jah, his predecessor as Diwan of Hyderabad state.

There was an ongoing bitter rivalry between them. Arastu Jah wanted to discredit then Resident James A Kirkpatrick, with Mir Alam being involved in that highly charged political contention. Mir Alam gained a lot of political mileage by supporting Kirkpatrick. However, the episode resulted in the rise of pro-British and anti-British factions in the Nizam's court. Mir Alam sided with the pro-British and extended even military help during the final Mysore war against Tipu Sultan. The British, in turn, played kingmakers, supporting Mir Alam against Arastu Jah to stabilise Hyderabad in their favour.

Role in Mysore War

It was Mir Alam who commanded the Hyderabad contingent during the siege of Srirangapatnam in the fourth Mysore war against Tipu Sultan in 1799. His forces included 10,000 cavalymen and four battalions of infantry. Six more East India Company battalions, led by James Dalrymple, joined them. These combined Hyderabad forces became part of the British Grand Army led by George Harris for the final assault on Srirangapatnam in April-May 1799.

The Hyderabad contingent under Mir Alam played a key role in the combined allied British army of more than 50,000

soldiers that included British, Maratha, and Portuguese troops. Upon returning to Hyderabad on the conclusion of the war and the signing of the Treaty of Mysore, Mir Alam was accorded a hero's welcome.

War Booty

The large funds Mir Alam spent on constructing the tank were received from Mysore and have an interesting historical background. Under the Treaty of Mysore, a large part of the kingdom was divided among the victors. To the truncated Mysore, Krishna Raja III, a scion of the Wadiyar family, was restored to the throne. The entire territories south of the Krishna river, the present Rayalaseema area in Andhra Pradesh, went as the share of the Nizam of Hyderabad, which he ceded to the East India Company in 1800 under the Subsidiary Alliance signed with Lord Wellesley. Hence the name, 'Ceded Districts' to the area under British rule. Tipu Sultan's vast treasures, his throne, swords, jewels, and innumerable artefacts, were looted and divided among the victors.

At the Treaty, Hyderabad was represented by the young and ambitious Mir Alam, who at that time was only Peshkar. But he had the distinction of having led Hyderabad's cavalry in the final siege of Srirangapatnam. Arastu Jah, the Diwan at that time, was busy with state affairs under the ageing Nizam Ali, then Nizam of Hyderabad.

Lifestyle disorders pushing India towards kidney disease epidemic, says renowned nephrologist

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is emerging as one of the country's most pressing public health concerns, a renowned nephrologist said.

CKD is fuelled by lifestyle disorders like diabetes and hypertension and compounded by environmental and occupational factors, kidney ailments are no longer confined to the elderly or the urban elite, he said.

If left unchecked, kidney disease could soon take on the proportions of an epidemic, the nephrologist said.

Dr H Sudarshan Ballal shared his experience of witnessing how India's renal healthcare evolved from scarcity to scale but also watched new challenges emerge with unsettling speed.

"When I returned to India in 1991 from the US, there were just 800 nephrologists in the entire country. In fact, there were more Indian nephrologists practising in the US than in India. We used to call ourselves one in a million," Ballal recalled.

Three decades later, the situation has undoubtedly improved, with thousands of specialists and advanced treatment facilities spread across the country, he said.

"The situation is less grim than it was 30 years ago. But we still haven't covered the entire spectrum of patients who need treatment. Kidney disease is very common. Every year, nearly two lakh people develop severe kidney failure, and ten times more suffer from milder forms. Unfortunately, less than 25 per cent of them get any kind of treatment," Ballal said.

While access to nephrologists and dialysis centres has grown significantly, the affordability gap remains wide. Dialysis and transplants, the only options for end-stage renal disease, continue to be beyond the means of many families.

"Affordability is still a huge issue. In the early 1990s, only about five per cent of patients had insurance. Today, over 60 per cent are covered, but even then, the cost of long-term treatment is high," he noted.

India's rising burden of kidney disease is closely tied to its status as the diabetes capital of the world, Ballal, who is also the Chairman of the Medical Advisory Board of Manipal Hospitals and Director of the Manipal Institute of Nephrology and Urology, stated.

"The number one cause of chronic kidney disease globally is diabetes. So as diabetes increases, kidney disease inevitably follows. Unless we control the epidemic of lifestyle diseases, kidney disease will continue to rise. It's almost bordering on an epidemic," he said.

When asked about doctors identifying a mysterious condition called Chronic Kidney Disease of Unknown

Origin (CKDU), increasingly seen among agricultural workers in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and parts of Karnataka, Ballal said that the condition is deeply linked to the environment and working conditions.

He said, "I am happy that you are asking me this. These are young men working long hours in the heat. Some suspect dehydration, others point to soil contamination from fertilisers or pesticides. But no single cause has been identified yet. It's not contagious, but it's deeply linked to the environment and working conditions." The nephrologist insisted that prevention must take precedence over cure.

"Clean drinking water, sanitation, and vaccinations save more lives than all corporate hospitals combined," he says. "If we strengthen primary health care, improve nutrition and public hygiene, we can prevent most of these diseases before they become life-threatening," he said.

For those already affected, he believes universal health insurance and stronger public hospitals are crucial.

"No one should be denied treatment



because of cost," he said, adding that "Just like Medicare or the NHS, we need systems that ensure every citizen has access to care," Ballal said.

Despite the challenges, he is hopeful about the future. Ballal said emerging technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), will transform the way kidney diseases are identified and managed.

"Technology and artificial intelli-

gence will change how we diagnose and manage kidney diseases. AI can detect patterns, predict outbreaks, and even assist in treatment planning. The future won't replace doctors, it will empower them", he said.

"Kidney disease may not spread through infection, but it spreads through neglect of our habits, our health systems, and our priorities. Unless we act now, it will become an epidemic of our own making," he said.

Stem cells sound magical, but they're not all created equal

Melbourne: Most people have heard of stem cells. They are often described as "miracle" cells—ones that can grow into any other type of cell in our bodies, promising revolutionary medical treatments.

However, not all stem cells are the same, and not all of them can become treatments equally well.

To appreciate what stem cells actually do—and can't do—we need to understand their different types. Each comes with its own strengths, limitations, and challenges.

Stem cells already save lives in Australia and worldwide. But if we want them to help more people, science alone is not enough. We also need strong regulation, industry partnerships and public trust.

What are the three types of stem cells?

Stem cells are the body's raw materials: unspecialised cells that can, under the right conditions, develop into many different types of specialised cells including blood, skin, heart, or brain.

There are three main stem cell types: adult, embryonic, and induced pluripotent.

As their names suggest, they are found in adult tissues, come from embryos, or are created in the lab respectively. Let's look at each type in detail.

Adult stem cells: proven but limited

Adult stem cells are found throughout the body, often named after the tissue they come from—such as bone marrow, skin, or gut.

Because they are collected from a donor or the patient themselves, their use is ethical and based on informed consent. But they are limited. They can usually only regenerate the cell types from the tissue they came from—a skin stem cell can only grow into a skin cell, for example. Also, their quality varies from person to person.

Adult stem cells are useful and can be life saving, but not a universal solution.

The only approved stem cell therapies currently used in Australia involve blood stem cells (haematopoietic stem cells). These are used in bone marrow transplants to treat blood cancers like leukaemia, and some immune conditions such as multiple sclerosis.

Embryonic stem cells are more

versatile than adult ones. They appear only days after fertilisation and can become nearly any cell type in the body, a property called pluripotency.

This power comes with ethical and legal challenges. In Australia, embryonic stem cells can only be derived from donated embryos under strict conditions. Their use is tightly regulated and often debated.

At the Australian Regenerative Medicine Institute, my team studies the earliest stages of life. Using advanced imaging, we capture how embryonic cells organise, change shape, and "decide" what types of cells they will become.

These processes hold vital clues for guiding stem cells to one day repair or replace damaged organs, and for understanding how a healthy embryo develops.

In 2006, scientists found a way to "rewind" specialised adult cells, such as skin or blood cells that usually cannot change, and return them to a stem-cell-like state.

These are called induced pluripotent stem cells or iPSCs for short. Once reprogrammed, they regain the ability to become many other cell types.