

Hyderabad Students Soar High: SATHEE Facilitates ISRO's LVM3-M6 Bluebird Launch Experience to Lotus Lap School students

Hyderabad : A group of 45 students of Lotus Lap Public School, Vanasthalipuram, Hyderabad today witnessed a live satellite launch of LVM3-M6 BLUEBIRD, India's first heaviest commercial communication satellite, at the prestigious Satish Dhawan Space Centre, ISRO facility in Sriharikota.

Under the initiative of SATHEE, SATHEE Kendra, Hyderabad facilitated this visit of 45 students of Grades 9 and 10 students. SATHEE (Self-Assessment Test and Help for Entrance Exams) is an initiative by the Ministry of Education, in association with IIT Kanpur, which will give students a self-paced interactive learning and assessment platform to prepare for competitive and other exams. SATHEE Kendra, Hyderabad centre works in Telangana to help, support the students get benefit through offline support.

The visit marks a significant milestone in the SATHEE's commitment to providing real-world exposure to students in the field of space science and technology.

The BlueBird Block-2 satellite, weighing 6,100 kg, into Low Earth Orbit (LEO). It's the heaviest payload launched by LVM3 and will provide high-speed cellular broadband directly to smartphones worldwide.

The students were thrilled after watching the launch. After the successful completion of the educational tour, all students have expressed their grati-



tude towards the SATHEE.

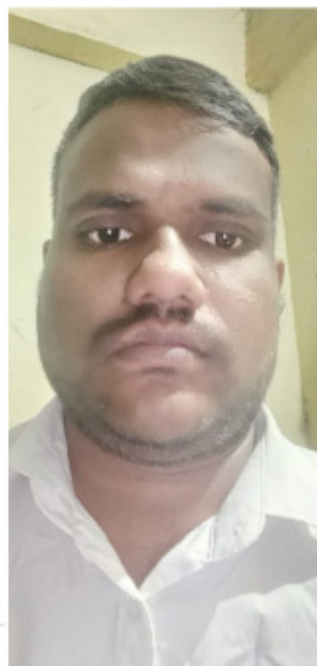
Students also visited the space

museum where they interacted with scientists and briefed about various scale

down satellite and rocket models present in the space museum.

Social Activist Ande Raghu Files PIL in Supreme Court Seeking Online Disclosure of Government Expenditure

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 25, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “Prominent social activist Ande Raghu has filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court of India seeking mandatory online disclosure of government expenditure details. In his petition, Raghu stated that information related to the allocation and utilization of government funds for development works and welfare schemes should be made available voluntarily on the internet. He argued that citizens should not be compelled to file applications under the Right to Information (RTI) Act to access such details, as these funds constitute public money. According to the petitioner, placing detailed expenditure information online would enable citizens to clearly understand how every rupee of government money is being spent and for what purpose. This step would significantly enhance transparency between the government and the public and help in curbing corruption. The PIL has been filed under Article 32 of the Constitution of India on 14 October 2025 and has been officially admitted by the Supreme Court. The case is expected to come up for hearing soon. The petition has been registered with File Number: 4061/2025. The outcome of the case is being keenly watched across the country, as it could have far-reaching implications for transparency and accountability in public finance.



The G-RAM-G Bill introduced by the Modi government is a death warrant for rural India

- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 must be continued
- The G-RAM-G 2025 Bill must be repealed immediately
- Demands of the leaders (speakers) who participated in the Agricultural Workers' Union Round Table meeting



while speaking at the meeting. On Saturday, a "Round Table" meeting was organized at Sundaraiah Bhavan, Bhuvanagiri, under the auspices of the Telangana Agricultural Workers' Union District Committee, demanding the continuation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and the repeal of the G-RAM-G Bill brought in by the Modi government. The meeting was presided over by District President Bollu Yadagiri. The participating leaders stated that the National Rural Employment Guar-

antee Act, introduced for the upliftment and employment of rural poor, has been very beneficial to the poor. They said that the employment guarantee scheme played a crucial role even during times of rural crisis. They criticized the weakening of the employment guarantee act, which provides employment to over 30 crore people belonging to SC, ST, and weaker sections across the country. They said that the new law does not guarantee work or payment, and that it allows the central government to act as it pleases. They expressed their anguish that if this new law is implemented, all the schemes, rules, and guidelines under the employment guarantee program will be cancelled. They stated that the scheme implemented under the new law is merely a centrally sponsored scheme and will not benefit the people; it will be entirely under the control of the central government, which will have the author-

ity to decide how much funding to allocate to each state. They criticized that the central government's responsibility has been reduced from 90 percent in the previous law to 60 percent, and that the priority of laborers has been reduced, giving more importance to machinery and materials. They criticized the Modi government for reducing funding for this act over the past ten years and for introducing new government orders that have intimidated the workers. They said that Prime Minister Modi does not want this scheme to exist. They stated that it is extremely deplorable that the successors of Godse, who killed Gandhiji, are abolishing the law named after Mahatma Gandhi with their RSS Manuvadi ideology. They said that comparing the 2005 employment act with the current bill reveals Modi's political agenda, and that this will destroy rural India. They said it feels like a conspiracy to kill people through starvation. They stated that the rural employment scheme, through the employment guarantee act, provided at least some work, which had a positive impact on agricultural wages and empowered workers to demand higher wages. They also mentioned that wages were paid equally to both men and women. However, they criticized the Modi government, saying that the numerous flaws in the MGNREGA act, the reduction of employment for rural poor, the attempts to repeal the act, the denial of work, and the encroachment on

states' rights, all indicate that the government intends to deprive the rural poor of employment. They alleged that the government is indifferent to the poor, laborers, unorganized workers, and farmers, except for corporate forces. They called upon all sections of people to unite and prepare for movements to protect the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and to demand the repeal of the MGNREGA bill. Also present at the event were Dalit Sena State President Pallerla Venkatesh, Technical Assistant Association District President Kondamadugu Ramesh, SC ST Vigilance and Monitoring Committee member Barre Sudarshan, Telangana Rythu Sangham District General Secretary Maturi Balaraju, CITU District President Komatireddy Chandrareddy, Telangana Praja Front District President Kashapaka Mahesh, DYFI District Secretary Gaddam Venkatesh, PNM District Secretary Eerlapalli Muthyalu, LHPS District President Bhaskar Naik, Telangana Agricultural Workers Union District Vice President and Cheemala Konduru Sarpanch Pallerla Anjaiah, CPM Bhongir Town Secretary Maya Krishna, and KVP District representatives. Vice President Yadagiri, DYFI District Vice President MD Saleem, and Agricultural Workers' Union committee members Siliveru Ellayya, Kondapuram Yadagiri, Bollepalli Kishan, Rambabu, Rajan Babu, and others participated.

“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 25):- The leaders expressed their anguish, stating that the BJP Modi government at the center has repealed the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 and introduced the "Vikasit Bharat, Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajivita Mission, G-RAM-G Bill," which they called a death warrant for rural India. They demanded that the central government continue the 2005 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and immediately repeal the G-RAM-G 2025 Bill. Telangana Agricultural Workers' Union State Secretary Kondamadugu Narasimha, TPCC State Secretary Thangallapalli Ravikumar, PMC State Secretary Surupanga Shivalingam, and BSP State Committee member Battu Ramachandraiah made these demands

The four labor codes that harm workers must be repealed

- CITU State Vice President S. Mallikarjun



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... December 25): CITU State Vice President S. Mallikarjun demanded the repeal of the four labor codes introduced by the BJP government, which are detrimental to workers. “On Wednesday, a meeting of the CITU District Committee was held at the local CITU district office under the chairmanship of District President Komatireddy Chandrareddy. “Speaking as the chief guest at this meeting, CITU State Vice President S. Mallikarjun criticized the central government for issuing a notification on November 21 for the implementation of the four labor codes as part of a conspiracy to turn the working class, the creators of wealth, into modern slaves for the benefit of corporate managements. He criticized that the codes include provisions that allow employers to increase the eight-hour workday, which workers fought for and achieved, to twelve hours. He strongly condemned the labor codes for questioning the workers' right to strike and their right to form unions. They criticized the government for eliminating the concept of permanent employment and introducing a fixed-term employment system, thereby removing job security. They also criticized the Modi government for introducing a new definition that excludes workers earning more than 18,000 rupees from the purview of labor laws, thus exploiting the working class. On the other hand, they

stated that a bill has been introduced under the name of Electricity Amendment 2025, which would eliminate the possibility of farmers receiving subsidies and endanger the rights of the states. They criticized the BJP, alleging that it is weakening the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) and changing its name to V.V. Ramji, and that while the central government previously allocated 90% of the funds, it has now limited it to 60%, shifting the remaining 40% onto the states. They alleged that this is part of a conspiracy to gradually abolish the employment guarantee scheme. They also stated that the government has introduced a bill on insurance laws under the name “Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha” (Insurance for All, Pro-

tection for All), allowing 100% FDI in the insurance sector. They warned that this is extremely dangerous for employees and beneficiaries, and that it only benefits insurance companies, investors, and corporate entities, causing severe harm to the people of the country. They criticized that the bill introduced under the guise of nuclear safety, accountability, and sovereignty is part of a conspiracy to privatize nuclear power produced in the public sector. They alleged that the policies of the Narendra Modi-led BJP government are simultaneously attacking workers, farmers, employees, and the poor. They called upon people's organizations to prepare for a resistance movement against these policies, and as part of this, urged workers and the public to participate in large numbers in the nationwide protest program at dis-

trict centers on December 26th and the worker-farmer unity rally on January 19th to teach Modi's policies a fitting lesson. Those who participated in the meeting included CITU District Secretary Kalluri Mallesham, District Treasurer MD Pasha, District Vice Presidents Dasari Pandu, Maya Krishna, Donuri Narsireddy, District Assistant Secretaries Gorige Somulu, Turkapalli Surender, Chekka Ramesh, Potta Yadamma, Silveru Ramakumari, Pailla Ganapathi Reddy, and District Committee members Adimoolam Nandeeshwar, Gandhamalla Mathaiah, Morigadi Ramesh, Burugu Swapna, Cheemakandla Sriramulu, Radharapu Mallesham, Potharaju Jahangir, Bathula Dasu, Thooti Venkatesh, SD Umar, CH Srinu, Jonnakanti Devaiah, Konde Narasimha Jangayya, and others.

Festive Christmas Celebrations at United Christian Church, Kaghaznagar



“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, December 25 (Indian Chronicle) “The United Christian Church at the Kaghaznagar mandal headquarters witnessed joyful Christmas celebrations on Wednesday, marked by prayers, fellowship, and a festive cake-cutting ceremony. “Addressing the gathering, speakers said that Christmas is being celebrated with enthusiasm throughout the Sirpur constituency. They highlighted that the people's government, guided by the teachings of Lord Jesus Christ, is committed to promoting harmony, welfare, and development across all religious communities. “United Christian Church Pastor M.D. Wilfred, along with his son Vinod, conveyed heartfelt Christmas greetings to Christian brothers and sisters on the occasion.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 101st Birth Anniversary Observed with Floral Tributes in Cherlapally Division



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 25, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“On the occasion of the 101st birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Cherlapally Division, paid floral tributes at the Telangana Thalli

statue located at Chakripuram Cross-roads on Thursday. The programme was led by Cherlapally Division BJP President Challa Prabhakar. Speaking on the occasion, party leaders recalled the contributions of Atal Bihari Vajpayee to the nation and described him as a statesman who ushered India into a new phase of development. Challa Prabhakar said Vajpayee's leadership symbolised ad-



ministrative efficiency, democratic values, and a firm commitment to national interest. His clarity of thought, strong decision-making, and eloquence, he noted, set him apart as a unique leader in Indian politics. Leaders further stated that Vajpayee's life stood as a true example of statesmanship, patriotism, and respect for democratic principles, and that his vision and ideals continue to

guide future generations. Senior BJP leaders Kasula Surender Goud, Devanadham, Anand Goud, Laxman Goud, Ganesh Mudiraj, Laxminarayana, Sahadeva Goud, Ramesh Choudary, Vidyasagar, Raju, Kalavathi, Srikanth, Shivaprasad, Venkatesh Yadav, Venkateshwarlu, Anil, and others participated in the programme. Cherlapally Division BJP

Cheque Power Has Not Been Revoked For Sub- Sarpanches - Don't Believe The False Propaganda

““Indian Chronicle” kumram bheem, Asifabad, District Reporte, Jade Srinivas. December, 25. “BC Student Union District President Lobade Lahu Kumar clarified that the check power of Wankidi mandal Khamana Gram Panchayat Upasarpanch and BC Student Union District President Lobade Lahu Kumar Upasarpanch has not been revoked. He accused some people of deliberately

misleading the people by spreading false propaganda on this issue. He said that more than 4,700 BC sarpanches across the state have won, and in the remaining 7,000 or so gram panchayats, 80 percent of them are BC sub- sarpanches. In this context, he criticized the fact that such false leaks are being spread with the intention of weakening the BC Criticized. He said that the check power of the sub- sarpanchs has not been removed and the Telangana government has suggested that separate bank accounts be opened in the newly formed panchayats and mandals only for the management of the 15th Finance Commission funds. He explained that the payments of these funds will be made with the digital signatures of the panchayat



secretary, MPDO, sarpanch and MPP. However, he expressed his concern that some officials and media groups are spreading false information that the check power of the sub- sarpanch has been abolished. In fact, he clarified that the powers of the sub- sarpanch have not been abolished anywhere. He demanded that the government identify those who spread such false propaganda and take strict action. Some people from the ruling classes in the government identify those who have made such false propaganda and take strict action. He warned that if some people from the ruling classes in the government commit such acts, they will be made guilty in a public movement. Finally, Lobade Lahukumar called on the people of Telangana to refute these false propaganda.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 101st Birth Anniversary Observed at BJP Sanath Nagar Office:



““Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, December 25:“On the occasion of the 101st birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna awardee and former Prime Minister, the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a commemorative programme was held with great reverence at the BJP office of the Sanath Nagar Assembly constituency in Begumpet. “BJP State Youth leader Marri Pururava Reddy, along with other senior BJP leaders from the constituency, paid floral tributes to the portrait of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and offered their heartfelt respects. “Speaking on the occasion, Pururava Reddy recalled the invaluable and unforgettable services rendered by Atal Bihari Vajpayee to the nation and paid rich tributes to his visionary leadership. “The programme was attended by M. Mahesh Kumar, T. Shravan, M. Baburao, Sandhya Lakshmi, C. Kranthi, R. Santosh, M. Raghunath Goud, N. Chandrapal Reddy, B. Vikas, K. Naresh, Shravan, Parshi Paramesh, Bojja Narsing Rao, Sriraman, and several other party members.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee Centenary Celebrated with Blood Donation Camp in Boduppall

“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, December 25, (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “The centenary birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee was celebrated in a grand manner in Boduppall under the aegis of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). As part of the celebrations, a blood donation camp was organised and blankets were distributed to sanitation workers. Speaking on the occasion, BJP leaders recalled Vajpayee as a visionary statesman who provided good governance that earned appreciation even from opposition parties. They said his leadership, commitment to democratic values and inclusive governance continue to inspire the nation. The speakers also stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is carrying forward Vajpayee's ideals by following his path and striving to build India into a leading nation. They expressed hope that the principles of good governance and development envisioned by Vajpayee would continue to guide the country. The programme was attended by BJP East Zone Vice President Gandipalli Raju, Talari Ravi, Kiran, Pawan, Anand, Mahesh, Radhika, Rajireddy, Lakshmaiah, Ram Reddy, Venugopal, Jai Kishan, along with BJP leaders from the state, district and mandal levels. Leaders from various morchas, booth presidents, committee members and party workers participated in large numbers.



MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, Pooduri Jitender Reddy Participate in Christmas Celebrations



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, December 25 (Indian Chronicle): “Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and BRS senior leader Pooduri Jitender Reddy participated in the Christmas celebrations held at Rehoboth Ministries in Sai Ram Nagar Colony, Uppal, and at Lourdes Matha Church in Ramanthapur Church Colony. “On this occasion, they offered special prayers and conveyed Christmas greetings to the Christian community, wishing them peace, joy, and prosperity on the festive occasion.



Govt empowers rural women with dedicated SHG hubs

Hyderabad: The state government has taken a significant step towards the economic and social empowerment of rural women. On Wednesday, the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development department issued orders for the construction of Self-Help Group (SHG) Federation buildings in every village.

Each building will be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 10 lakh, serving as a permanent venue for federations and self-help groups to operate. The sanctioned design specifies a 552-square-foot structure to be built on a 200-square-yard plot.

Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Seethakka described the decision as a historic milestone in strengthening women's groups at the grassroots level. "Rural women should not be limited to SHG participation alone; they must evolve into centres of self-employment and decision-making," she stated.

Seethakka clarified that the Congress government aims to provide women with respect, security, and self-confidence through these dedicated

spaces. The project is set to be implemented in a phased manner across all villages in the state.

Interstate human trafficking gang held in Miyapur, newborns rescued

Hyderabad: Eleven members of an interstate human trafficking gang were arrested here, and two newborn babies were rescued from them, police said on Wednesday. Based on credible information, the prime accused were apprehended within the limits of Miyapur Police Station along with their associates from different parts of the city during the processing of selling the babies, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Madhapur Zone) Ritiraj told reporters. On the modus operandi, the DCP said the accused, hailing from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Bihar, formed an organised gang with a common intention to illegally /

An exclusive preview of Delhi's new Mughal museum

Delhi is crusted with layers and layers of the past. These exist laterally, extending outwards, but also vertically, beneath the ground, under a surface that millions of feet pound on every day. It is fitting, then, that the newest landmark of this city of graveyards is entirely underground. Opening in August, the Humayun Museum lies beneath the soil on which the Mughal identity, which gave a distinctive character and left an indelible mark on India, first began to take shape. Indeed, the earliest city of the Mughals was not Agra, or Lahore, or Fatehpur Sikri. Neither was it the Walled City of Shahjahanabad, the so-called Purani Dilli. It was around the much older 14th century shrine of Delhi's great Sufi saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. This is the assertion of the country's newest museum.

"The Humayun Museum will serve as a gateway to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Humayun's Tomb," says Ratish Nanda, the CEO of Aga Khan Trust for Culture, which has built the museum. "Each artefact relays and interprets the story of this historic precinct, where 700 years of monumental architecture is surrounded with craft, music, culture, and pluralism."

Stepping inside the museum, visitors are transported into the world of Humayun's Tomb — from the 16th century, when the monument was built, to the later centuries whose narrative the tomb helped shape, right up to this modern age. Each gallery is arrayed with numerous clusters devoted to different themes — their arrangement resembling French gardens whose hedges are arranged like a maze. The clusters feature artefacts, replicas, films playing on loop, architectural models, stone fragments, statues and paintings that come together to weave hundreds of years of history. The Humayun Museum is the culmination of 15 years of work by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, in partnership with the Archaeological Survey of India — the same team that restored Humayun's Tomb. Fashioned as a site museum, the subterranean sprawl awakens visitors to the aesthetics of a slice of land that was — due to its intimate proximity to Nizamuddin's shrine — the preferred burial field for both the awaam and the baadshah (commoner and king). The dargah was venerated by the Mughals all through their 331-year rule. Each of the 18 emperors kept their links with this Sufi terrain; if not always through ziyarat (pilgrimage), then through architecture, or by making the zameen (ground) their final resting place. Until now, India's only prominent UNESCO World Heritage Site museum was in Sarnath, which bears a collection of 7,000 precious objects, out of which 300 are on display. The new museum in Delhi exhibits 700 objects, out of which 500 are original — some are provided by the National Museum, and many are from the collection of the Archaeological Survey of India and the Aga Khan Trust. The 200 replicas are of the same dimensions, and in the same materials, as their originals — made by artists trained in the crafts of the time.

Humayun's father Babar founded the Mughal dynasty. Humayun's son Akbar be-

came the greatest of all the Mughals. Nestled between them, Humayun remains somewhat out of focus. The most famous thing about him is the Humayun's Tomb — and that wasn't built by him. The museum reveals the lesser-known Humayun. Far from being a nonentity, he was a warrior who fought numerous battles, founded the Mughal school of miniature art, lost Hindustan (to Sher Shah Suri) after ruling it for about a decade, and then re-won it 15 years later. During the intervening years, Humayun stayed in Iran for 11 months as a guest of its Shah. And this dagger belonged to the Shah, inscribed with the words: "Sultan Tahmasp Safari". The iron blade, with its graceful curve, is a tangible link to a long, tumultuous period in Humayun's life. A life full of contrasting probabilities that could have spun our national history to one of several "what if" alternatives. On this, he must have sat and mulled upon the end of his dynasty. This was the ornate throne of the final Mughal emperor. At first, Bahadur Shah Zafar's marble throne looks small, not quite a seat of power. Gradually, it grows on the senses, becoming statelier as one observes it closely. The armrests are supported by latticework in stone. The tip of each armrest curves into stylised swans. Rows of coloured spots appear to mark the places inlaid with gems, though these are traces of severely faded paint.

A devotee of Sufism, Zafar had allotted himself a grave next to the dargah of a cherished Sufi saint in Mehrauli. But his plan didn't work — following the failure of the 1857 war of independence, in which Indian fighters rejected British rule and chose Zafar as their nominal ruler, the emperor was sent into exile in Rangoon, Burma (now Yangon, Myanmar), where he was eventually buried. Now, at long last, Zafar finds some posthumous peace in the museum. His throne commands a part of the gallery that celebrates his beloved Sufi mystics. The saint of Mehrauli belongs to the same Sufi order as Hazrat Nizamuddin, the surrounding grounds of whose shrine eventually became the resting place of hundreds of Mughal royals. Called the "dormitory of the Mughals," Humayun's Tomb is home to 160 graves, most of them in ground-level vaults. A display case beside Zafar's throne details all the Mughal monarchs who visited Nizamuddin's dargah. Their veneration began in 1526, following Babar's victory over Ibrahim Lodi. Among the first things that Babar did on entering Delhi was to pray at this dargah. Years later, his son Humayun built his capital of Dinpanah, known as Purana Qila, close to the dargah. Humayun also built a tomb for his mother, Maham Begum — it was even closer to the dargah (and now functions as a traffic island). Then, Humayun's successor, Akbar, built a mausoleum for his father close to Nizamuddin's dargah — the Humayun's Tomb. One of the two most significant early Mughal monuments, it served the model for the other, the Taj Mahal. The tomb was Zafar's refuge after he lost to the British in 1857, and it was from here that he was arrested and deported to Rangoon. This is the 14th century illustrated and handwritten manuscript of the roman-



tic poem Laila Majnu. The version is by the poet Abdullah, who was from Jam town in modern-day Afghanistan. The manuscript has 332 pages of text and 18 illustrations, some bearing floral details in gold. The copy does not belong to Humayun, but its presence reiterates how books were his spiritual companions. Literature was Humayun's lifeblood. His father authored one of the world's most vivid early memoirs (Baburnama). Humayun himself was a poet who penned in Persian and Turki. An avid reader, he was a compulsive collector of books. His library was carried along on all his frequent journeys, on the backs of special library camels called shutur-i-kitubkhana. His encampment was once attacked in a battlefield close to Kabul, and the camels carrying his library were lost, causing him acute anguish. But the camels were later spotted wandering on their own, and the books were retrieved.

Upon losing the Bengal sultanate to Sher Shah Suri, Humayun was obliged to add even more distance to his travels. In all, he journeyed 34,000 km — from present-day Bangladesh to the borders of Europe. His books would always be with him, and they found their final home in his city of Dinpanah, where Humayun built a double-storeyed kitubkhana, or library. The museum exhibits a beautiful model of this library, and a painting displays the tile decor of the interiors as they originally looked. The tiles in the actual library have lost their shine, and the walls show their faded gleam. For a man who spent much of his life on the road, and much of that time in wars, it was a tragic yet fitting farewell that the book-collector Humayun died in his library after slipping on its steep stairs at the age of 47. Although born in Kabul, the texture of Humayun's daily life was steeped in the traditions of the land where he was eventually buried. The museum's seven bronze Humayuns are sculpted by Scottish artist Jill Watson. Each Humayun is wearing the same ulbaqcha — a jacket that the emperor designed himself — but the robes are of different colours. In Hindu astrological traditions, planets associated with a day of the week are worshipped as deities. To avail the benefits of the powers associated with the planets, Humayun matched the colour of his robes to correspond to the colour of the planet of the day.

For instance, white (moon) was for Monday, and black (Saturn) was for Saturday. The day Humayun fatally slipped, he was on his library's roof, waiting for a word from his mathematician, whom he had sent to observe the rise of Venus in order to set the most auspicious hour to take an administrative decision. Since he died on a Sunday, Humayun must have been wearing a golden robe. The silver rupee coin bears the Arabic inscription, "Allahu Akbar jallajalaluhu". Flip it around, and it bears, in Persian, the word "Ram". Minted during Akbar's reign in Berar, which is in present-day Maharashtra, the coin is evidence of the Muslim-born ruler's fascination for various faiths — a passion that led him to propound the spiritual system "Din-i-Ilahi", or the religion of God. This aspect of Akbar is reflected in another exhibit — a much-faded 17th century Persian-language farman, or royal decree, issued by him, referring to scores of land allotments for the construction of temples. Age-old tradition does not let women enter Hazrat Nizamuddin's small grave chamber. But the museum has an exact replica — not of the grave but of the grave chamber's spectacular wooden canopy gifted by a Mughal noble from 17th century Bengal. It is inlaid in mother-of-pearl, ostensibly to mimic the starry effect of the night sky. A giant Tree of Life holds up each of the four corners of the canopy. In a sense, the museum's spiritual core is this recreated canopy, simply because its original hangs over Nizamuddin's grave. Had the saint's grave not existed here, there would be no Sufi dargah at this place. And no Humayun's Tomb. The golden vase looks fragile, as if it could shatter at the touch. The vase exists as a drawing on a damaged tile and lies beside tiles of competing exquisiteness. The 17th century Shahjahan tiles were recovered by Old Delhi's illustrious Persian scholar, the late Yunus Jaffrey, from the Neeli Chatri monument at the foot of Salimgarh Fort, which stands beside the Red Fort. It was Humayun's favoured riverside pavilion, where he would often look at the Yamuna, or read a book. The edifice still exists, without the tiles. Fortunately, a handful of Delhi's monuments continue to hold on to their glazed tiles (plainer than the Shahjahan tiles), which are indicative of the Central Asian origins of the Mughals. Such tiles once adorned parts of Humayun's Tomb,

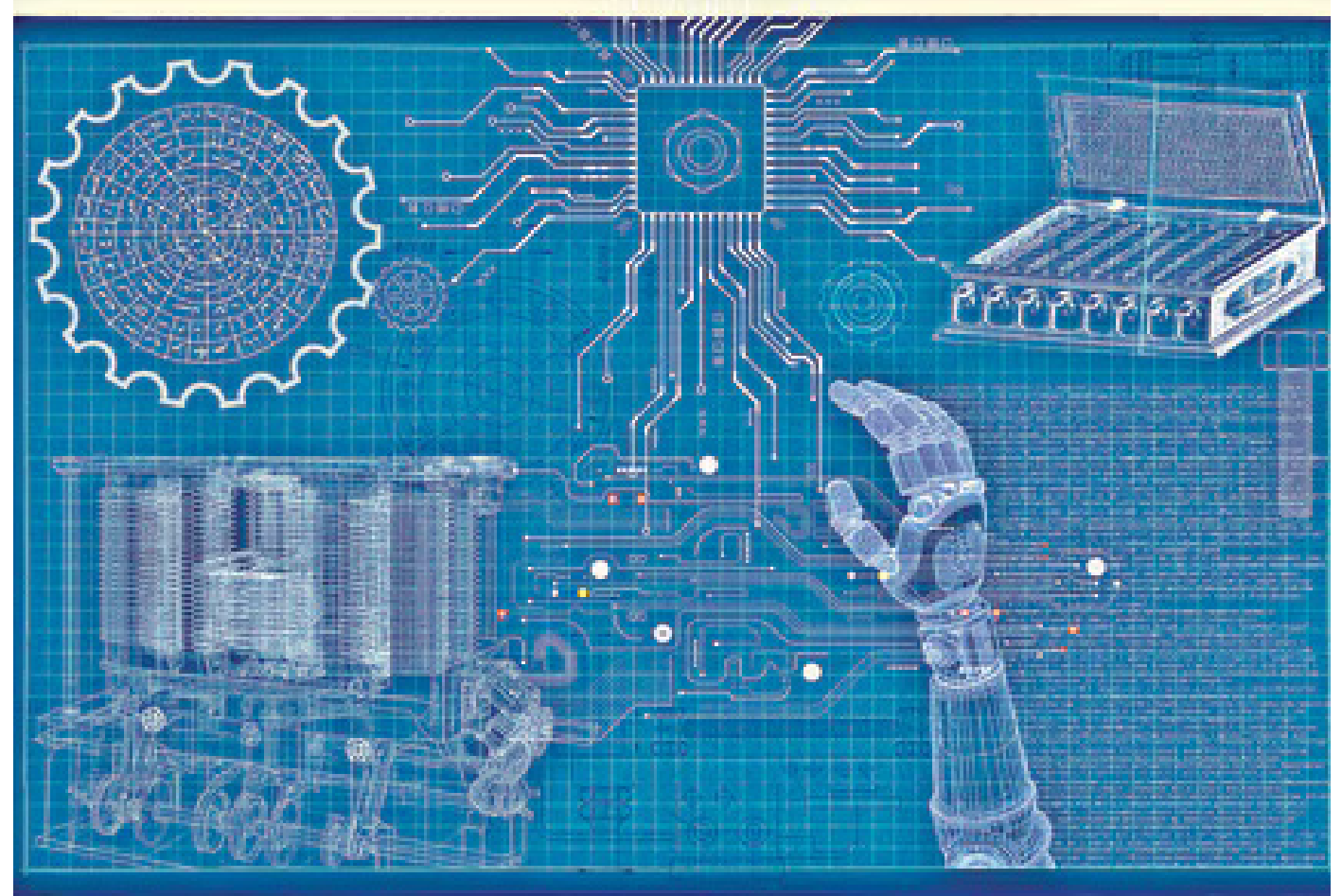
We've been trying to chat with machines for centuries. See what came before AI

All those years ago, an Arabic astrology wheel was built in an early attempt at automated chat. Then, in 17th-century Europe, a "mathematical cabinet" was built in an attempt to automate poetry, music and coded messages. There was an American robot in the 1930s designed to spit out story ideas for Hollywood. Spell checks, text messaging and autocorrect would follow.

It's an intriguing journey that Dennis Yi Tenen, a scholar and software engineer, traces in his new book, *Literary Theory for Robots: How Computers Learned to Write*. His aim, he says, is to take some of the fear and confusion away from how we view this technology, and offer a reminder that humans have always woven threads of language and technology together, driven by a primal urge to protect and promote intelligence and knowledge. "Language and technology didn't just develop together; language is technology," says Yi Tenen, an associate professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University. "While many animals teach things to their young, only humans are able to do it remotely, for instance, preserving and transmitting our collective know-how across time and space." Can we go too far in this quest? "Of course we can. I find it difficult to use technology in a balanced way in my own life," Yi Tenen says. With AI, of course, the struggle isn't quite the same. It is, potentially, a struggle over the nature of reality, veracity, truth.

Which is why it is even more vital to view this technology accurately and dispassionately as a product of human endeavour, Yi Tenen says, and not as something that is a being by itself. If we view it as an extension of our collective intelligence, we can hold technology makers responsible and accountable, he adds. His book, accordingly, takes a step back, into the historical context of AI. How far back can we trace our efforts to create "intelligent" machines? Take a look.

This device, created in Arabia, was a maze of concentric circles and elaborate charts that bore zodiac signs, letters, symbols and numerical values. Cords zig-zagged across the whole. A manual or rulebook of sorts helped soothsayers interpret the readings, particularly in matters of astrology. What's interesting, though, is that some of the circles contained verses from the Quran and other holy texts, "and in manipulating the circles, one could actually kind of have a conversation with the device," Yi Tenen says. "The fact that we're still in Q&A mode with ChatGPT... I thought that was such a cool parallel." The earliest literary bots were shaped like giant cupboards, and operated like a sort of word loom. One of the earliest examples is the Mathematical Organ created by 17th-century polymath Athanasius Kircher. Made of painted wood, this was a box-style chest made up of rows and columns of wooden slats or rods. Attached to each were paper booklets on subjects such as arithmetic, music, geometry, chronology and astrology. In a spooky foreshadowing, Kircher called them "applications". Manipulating these rods and consulting the booklets, which were ar-



ranged in a matrix, could help the user compose poetry and music (of a sort), write encrypted messages, and work out certain kinds of mathematical and astronomical calculations. Kircher sold a version of the device to the young Archduke Charles Joseph of Austria to help with his studies. It sparked several debates, including a public one at a bar between Kircher and the German poet Quirinus Kuhlmann. The latter argued that the path to knowledge should be "torturous, accessible only to those willing to walk it properly". It wasn't the organ that was intelligent, the poet added; the intelligence lay with Kircher. "Without the box, the young duke remains an idiotic parrot." Essentially, an early instance of the argument that computers are making us lazy and stupid. The Analytical Engine, 1830s It was Kircher's Mathematical Organ that inspired the English mathematician Charles Babbage to create what would go down in history as the world's first computer, in the 1830s. Babbage called it the Analytical Engine, and developed its functions in collaboration with the countess and mathematician Ada Lovelace.

It eventually looked like a weaver's loom. The machine — only partly built by Babbage in his lifetime — had a mill (like the central processing unit), store (like memory storage), reader (input device) and printer (output device). The mill could process calculations with the help of punch cards inserted into the reader. The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations, 1895 By the 19th century, amid the early years of the industrial revolution, templates were emerging: for furniture, machinery, clothing, equipment, and for the arts (literature, film, mu-

sic), journalism, even philosophy. In the arts, templates have always been looked down upon as a poor substitute for missing genius. But, Yi Tenen argues, they have always lain at the heart of how we learn. Could a machine, then, help a not-so-great writer write a great tale? Long before ChatGPT, an outline generator was created by the French writer Georges Polti, in 1895. Titled *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, it listed three dozen predicaments designed to help a struggling playwright. These included supplication, deliverance, vengeance, pursuit, disaster, revolt, rivalry and adultery. Each was explained briefly with examples. For instance, pursuit came with the instructions that the plot should be "held by the fugitive alone; sometimes innocent, always excusable, for the fault — if there was one — appears to be inevitable, ordained; we do not inquire into it or blame it, which would be idle, but sympathetically suffer the consequences with our hero, who whatever he may once have been, is now but a fellow-man in danger". Combining elements from his set of dramatic situations,

hundreds of thousands of stories could take shape. Though rarely acknowledged, such templates were frequently used by writers well into the age of cinema, Yi Tenen says. This machine, built by Los Angeles screenwriter Wycliffe Hill, could produce a complete outline of a story in 20 minutes, its whirring gears drawing background, characters and dramatic situations from a series of tapes housed in its chassis. The robot found no takers (it is unclear why, but expense may have been a factor; it is also possible that the stories weren't very good). But it prompted Hill to write a book titled *Plot Genie* (1935), about a wheel that could be spun to point to seemingly random numbers, which could be referenced against a set of charts, to generate plot requisites (locale, character, the beloved, the problem, and so on). As it turns out, Hill wasn't a polymath or early technocrat. He was a scriptwriter who became fixated on decoding the intricacies of what makes a good plot, when his own screenplay was rejected. His aim was to take the effort and uncertainty out of writing.

AFA former and present commandants get medals

Hyderabad: Air Marshal (retd) B Chandra Sekhar, former Commandant of the Air Force Academy (AFA) in Hyderabad, received the Param Vishisht Seva Medal. Additionally, current AFA Commandant, Air Marshal S Shrinivas has been honoured with the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal for his exceptional services to the

Indian Air Force (IAF), a press release said. On Friday, President Droupadi Murmu conferred 94 Distinguished Service Decorations to the personnel of the Armed Forces and the Indian Coast Guard during the Defence Investiture Ceremony (Phase-2) at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi.

Poonam Saxena on Bridgerton, Regency romances and Georgette Heyer

Long before Julia Quinn and #Polin, there was Heyer. Look closely and you see signs of her impeccable research, down to the slang of the time, on screens today. Shonda Rhimes has always found surprising ways to tap into the mood of the moment. Currently, it is her Netflix series *Bridgerton* that has taken over timelines and watchlists. When Season 1 was released in 2020 and became a monster hit, there was some amount of head-scratching. In a universe of shows about dysfunctional families, serial killers, crime and horror, a costumed Regency romance series seemed an aberration. But here's the thing, dearest gentle reader.

Long before the *Bridgertons* arrived, a group of readers (a very, very large group) was already closely acquainted with the charm and appeal of Regency romances. British writer Georgette Heyer (1902-1974) had 51 novels in print when she died, with 50 million copies sold. Most were Regency romances. My friends and I, and indeed much of our generation, couldn't get enough of them in our growing-up years. I've read and re-read her books countless times. But it seems like few people buy her novels today. More's the pity... *Bridgerton* itself is based, of course, on the series of novels by American writer Julia Quinn, each dedicated to the life and loves of one of the family's eight children. Quinn credits Jane Austen and Heyer with basically inventing the Regency romance (not that we needed her to tell us this). This era stretched from about the 1790s to the 1830s, a period of wealth and strict social mores when the aristocracy flourished. The term itself is drawn from a short span, 1811 to 1820, during which George IV served as Prince Regent, stepping in for his ailing father, George III. Austen (1775-1817) remains a powerhouse, with a small industry seemingly dedicated to retelling her stories for the screen. The appeal of Heyer's work was different. She herself made self-deprecatory comments about her books. "I think... I ought to be shot for writing such nonsense. But it's unquestionably good escapist literature," she once said. At the same time, she disliked critics who wrote her off as just another insubstantial romance writer. Because her books were also defined by solid hard work. Her background research was impeccable. Her library contained histories of everything from costumes to coaches. She left behind scores of files with notes on women, business, banking and evolving social norms. Her homework included unearthing the delightful slang of the period. If you were being foolish, you were "making a cake of yourself". If something was popular, it was "all the crack". Every Regency romance writer since has borrowed heavily from the exhaustive research in her books. In her use of such details, she created an amusing and delectable world of the wealthy and titled who swanned about between their London and country homes. Her heroes were intriguing. There was Justin Alastair, Duke of Avon and hero of *These Old Shades* (1926), who was tall and sardonic, with thin lips and heavy-lidded eyes, and who invariably dressed in gold-laced coats, silk waistcoats and jew-



elled cravats. His nickname was Satan, because of his dissolute, wicked past. There was Freddy, hero of one of her funniest books (my personal favourite), *Cotillion* (1953). He was a not-very-bright man, always surrounded by a posse of droll, idle young men, but possessed of exquisite taste and a good, kind heart. Heyer's heroines were spirited and dashing (Sophia in *The Grand Sophy*, 1950), shy and timid (Hero in *Friday's Child*, 1944) or artless, charming ingenues (Horatia in *The Con-*

venient Marriage, 1934). In their polished Hessian boots and long-tailed coats, the men gambled in discreet clubs, went riding and racing, or escorted women to social engagements. The women spent an inordinate amount of time shopping and sighing over gauzy gowns and silver ribbons. Love blossomed in drawing rooms, at card parties and balls. The novels often had the most hilarious climaxes, featuring frantic carriage races, gunshots, and multiple characters tumbling into the same place,

often a remote inn or isolated manor. Through it all, Heyer's wit and humour stood out. You have to be careful reading one of her romances in public, for fear of emitting suppressed snorts of laughter from time to time. (In *These Old Shades*, the Duke of Avon asks his newly acquired page where he was born. The page says that it was not in Anjou, and the Duke responds languidly, "That is of course interesting. Spare me a list of the places where you were not born, I beg of you.")

Enjoy freshly brewed beer straight from tap at this new place in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Have you ever wondered what it would be like to enjoy a freshly brewed beer straight from the tap, just like in the good old days? Welcoming the taproom experience, Daily Rituals opens one of the first taprooms in Hyderabad at Jubilee Hills. A taproom serves alcoholic drinks, primarily beer from a tap, providing a unique and refreshing experience for beer enthusiasts. Daily Rituals, serves a variety of draught beers, making it a haven for those who appreciate quality brews. "A taproom is a place where draught beer of different kinds is served," explained Varun Reddy, the managing director of Daily Rituals. The place also features a quirky array of beverages, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. But, what sets it apart is its menu of staple Hyderabad dishes, blending the old-city charm with a modern, urban setting. "We can accommodate over 350 people! With three distinct levels, whether you're with family, friends, a partner, or just by yourself, there's a section that will make you feel right at home," Varun Reddy shared, and added, "We have a favourite spot



which is the solo tables overlooking the road, perfect for those deep thoughts that come naturally after enjoying our beers." Spanning an area of about 15,000 square feet, the taproom embodies the mantra 'Less is More'. The interior design focuses

on natural lighting, cosy spaces, and witty elements, all while preserving the area's natural flora and fauna. Architecturally, the design ensures that natural light reaches even the most underground levels, creating a bright and welcoming atmosphere."