

## Government Committed to the Upliftment of BCs: Minister Ponnam Prabhakar Goud



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 14, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“The new year calendar of the Gouds Welfare Association, Medchal-Malkajgiri, was released on Tuesday by BC Welfare and Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar Goud. Speaking on the occasion, the minister stated that the government is actively working for the overall development and welfare of Backward Classes. He extended Sankranti greetings to the people

of the state and reiterated the government’s commitment to inclusive growth and social justice. Association President Thalla Anand Goud, General Secretary Muthyam Mukesh Goud, Treasurer Budampalli Niranth Goud, Goud Association state leader Kasula Mahesh Goud, GOPA State Joint Secretary Battini Vinay Kumar Goud, along with Ramakrishna, Elgani Venkatesh Goud, Battula Ganesh Goud and other members were present at the event.

## Goda Rangamannar Kalyanotsavam Celebrated with Grandeur in Kushaiguda



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 14, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“As part of the Dhanurmasam religious observances, the Sri Goda Rangamannar Kalyanotsavam was celebrated with great devotion and grandeur on Wednesday at the Sri Padmavati Venkateswara Swamy Devasthanam in Kushaiguda. The

temple premises were adorned for the occasion as the utsava idols were ceremonially installed.

The divine wedding was conducted amid the chanting of Vedic hymns by the temple priests, creating a spiritually vibrant atmosphere that captivated the devotees. Priests Ramanacharyulu, Venugopalacharyulu, Narayanacharyulu, and Lakshmanacharyulu performed the rituals with Vedic recitations, while devotees witnessed the proceedings with deep devotion. The event was further enriched by traditional auspicious music, adding to the festive fervor. Following the Kalyanotsavam, annaprasadam was distributed to the devotees. The event was organized under the leadership of temple chairman Uppala Yadagiri Reddy and held under the supervision of Endowments Department Executive Officer Matam Veereshwar. Temple founder family member Palle Srikanth Reddy, along with temple staff members Ram Naresh, Mahender, and Srinivas, actively participated in the arrangements. “Several devotees, including Sappidi Srinivas Reddy, Panjala Srinivas Goud, Lakshminarayana, Bhashya Naik, Srikanth Reddy, Siddipet Srinivas, and Murali Panthulu, among others, attended the celebration.



# Ranganatha Swamy Kalyanam celebrated grandly in Venkatapuram



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 14):- The Kalyanam (wedding ceremony) of Sri Goda Ranganatha Swamy was celebrated with great pomp and splendor in Venkatapuram, Turkpally mandal, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. On this occasion,

Vedic scholars and Brahmins beautifully performed the wedding rituals of Lord Ranganatha Swamy with Vedic mantras and hymns. Venkatapuram village Sarpanch Karre Karunakar Madhavi, village ward members, villagers, youth from various villages in the mandal, Boyini Nagaraju, and a large number of devotees participated in this program.



“Uppal (Indian Chronicle Correspondent, January 14):- A scene of women drawing Bhogi and Sankranti rangoli designs in front of Arjun Heights in Uppal on Tuesday night. Later, on Wednesday morning, they lit the Bhogi bonfire. A scene of the residents of Arjun Heights apartment exchanging Sankranti greetings.





:"Uppal (Indian Chronicle Correspondent):- A scene of Uppal HMDA layout walkers lighting the Bhogi bonfire in Uppal. Present were Uppal Mahankali Temple Committee Chairman Telakala Mohan Reddy, Sai Baba Colony President Lekkala Anji Reddy, and other members of the walkers' group. On this occasion, the walkers' committee members extended their greetings for the Bhogi and Sankranthi festivals.

## It is delightful to see kites being flown in the government college grounds on the occasion of the Sankranthi festival:

- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District President Utkuri Ashok Goud



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 14):- Under the leadership of Bharatiya Janata Party town president Ratnapuram Balam, kites were flown in the government college grounds on the occasion of the Sankranthi and Bhogi festivals. On this occasion, District President Utkuri Ashok Goud said that he extends Sankranthi greetings to the people of the two Telugu states and also to the people of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. He said that people celebrate the Sankranthi festival with great joy as the crops cultivated by the farmers through their hard work reach their homes and the sun enters the Capricorn zodiac sign. On the first day, Bhogi, bonfires are lit in the streets, and rangoli and gobbemmas (cow dung figurines) are placed in front of every house. The second day is Makara Sankranthi, and the third day is Kanuma,



the festival of farmers, where cows are beautifully decorated and worshipped. He said that every festival celebrated in this country is intertwined with the country's epics and is a part of people's lifestyle, reflecting the worship of nature. Those who participated on this occasion included Narla Narsing Rao, Survi Srinivas Goud, District Vice Presidents Jainapally Sundar Reddy and Patnam Srinivas, District General Secretary Chanda Mahender Gupta, former Municipal Vice Chairman Maya Dasharath, Durgapatri Lakshminarayana, Mangu Narasimha Rao, Kolloju Satish, Town General Secretary Rallabandi Krishnachari, Ratnapuram Srisailam, Kolichelima Mallikarjun, Narala Ramesh, Kanukuntla Ramesh, Nuvvula Narasimha, Narala Raju, Yedagani Santosh, Raju Chary, Bandaru Lokesh, Kanukurthi Naveen, Patiraju, and others.

## Sankranthi celebrations at Nacharam Police Station

“Indian Chronicle OU January 14: On Wednesday, the women police celebrated the Sankranti festival at Nacharam Police Station by performing muggulu. CI Kothapalli Dhananjaya Goud performed special pujas. CI Dhananjaya Goud wished all the Telugu people a special Sankranti festival and wished them good health and happiness. SIs Venkatayya, Maibelli, Prabhakar Reddy, women constables Poorna Aruna Mounika Nagamani Ashwini and others participated in the program.





# Land dispute at William Moon High School, Tandur



“Vikarabad, Tandur (Indian Chronicle 14, Jan) “A land dispute has erupted over the William Moon High School premises in Tandur town, Vikarabad district. The Methodist Church claims that a portion of the land, approximately 2 acres 24 guntas, belongs to the missionary institution. They allege that someone is trying to encroach on the land and had warned them. “The church leaders, DS Kotrika Janardhan and DS K Mark, held a press conference and presented documents in court, which reportedly state that the 35 acres 18 guntas of land belongs to the missionary. The court has issued a “status quo” order, and the police have advised against any

further action until the court’s decision. “The police were informed, and they intervened to calm the situation. The church leaders urged people not to interfere with the land and to wait for the court’s decision. “Missionary doesn’t have any documents “ The missionary institution had sold 14 acres 20 guntas of land to P. Paul, out of 17 acres 4 guntas in Survey No. 62/A, Malreddy Palli, Tandur town. The court has ruled that the remaining 2 acres 24 guntas of land belongs to them, and the Collector has conducted an inquiry and issued a new passbook to them. The court has issued a status quo order in this regard.

## Vehicle Checks at Uppal Monday Market – Police Action Aimed at Public Safety“



“KISHORE VADDEPALLI, Uppal, January 14 (Indian Chronicle). “Police conducted extensive vehicle inspections at the Monday Market under the jurisdiction of the Uppal Police Station with the objective of ensuring road safety and safe travel for the public. The checks were carried out under the supervision of ACP S. Chakrapani and CI K. Bhaskar. “During the operation, SIs Chiranjeevi, Venkata Reddy, Vinay, along with other police personnel, inspected two-wheelers and four-wheelers. Special attention was given to verifying vehicle documents, helmet usage, and compliance with traffic rules. Vehicle riders who violated the rules were issued instructions and warnings. “The police advised the public to strictly follow traffic regulations, wear helmets, and carry valid vehicle documents at all times. They stated that the primary objective of these inspections was to prevent road accidents and ensure public safety.





# Sankranti Saree Distribution Held at Kushaiguda Police Station



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 14, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“As part of Sankranti celebrations, a saree distribution program was organized by the Lions Club of Bhagyanagar Green City at the Kushaiguda Police Station (Rangavalli). The event was held to encourage and

appreciate women police constables who emerged as winners in the rangoli (muggu) competitions conducted at the station. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Uppal Zone, Malkajgiri Police Commissionerate, N. Venkataramana, attended the program as the chief guest and distributed sarees to the winning women police constables.

The program was organized under the leadership of Lions Club President Lion Vadloju Jyothirmaya Chary. Speaking on the occasion, the organizers stated that such cultural activities help promote festive spirit and morale among police personnel. Kushaiguda Circle Inspector L. Bhaskar Reddy, Sub-Inspectors Sudhakar Reddy, Venkanna, and

Srinivas were present at the event. Lions Club members Mahankali Narasimha Chary and Nara Mohan Rao, along with police staff members Ranganna and Lakshman, also participated in the program. The event concluded with appreciation for the participants and a festive atmosphere marking the Sankranti celebrations.

## Free drinking water accommodation centers started under the auspices of JS Foundation



“K Sadanand “Husnabad “On January 14, for the convenience of the devotees in the precincts of the Kotakonda Sri Veerabhadra Swamy temple of Husnabad Constituency, Bhimdevvara Palli Mandal, BJP State Working Committee members JSR “Free drinking water centers were set up under the auspices of JS Foundation. “on wednesday “JSR Foundation Coordinator Kashireddy Narender Reddy under the direction of Veerabhadra Auto Union President Jatothu Kishan Nayak. “The ribbon was cut and started. “On this occasion, he said that it is for the convenience of water for the devotees who come to visit Veerabhadra Swamy “Here under the auspices of JS Foundation “He informed that drinking water centers have been set up. He asked the devotees to use free drinking water. “Arun, Siva, Bonagiri Anil, Elabaka Ramesh, Darawat Kishan, Uppala Ramana, MD Saidulu, Suryam, Kadasu Praveen, Venkata Swami Gulolothu, Raji Reddy and others participated in this program.



# Man Arrested for Selling Banned Chinese Manja in Kushaiguda



“NARRA SRINIVAS REDDY (NSR), Medchal - Malkajgiri Staff Reporter, January 14, (INDIAN CHRONICLE):“Kushaiguda Police arrested a man for selling banned Chinese manja (glass-coated/synthetic kite string) within the limits of Kushaiguda Police Station on January 12, 2026. Based on credible information, police conducted a search at a kite shop located beside the Sulabh Complex in Bhavani Nagar at around 6:00 pm. During the inspection, the accused was found selling Chinese manja, which is prohibited under Telangana government regulations. The arrested person was identified as M. Venkata Sai (32), son of Venkatesh, a businessman and resident of Gandhi Nagar, Kapra. Police seized the banned manja from his possession. During questioning, the accused admitted that he was selling Chinese manja despite knowing that its manufacture, storage, sale, and use are illegal. A case has been registered, and further investigation is underway. Background and Public Warning The Telangana government has imposed a complete ban on Chinese manja (glass or metal-coated synthetic kite string) since 2016 due to the serious threat it poses to human life, birds, animals, and the environment. Several incidents have been reported in which motorcyclists and children riding bicycles suffered severe neck injuries caused by hanging kite strings on roads. Under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, offenders may face imprisonment of up to five years, a fine of up to Rs.1 lakh, or both. Police Advisory Police have advised the public to: Use only soft cotton kite string for flying kites during the Sankranti festival Refrain from buying, selling, or using Chinese or glass-coated manja Immediately inform the police by dialing 100 or contacting the nearest police station if illegal sale of banned manja is noticed Police urged citizens to celebrate Sankranti safely and responsibly, ensuring the protection of human lives, birds, and animals.

## Let's turn Husnabad Ellamma pond into a tourism spot

### Minister Ponnam Prabhakar in Kite Festival



“K Sadanand “Husnabad, January 14, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar participated in the Kite Festival organized at Husnabad Ellamma Pond on Wednesday as part of the Sankranti celebrations and distributed kites. “On this occasion, he along with local leaders flew aerial maps. “After that, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said that he wished the people of Husnabad on Bhogi and Makar Sankranti festival. “Aspire to celebrate Sankranti festival with family members with colorful muggle gobbemmas. “He said that 40 countries participated in the

Kite and Sweet Festival at the Parade Ground in Hyderabad on Tuesday. Hundreds of kite players were present. “A stall of 1200 sweets and pastries has been set up. “He said that Husnabad Ellamma Pond will be converted into a tourism spot within the next year. “Kite and Sweet Festival is here for Sankranti “It has been made more grand. “Maha Samudra Gandhi, Sardar Papanna Guttalu, Bhairava Swamy Temple, Urban Park, Raikal Waterfalls, Ellamma Pond, Ellamma Temple, Potlapalli Rajarajeswara Swamy Temple, Kotakonda Sri Veerabhadraswamy Temple, Gauravelli Gandipalli Project.



# Israeli Supreme Court's historic verdict against Netanyahu's judicial overhaul law | Explained

The story so far: Israel's Supreme Court on January 1 struck down a law limiting its own powers — a momentous step that threatens to reopen the fissures in Israeli society that preceded the country's ongoing war against Hamas. The controversial legislation passed by Israeli lawmakers on July 24, 2023 prevents judges from striking down government decisions on the ground that they are 'unreasonable.' The Court's 8-7 ruling for the first time struck down an amendment to the country's quasi-constitutional "Basic Laws" by underscoring that it would deal a "severe and unprecedented blow to the core characteristics of the State of Israel as a democratic state." The revoked law was part of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's divisive judicial overhaul plan that sparked months of mass protests and triggered one of the deepest political upheavals in Israel's 75 years. Thousands of Israeli army reservists, who constitute the backbone of the military, also threatened to stop reporting for service as a mark of protest. However, they subsequently set aside the vow with the onset of war.

The decision, however, did not come as a total surprise — a draft of the ruling was leaked to the media during the last week of December. Reacting to the leak, Minister of Justice Yariv Levin claimed that the "citizens of Israel expect the Supreme Court not to publish during a war a ruling that is controversial even among its judges." Echoing similar sentiments, the speaker of the Knesset, Amir Ohana, added that "a time of war is certainly not the time to establish a first precedent of its kind in the history of the country." The timing of the verdict was also crucial as a delay of a few weeks might have produced a different outcome. The recent retirement of two justices, Chief Justice Esther Hayut and Justice Justice Anat Baron, imposed a deadline of mid-January to pronounce the ruling, after which they would have been ineligible to participate in it. "It's a small and fragile majority. Two of those justices are no longer presiding in the court — and today's court would likely have a majority take the opposite view," law professor Yedidia Z. Stern, who was involved in talks to broker a compromise on the judicial overhaul, told a news portal. The 'reasonableness' doctrine in the absence of a written constitution, the country's Basic Laws serve as an informal constitution, governing core constitutional ethos such as the creation and role of state institutions, relations between state authorities, and the protection of some civil rights.

The power to review the legality or 'reasonability' of laws is analogous to the power of judicial review vested with Indian courts. There is no law defining judicial review powers; the grounds for judicial intervention in administrative affairs have been promulgated through court rulings. One such legal standard is the 'reasonableness doctrine' or the standard of extreme unreasonableness, derived from the Wednesbury unreasonableness principle in English common law. A decision is deemed unreasonable if a court rules that it was made without considering all relevant factors or without giving relevant

weight to each factor, or by giving irrelevant factors too much weight— even if they do not violate any particular law or contradict other administrative rulings. Notably, the judiciary cannot revoke government decisions simply because they disagree with them. Under the doctrine, such revocation is permissible only in cases in which the balance between the various considerations that were made is unreasonable to an extreme. Explained | What is the 'reasonableness' doctrine at the heart of Israel's judicial overhaul? In January last year, the Supreme Court invoked this doctrine and ordered Prime Minister Netanyahu to dismiss his key ally, Shas leader Aryeh Deri from his cabinet, on the grounds that his recent criminal conviction for tax offenses, and a resultant suspended jail sentence which was yet to expire, made his appointment 'unreasonable in the extreme.' This prompted the government to set in motion a plan to limit judicial review over executive actions. What does the verdict say? In a majority ruling (supported by twelve of the fifteen justices), the Court held that it has the power to judicially review Basic Laws and interfere in exceptional cases where the Knesset exceeds its constituent powers. In addition, eight of the justices struck down the amendment to the Basic Law: The Judiciary through which the Knesset proposed to revoke judicial review of the reasonableness of executive decisions. The seven dissenting judges, however, saw overreach in the decision, saying that the doctrine of reasonableness "undermines basic democratic principles including the separation of powers." The majority, led by departing Chief Justice Esther Hayut, underscored that the reasonableness standard was a crucial tool to protect against arbitrary government overreach, particularly in Israel, which lacks a formal constitution. She underscored that the newly enacted law "does the most severe harm possible to the principle of the separation of powers and the principle of the rule of law," which constitutes "a severe blow to two of the most explicit characteristics of Israel as a democratic state."

While cautioning about the extreme ease with which a Basic Law can be amended (with a simple majority in the Knesset), the Chief Justice asserted that judicial review is critical in "defending the individual and the public interest." "In rare cases in which the beating heart of the Israeli form of constitution is harmed, this court is authorized to declare the invalidation of a Basic Law that has in some way exceeded the Knesset's authority." Chief Justice Esther Hayut Revoking the doctrine "harms several cornerstones of jurisprudence and democracy: the rule of law, the right of due process, the separation of powers," said Justice Amit Yitzhak Amit, another member of the court's liberal wing. He pointed out that "given the heavy democratic deficit in Israel," such a revocation has much "greater weight here than in other countries."

Although Justice Alex Stein, a conservative judge, concurred with the majority that the Court had the right to curb the unbridled powers of the Knesset to pass Basic Laws, he emphasised that it was not



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obligated to strike down the impugned law. He added that revocation of the doctrine "violates no constitutional norm." In an opinion for the minority, Justice David Mintz underscored that judicial review of even regular legislation was "not based on strong foundations" and as such there was "for sure no authority allowing for the court to deliberate on the validity of a Basic Law" or to strike one down. "Annuling a Basic Law based on an amorphous doctrine and an undefined formula carries a heavy price from a democratic point of view, certainly when it comes to an issue about which the Court itself is in an 'institutional conflict of interest,'" he wrote. Justice Yael Wilner observed that the doctrine of "existing interpretation" should be used to interpret the law more narrowly and allow for review only in cases where an administrative decision is extremely unreasonable. Pointing out that there exist alternative grounds for judicial review such as proportionality, arbitrariness, and discrimination, she asserted that the amendment "does not seriously harm the democratic identity of the State of Israel." How have Israeli politicians reacted to the ruling?

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party said that the Supreme Court's decision was "in opposition to the nation's desire for unity, especially in a time of war." They slammed the judges for ruling on the issue when Israeli soldiers are "fighting and endangering themselves in battle." Israel's justice minister and architect of the law Yariv Levin accused the judges of "taking into their hands all the authorities that are supposed to be divided between the three branches of government in a democracy." He added that the ruling was "the opposite of the spirit of unity required these days for the success of our fighters on the front." However, opposition leader Yair Lapid welcomed the verdict and said on social media platform X that the apex court had "faithfully fulfilled its role in protecting the citizens of Israel." "If the Israeli government again starts the quarrel over the Supreme Court then they have learned nothing," he said. "They didn't learn anything on October 7, they didn't learn

anything from 87 days of war for our home." Benny Gantz, a member of Israel's war cabinet, said that the Court's decision "must be respected" and political disputes postponed until after the war. Although initially opposed to the overhaul, he subsequently joined an emergency wartime unity government with Mr. Netanyahu. Shikma Bressler, one of the organisers involved in last year's large-scale protests against the law also hailed the Court's ruling, saying in a video statement that the top Court had for the moment removed "the sword of dictatorship from around our necks." Editorial | Blow to Netanyahu: On Israeli Supreme Court's verdict and limiting the judiciary's powers

What happens next? Prime Minister Netanyahu has so far not issued any personal response to the ruling and had repeatedly refused to state whether he would respect the Court's decision when asked in the months leading up to the pronouncement. Justice Minister Yariv Levin, however, said that the ruling would not "stay our hand," indicating a potential standoff between the right-wing government and the judiciary. However, considering the ongoing war with Hamas and the need to maintain national unity, any immediate countermove against the decision seems unlikely. Across the Israeli political divide, both proponents and opponents of Mr. Netanyahu's judicial overhaul plan have stressed the need to avoid any domestic turmoil. In normal times, the decision may have led to a constitutional crisis or worse. "If we didn't have the (Hamas) war, we would have had an internal war and we've avoided that," Reuven Hazan, professor of political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, told CNN. "But this precedential verdict also raises another and no less critical aspect: the importance, after the war, of reinforcing the constitutional rules of the game, placing checks and balances on political power, and better defining the relations between the branches of the state," wrote Suzie Navot, an expert in constitutional law and vice president of the Israel Democracy Institute, an independent research group.



# What is Humboldt's enigma and what does it mean for India? | Explained

Explorers and naturalists have been asking this question for centuries. Many have also been curious why some areas are more biodiverse than others. One of them was Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) – a polymath who recorded observations on various natural phenomena across the fields known today as geography, geology, meteorology, and biology. Once, when exploring South America, he recorded the distribution of plants on a mountain. He also noted how climates were similar across various mountains in different parts of the world – but where specific features occurred on a mountain varied with elevation. From his various studies, Humboldt suggested there was a relationship between temperature, altitude, and humidity on one hand and the occurrence patterns of species – or their biodiversity – on the other. His example of choice was the Chimborazo mountain in Ecuador, which has today become an important illustration of mountain diversity. Two centuries later, a group of biogeographers – scientists who explore the relationship of diversity with geography – used modern tools to take another look at the drivers of biodiversity. Based on their findings, they proposed their own version of the link between biodiversity and mountains and called it Humboldt's enigma.

## What is Humboldt's enigma?

The world's tropical areas receive more energy from the Sun because of the earth's angle of inclination. So the tropics have greater primary productivity, which then facilitates greater diversity: more ecological niches become available, creating more complex ecosystems and greater biological diversity. The proponents of Humboldt's enigma have held that the earth's tropical areas by themselves don't contain all the biodiverse regions, that many areas outside the tropics are highly biodiverse. These places are mountains. Indeed, while we expect diversity to decrease away from the tropics, mountains have been an important exception. This is the essence of Humboldt's enigma. But scientific evidence has been hard to acquire, requiring the use of complex analytical methods and large datasets of various taxonomic groups – and even then remains an incomplete exercise. A simple way to think of Humboldt's enigma in India is to consider the biodiversity in our tropical areas, south of the Tropic of Cancer passing through Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. These areas are supposed to be the most diverse in the country. The Western Ghats plus Sri Lanka biodiversity hotspot lies in this zone. However, the eastern Himalaya are much more diverse. Some scientists have even suggested this part of the mountain range is the second-most diverse area of perching birds in the world. For river birds, the eastern Himalaya may be the most diverse. To understand how this might be possible, let's turn to the modern understanding of Humboldt's enigma.

## What drives biodiversity?

The history of the earth, its geography, and the climate are the main drivers of mountain diversity. And different

biodiversity at different locations is the result of changes in how these factors have intermingled over time and space. We know mountains host two processes that generate biodiversity. First: geological processes, like uplifts, result in new habitats where new species arise, so the habitats are 'cradles'. Second: species on some climatologically stable mountains persist there for a long time, so these spots are 'museums' that accumulate many such species over time. Coastal tropical sky islands (mountains surrounded by lowlands), like the Shola Sky Islands in the Western Ghats, are a good example. Here, old lineages have persisted on the mountain tops as climates and habitats fluctuated around them in the lower elevations. This is the reason some of the oldest bird species in the Western Ghats, such as the Sholicola and the Montecincla, are housed on the Shola Sky Islands. Sometimes, the same mountain can be both cradle for some species and museum for others, depending on the species' ecologies. The northern Andes range – including Chimborazo – is considered the most biodiverse place in the world. If we start from the foothills of the Andes and climb, we're going to encounter different temperatures and rainfall levels that support everything from tropical evergreen biomes in the lower elevation to the alpine and tundra biomes near the top. Such a large variation over short distances supports the immense biodiversity found in mountain regions – and worldwide. Another critical force in biodiversity formation is geology. The foundations on which mountains are erected often differ from those on which low-elevation regions rest. Scientists have found that the more heterogeneous the geological composition of mountains is, the more biodiverse they are. Around the world, all mountains with high biodiversity have high geological heterogeneity as well, especially in the tropics. Even in tropical regions, where we expect higher biodiversity, some mountains with a lower variety of rocks are relatively less biodiverse. We also know plants are influenced by the type of soil, which depends on the type of rocks in that area. So high geological heterogeneity often produces unique habitat patches on mountains within similar climate regimes, and promotes diversification.

Against this backdrop, what drives biodiversity in the eastern Himalaya? Climate dissimilarity is still one crucial factor, something Humboldt also indicated based on his observations of the Chimborazo and understood to be a paradigm. Researchers have also found some groups of birds to have evolved elsewhere and dispersed to the Himalaya, resulting in higher diversity there.

## What do we still not know?

Multiple factors drive diversification and the Humboldt's enigma in different parts of the world. Then again, scientists have also advanced more than a hundred different hypotheses on how diversity varies in different parts of the world, and they contend with the enigma in different ways. This article simply presents the big picture. An important limitation of scientists'



attempts to explain biodiversity patterns is the lack of fine data on where species occur. For now, birds are the best-described group around the world, and their diversity patterns suggest mountains play a defining role. We need more research. In India in particular, several areas are understudied. We can't expect to understand a place's true biodiversity unless we also use modern tools like genetics. For example, why don't the Eastern Ghats have any endemic passerine birds? The most likely answer is that scientists haven't studied them for more than a century, especially with modern tools. Some national programmes are trying to address these

gaps, including the National Mission on Himalayan Studies, the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, and the National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Wellbeing. They need to be strengthened, bolstered by the will to support basic research on diversity. Humboldt's enigma is perhaps one of many puzzles of mountain biodiversity – and our backyards are excellent places to study them, to find answers to global problems of climate and landscape change. V.V. Robin is an associate professor studying bird ecology using genetics and bioacoustics, and Naman Goyal is a PhD student working on the diversification patterns of birds – both at IISER Tirupati.

## Valve's new guidelines mandates AI Transparency for Steam games

Valve has unveiled new regulations governing the publication of AI-infused games on its 'Steam' platform. The company, in a recent blog post, outlined the changes aimed at bolstering transparency and safeguarding users against potential risks associated with AI-generated content. Developers are now required to disclose whether their games use AI, specifically pinpointing instances where pre-generated content, such as art, code, or sound, is created with AI assistance.

The disclosure extends to live AI-generated content during gameplay, prompting developers to detail safety measures preventing the creation of illegal or infringing material. Valve's move is a response to complaints from developers who faced rejections due to AI-generated assets allegedly relying on copyrighted material. The company emphasized its commitment to not impede AI integration but rather to align its review policies with evolving copyright laws. To enhance user awareness, Steam store pages will now indicate if a game contains AI, allowing consumers to make informed choices. Additionally, users can report any encounters with illegal AI-generated content within the



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game. While some developers champion AI for its utility in testing, concepting, and cost-efficient game development, concerns persist within the industry about its potential to replace human creatives. Valve's blog post implies an adaptive approach, acknowledging the evolving landscape of AI technology and legal frameworks, signaling a commitment to revisiting these rules as needed.