

## Forts, quarries, crocodile sanctuary become wedding shoot hotspots in Mancherial

Mancherial: Gone are the days where brides and grooms got their wedding photographs clicked at home and the wedding venue. From forts to abandoned quarries, and even a crocodile sanctuary, are among the newest wedding photo-shoot hotspots in Mancherial now.

The historic Gandhari Khilla at Bokkalagutta village in Mandamarri mandal, abandoned limestone quarry of Mancherial Cement Company near Gadpur village in Hajipur mandal, the downstream of Sripada Sagar Yellampalli irrigation project at Gudipet in Hajipur mandal, the Nandanavanam children's park in Naspur, a crocodile wildlife sanctuary at Sivvaram in Jaipur mandal and forests on the peripherals of Kawal Tiger Reserve in Jannaram mandal have become sought after destinations for pre-wedding photography shoots. "Of late, brides and grooms are showing interests in visiting scenic tourist spots, ancient forts, forests, parks, river-

beds and streams and some prominent holidaying spots such as Ooty, Kodaikanal as well for their pre-wedding photo-shoots and songs by spending huge amounts," Javaji Kumara Swamy, an outdoor photographer from Mancherial told 'Telangana Today'.

Neelakantha and Harika, a would-be couple from Utnoor mandal centre said they chose Gandhari Khilla for their pre-wedding photo-shoot after learning about the beauty of the spot through friends. They spent a day clicking photographs and filming songs at a tank abutting the historical spot. The bride and groom are charged somewhere between Rs.30,000 and Rs.50,000 for the pre-wedding photo-shoots, which involves transportation of photography equipment, assistants and make-up personnel. The cost of photography for shooting the entire wedding is anywhere between Rs.1 lakh and Rs.6 lakh, depending on quality of output and equip-



ment such as cameras, cranes, screens and trolleys. Meanwhile, swanky studios meant for pre-wedding photo-shoots have

been set up in Luxettipet and Dandepalli mandals. The studios are charging rents on a daily basis.

## Lakhs of families miss subsidized LPG failing to give accurate information



Hyderabad: Failure to furnish accurate and adequate information has turned out to be a barrier preventing many households from accessing to the benefit of LPG refill at a subsidised price of Rs 500 provided by the State, according to officials tasked with monitoring of the scheme

implementation. The provision of LPG refills on subsidy under the Mahalaxmi scheme, is one of the six guarantees of the Congress party and much importance has been attached to it.

The Civil Supplies Corporations has planned to reach out to some 65 lakh ben-

eficiaries initially, as against 89 lakh white ration card holders expected to merit consideration for benefit. Many of the applicants could not provide the required documents like copies of the Aadhar card and ration card, while submitting Praja Palana forms. Adequate arrangements were made for receiving the forms from the applicants at the gram panchayats and in municipal wards before January 6, 2024.

More lapses were observed even during the verification process. Many applicants missed the opportunity for failing to provide even their own phone numbers or mobile numbers besides important information while filling out the six sections of the Praja Palana forms. In some cases, the department could retrieve information pertaining to the applicants from alternate

sources. But they proved helpless, in the case of those who gave eight digit mobile numbers.

Approvals were given promptly in the case of all the genuine applications upon successful verification of the application forms. In the case of those who failed to provide accurate information, the government is yet to take a decision. The government has to review such issues, as the initiative is aimed at making clean cooking gas more accessible and affordable for BPL families while empowering women. Even though the government was keen on reviewing the Praja Palana exercise to give an opportunity to the families that did not figure in the final list, it did not happen as the code of conduct for the MLC polls came into force, they stressed.

## ACB arrests TSRTC Huzurabad depot manager

Karimnagar: The ACB on Monday nabbed TSRTC Huzurabad depot manager Srikanth allegedly while accepting a bribe of Rs.20,000 from a driver in Elkathurthy mandal. According to the ACB, a native of Dandepally of Elkathurthy mandal, Ravinder was working as a driver in Huzurabad depot and was recently issued a charge memo. Ravinder approached depot manager Srikanth and requested to assign him duties by removing the charge memo. However, the DM allegedly demanded the bribe to remove the charge memo. Unable to pay the bribe, Ravinder approached the ACB, who laid a trap and nabbed Srikanth while he was accepting Rs.20,000 from Ravinder in a hotel at Elkathurthy.



# India can learn from Japan's 'womenomics' reforms

Even as Japan was grappling with falling fertility rates, a declining population, and stagnant growth, a series of reforms on "womenomics" were introduced as part of the "Abenomics" era. And today, they are showing results. Women's labour force participation rate (WLFPR) in Japan has grown by ten percentage points, from 64.9 per cent in 2013 to 75.2 per cent in 2023. This is not only the fastest growth in Japan's WLFPR in the past few decades, but also the highest amongst the G7 countries in the last decade. Notably, the largest increase in WLFPR is in the 30-34, and 35-39 years age groups — signalling the return of mothers to the workforce. Moreover, adding roughly three million women to its workforce is helping Japan bridge labour shortages. Estimates suggest this increase in WLFPR could have increased Japan's GDP per capita by between 4 per cent to 8 per cent. It's no surprise that a majority of the "womenomics" reforms have been linked to investments in the care economy and rebalancing gender norms.

The Japanese government's investment to expand daycare capacity from 2.2 million in 2012 to 2.8 million in 2018 has reduced daycare waiting lists that would often run into years. In 2023, the government of Japan announced a further boost in investment of \$26 billion for childcare measures between 2023 and 2026. Japanese parents had been entitled to year-long partially paid parental leaves — with women receiving 58 weeks, and men 52 weeks. In 2022, greater flexibility in paternity leave provisions was introduced, reducing notice periods, and allowing men to break up their paternity leave. Moreover, making disclosures of paternity leave uptake mandatory, introducing flexible work, and encouraging companies to demonstrate that taking paternity leave would not hamper career progression have helped in boosting paternity leave uptake from 2 per cent in 2012, to 17 per cent in 2023.

In 2016, Japan's Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace made disclosures of diversity action plans and diversity data mandatory. This led to the introduction of the "Eruboshi" certification, a five-star system recognising companies committed to workforce diversity. The certification has become aspirational among Japanese firms today, with the number of companies receiving the Eruboshi certificate growing from 815 in 2019, to 1905 in 2022.

What India can learn from Japan India and Japan share several cultural similarities — one that stands out relates to the social norms surrounding domestic work. Among the G20 countries, India and Japan have the widest gender gaps in unpaid care with women performing about 8.4 times the amount of unpaid work in India, notionally valued at 15 per cent to 17 per cent of GDP, and 5.5 times in Japan, similarly valued at about a fifth of GDP. As India embarks on a path towards women-led development, a few clear lessons emerge from Japan's experience in enhancing WLFPR to push the country's

GDP. First, interventions for bridging the gender gaps in domestic and care work have a significant impact on WLFPR. Japan saw its highest gains in WLFPR when it committed to long-term public investments in care infrastructure and services, especially childcare. Second, changing people's mindsets around social norms is as important as formulating progressive regulations. As is evident from the Japanese experience, legal entitlement to gender-neutral parental leave is not sufficient. Enhancing uptake among men requires an employer-led approach that dispels gender stereotypes around care work. Third, it is essential to invest in a wide range of care infrastructure and services solutions — covering not only childcare, but also elder care, domestic work, and long-term care for highly dependent adults to reduce dependency and access the silver economy. For instance, Japan has leveraged some private sector partnerships for investments in affordable senior living and care services. As the share of elderly persons in India's population is expected to rise from 10 per cent currently to 20 per cent by 2050, India, too will need to prioritise elder care infrastructure and service investments. Suggested policy changes Taking these lessons from Japan, and after an in-depth analysis of over 100 international best practices from around the G20 countries as well as notable domestic practices in India, our team, alongside the Confederation of Indian Industry, and Karmanya Counsel — with the support of the Ministry of Women and Child Development — has formulated a five-pillar strategy to unlock business opportunities in India's care economy, with a focus on the



following: Gender neutral and paternity leave policies; subsidies for availing/providing care services; enhancing investments from both the public and private sector in care infrastructure and services; skill training for care workers; and quality assurance for care services and infrastructure. After nearly declining con-

tinuously for five decades, India's WLFPR has begun showing a rising trend, increasing from 23 per cent in 2017-18 to 37 per cent in 2022-23. To keep this momentum going, we will require a continued long-term focus on the care economy for unleashing #NariShakti to achieve a Viksit Bharat @2047.

## How to translate PDFs using Google Translate on mobile and desktop



Google Translate, one of the most popular tools on the internet that supports 133 languages lets you quickly translate text, phrases and entire websites. But did

you know it can also translate PDFs? While many apps and services can help you do the same, Google's translation service doesn't require installation and works even

if you don't have a Google account. The service works flawlessly on a large screen, but if you are using a small-screen device like a smartphone will have to switch to the desktop version of the website. On Chrome, you can quickly switch to the desktop website by tapping the vertical three dots on the top right and selecting the 'Desktop site' option. Google Translate PDF You will have to zoom in and out a bit to use Google Translate to translate PDFs on mobile. (Express Photo)

How to quickly translate PDFs using Google Translate If you want to translate a PDF from one language to another on the go, here's how to do it. 1. Open your favourite web browser and head over to 'translate.google.com'.

2. From the top bar, tap on the 'Documents' button and on the screen that appears, you can either drag and drop the file you want to translate or search for it using the file picker.



# Canon India Redefines Broadcast Excellence with Flagship 4K Remote PTZ Camera Controller & 4K Indoor Remote PTZ Camera CR-N100

Canon India, a leading company in digital imaging solutions, further solidifies its market leadership in India's video production and broadcasting sector by introducing two advanced products, RC-IP1000 and CR-N100 in India. The RC-IP1000 is a top-of-the-line remote camera system controller for remote video production workflows to meet the needs of broadcast stations and event livestreaming. Whereas the CR-N100 is an indoor remote PTZ camera featuring a compact body and pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) catering to India's rising need for advanced streaming and video recording technology in spaces like meeting rooms and classrooms.

Commenting on the newest additions to the brand's portfolio, Mr. Manabu Yamazaki, President and CEO, Canon India, said, "As the volume of video content continues to rise in India, the RC-IP1000 remote controller has been much awaited by the industry as it exemplifies seamless control of remote PTZ cameras and contributes to efficient labor-saving workflows. In fact, the remote controller can easily manage as many as 200 individual camera units at one time. Complementing this, our CR-N100 indoor remote PTZ camera promises superior quality and connectivity, tailored to the diverse needs of educational institutions, corporate settings, and coaching centers. Through such cutting-edge offerings, we strive to redefine remote production, making it more intuitive and accessible than ever before."

**RC-IP1000 Remote Camera Controller: Enhance Ease-of-use for Remote Production Workflows** The RC-IP1000 is a dedicated controller that provides many functions and easy operation required by remote video production workflows, which will meet the needs of content producers at various work environments including video production at broadcast stations and event livestreaming. The Multi-Camera Management Application enables users to batch-configure initial camera settings as well as manage cameras, making it ideal for events that require multi-camera controllers, such as livestreaming of university lectures and live broadcasting of concerts.

Designed for ease-of-use, the RC-IP1000 features strategically positioned functional buttons and dials, along with a prominent 17.78 cm touch panel, facilitating simple operation. The device supports both IP2 and serial control, enabling remote Pan, Tilt, and Zoom (PTZ) movements. Users can effortlessly configure settings such as focus, exposure, and white balance. Moreover, the RC-IP1000 is compatible with popular broadcast industry standards, offering 12G-SDI input/output for 4K/60P, as well as visual input via IP and HDMI video output. Its touch panel can display feeds from up to nine video inputs sent from cameras via IP, allowing for simultaneous operation of multiple camera units. Additionally, it seamlessly integrates with selected Canon camera models, enabling control of large-scale systems. With the Multi-Camera Management Application, up to 200 individual camera units can be managed, depending on users' needs. Conventionally, the registration of usernames, passwords and IP addresses



to a camera, and registration of a camera to the controller had to be executed individually for each of the multiple cameras used. With this app, however, these proce-

dures can be executed from a single application system, thus enabling initial configuration of large-scale systems with minimal workload. In addition, the status of all con-

nected cameras can be viewed in a convenient list that enables easier execution of operations such as updating firmware, restarting and initialization.

## Addressing India's malnutrition landscape

Malnutrition is a significant contributor to the disease burden in India. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have an ambitious target of eradicating malnutrition by 2030, prompting the World Health Organisation (WHO) to designate 2016–2025 as the decade of nutrition. Despite strides made in reducing undernutrition indicators through national nutrition programmes, progress in India has been sluggish. A study by the Indian Institute of Public Health (IIPH) Hyderabad examined undernutrition across the nation and evaluated the distribution of nutritional indicators among children under three at the state level, utilising data from the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS).

This study published in the *Clinical Epidemiology and Global Health* journal centred on children below the ages of three and explored the prevalence and trajectory of undernutrition indicators across India, both nationally and at the state level. The analysis aimed to assess changes over a decade to understand the extent of the issue. Undernutrition can lead to vision impairment, weakened bones, protein deficiency, and gastrointestinal ailments in children. "We firmly grasped the importance of comprehending the epidemiology of the condition before advocating for policy changes or interventions. It's crucial to know who is affected, their locations, and how these factors evolve over time. Armed with this comprehensive understanding, we can aptly tailor existing policies and implement precise nutritional interventions," said

Sirshendu Chaudhari, Yashaswini Kumar, AY Nirupama, and Varun Agiwal, authors of the study.

Education and gender Comparing data from NFHS-1 (1992–93) to NFHS-5 (2019–20), the study found that while the prevalence of wasting (low weight for height) increased marginally from 19.9% to 20.5%, stunting (impaired growth) and the incidence of underweight decreased from 51.9% and 34.1% to 45.8% and 29.4%, respectively. Wasting exhibited a slight increase of 0.21%. The study identified significant factors affecting children's nutritional status, including maternal education and the child's gender. According to the study, all states and union territories mirrored the national trend of decreasing rates of stunting and underweight among children, though no consistent trend was observed for wasting prevalence.

In the NFHS-1 survey, stunting prevalence ranged from 33.2% (lowest) in Nagaland to 63.8% (highest) in Bihar. By NFHS-5, this range decreased from 23.1% (lowest) in Manipur to 41.6% (highest) in Meghalaya. Similarly, underweight prevalence in NFHS-1 varied from 19.7% in Mizoram to 60.2% in Bihar, but in NFHS-5, it ranged from the lowest of 11.6% in Manipur to the highest of 39.7% in Bihar. In NFHS-1, wasting prevalence spanned from 4.5% in Mizoram to 26.8% in Rajasthan. However, in the 2019–2021 survey, these figures shifted, with the lowest wasting prevalence at 11.4% in Punjab and the highest at 27.7% in Maharashtra.

In Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand, stunting, underweight, and wasting rates have consistently decreased over time.

Children in urban areas face an increased risk of stunting, underweight, and wasting over the years, although the statistical significance has remained relatively stable. Male children exhibited a higher likelihood of experiencing stunting, being underweight, and wasting compared to their female counterparts, although this trend did not consistently emerge across all NFHS surveys. Maternal education emerged as a highly significant factor influencing children's susceptibility to undernutrition. Children whose mothers had either no education or only primary education were at double the risk, while those with mothers having secondary education faced a 1.5 times higher risk of developing stunting and being underweight, although this risk decreased from NFHS-1 to NFHS-5. The findings of this study highlight the evolving trends in various malnutrition indicators, providing valuable insights into the necessary action to be taken at the State level and their correlation with socio-demographic factors. While all states have generally followed the national trend of decline in stunting and undernutrition, there hasn't been a consistent pattern observed in the prevalence of wasting. On a national scale, the decadal change rate indicates a decrease in the prevalence of stunting and underweight by 6.36% and 5.86%, respectively,



# BJP can't be trusted, its manifesto is just a pack of lies: Mallikarjun Kharge

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge called the ruling Bharatiya Janata party's (BJP) manifesto as the "biggest jumla [platitude]" and dismissed it as "just empty jugglery of words". In an exclusive interview with The Hindu, he questioned the Narendra Modi-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government's failure to address vital issues and deliver on previous poll promises. Excerpts.

What is your opinion on BJP's manifesto for the Lok Sabha election?

It's the biggest jumla and just a pack of lies. Mr. Modi's guarantee is a 'warranty of jumlas' as he has failed to fulfil his past promises. They didn't fulfil previous commitments, so who will trust them now? Those who resort to empty promises cannot fight a big war for the country, be it financial, social or educational. He (Mr. Modi) did not do any major work during his tenure that could have benefitted the people of the country. The prices of food items have skyrocketed and youngsters are demanding jobs, but their manifesto has nothing on these issues. The government failed to deliver on promises such as providing two crore jobs annually, doubling the income of farmers, ensuring Cost plus 50% on Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farmers, and depositing ₹15 lakh in each bank account. What is the Congress's stance on alleged discrimination against SC, ST and OBC students at the country's premier institutions like IIT and IIM, and how do you plan to fix it at institutional levels?

We are fighting this issue in Parliament, particularly since the tragic death of Rohit Vemula (a doctoral student at the University of Hyderabad) in January 2016. Discrimination of any kind is unacceptable. It is disheartening that even a single generation didn't get a chance to pass (out of top institutions). Instead of promoting them, they are being discriminated. We are committed to devising specific solutions to prevent such incidents. Even (Congress leader) Rahul Gandhi has been vocal about this government's exclusion of SC, ST and OBC communities from positions of power, both in government and the private sector. Mr. Gandhi has been advocating for diversification in the private sector. What is your party's stance on reservation in the private sector? We firmly believe in the necessity of reservations in the private sector and that we are going to fight. This requires either an amendment or the formulation of a separate Act.

How does your party view sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes?

The matter is currently pending with the Supreme Court. We will abide by the court's decision and we will explore alternative avenues if necessary.

The Bharat Jodo Naya Yatra concluded in Maharashtra. Do you believe this will positively impact the upcoming election?

Undoubtedly. When a leader (Mr. Gandhi) undertakes a padayatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, engaging with crores of people, including Dalits, Adivasis, and youth, and listening to their concerns, it certainly leaves an impact. Mr. Gandhi

started Nyay Yatra from Manipur, a region overlooked by Mr. Modi. That is the courage he has and it will yield favourable results for us.

Could key figures like Maharashtra's former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan, Baba Siddique and Milind Deora leaving the Congress affect it negatively?

Our Maharashtra leadership, including Congress Legislature Party leader Balasaheb Thorat and Pradesh Congress Committee chief Nana Patole, are best suited to address the potential impact of these departures. Even on the impact of Prakash Ambedkar contesting separately, they are best to answer, as I'm not aware of which pockets he (Mr. Ambedkar) has the influence and how it would impact the party.

It appears that there is internal discord within the Congress regarding seat-sharing arrangements with the allies, particularly with the Shiv Sena (UBT). Do you believe that your State leadership has failed to address these concerns, especially with Sangli and certain seats in Mumbai?

Whosoever is dissatisfied with the seat-sharing arrangement comes and discusses it with us. However, maintaining unity sometimes requires making sacrifices.



Our priority is to preserve the alliance and defeat Mr. Modi. Our main goals are to safeguard the Constitution and democracy and to remove those who threaten these institutions. Yes, I agree that there is some disappointment among a few leaders concerned about grassroots support, but those issues could be resolved. Unfortunately, in the previous election, the Congress se-

cured only one seat. In toto, we have decided to give more seats to Uddhav Thackeray, given their larger number of sitting MPs. Adjustments were made in seat distribution, but it does not mean they have taken the lion's share while we have conceded. We sacrificed one or two seats in the interest of unity, which does not indicate weakness on our part.

## Nurses should update their technological skills for better patient care: expert



Nurses should keep abreast of the technological advancements through continuous education and training to ensure compassionate patient-centred care, said Deborah Hatcher, Dean, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Western Sydney University, Australia, on April 9. Speaking after inaugurating the graduation day of the College of Nursing at CMC campus here, Ms. Hatcher said that technology is crucial

for the successful integration of skills and resources for health care. Educational opportunities should expand and incorporate models of best practice to enhance working conditions and empower nurses to deliver optimal care. "Nurses must adapt to and navigate complex systems while ensuring that they do not lose sight of compassionate patient-centred care," she said. Nurses are in great demand due to popu-

lation growth, ageing population and advancements in medical technology. "The rising need for specialised nursing knowledge and skills to address the complexities of modern healthcare has made acquiring knowledge and skills for nursing a prerequisite," she said. Ms. Hatcher said that in the post-COVID era, focus to prioritise wellbeing has been shifted to promoting self-care,



# Analysis | By attacking Israel, Iran turns shadow war into direct conflict

Iran launched a wave of drone and missile attack on Israel on Sunday night in retaliation against the April 1 air strike on the Iranian embassy compound in Damascus in which a senior IRGC commander was killed. Israel claimed that 99% of Iranian drones and missiles were intercepted mid air. The U.S., which helped the Israeli air defence, lauded the 'remarkable Israeli defence' and reiterated America's 'iron-clad' security commitments to Israel. Iran says the matter is concluded for now, but vowed to strike back with greater force if Israel retaliates. While the situation remains highly volatile, there are at least three takeaways from the biggest crisis that's unfolding in West Asia since the American invasion of Iraq in 2003.

One, U.S. President Joe Biden's policy of containing the West Asian crisis doesn't seem to be working. Since the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack in Israel, Mr. Biden had adopted a policy of offering carte blanche support to Israel's military operations in the region, while at the same time trying, diplomatically, to prevent Israel's actions leading to a regional war. Israel showered fire and fury on Gaza, levelling buildings across the strip, displacing over 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million population and killing at least 33,000 Palestinians, a vast majority of them women and children. But Israel's military operation did not limit to Gaza. It carried out air strikes in Syria and Lebanon, mainly targeting Iran and its proxies. Iran lost a number of senior commanders in Israeli attacks in Syria, including Mohammad Reza Zahedi, the IRGC commander who was killed in the Damascus consulate bombing. The U.S. kept supplying weapons to Israel throughout this conflict, and started a military campaign against Yemen's Houthis, who targeted vessels in the Red Sea "in solidarity" with the Palestinians. Mr. Biden was trying to douse regional fires without disrupting his support for Israel. Six months after the October 7 attack, Israel's Gaza war remains unfinished, while the conflict has already gone regional with Iran's attack on Israel.

Netanyahu's choice Two, Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in a spot. He built his career promising security to Israel. Yet, the largest attack in Israel's history, on October 7, unfolded on his watch. He went to Gaza promising to dismantle Hamas. After six months of war, Hamas is far from being dismantled and it's still keeping some 130 hostages who were captured on October 7. There is a genocide case against Israel in the International Criminal Court, and there is growing domestic pressure on the government to cut a deal with Hamas and get at least some hostages freed. And now, Mr. Netanyahu has to deal with the Iran attack as well.

Many say Mr. Netanyahu could use the Iran attack as an opportunity to do what he always wanted — hit Iran hard, drawing the U.S. into war, and regain regional and international legitimacy. Israel can again play victim. But his country has already been at war in Gaza for over six months. An open war with Iran would also mean a full-scale war with Hezbollah on the northern border where some 60,000 Israelis

have already been displaced from the Upper Galili region. The question Mr. Netanyahu faces is whether the Israeli state and society is ready for a prolonged war with the country's most powerful enemy in the region. U.S. President Biden is already pushing for a diplomatic off ramp to avoid a regional war. If Mr. Netanyahu doesn't retaliate after Iranian missiles attacked Israeli soil, he would lose credibility further and Iran would walk away with a victory. If he retaliates, it could open a cycle of attacks. He has to make a tough choice. Iran's message

Three, Iran has sent out a clear message that it is ready for escalation. When Qassem Soleimani was killed in Iraq in January 2020 by the U.S., Iran launched a missile attack against U.S. bases in Iraq, after giving enough time to the Americans to prepare for the attack. When Gen. Sayyed Reza Mousavi was killed in December in Syria, Iran attacked a building in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, which it claimed was operated by Mossad. But this time, Iran chose a big attack, with 300 drones and dozens of cruise and ballistic missiles, that originated from its soil and targeted Israel



proper. Even by Israeli accounts, some Iranian missiles hit the Ramon Air Base in Negev. This is the first time Iran launched a direct attack on Israel. And this is the first time any nation state in the region launched an attack on Israel since the 1991 Gulf War. Iran's one objective could be a demonstration of its capabilities. But the Iranians must

also be knowing that they crossed a red line when they launched a direct attack on Israel. They knew that Israel was likely to retaliate. And if Israel directly hits Iran, it can't just walk away from the conflict. So, by launching the midnight attack on Israel, the Iranians are telling their rivals that they are ready to escalate the shadow war into an open conflict.

## Why is there a WHO alert on viral hepatitis? | Explained

The story so far: India accounted for 11.6% of the total viral hepatitis disease burden globally in 2022, making it the country with the second highest disease load after China, according to the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Hepatitis Report 2024 released recently. Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Russian Federation and Vietnam, collectively shoulder nearly two-thirds of the global burden of hepatitis B and C.

What does the report highlight?

As per the report, the disease is the second leading infectious cause of death globally — with 1.3 million deaths per year, the same as tuberculosis, a top infectious killer. New data from 187 countries show that the estimated number of deaths from viral hepatitis increased from 1.1 million in 2019 to 1.3 million in 2022. Of these, 83% were caused by hepatitis B, and 17% by hepatitis C. Every day, there are 3,500 people dying globally due to hepatitis B and C infections. Half the burden of chronic hepatitis B and C infections is among people aged 30-54 years old, with 12% among children under 18 years of age. Men account for 58% of all cases.

What is hepatitis?

"Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that is caused by a variety of infectious viruses and non-infectious agents leading to a range of health problems, some of which can be fatal," says Sharad Malhotra, HOD, Gastroenterology Hepatology and Therapeutic Endoscopy,

Aakash Healthcare, Delhi. There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus, referred to as types A, B, C, D and E. While they all cause liver disease, they differ in important ways including modes of transmission, severity of the illness and geographical distribution. In particular, types B and C lead to chronic disease and together are the most common cause of liver cirrhosis, liver cancer and viral hepatitis-related deaths. An estimated 354 million people worldwide live with hepatitis B or C, and for most, treatment remains beyond reach, according to the WHO.

Why is India vulnerable?

Doctors attribute the large number of cases to several reasons including high population density, lack of awareness to symptoms, screening and treatment and not adhering to or having access to good hygiene practices. Dr. Sudeep Khanna, senior consultant, gastroenterologist, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, explained that one of the major reasons for the increasing burden of hepatitis in India is the high prevalence of chronic viral hepatitis B and C infections. "These chronic infections often remain asymptomatic for decades; furthermore, the lack of widespread screening programmes and limited awareness about the importance of hepatitis testing contribute to a significant proportion of cases going undiagnosed. Undiagnosed cases continue to transmit the infection, perpetuating the cycle of transmission and leading to a rise in the overall burden of the disease," he said. The physician added that another important factor contributing

to the rising number of hepatitis cases is the increasing prevalence of non-viral forms of the disease, such as alcoholic liver disease (ALD) and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). Doctors note that the high consumption of alcohol, particularly in urban areas, has led to a significant increase in ALD cases. Additionally, the rapid rise in obesity and metabolic disorders, coupled with sedentary lifestyles and dietary changes, has fuelled an epidemic of NAFLD in both urban and rural populations. These conditions can progress to more severe forms of liver disease further compounding the burden of hepatitis in India. Men report larger number of cases. Manoj Gupta, HOD, Liver Transplant and GI Surgery, PSRI Hospital, Delhi, states that this is due to high-risk behaviour like use of IV drugs, sharing injections while using IV drugs and sexual behaviour. "Multiple sex partners, or male to male sex is a very high-risk factor for these hepatitis B and C infections," he said.

How can it be prevented?

Hepatitis B can be prevented through vaccination and the report highlights the need to ensure coverage, while hepatitis C is curable with medicines. In India, the numbers of deaths due to viral hepatitis aren't comparable to tuberculosis, say experts, adding that cost of treatment is also among the lowest as India makes the generic version of the drugs. Also, the government's viral hepatitis control programme offers the vaccine to high-risk adults such as healthcare workers.



# Why Supreme Court's curative petition relief for Delhi Metro is significant

The ruling overturned the Supreme Court's September 2021 judgment that upheld the arbitral award. A month after the 2021 judgment, the court had dismissed a plea seeking a review — the final step in the appeal process after which a ruling of the highest court attains finality. The court has now exercised its "extraordinary powers" in a curative writ petition to correct a "fundamental error" in its judgment. In 2008, the DMRC entered into a public-private partnership with DAMEPL, a consortium led by Reliance Infrastructure Ltd, for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Delhi Airport Metro Express. While DMRC acquired the land and bore the cost of construction, the consortium was to design, install, and commission the railway systems in two years. Thereafter, until 2038, DAMEPL was to maintain the line and manage its operations, while paying a "concession fee" to DMRC. However, a year after the line became operational, the consortium asked DMRC if it could defer payment of the concession fee. Among the reasons cited were delays in providing access to the stations by DMRC, and that retail activity had not picked up on the line. This triggered a dispute between the consortium and the Union Ministry of Urban Development. Subsequently, barely a year into its operations, the line was shut following a complaint from DAMEPL that it was "unsafe to operate". The consortium triggered a termination of its agreement alleging there were technical problems in the civil structure of the Metro corridor, for which DMRC was responsible as per the agreement.

Before operations were finally handed over to DMRC in June 2013, DAMEPL and DMRC made a joint application before the Commissioner of Metro Railway Safety for reopening the line. While the line started functioning again, the government and Reliance began a battle before an arbitration tribunal for losses due to cancellation of the agreement. In 2017, the panel of three arbitrators decided in favour of Reliance and ordered DMRC to pay nearly Rs 8,000 crore. This included termination payment of Rs 2,782.33 crore, interest to the tune of 11%, bank guarantees, and expenses incurred in operating the Metro for a few months between the decision to terminate the agreement and the date on which operations were handed over to DMRC. When the consortium sought to enforce the award, DMRC moved the Delhi High Court. A single judge Bench of the HC refused to interfere with the award, and directed DMRC to deposit 75% of the award in an escrow account.

The government then moved an appeal before a two-judge (division) Bench of the High Court. In 2019, the division Bench overturned the arbitral award, ruling in favour of DMRC. The Bench held that the tribunal had not considered some key facts, and had left some ambiguity in interpreting when the termination of the agreement took place. This led DAMEPL to approach the Supreme Court against the High Court verdict. The SC heard the case, and in September 2021 reversed the HC verdict. A Bench comprising Justices L

Nageswara Rao and S Ravindra Bhat underlined that courts must exercise restraint when interfering with arbitral awards. This is crucial, since arbitration is an institutionalised alternative form of dispute resolution. It is devised and regulated by a 1996 statute to ensure speedy disposal of cases, especially commercial matters which suffer due to delays in the judicial system. The legislation and a plethora of SC judgments underline this aspect of minimum judicial interference with arbitral awards.

In November 2021, the SC dismissed a review petition against its judgment. Almost eight months later, DMRC filed a curative writ petition, the last resort to correct a judgment of the Supreme Court. Curative jurisdiction is a layer of appeal against a Supreme Court decision is not prescribed in the Constitution. It is a judicial innovation, designed for correcting "grave injustices" in a ruling of the country's top court. The SC first articulated the concept of a curative writ in *Rupa Ashok Hurra vs Ashok Hurra* (2002). If there was a significant miscarriage of justice due to a final decision of the Supreme Court, could the court still correct it? One the one hand was the issue of finality and closure to a case, and on the other hand was the substantive question of rendering justice in its true sense. In answering this question, the SC said that its "concern for rendering justice in a cause is not less important than the principle of finality of its judgment". However, curative writs are sparingly used. There are narrow, mostly procedural grounds that permit the filing of a curative writ. A claim must be made that principles of natural justice were not followed — for example, that a party was not heard, or that a judge was biased, or had a conflict of interest. These petitions need to be approved by a senior advocate designated by the court. Curative writs are filed mostly in death penalty cases. The SC in the *Yakub Memon* case (2015) and the

### JOURNEY OF THE DISPUTE



*Reliance-led consortium had won the bid to operate the Airport Metro. File*

<p><b>2008:</b> DAMEPL wins 30-year build, operate, transfer contract</p> <p><b>FEB 2011:</b> Line becomes operational</p> <p><b>APR 2012:</b> DAMEPL seeks to delay payment to DMRC</p> <p><b>OCT 2012:</b> DAMEPL formally initiates termination of agreement</p> <p><b>JUNE 2013:</b> Arbitration proceedings begin</p> <p><b>MAY 2017:</b> Arbitration panel decides in favour of DAMEPL</p>	<p><b>MAR 2018:</b> Single judge Delhi HC Bench refuses to interfere with arbitral award.</p> <p><b>JAN 2019:</b> Two-judge Bench of the HC sets aside the arbitral award</p> <p><b>SEPT 2021:</b> Two-judge SC Bench restores arbitral award</p> <p><b>NOV 2021:</b> SC dismisses review petition against its judgment</p> <p><b>AUG 2022:</b> Centre files curative petition</p> <p><b>APR 2024:</b> SC restores 2019 HC ruling</p>
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Delhi gang rape convicts case (2020) dismissed curative writs challenging death sentences. In 2023, in the Bhopal gas tragedy case, the SC refused to exercise its curative powers to enhance the compensation provided to victims that was deemed grossly inadequate. The restoration of the 2019 position means that DMRC does not have to pay the arbitral award. About Rs 2,600 crore that DMRC had deposited with the High Court in an escrow account will be restored. Allowing a curative petition at

the government's instance almost two and a half years after its final verdict marks a significant moment in the way the court has exercised its vast powers. Lawmakers often argue for judicial restraint, especially with regard to the exercise of powers that the court has given to itself by going beyond the letter of the Constitution. While the government had high stakes in this case, such exercise of the curative jurisdiction could have a bearing on investor confidence.

## Meta to blur Instagram messages containing nudity in latest move for teen safety

Instagram will test features that blur messages containing nudity to safeguard teens and prevent potential scammers from reaching them, its parent Meta said on Thursday as it tries to allay concerns over harmful content on its apps. The tech giant is under mounting pressure in the United States and Europe over allegations that its apps were addictive and have fueled mental health issues among young people.

Meta said the protection feature for Instagram's direct messages would use on-device machine learning to analyse whether an image sent through the service contains nudity. The feature will be turned on by default for users under 18 and Meta will notify adults to encourage them to turn it on.

"Because the images are analysed on the device itself, nudity protection will also work in end-to-end encrypted chats, where Meta won't have access to these images — unless someone chooses to report them to us," the company said. Unlike Meta's Messenger and WhatsApp apps, direct messages on Instagram are not encrypted but the company has said it plans to roll out encryption for the service.

Meta also said that it was developing technology to help identify accounts that might be potentially engaging in sextortion scams and that it was testing new pop-up messages for users who might have interacted with such accounts. In January, the social media giant had said it would hide more content from teens on Facebook and



Instagram, adding this would make it more difficult for them to come across sensitive content such as suicide, self-harm and eating disorders. Attorneys general of 33 U.S. states, including California and New York, sued the company in October, saying it repeatedly misled the public about the dangers of its platforms.



# Here's what a 100-gram serving of mishrikand contains

Jicama, also known as mishrikand, is a root vegetable native to Mexico and Central America that offers a unique combination of flavour and health benefits. It resembles a potato with a similar texture, including thick, brown skin and white flesh. But, it tastes more like an apple, albeit less sweet. Unlike apples, however, mishrikand does not brown after being cut. Sanchi Tiwari, nutritionist, Lord's Mark Biotech, says, "A powerhouse of nutrients, mishrikand is packed with essential vitamins such as Vitamin C and Vitamin B6. Vitamin C bolsters the immune system, supports oral health, and reduces inflammation, while Vitamin B6 contributes to brain function and red blood cell formation."

Moreover, she says, it contains antioxidants that combat cell damage, potentially lowering the risk of chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. "Furthermore, it serves as a hydrating snack due to its high water content, making it an ideal choice for maintaining hydration levels, particularly in hot weather. Its low glycaemic load, Tiwari suggests, makes it suitable for individuals monitoring blood sugar levels, offering a safe alternative for those with diabetes or insulin sensitivity. In essence, it stands out as a nutrient-rich vegetable that not only satisfies the palate but also contributes to overall well-being and vitality."

#### Nutritional profile of mishrikand

Each 100-gram serving of mishrikand contains:

Calories:	49.4
Protein:	0.94 g
Fat:	0.12 g
Carbohydrates:	11.5 g
Fibre:	6.37 g
Calcium:	15.6 milligrams (mg)
Magnesium:	15.6 mg
Phosphorus:	23.4 mg
Potassium:	195 mg
Vitamin C:	26.3 mg

Mishrikand also contains small amounts of vitamin E, thiamine, riboflavin, vitamin B6, pantothenic acid, calcium, phosphorus, zinc and copper with antioxidants. Further mishrikand helps to prevent cell damage and reduce oxidative stress. mishrikand, jicama Mishrikand serves as a hydrating snack due to its high water content, Sanchi Tiwari, nutritionist, Lord's Mark Biotech says.

How is mishrikand beneficial for health?

Mishrikand (*pachyrhizus erosus*, fabaceae) is a potent medicinal plant that is commonly served as raw or processed edible tuberous dishes, according to Tiwari. "It is a good source of antioxidant, prebiotic, helps in blood sugar regulation, is very low in sugar and fat and maybe a suitable replacement for starchy, higher carbohydrate vegetables. As a low-calorie and nutritionally dense food, it may be a good potato substitute for people with dia-

betes," she says. Mishrikand can be further beneficial for health in the following ways:

**Nutrient rich:** Mishrikand is packed with essential vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin C, folate, potassium, magnesium, iron, and manganese. It is low in calories but high in fibre, making it a weight loss-friendly food that promotes satiety and aids digestion. **Antioxidant powerhouse:** With significant amounts of antioxidants like Vitamin C, Vitamin E, selenium, and beta-carotene, mishrikand helps neutralise free radicals and reduce oxidative stress, potentially lowering the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. **Heart health:** Mishrikand contains soluble dietary fibre that helps lower cholesterol levels and potassium, which helps regulate blood pressure by relaxing blood vessels. Its iron and copper content supports healthy red blood cells and circulation, while nitrate improves blood flow and reduces the risk of blood clots. **Digestive health:** High in fibre and water, it promotes healthy bowel movements and eases constipation. Its prebiotic fibre, inulin, feeds beneficial gut bacteria, improving gut health and reducing the risk of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. **Cancer prevention:** The antioxidants and fibre in mishrikand have protective effects against certain types of cancer, particularly colon cancer. Inulin fibre acts as a prebiotic, promoting the growth of healthy gut bacteria and enhancing the immune response against cancer cells.

**Weight management:** As some nutrient-dense, low-calorie food rich in fibre and



water, this vegetable helps control appetite, stabilise blood sugar levels, and increase insulin sensitivity, potentially aiding weight loss efforts. **Versatile and delicious:** Mishrikand can be enjoyed raw or cooked in various dishes, adding crunch and flavour. Whether eaten plain, with dips, or incorporated into salads and stir-fries, it offers a tasty and nutritious addition to any diet.

**Potential culinary uses and preparation methods that preserve the nutritional integrity of mishrikand** Tiwari says that mishrikand is commonly enjoyed raw in salads, providing a refreshing crunch alongside other vegetables. "Mishrikand sticks make for a nutritious snack when paired with dips like hummus or salsa. Pickling the vegetable also maintains its nutrients

while adding a tangy twist, and it can also be stir-fried briefly to retain its crunchiness," she adds. Grating mishrikand for slaws or spiralling it into noodles, she says, offers versatile options for incorporating it into dishes. Lightly baking the slices or fries creates a healthier alternative to traditional snacks. Overall, combining mishrikand with nutrient-rich ingredients ensures its nutritional integrity is maintained in various culinary creations. One should be able to preserve the nutritional integrity of mishrikand by consuming it raw or lightly cooked, Tiwari recommends. In case if overcooked, it can lead to a loss of nutrients. It would be adding additional value if we pair mishrikand with other nutrient-rich foods like vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats as it can enhance its overall nutritional value in a dish.

## Hormone therapy safe for women over 65: Study

New York: Taking hormone therapy (HT) may be safe and promote long-term health in women, especially after 65 years of age, revealed a large study on Wednesday, challenging previous research that linked increased risks for various cancers and heart disease with the therapy.

Hormone therapy is a medication that contains female hormones — oestrogen and progesterone — and is widely used to treat menopausal symptoms like hot flashes and vaginal discomfort. However, previous research showed it to be detrimental to the long-term health of women, prompting fears about its usage.

However, the study, published online today in the journal *Menopause*, showed that no general rule exists for stopping hormone therapy in a woman based on age alone. The researchers from the Menopause Society noted in the study "that the risks, after age 65, may vary by the type, route, and dose women take". "This large observational study of women provides reassurance regarding the safety of longer-



term hormone therapy use and even potential benefits, particularly in women using oestrogen alone. It also offers important insights into variations among differ-

ent hormone therapy doses, routes of administration, and formulations that could facilitate individualisation of treatment," said Stephanie Faubion, medical director for The Menopause Society.

# What is the connection between urbanisation and sparrows?

There is a long list of reasons cited for the fall of the sparrow. Some of them are not immediately obvious. In 1898, there was an international conference on horse-dung. There is a long list of reasons cited for the fall of the sparrow. Some of them are not immediately obvious. In 1898, there was an international conference on horse-dung. Six years ago, in this newspaper, I had written an article on the disappearing sparrow ('I'd rather be a sparrow,' IE, February 22, 2018). It is time to revisit the sparrow. There is a Simon and Garfunkel song, 'I'd rather be a sparrow than a snail'. The forests are no longer an option. They have been taken over by streets and we no longer feel the Earth beneath our feet. What is Delhi's state bird? General knowledge questions involve the national bird (peacock). Rarely are we asked about state birds. Thanks to the Hornbill Festival, many people may think the hornbill is Nagaland's state bird. It isn't. Nagaland's state bird is Blyth's tragopan, a kind of pheasant. The hornbill is a state bird in Arunachal and Kerala. Since 2012, Delhi's state bird has been the house sparrow. (Before that, Delhi had no state bird.) One needs to specify that it's the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), since there are other sparrows.

It's odd that Delhi's state bird should be a sparrow, since sparrows have vanished from Delhi. From 2010, March 20 has also been celebrated as World Sparrow Day. Some 50 years ago, when we used to be students in Delhi, sparrows were a common sight. No longer. I presume students still declaim from Hamlet, "There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow." One shouldn't blame providence for the fall of the house sparrow. It has more to do with human development and urbanisation. One can go to Goraiya Gram to see a sparrow. "Goraiya" means a house sparrow and this village for sparrows has been set up in Garhi Mandu forest, one of the four city forests in Delhi. There are many words for sparrow in Sanskrit. The most common is chataka. But the one I like most is grihbalibhuj, since it captures the nature of a house sparrow. It is a bird that feeds on offerings strewn around the house. There is a long list of reasons cited for the fall of the sparrow. Some of them are not immediately obvious. In 1898, there was an international conference on horse-dung. There were an estimated 3,00,000 horses in London in 1900 and some 1,70,000 in New York. One needed to handle the horse-dung and urine. There were concerns that urban centres would be swamped under heaps of dung. This didn't happen, because automobiles drove horses out of business and eventually, horse traffic was banned. These work-horses were fed grain and grain had spillages, which sparrows fed on.

On the net, I found a delightful essay by W H Bergtold, written in 1921 (published in *The Auk*) and titled, 'The English Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and the Motor Vehicle'. "Fifteen years ago one could see on any of the crowded business streets of Denver, dozens, nay, hundreds of English

Sparrows, and the air was then resonant with their shrill notes of love, war and alarm; ...To what can this changed condition be attributed? Increase of enemies, mortality by disease, changing environment, or lessening of food supply, all of these, and perhaps more, might be cited as possible causes...Obviously, there is but one cause to which one can attribute the great shrinkage in the equine population of this city, namely the displacement of the harnessed horse by the motor vehicle; ...While it has been almost unnoticed, it has been none the less certain and effective; the self-propelled vehicles of a city affect the sparrow not only through starvation, but probably also through making the species' street life so hazardous and fatal as to drive it largely out of the business areas." You should read the entire essay. As I said, reasons you won't immediately think of, reminding you of Ian Malcolm's butterfly effect.

There will be a host of reasons cited by ornithologists. But I wonder about nests built by sparrows. When we were young, houses had ventilators and invariably, sparrows built nests in ventilators, sometimes, on tops of ceiling fans. I can't remember, in an age of air-conditioning, the last time I saw a ventilator. Modern urban architecture robs sparrows of their nesting sites. Humans migrate from rural areas to urban. I guess sparrows have taken the reverse route. I have seen sparrows outside Delhi. The State of India's Birds report shows there is still a declining trend (in number of sparrows), but with some reversal in recent years. There is a greater concern about sparrows and something like Eco Roots



Foundation provides nests and people have taken to feeding sparrows. Other than architectural design, there are other factors. Where will sparrows get food? Home gardens have virtually vanished in metros. Insecticides and pesticides have got rid of insects. I remember an article from *Down to Earth*. To quote, "Subramanya, a Sacon (Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History) member in the National Wetland Conservation Programme and currently working with the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, confirms the

decline of sparrows in Bangalore. He attributes it to the lack of nesting sites in modern concrete buildings, disappearing kitchen gardens and the non-availability of a particular larvae (*Helicoverpa armigera*), associated with the field bean... Formerly, urban households in India used to buy field beans as pods in vegetable markets. When the pod was broken, larvae came out, to be promptly devoured by sparrows. But now that fresh seeds are available in packets, these larvae have disappeared, depriving the sparrow."

## Study links gas to rise in non-smoker lung cancers

New York: Lung cancer has traditionally been thought of as a "smoker's disease". However, the tremendous rise of the deadly disease in non-smokers indicates their long-term, high exposures to radon gas, according to a study. Radon gas is colourless and odourless and emitted from the breakdown of radioactive material naturally occurring underground that then seeps through building foundations. The gas can silently linger and accumulate in people's lungs and homes, and cannot be detected unless tested.

Data indicates that about 15-20 per cent of newly diagnosed lung cancers occur in people who have never smoked, many of whom are in their 40s or 50s. "Anyone with lungs can develop lung cancer, and as a community, we should be aware and concerned about radon exposure because it's thought to be one of the leading causes of lung cancer in never-smokers — and there is something we can do to reduce our risk," said David Carbone,

a thoracic medical oncologist at The Ohio State University in the US.

Carbone informed that there are relatively simple tests that can measure radon in the home and aid in actions to reduce its exposure.

This includes installing outside the home a radon remediation system that sucks air from the basement, where radon gas typically lingers. Increasing airflow by opening windows using fans/venting in your home, and sealing cracks in the floors, walls, and foundation is also important.

Further, Carbone called for potential legislation to require radon testing at schools, at places of business, and during home sales to help reduce community risk. The effects of radon on the lungs are cumulative and can be delayed by decades. "So your children playing in your basement or going to school today, exposed to unknown levels of radon, could be at risk for developing lung cancer 10,



Radon gas is colourless and odourless and emitted from the breakdown of radioactive material naturally occurring underground that then seeps through building foundations.

20, 30 years from now," Carbone said. "And because the gas is totally colourless and odourless, you would have no idea you were being exposed unless you knew the importance of proactively testing."