

IMD predicts severe heatwave conditions over South Peninsular India including Telangana

New Delhi: Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions likely to continue over East and south Peninsular India including Telangana, during the next 5 days, the India Meteorological Department said on Friday. "A spell of rainfall accompanied by isolated thunderstorms/lightning and heavy rainfall is likely over Northeast India from 28-30 April," it said. According to the IMD, heatwave to severe heatwave conditions will likely prevail in many places over Gangetic West Bengal, in some parts of Odisha, and in isolated pockets over Sub-Himalayan West Bengal during the next 5 days.

"Heatwave conditions in isolated pockets over Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Rayalaseema, Interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, East Uttar Pradesh during the next 5 days; Kerala & Mahe during 26th-28th; Konkan during 27th-29th and West Uttar Pradesh, Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam during 28th-30th April 2024," IMD said in a statement.

The IMD has also predicted a fresh spell of rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds is likely to occur over the Western Himalayan region from April 26-29 and the plains of Northwest India from April 26-28 and adjoining Central India from April 26-27. "Western Disturbance as a cyclonic circulation lies over south Iran & adjoining south Pakistan in lower & middle levels. An induced cyclonic circulation lies over West Rajasthan in lower tropospheric levels. Under their influence: Fairly widespread to widespread light to moderate rainfall/snowfall accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning very likely over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh and isolated rainfall over Uttarakhand during 26th-29th April 2024, with the possibility of hailstorm over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad on 26th and Himachal Pradesh during 26th-28th and Uttarakhand on 28th and 29th April 2024," it said in a statement. "Isolated Heavy rainfall also likely over Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh-Gilgit-Baltistan-Muzaffarabad during 27th-29th April and over Himachal Pradesh on 29th April 2024," IMD said, adding that isolated to scattered rainfall accompanied by thunderstorm, lightning & gusty winds (40-50 kmph) very likely over Punjab, Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi during 26th-28th and over Rajasthan & West Uttar Pradesh on 26th April, 2024.

The IMD further said a dust storm over West Rajasthan for today. "Isolated Hailstorm very likely over Punjab and Haryana on 26th & 27th; over East Rajasthan on 26th April 2024," it said. "Strong surface winds (25-35 kmph) very likely to prevail over Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and south Rajasthan on 26th & 27th April," it added. Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions



are very likely to prevail in many places over Gangetic West Bengal, in some parts over Odisha, and in isolated pockets over Sub-Himalayan West Bengal during the next 5 days. Heatwave conditions in isolated pockets over Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana, Rayalaseema, Interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, East Uttar Pradesh during the next 5 days; Kerala & Mahe during 26th-28th; Konkan during 27th-29th and West Uttar Pradesh, Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam during 28th-30th April

2024, it said.

Hot and humid weather is very likely to prevail over Assam & Meghalaya, Tripura during 26th-28th; Kerala & Mahe, Coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry & Karaikal during 26th-30th; Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam on 26th & 27th and Konkan & Goa on 26th April 2024, it said. IMD further said that fairly widespread to widespread light to moderate rainfall/snowfall accompanied by iso-

lated thunderstorms & lightning & gusty winds (40-50 kmph) is very likely over Arunachal Pradesh and scattered to fairly widespread rainfall over Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram & Tripura during 26th-30th April 2024. It added that isolated light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms & lightning is very likely over Sikkim on April 28, 2024. It added that heavy rainfall is likely over Arunachal Pradesh and Assam & Meghalaya on 28th & 30th April 2024.

Sasta, sundar, tikau: This shop in Hyderabad recycles old items

Hyderabad: In a unique initiative at striking the right balance in environment sustainability through recycling and philanthropy, a voluntary organisation from Hyderabad collects unused electronic goods and other household items from houses and instead of discarding them, it repairs and even refurbishes them. Later, it sells these items at less than the market rate from a shop — 'Sab Hi Sasta' — and uses the money collected for community welfare.

The 'Sab Hi Sasta' outlet at Bandlaguda is run by the Hyderabad-based voluntary organisation Safa Baitul Maal and the items are sold for dead cheap. At

the store located on the road connecting Aramghar with Chandrayangutta, anyone can buy secondhand furniture, home furnishing, bedding, fitness equipment, electronics and even books. Abdul Azhar, vice president of Safa Baitul Maal, says the idea of setting up the store came after the charitable institution started collecting furniture and electronics lying unused in many households.

"Initially, we collected old newspapers and books. But families pestered us to take their other unused stuff too. We thought of collecting such articles, repairing them and selling them. The proceeds of the sales are used to take up welfare initiatives," says

Azhar. Safa Baitul Maal (SBM) also runs a call centre to which people make a call and share the residential or office address details from where the articles have to be picked up. An auto-rickshaw or van reaches the place and collects the items. "The articles are transported to our warehouse at Jalpally where it is segregated. Electronic items that can be repaired are sent to the SBM workshop at Bandlaguda where 40 of our people work. Later, they are put for sale at the store," he explains. The SBM takes up many welfare schemes, including sponsoring education of orphans, pension for women and the differently abled and providing groceries to the needy

Faced with coastal Karnataka 'saffron wall', Congress counts on welfare schemes, local factors

Back in the 1990s, Kota Srinivas Poojary was a regular speaker at campaign events for K Jayaprakash Hegde, canvassing for the then Janata Dal leader in the erstwhile Assembly seat of Brahmavar in Karnataka's Udupi district. Three decades on, much has changed for the two. Poojary is now the BJP candidate from the Udupi-Chikmagalur Lok Sabha constituency, taking on Hegde for whom he once sought votes.

Udupi-Chikmagalur falls partly in coastal Karnataka, often dubbed the "laboratory of Hindutva", and partly in Malnad. As in other constituencies in the coastal Karnataka region, such as Dakshina Kannada, the Hindu right wing has been a dominant force in Udupi-Chikmagalur that was at the centre of the hijab row a couple of years ago. The Congress, facing an uphill battle, is now banking on the Siddaramaiah government's guarantee schemes and local caste and community factors to go toe-to-toe with the BJP in Udupi-Chikmagalur and Dakshina Kannada, where polling is scheduled to be held in the second phase on April 26. Though the "saffron wall" in this part of Karnataka took some hit last year as the Congress swept back to power in the state elections — at present, four Assembly segments in the Chikmagalur area of Udupi-Chikmagalur are with the Congress and in Dakshina Kannada, the party managed to win Puttur after almost a decade — it remains a challenge to break it down in the Lok Sabha elections.

The Congress held Udupi-Chikmagalur briefly after Hegde won it in a 2012 bypoll necessitated by D V Sadananda Gowda's resignation as MP following his appointment as Karnataka chief minister. But Hegde lost the seat two years later in the 2014 elections and the party failed again in 2019. It is an even bigger story of BJP dominance in Dakshina Kannada that was formed after delimitation in 2008. Support for Congress guarantees in Chikmagalur, some Congress workers conceded that the fight was a tough one. "The support for the BJP is reminiscent of the Congress in the 1980s and 1990s. Around 40% of the voters are with the BJP. Changing that is a huge task," said a local party worker.

At a recent campaign event, Poojary said people were with the BJP as they wanted to see Narendra Modi return as the prime minister. He also promised them better roads between Udupi and Chikmagalur and the extension of rail connectivity in the region. For the Congress, the choice of Hegde — he was expelled from the party in 2015 and rejoined from the BJP only in March — is a move aimed at consolidating its position with the help of the former state minister's support base in Udupi district. "People still remember that Udupi was carved out of Dakshina Kannada district during my tenure as minister. The programmes launched for fishermen in the region and the outreach I did as an elected representative will help me," Hegde told The Indian Express.

The Congress is mostly relying on the guarantee schemes that propelled it to



power in the state last year. In rural Chikmagalur, the schemes are popular, especially among women. At Mudigere, about 30 km from Chikmagalur city, Arunakshi, a homemaker, said she was supporting the Congress because of the guarantees. "Rs 2,000 per month, free power, and other schemes are helping us," said Latha M, who runs a small shop near the village of Kottigehara, about 17 km from Mudigere.

The BJP's dominance in Dakshina Kannada stretches back even further. Before the constituency came into existence after the 2008 delimitation, it was known as the Mangalore Lok Sabha seat. In 1991, it became one of the first constituencies in south India to elect a BJP MP and since then has been sending a BJP leader to Parliament. In the last three Lok Sabha polls, former state BJP president Nalin Kumar Kateel won from Dakshina Kannada. But this time, in search of a ninth consecutive victory from here, the party dropped Kateel and fielded state BJP secretary Captain Brijesh Chowta.

In the past in Dakshina Kannada, the

BJP benefited from its Hindutva plank overshadowing caste factors in what is a demographically diverse district. But this time, a section of the OBC Billava community, which is estimated to have around four lakh voters, is said to be unhappy with the party for not fielding one of them. Like Kateel before him, the 42-year-old Chowta is from the Bunt community, a forward caste that is estimated to have around 2.25 lakh voters. Hoping to take advantage of the situation, the Congress has fielded 53-year-old Padmaraj Poojary, an advocate from the Billava community. The Congress is hoping that consolidation of the Billava vote along with that of Muslims and other smaller communities will work in its favour. Poojary is also playing up his two-and-a-half-decade association with the Kudroli Gokarnanatheshwara Temple to project his pro-Hindu image. "Caste should not be an issue. We are not seeking votes based on it. We are seeking votes in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi because Modi means development, Modi means progress," Chowta told The Indian Express. According to Poojary, getting rid

of the "communally sensitive" tag is the key to the region's progress. He alleged that BJP MPs had worked only to sustain that label and had done little to develop the region. "Hindutva has been a factor during polls. But, it will not be enough for the BJP to win this time," he said. With Muslims said to be the largest group in the constituency — as per some estimates, there are 4.5 lakh Muslim voters — and the banned Popular Front of India's political front Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) not fielding a candidate, the Congress is expecting more than its usual share of votes from the minority community. Raviraj Kumar, a taxi driver in Mangaluru, said the state government's guarantee schemes could help the Congress. "Women who get money and free bus travel are happy. So, they could support the Congress," he said. Others said this time it could be a "50-50 affair", something core BJP supporters dismissed as "merely wishful thinking". BJP supporter Sai Shetty said the party would sail through due to Modi and its organisational prowess. "Though the victory margin may come down, Chowta will win," he said.

US House passes Legislation potentially banning TikTok

New Delhi: The US House of Representatives has once again passed a new legislation that may lead to a ban on Chinese short-video making platform TikTok in the country. In March, the House had voted in favour of a bill seeking to ban the popular social media platform TikTok that has more than 170 million users in the US. The legislation in March required TikTok's parent company ByteDance to divest its stake in the company within 180 days or six months of the enactment of the law. Failure to meet the deadline would bar TikTok from the Apple and Google app stores.

What makes this new bill different?

Instead of a six-month deadline, China-based ByteDance will now have about nine months to divest its stake. This new deadline can be further extended by the White House for 90 days, reports CNN. Some key lawmakers who earlier expressed skepticism now extended their support for the bill. Also, the House Republicans have inserted the new TikTok bill into a much larger foreign aid package. Rather than asking the Senate to vote on the TikTok bill in isolation, "bundling the bill with foreign aid to Ukraine and Israel makes it much harder for lawmakers to oppose the TikTok measure".

Senators could try to strip out the

TikTok legislation but according to policy analysts, it is unlikely. The odds of Senate passage are as high as 80 per cent. If the Senate votes to approve the TikTok legislation, it will head to President Joe Biden's approval. "Biden endorsed the prior version of the TikTok bill, which suggests he may quickly sign any foreign aid package that includes similar language targeting TikTok," according to the report.

For TikTok, in addition to complying with the legislation, it could also challenge the bill in court. TikTok CEO, Shou Chew, had said in March to continue fighting, "including exercising our legal rights." A court challenge could lead to the legislation being temporarily blocked.

SAD and Congress cornering the AAP govt on farmers' issues



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), April 25 – Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and congress parties are cornering the Punjab Aam Adami Party (AAP) government on farmers' issues. Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Thursday alleged that after denying compensation to farmers, chief minister Bhagwant Mann was sprinkling salt on their wounds by not lifting their hard-earned wheat produce resulting in complete clogging of all grain markets in the State.

Mr Badal, who visited the Mahuana and Malout grain markets, witnessed firsthand how farmers are being harassed. He also interacted with farmers and assured

them that in case lifting of wheat was not started from 'mandis' the SAD would agitate to ensure justice was done to them. In a frontal attack on chief minister Bhagwant Mann, the SAD president said it was shocking that while farmers were suffering in the grain markets, the chief minister was visiting Assam and Gujarat. "Earlier also when Punjab was hit by floods last year, the chief minister chose to abrogate his responsibilities and run away to facilitate Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Convener Arvind Kejriwal's visits to other States". Asserting that farmers had been dealt a double blow, Mr Badal said, "Farmers are already reeling from non-payment of compensation for damage to wheat during hail storms ear-

lier. Now when they have brought their harvest to the market, they are facing difficulties in getting in procured".

Mr Badal said the AAP government had ruined the agricultural economy of the State during the last two years. "Farmers are yet to receive compensation for crops damaged due to flooding or hail storms. The chief minister reneged on his promise to ensure advance relief of Rs 25,000 per acre to farmers for crop relief. The AAP government also failed to procure pulses and maize crops despite tall promises that they would be procured in entirety". Urging the peasantry to teach a befitting lesson to the anti-farmer AAP government which had

also colluded with the Haryana government to suppress the ongoing farmer agitation, Mr Badal said "I appeal to Punjabis to seal the borders of Punjab with their votes to ensure Delhi based parties are not able to capture their mandate and betray them again". Congress has also slammed the Punjab government for failure to resolve the farmers issues. The Leader of the Opposition (LoP), Partap Singh Bajwa on Thursday lambasted the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann for shamelessly renegeing from its pre-assembly-poll promises of providing MSP on 23 crops.

"In an interview with a private media platform, CM Mann said that he cannot provide MSP because it is the Union Government that is supposed to provide MSP. Mann said he can only provide the farmers with compensation", Bajwa added. Senior Congress Leader Bajwa said that before the assembly elections in the state, CM Mann and Tourism Minister Anmol Gagan Mann had vowed to procure 23 crops at MSP once the AAP formed the government. They used to condemn the Congress government for not providing MSP. "After winning the assembly elections, Mann committed to procuring Moong Dal crop at MSP, however, he failed terribly to keep his promise. Consequently, the farmers were forced to sell their crops to private players at lower prices", Bajwa added. The opposition leader said that the AAP government couldn't even provide the farmers with compensation, whose paddy, sugarcane, cotton and other crops were damaged due to the worst-ever floods last year. Wheat crops were also damaged by hailstorms this year yet no compensation was given. "The Kerala government provides MSP on fruits, vegetables and some other crops as well. If Kerala can do this why can't the Punjab government? Asks Bajwa. Bajwa said that CM Bhagwant Mann has no moral ground to go to the farmers and seek their votes as he has failed to fulfil his promises to the farmers.

Has Hooda gripped Congress High Command under his clutches?

Ultimately, after a long wait, Congress has declared its Haryana Lok Sabha candidates' names. The list, apparently delayed due to alleged infighting within the party's State unit, seems to bear the upper and sole deciding free hand of former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda. If we analyse the congress' list of candidates for Haryana Lok Sabha seats released on Thursday, it seems crystal clear that congress high command has surrendered to former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition, Bhupender Singh Hooda. In the name of survey and winnability Hooda has succeeded in sidelining and downsizing his rivals in the party. Out of the ten Lok Sabha seats in Haryana, the Congress on April 25 released its list of candidates for eight out of the nine Lok Sabha seats, it is contesting in Haryana. Out of these 8 seats, Hooda camp got 7 and only one seat of Sirsa has gone to another faction. Kurukshetra seat has already been given

to INDIA block partner, Aam Aadmi Party. The Congress party has kept on hold the Gurgaon seat, where Hooda is supporting the Actor Raj Babbar, however the former state minister Captain Ajay Singh Yadav is trying to capture the same. But to negate the claim of Ajay Yadav, Hooda has already barricaded the road for Yadav by inducting another Yadav (Rao Dan Singh), his close associate, from Bhiwani-Mahendragarh Lok Sabha seat. With this step Hooda has succeeded in killing two birds with one stone. Firstly, he has dashed former Chief Minister Chaudhary Bansilal's legacy and given a jolt to his long-time rival – former Minister Kiran Chaudhary by snatching the Lok Sabha ticket of Kiran's daughter Shruti Chaudhary, a granddaughter of late Chaudhary Bansilal and secondly neutralized the claim of Captain Ajay Yadav by already giving share to Yadav community, extending ticket to Rao Dan Singh, a Yadav, as only one seat was to be

offered to this community out of 10 LS seats according to social engineering. It is also surprising that former union Minister Birender Singh's son, Brijender Singh, a former BJP MP from Hisar, who had just joined congress party by leaving BJP with an assurance of Lok Sabha ticket either from Hisar or Sonapat, has found his name omitted from Congress' list. Instead, the party has fielded from the Hisar seat three-time former Hisar MP Jai Prakash (JP) considered to be a confidant of Hooda. To cut down the claim of Birender Singh on Sonapat seat, Satpal Brahmachari, a Brahmin, another confidant of Hooda, the party's Haridwar Assembly constituency candidate in 2022, has been named party's candidate for the Sonapat seat. Brahmchari's nomination will not only downsize and close the way of Hooda's long-time competitor Birender Singh, but also work as a bonanza for Hooda's son Deepender Hooda, as through Satpal Brahmchari, he will polar-

ize Brahmin votes in Rohtak. In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Deepender Hooda lost Rohtak seat to BJP's Arvind Kumar Sharma with a thin margin of 7500 votes. Varun Choudhary, former State Congress president Phool Chand Mullana's son and Mulana MLA, has been named the candidate for the Ambala seat, reserved for the Scheduled Castes. Mullana had been a close associate of Hooda. Congress general secretary and former Union Minister Kumari Selja, the remaining lone opponent of Hooda in the party, has been fielded from Sirsa, a Scheduled Caste-reserved seat. However, Selja has been time and again denying to contest Lok Sabha election and instead was willing to go to Haryana assembly as a contender for CM Post. Her supporters are regularly sloganeering in her favour claiming her as 'Bhavi CM', but here also, Hooda, by forcing her to fight Lok Sabha election, has got rid of her over the CM post and remained the sole claimant of Chief Ministership.

Access Meditech Announces Ambitious Expansion Plans, Targets New Markets and Innovations

Hyderabad-based InsureTech Leader Celebrates 17th Anniversary, Unveils Plans for Growth and Technological Advancements



Access Meditech Private Ltd. (AMTPL), a distinguished leader in the InsureTech sector, celebrated its 17th Anniversary by announcing its future expansion plans at the Golkonda Resort in Gandipet, Hyderabad.

Mr. Syed Aijazuddin, Founder and CEO, Mr. Mirza Mumtaz Ali Baig, Chief Infrastructure Officer (CIO) and Ms. Sai Meghana Kolanupaka, Project Delivery Head, addressed the media and shared the company's success story and future

plans. Hyderabad-based Access Meditech Private Ltd (AMTPL) has emerged as a leader in the InsureTech sector, providing cutting-edge Software Solutions & Services tailored for insurance companies, Third Party Administrators (TPAs), Aggregators, and Insurance Brokers. The company's mission is to empower the global insurance industry with advanced technology and ERP solutions, enabling insurers to innovate, collaborate, and operate with unparalleled efficiency and agility.

On this occasion, Mr. Syed Aijazuddin, Founder and CEO of AMTPL, stated, "We are excited to announce our ambitious expansion plans as we celebrate our 17th anniversary. We aim to expand into new markets, introduce new products or services, invest in research and development, and form strategic partnerships to drive our business growth. We are implementing new products, incorporating Artificial Intelligence (AI) modules, and plan to hire 30 to 40% more employees by the next quarter. We are also open to partnering with businesses interested in the insurance domain." Mr. Aijazuddin further shared that the company, which started as a small startup in Masabtank, Hyderabad, is now moving to a larger location in Madhapur, spanning over 18,000 square feet. AMTPL currently has branches in Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and Hyderabad, and plans to expand its presence in the Middle East countries. AMTPL proudly holds the es-

teemed CMMI Level-III accreditation, earned between 2014 and 2016, underscoring the company's unwavering dedication to quality and performance.

Few of the Clients:

CIGNA Int'l, AXA, Munich Re, Microsure (In coordination with Bill n Melinda Gates Foundation and World Bank) Syed Aijazuddin, a distinguished professional in the insurance industry,

boasts a prolific career spanning over 27 years. With deep expertise in insurance, he excels in plan designing, risk projection, and developing tailored software solutions for the sector.

Aijazuddin holds professional qualifications from esteemed institutions such as the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII) in the UK and America's Health Insurance Plans in the USA, solidifying his authority in the field.

Snapchat reaches 422 million daily active users globally

New Delhi: Social media platform Snapchat reached 422 million daily active users in the first quarter (Q1) this year, an increase of 39 million or 10 per cent (year-on-year). In Q1, the revenue of its parent company Snap grew 21 per cent (on-year) to \$1.195 billion, driven by improvements made to its advertising platform and an increase in demand for its direct-response (DR) advertising solutions.

"We continued to make progress toward diversifying our revenue sources, with Snapchat+ growing to more than 9 million subscribers in Q1," the company said in a statement. In the quarter, overall time spent watching content globally grew year-over-year, driven primarily by strong growth in total time spent watching Spotlight and Creator Stories.

"Total time spent watching Spotlight content increased more than 125 per cent year-over-year," informed the company. Snap said that to further deepen content engagement, it is focusing on three key areas. "First, we continue to invest in our machine-learning (ML) models to improve content ranking and personalisation across all of our content surfaces," the company noted.

Why are students protesting across U.S. campuses? | Explained

On April 18, more than 100 pro-Palestinian protesters who were camped out in tents in Columbia University, New York, were arrested by the police. Since then, similar encampments and protests have risen across U.S. campuses, including in New York University, Yale University and the University of Texas. These protests are an escalation of the demonstrations going on in U.S. campuses ever since the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel and Israel's subsequent bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

What happened?

Columbia University president Minouche Shafik called in the NYPD to arrest the camping students a day after her Congressional hearing with the U.S House Committee on Education and the Workforce. The hearing was to learn more about the University's efforts in countering anti-Semitism. Similar hearings had happened on December 5, 2023 with the presidents of the Universities of Pennsylvania, Harvard and Massachusetts, after which presidents of Pennsylvania and Harvard resigned amid criticism of their "inaction" in handling rising anti-Semitism and Islamophobia on campuses after the October 7 attacks. In a similar pattern, Ms. Shafik was also questioned on the university's inaction to stop anti-Semitic rhetoric on the campus and has faced calls for resignation from various quarters, particularly from New York's Republican Congressional delegation. In her latest statement on April 23, Ms. Shafik had given a deadline for protestors to reach a peaceful agreement with the University. She warned that if the talks were not successful, "we will have to consider alternative options for clearing the West Lawn and restoring calm to the campus so that students can complete the term and graduate". Since then, discussions have been ongoing and the deadline extended twice. Several campuses, taking inspiration from the protests in Columbia, have peacefully escalated their protests, which have also faced repression from respective university administrations. On April 25, more than 30 people were arrested at a protest held at the University of Texas.

What are the protests about?

On October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked Israel, killing about 1,200 civilians and taking more than 250 people hostage, following which Israel commenced its invasion of the Gaza Strip, killing over 34,000 people, a vast majority of them women and children. Protests have been going on in universities ever since, calling for a permanent ceasefire. These protests peaked last week when students of Columbia started camping out in front of the university campus lawn, creating, as they call it, a 'Gaza solidarity encampment'. Their primary demands: Columbia university should divest funds from any company/institution that is associated with Israel or profits from "Israeli apartheid"; financial transparency



into the university's investments; and amnesty for all students/faculty that have been participating in the ongoing pro-Palestinian movement. As per the Columbia Daily Spectator, the student newspaper of the university, on April 23, Columbia College passed a divestment referendum by a large margin. The referendum asked students whether the university should divest financially from Israel, cancel the Tel Aviv Global Center, and end Columbia's dual degree programme with the Tel Aviv University. The first question passed with 76.55% of voters in favour, while the latter two garnered 68.36% and 65.62% support, respectively. Columbia University has a rich history when it comes to student movements. The last time protests of this scale rocked the campus was in 1968 when students protested the U.S.'s role in the Vietnam War and university policies they considered racist. Similar push-back happened then as well with almost 700 people being arrested by the police.

How have the protests been perceived?

The protests have increasingly polarised student groups and pitted them against each other. While the pro-Palestinian movement has asserted that their movement is peaceful and that their sole goal was to fight against the ongoing "genocide" in Gaza and the U.S.'s complicity in the same, certain Jewish student groups allege that there have been instances of anti-Semitism in the protests and that Jews feel unsafe on the campus. Several Congresspeople have said the protests were the reason for the alleged increase in anti-Semitism on the campus. New York City Mayor Eric Adams stated that he is "horrified and disgusted" with the anti-Semitism being "spewed" at Columbia

University. The State of Israel's official X account retweeted a video of the Columbia protests, calling the protestors "terrorists".

Democratic Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, on the other hand, has backed the protests, stating the arrests have "ignited a nationwide Gaza Solidarity movement". She stated on X that "this is more than the students hoped for and I am glad to see this type of solidarity". On April 21, The White House also weighed into the issue with a statement which said, "even in recent days, we've seen harassment and calls for violence against Jews. This blatant anti-Semitism is reprehensible and dangerous – and it has absolutely no place on college campuses, or anywhere in our country."

Do campuses receive funds from Israel?

The 'disclose and divest' demand of the protestors have gained much traction over the week. It has its roots in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement which is a non-violent Palestinian-led movement, calling for boycott and economic sanctions against Israel. A report by the Associated Press quotes MIT students who state that MIT has accepted more than \$11 million from the Israel Defence Ministry over the past decade. Similarly, the protestors at the University of Michigan say the university sends more than \$6 billion to investment managers who profit from Israeli companies or contractors. However, University of Michigan officials said they have no direct investments with Israeli companies, and that indirect investments made through funds amount to a fraction of 1% of the university's \$18 billion endowment. This sentiment was echoed in a report by the The New York Times, which said uni-

versities have less direct control over their investments, opting instead for asset managers to oversee portfolios. Some university administrators have also made the point that very little of their endowments is invested in companies that could be linked to Israel. According to the Federal Student Aid database, from 2020-22, Columbia University received over \$2 million as foreign gifts and contracts from Israel. However, it is unclear from where in Israel these funds came from, who the investors were and what the fund was used for. On the other hand, universities are losing funding from investors due to what investors are calling 'anti-Israel protests'. Law and investment firms have threatened to rescind job offers and not hire protesters when they graduate. Some of the prominent investors who have declared they will pull funding from campuses include venture capitalists David Magerman and Jonathon Jacobson, and Jon Huntsman, the former U.S. ambassador to China.

What next?

Tensions remain high across U.S. college campuses as university administrations try to balance students' protests and increasing pressure from the government. While Columbia discussions seem to be moving forward with a large section of students dispersing in return for written agreements that the police nor the National guard will be called in, protests across other U.S. campuses seem to be spreading like wildfire. Meanwhile, the war in Gaza rages on. Israel pounded Gaza with airstrikes on April 24 following the approval of a \$13 billion aid package by the U.S. Congress to Israel. Reports suggest that Israel is gearing up to begin its assault on Rafah, where over 1.4 million Palestinians are now seeking refuge.

No age restriction for health insurance now: All you need to know

Senior citizens, even if they are 80 or 90 years old, will now be able to buy health insurance, irrespective of existing medical conditions. This is a huge relief for all Indians above the age of 65. The insurance regulator, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), has asked insurance companies to offer their usual health policies to everyone, including senior citizens, students, and children.

This comes after the ruling BJP said in its election manifesto that "everyone over the age of 70 years" would be brought under the government's Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme. The regulator has told insurers to "design products specifically for senior citizens, students, children, maternity and any other group as specified by the Competent Authority (IRDAI)". The insurers "shall endeavour to offer coverage for persons with all types of existing medical conditions," the IRDAI said in "Specific provisions applicable to health insurance products" published in the Government of India Gazette.

India is a predominantly young country currently, but the share of the population above the age of 60 is projected to reach 20% by 2050. Following the IRDAI instruction, "companies can build new products or enhance existing products offering comprehensive coverage to the entire family, including parents, instead of the current approach of restrictive offering for senior citizens," said Rupinderjit Singh, Vice President-Retail Health, at the insurtech company ACKO.

Sharad Mathur, MD & CEO, Universal Sompo General Insurance Company, said the move will benefit both senior citizens and working adults who are caring for aging parents. "Not only will it improve access to quality healthcare services, it will also encourage more Indians to secure their loved ones against serious medical conditions and illnesses," Mathur said. Insurance companies mobilised Rs 1.09 lakh crore in all as premium in the year ended March 2024. Government schemes accounted for Rs 10,577 crore, retail customers Rs 42,200 crore, and group policies Rs 55,020 crore, according to General Insurance Council data.

What was the age limit for health coverage until now?

IRDAI norms put the ceiling for buying health insurance at age 65. Thereafter, insurance cover came with tougher conditions, including compulsory pre-insurance health check-ups, and no cover for pre-existing ailments. This is because susceptibility to illnesses increases after a certain age, regardless of how healthy an individual customer may be. Also, premiums increased with age, so customers older than 50 were forced to make do with limited cover, and accept the removal of certain insurance riders. "A large number of senior citizens have no coverage, or coverage that is not enough to foot their hospital bills. This is a great opportunity to innovate and penetrate the underserved market," said Sumit Bohra, president of the Insurance Brokers Association of India (IBAI).

What should senior citizens look for

when buying health insurance?

In general, those with no medical conditions should look to buy the most comprehensive cover, with 100% bill payments, and small or no waiting periods. "Customers with existing health issues should evaluate options from various insurers, and choose the best balance of cover and cost. They should consider the network coverage, room rent limit, disease sub-limits, consumable cover, and other policy terms and conditions which may curtail payouts at the time of claim," ACKO's Singh said. Mathur said the amendment should "ultimately serve the interests of senior citizens and take India a step closer to the goal of achieving universal healthcare for all by 2030".

What issues could possibly arise in the implementation of IRDAI's idea?

Insurers may not be enthusiastic about catering to the 65-plus age bracket, and even if they do, the terms and conditions of such insurance policies may not be favourable to the customer. A 70-year-old individual who may now have the opportunity to buy health insurance for the first time, will likely encounter stringent terms, exclusions, and possibly high premiums. Since people in the 65-plus age group often have pre-existing conditions, insurers will carefully evaluate the profitability, sustainability, and scalability of their policies for this demographic. "Individuals seeking health insurance post-retirement may find it advantageous to continue with employer-offered health insurance if possible, where insurers can provide more competitive premium rates and favourable policy conditions," Anuj Parekh, Co-founder and CEO, Bharatsure, said. Ultimately, while IRDAI seeks to promote access to insurance for older age groups, its move also underscores the importance of aligning insurer interests with customer needs to ensure comprehensive and equitable coverage across all demographics, Parekh said. Senior citizens' Insurance FAQs

Are check-ups needed to renew?

Insurers should not ask for medical examinations, a new proposal form, etc. at the renewal stage if the sum insured does not change, IRDAI has said. Insurers should try to recognise improvements in risk profile to remove loadings at the point of renewal. Insurers currently routinely ask senior citizens to submit medical reports at renewal, and raise the premium if more medical conditions are detected. Insurers should also establish a separate channel to address the health insurance related claims and grievances of seniors, IRDAI has said.

Can an insurer refuse renewal?

IRDAI has said insurers should not refuse to renew a health insurance policy on the ground that the insured had made one or more claims in the preceding policy years, except for policies that terminate after the payment of the benefit covered under the policy, such as a critical illness policy. There have been complaints that insurers refuse to renew after the customer



crosses a particular age. Policies should be renewable except on grounds of established fraud/ non-disclosure/ misrepresentation by the insured, IRDAI has said.

What about premium demands?

IRDAI has prohibited raising premiums because of higher claims. But it has allowed insurers to raise premiums on portfolio basis, and has asked insurers to offer discounts to individual policy holders with good claim experience. "Premiums usually increase with age due to the increased health risks. Premiums increase by about 10-20% on average for every five-year age bracket based on the experience of insurers, and the health inflation in India, which is around 15%," Rupinderjit Singh of ACKO

said. Currently, insurers often raise renewal premiums arbitrarily, mainly for senior citizens, even if they have not submitted any claims. All retail health policies have seen premium hikes over the last couple of years.

What is the waiting period?

The waiting period for pre-existing diseases disclosed by the customer should not be more than 36 months in case of continuous coverage under the policy, IRDAI has said. "Insurers may endeavour to have smaller pre-existing-disease waiting periods and specific waiting periods in health insurance products," the regulator has said. This means that depending on their profitability, insurance companies can cut the waiting period to even six months.

Playing through the heat

Summer has come early, a lot early, in 2024. Hyderabad, like Mumbai and Pune, has scaled the 40-degree Celsius mark in April to make it one of the hottest summers on record. Most parts of the city were registering temperatures north of 40 degrees as early as April 7. So, without further ado, let us quickly take a look at what you can do to protect your gaming devices from the heat this summer: The most intense of all gaming platforms, the PC/gaming PC is often configured for incredible amounts of power, which means that it also runs a lot hotter than most gaming devices. Now would be an ideal time for you to use software that tells you the temperatures of your build. It would be prudent not to overclock your hardware and also to try and not run games at maximum settings. I would also recommend checking how well your fans work and how the heat exchange is happening between inflow vs outflow fans. For those who use liquid cooling systems (highly recommended) it would be a great time to check if you need to do something to maintain their efficiency.

Lastly, now would be a great time to also minimise RGB settings as heavy light setups tend to increase the temperature around the gaming PC.

Mobile phones are the most popular

platforms of play in the country. However, with the temperature soaring over 40 degrees, the very portability that mobile phones offer can become a disadvantage. It would be sensible to judiciously pick the right times to play games while on the move. If you are in air-conditioned/climate controlled environments, then there's not much of an issue. However, make sure to check the temperature of your device and stop playing when you think it's getting too hot. I would recommend not playing when the device is charging.

The most optimised devices in this list, consoles carefully balance power and performance, but can be a little too compact in size when it comes to dissipation of heat. If you're using a last-gen device like the PS4, make sure to check the amount of dust that has built around it. If you're using the slim variants of consoles, ensure that you're doubly careful when it comes to playing in hot temperatures. While each device faces its own challenges when it comes to managing the heat, there are a few overall considerations that all players can take:

Play games early in the morning and late in the evening, clean your devices regularly, avoid excess multitasking, and ensure that your device's internals are free of dust. In this heat, let's game responsibly and with moderation.

Ezhavas to Nairs, Muslims to Christians: Key groups behind Kerala's perennial power play

Various castes and communities in Kerala play a crucial role in driving the politics of the leading parties and their alliances. In the election season, from the selection of candidates to the framing of planks to running of their campaigns, the interests and concerns of such communities are factored in by the parties as part of their strategies to retain vote banks and expand bases to the rival turfs in the state. The single largest Hindu community in Kerala, Ezhavas make up about 23% population of the state. The Ezhava community belonging to the OBC category has traditionally been a part of the ruling CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF)'s vote bank.

The community's largest outfit SNDP Yogam floated a political party, Bharat Dharma Jana Sena (BDJS), in 2015. The BDJS has been an ally of the BJP-led NDA in the state since the 2016 Assembly polls. However, the BJP has not been able to make inroads into the Ezhava community through the BDJS mainly because the latter's grassroots level workers are the SNDP Yogam's members, who are associated with various parties, especially the CPI(M). During the BJP-led agitation against the entry of women into the Sabarimala temple in 2018, the BDJS backed the protesters. However, the BDJS patron and SNDP Yogam general secretary, Vellappally Natesan, remained with the CPI(M)-led government's "renaissance movement platform" formed to counter the Sabarimala agitation.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BDJS contested, unsuccessfully, 4 seats out of 20, but got only 1.88% of votes. Its ally BJP contested 15 seats, but again failed to open its account while getting 13% votes. In the 2021 Assembly elections, the BDJS contested 21 out of 140 seats, but its vote share dipped further to 1.06%. The BJP contested 113 seats, but drew a blank while its vote share fell to 11.30%. In many of these seats, the LDF emerged victorious or improved its vote share as compared to the previous elections.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the BDJS is again contesting 4 seats as compared to the BJP's 16 seats. BDJS chairman Thushar Vellappally is in the fray from Kottayam while BJP leader and Union minister V Muraleedharan is contesting from the Attingal seat, where Ezhavas form a sizeable chunk of the voters.

Muslims are the second-largest religious community in the state, making up 26% of its population. The Muslim community politics in Kerala has been traditionally dominated by the IUML, an ally of the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF). The churning in the community in the last two decades have led to formation of several parties and splinter groups, but they have remained behind the IUML, which is part of mainstream politics at the state and national levels. The Muslim voters play a decisive mainly in the North Kerala constituencies of Wayanad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Vadakara, Kannur, Ponnani and Kasaragod.

The CPI (M) has been trying to make inroads into the community, mainly targeting Sunni Muslims, who have been closely

associated with the IUML. The Muslim vote especially assumes significance in this election with the concerns over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) turning into a major election issue in the state. Both the CPI(M) and the Congress have positioned themselves aggressively against the BJP, even as they are also taking on each other in the state while being the INDIA alliance partners at the national level.

The other minority community, Christians, which form 18% of the state's population, has also been traditionally with the Congress. However, the decline of the regional Christian party Kerala Congress groups and the exits or deaths of the Congress's key Christian faces have led to the BJP launching an outreach to the community. In Central Kerala's constituencies where the Christian vote is pivotal, the Congress and CPI(M) have vied with each other to take over the community vote bases from the Kerala Congress factions. Among Christians, Catholics are the dominant group. While the Catholic Church has been grappling with some internal administrative issues, there have been differences between the Jacobite and Orthodox Churches over the control of certain churches. There seems to be some resentment among a section of Christians over the bids of both the Congress and the CPI(M) to woo Muslims. The upper caste Christian groups have also been concerned with the Congress's pitch for a national caste census. This has given an opportunity to the BJP and the Sangh Parivar to make attempts to reach out to the Christian community.

The Manipur ethnic strife raging since May last year has however dealt a blow to the BJP's bid to connect with Kerala's Christians. The state's Churches as well as dioceses seem to be divided on their approach towards the BJP in light of the Manipur crisis. The upper caste Hindu Nair community, which accounts for about 14% of Kerala's population, is an influential group which has a strong representation in politics and governance. The community's outfit Nair Service Society (NSS) had a political wing, National Democratic Party, which had been part of the UDF. It was dissolved in 1995 when the Congress was in power. The NSS has since officially stuck to its position of being "politically equidistant" from the parties.

In the current Pinarayi Vijayan Cabinet, seven out of 21 ministers are Nairs, although the NSS leadership was believed to have been against the CPI(M) in the 2021 polls. Recently, the NSS leadership hailed three-time MP Shashi Tharoor as an "original Nair". Tharoor is contesting again as the Congress's candidate from Thiruvananthapuram, where the Nair vote is considered a key factor. Congress candidate for Lok Sabha polls Shashi Tharoor offers prayers at the Aruvippuram Shiva temple, in Thiruvananthapuram, April 21, 2024. (PTI) Congress candidate for Lok Sabha polls Shashi Tharoor offers prayers at the Aruvippuram Shiva temple, in Thiruvananthapuram, April 21, 2024. (PTI) The state Congress leadership also has other prominent Nair faces such as K C Venugopal, Ramesh Chennithala and K



Muraleedharan. Tharoor is taking on high-profile BJP candidate and Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar, who is also a Nair. In Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam seats too, the Nair community plays a decisive role in determining the poll outcome. The BJP's candidate in Thrissur is actor-turned-politician Suresh Gopi, who also belongs to the Nair community.

The Scheduled Castes (SCs) form about 9% of the state's population, who have been mainly associated with the

CPI(M) and the Congress through various organisations. Alathur and Mavelikkara are two SC-reserved seats. Six-time Lok Sabha member Kodikunnil Suresh, who is contesting from Mavelikkara, is the prominent Dalit politician from the Congress. State minister K Radhakrishnan, who is contesting from the Alathur seat, is a leading Dalit face in the CPI(M). While Suresh is an invitee to the Congress Working Committee, Radhakrishnan is a CPI(M) Central Committee member.

Ransomware payments drop as more companies refuse to pay extortion demands: Report

Ransomware payments dropped to a record low of 28% of companies paying ransom in the first quarter of 2024 as more and more companies refused to pay extortion demands. The figure was 29% in Q4 2023, and payments have been diminishing steadily since early 2019. Coveware, a cybersecurity company, said in a blog post. Additionally, a decline of 32% quarter-over-quarter (QoQ) was reported in average ransom payments, while a 25% QoQ increase in the median ransom payment was reported.

The simultaneous drop in average and rise in median ransom payments indicate a decrease in high figure payments and an increase in moderate amounts, and could be caused by ransom demands becoming more modest and fewer high-value targets falling prey to ransomware attacks.

The decrease in payments is being attributed to organisations implementing more advanced protection measures, mounting legal pressure to not pay ransoms and cybercriminals repeatedly publishing or selling stolen data despite being paid to not release it, and providing victims with a decryption key.

Action by law-enforcement agencies

like the FBI also played a significant role in bringing down the number of attacks witnessed by organisations. The FBI recently disrupted the operations of a major ransomware gang that created a chain of disruptions in the operations of other major gangs. The disruptions further led to payment disputes and exit scams, further weakening the confidence of other ransomware gangs, many of which are now operating independently. Many ransomware gangs have even quit cybercrime due to increased pressure from law-enforcement agencies and ramping up of security by organisations.

However, the dip in ransomware payments should not be taken as a sign of the weakening of operations by ransomware gangs. Many ransomware gangs are still operational with the FBI reporting that just one gang is responsible for breaches in 250 organisations, pocketing \$42 million in ransom payments. Remote access and vulnerability exploitation are being seen as the biggest avenues for ransomware attacks. A ransomware is a type of malicious software that blocks the victim from accessing stored data by encrypting it. A ransom is then demanded from the owner in exchange for the decryption key.

It's not the climate, it's us

But now, the weather is awkward — a roller coaster of the climate crisis and our actions. We constantly seem to be vying to break the hottest-year record annually, so much so that even the Guinness World Records might not be able to keep up with this extraordinary feat.

Warmest January on record already. Warmest 2023 since “global records began in 1880” (NASA). 2024 seems to be all set to beat this unenviable record. Delayed snow in the Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh regions. India emerged as a top contender for climate hotspot in a study conducted by researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology and the University of Augsburg, Germany. Yet again, we are witnessing a tsunami of heat waves that the IMD has warned about. Hottest days. Increased daytime temperatures. And worse, rising death tolls, with so many Indians not having the means or the access to adapt to soaring temperatures. That is the planet we are all set to bequeath to the next generation. We pass on many things to our children — property, genes, traits, et al. But we are also the generation that passes on a climate-changed planet. What would our last will and testament look like? To me, it's one that offers them an inheritance of a better climate future. Because a clean future is a right. One that the Supreme Court of India recognised in March — a distinct right “to be free from the adverse effects of climate change”.

While working on the picture book *We Hope: Children on Climate Change* (Pratham Books), my (former) colleague Smit Zaveri and I combed through hundreds of forms and letters written by children living in different habitats of India. From Agumbe, a place that was once known as the Cherrapunji of the south for its abundant rainfall, 15-year-old Sathvik wrote, “There is a lake near my house which has water only during the monsoon. The rest of the time it is dry due to the heat.” Thirteen-year-old Dilip Mashya from Dahanu noted, “Our village used to look like a forest. Now it does not look like a forest.” Every entry was a cause for heartbreak. Like when 15-year-old Atharva Raut from Mumbai wrote, “My lungs are tired” and Mehran Shafi from Jammu and Kashmir, all of 12, said, “I feel upset about my future on this planet, because children have to face it the most and I am also feeling sorry for the Earth.” Burning fossil fuels has made us all pyromaniacs, culpable in our individual and collective way, but especially to the next generation. As we read, a pattern began to emerge. We realised that while the concepts of climate change might not always be coherent to students, they were keen observers of the weather around them, ticking off “more rain”, “more hot”, “flooding”, “water shortage”, “animal extinction”, “pollution” and “change in the time that flowers bloom”.

What made my heart sink was that, increasingly, as research underscores across the world, their relationship with nature has degenerated into something that's either transactional — as the provider of food, air, water etc — or is anxiety-ridden. In the section where the children wrote letters to Dear Earth, most were apologetic about human action and promised to do better. That's not the sort of burden that

homework-grappling children should have to deal with. Algebra's scary enough.

In 2023, UNICEF estimated that “76 per cent of children in South Asia are exposed to extreme high temperatures where 83 or more days in a year exceed 35°C.” That's 460 million children under the age of 18. And that, “3 in 4 children in South Asia are already exposed to extreme high temperatures compared to only 1 in 3 children (32 per cent) globally.” Additionally, each unprecedented weather event is embedded with trauma and stress. Our children are one of the most vulnerable to the climate crisis. Their present is already at stake, it's a sad fact that we're already getting to witness the adverse effects of climate change. As grown-ups, we remember our weather heritage from when we were children. The MRF Rain Day predicting ads. The snowfall-time holidays. The changing of the seasons, heralding festivities, seasonal foods, and wardrobe planning. But each generation's understanding and acceptance of their environmental conditions are constantly being lowered — a phenomenon called Shifting Baseline Syndrome. That means a child in Delhi comes to consider the soaring AQIs as a regular part of winter, the donning of smog masks as much a ritual as the airing of woollens and the eating of gajak and other winter foods. Or, a student in Assam or Chennai expects frequent school disruptions because of flooding. And walking further and further for water in Maharashtra is part of a daily routine for some. In Bengaluru, children squint at purple skies



heavy with smog when looking for stars. Little wonder that I continuously have classroom interactions where children sensorially describe their city with negative connotations — suffocating like a grave, a polluted chamber that's claustrophobic, too loud with horns and people complaining, it reeks of cement, smoke, and garbage. This is a new normal. An unacceptable one.

Last year, when I spoke to a group of middle graders in Ahmedabad, I asked them which passage from my book, *A Cloud Called Bhura* (Talking Cub) in which a group of tweens go on a climate quest against a brown cloud of pollution, I should read from. They had already read the book,

so they began to offer suggestions. The overwhelming one was from the chapter, “When it Rains, It Pours”, where the protagonists find themselves wading through a flash flood. As I finished, there was an outpouring from the children sharing their experiences of the floods that year. Sometimes, as the grown-ups in the room, what they expect us to do is listen. So, I did.

Like, listen to 10-year-old Bethany from Dimapur, for instance, who wrote, “I will try to protect you, Earth, from this changing weather.” Let us.

The Bengaluru-based writer is a children's author, editor and climate warrior

Elon Musk lashes out against Australian court demand to remove stabbing video on X

Elon Musk lashed out against the Australian government after his platform was ordered by a court to take down videos and media that showed the stabbing of Orthodox Christian leader Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel in Sydney on April 15. The country's eSafety commissioner, Julie Inman Grant, had earlier told X and Meta to remove the violent media from their platforms within 24 hours.

This week, the Federal Court of Australia ordered the video to be removed from X until Wednesday, and said another hearing would take place to assess Grant's removal order.

“Our concern is that if ANY country is allowed to censor content for ALL countries, which is what the Australian “eSafety Commissar” is demanding, then what is to stop any country from controlling the entire Internet? We have already censored the content in question for Australia, pending legal appeal, and it is stored only on servers in the USA,” posted Musk on X on Tuesday, in response to losing the court challenge.

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese harshly criticised Musk over his refusal to comply. X also said that the Australian government wanted it to censor



some posts commenting on the attack, claiming that the comments in question did not break the platform's hate speech rules.

“X believes that eSafety's order was not within the scope of Australian law and we complied with the directive pending a legal challenge. X has now received a demand from the eSafety Commissioner that X globally withhold these posts or face a daily fine of \$785,000 AUD (about \$500,000 USD),” posted the company on

April 19. X has loosened its content moderation rules since it came under Musk's leadership. While its owner claims this is a victory for free speech, the platform has seen a surge in users trying to monetise violent videos and adult content. Musk's refusal to comply with the Australian administration is also likely to spook more traditional advertisers, who want tech companies to maintain amicable relations with their government and their audience.