

# Telangana's fiscal health prudent with surplus revenue

Hyderabad: Telangana's fiscal health has been a topic of intense debate, particularly with the recent claims by the Congress government that it was forced to obtain loans just to pay salaries. However, an analysis of the State's actual expenditures furnished in the Assembly over the years reveals a different story, pointing out the financial prudence of the previous BRS government which maintained a revenue surplus budget for most financial years, except for three years affected due to COVID-19 pandemic. For the uninitiated, a revenue surplus budget indicates the sound fiscal health of the State. When a government's income from taxes and other sources exceeds its revenue expenditures, then it is known as revenue surplus. The salaries and pensions of the State government employees are paid from the revenue expenditure account. The State's debts do not reflect in this account.

When Telangana was formed in 2014, the BRS government inherited a challenging financial situation. As per the audited actual budget expenditures, the previous Congress government handed a revenue surplus budget of just Rs 368.65 crore to the BRS (then TRS) government in 2014-

15. Over the next few years, this surplus grew significantly, peaking at Rs.4,337 crore in 2018-19. This period of fiscal growth demonstrated the BRS's commitment to effective financial management and its ability to generate revenue beyond its expenditure. However, the years 2019-20 to 2021-22 marked a downturn, with the State recording a revenue deficit, reaching as high as Rs 22,298 crore in 2020-21. This was largely due to the economic slowdown triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely impacted revenue collections while increasing expenditure on health and welfare.

Despite these challenges, the BRS government managed to turn the situation around, with a significant recovery in 2022-23, recording a surplus of Rs 5,943.64 crore. The revised estimates for 2023-24 indicate further improvement, with a projected surplus of Rs 9,031.48 crore in February 2024, though it was later revised down to Rs 1,704.89 crore in July 2024 in the State budget presented by the Congress this fiscal. The Congress government's claims that it has been compelled to take loans to pay salaries appear misleading when juxtaposed against this



backdrop. While the State did face revenue deficits during the pandemic, the overall trend shows that Telangana has consistently worked towards maintaining a revenue surplus, especially under BRS rule. The Congress's narrative of financial mismanagement does not hold up when considering the broader fiscal context and the State's ability to bounce back into a surplus. Moreover, the budget estimates for

2024-25 project a revenue surplus of Rs 297.42 crores, further underscoring the State's fiscal discipline. The state's ability to generate a surplus in recent years, despite the setbacks of the pandemic, points to sound fiscal management. The Congress's claims of financial distress seem to overlook these facts, painting an incomplete picture of the state's financial health.

# Study finds high-risk HPV in men linked to infertility



New Delhi: Human papillomavirus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted virus, can decrease the sperm quantity and quality in men leading to infertility, a study confirmed on Friday. Researchers from Universidad Nacional de Cordoba in Argentina showed that men are very susceptible to HPV infections and have major

problems such as the increased risk of genital warts and malignancies of the mouth, throat, penis, and anus. But the top problem is being rendered infertile.

The study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology*, showed that men infected with high-risk HPV genotypes show evidence of

sperm death from oxidative stress and an impaired immune response. The study "demonstrated that genital HPV infection is highly common in men and that, depending on the viral genotype that is causing the infection, the impact on sperm quality and semen inflammation might vary," said Dr. Virginia Rivero, a professor at the university.

"Male fertility and the immune system's capacity to fight off infection seem to be more negatively impacted by high-risk HPV genotype infections," Rivero added. HPV infections had been most common among women, leading to cervical cancer risk in 95 per cent of cases. However, a recent study in the journal *The Lancet* showed that 1 in 3 men over the age of 15 are at least partially infected with genital HPV, and 1 in 5 have some infection with high-risk, or oncogenic, HPV strains.

The latest study focussed on 205 adult males in Argentina who visited a urology clinic for evaluations related to reproductive health or urinary tract problems be-

tween 2018 and 2021. Nobody had received an HPV vaccination. Nineteen per cent of the individuals tested positive for HPV, of which twenty men were found to have high-risk HPV (HR-HPV) and seven to have low-risk HPV (LR-HPV).

There was no discernible variation in the groups' semen quality according to routine semen analysis. Nevertheless, additional high-resolution examination demonstrated that males who tested positive for HR-HPV had considerably fewer CD45+ white blood cell counts in their semen and higher levels of reactive oxygen species (ROS), which can harm sperm.

"We concluded that men infected with HR-HPV, but not LR-HPV, show increased sperm death due to oxidative stress and a weakened local immune response in the urogenital tract," said Rivero, suggesting that HR-HPV-positive men could have impaired fertility. T

The study raises important questions about how HR-HPV affects sperm DNA quality and its implications for reproduction and offspring health.

# On the politics of faith: Analysing the sensibilities behind the Kanwar Yatra

In the month of August, streets and highways across Delhi were filled with the vibrant saffron clad figures of Kanwariyas, carrying bamboo poles and pitchers filled with water from the sacred river of Ganga. The Kanwar Yatra, a pilgrimage undertaken annually by lakhs of Shiva devotees, has largely been a peaceful event. However, this year was marked by significant escalation in violence, vandalism and physical assault by Kanwariyas across various States, with at least 11 such reported incidents. These include the attack on a Sikh school bus in Haryana's Fatehabad, the assault of a Muslim man in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut and the forced entry into a female bathing area at a religious place in Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu, amongst others. The Lokniti-CSDS conducted a survey of 1,029 Kanwariyas to explore their backgrounds, and experiences during their religious pilgrimage.

Who are the Kanwariyas?

While the pilgrimage is open to all, men make up the majority of the Kanwariyas. 95% of the surveyed participants were men, and only 5% were women. Female pilgrims face unique challenges. One in every five respondents (22%) believe that women should not participate in this Yatra, citing concerns about women's safety (62%), health issues and menstruation (13%). About one in 10 also reported that women distract and slow the pace of the journey. Kanwariyas come from diverse backgrounds. Surprisingly, devotees with a graduate degree are twice as likely to join the pilgrimage compared to those without formal education (16% vs 8%). The majority of participants hail from lower- and middle-class backgrounds (27%), with their involvement slightly higher than that of both the most underprivileged (23%) and the more affluent groups (22%). The Yatra saw significant participation from marginalised communities, with Dalits and OBCs making up 22% and 21% of the interviewed devotees, respectively. Upper-caste devotees also form a significant portion, with about one-third devotees belonging to this group. Walking remains the most popular mode of travel, with about eight in 10 devotees covering the route by foot. Others use cycles or motorcycles, truck/tempo, shared vehicles or a car. Social connections are integral to the pilgrimage. Over half of the devotees were accompanied by their friends (57%), whereas another quarter journeyed with their families. Only 16% were travelling alone. The Yatra can also be financially demanding. While 90% are able to manage their expenses, the rest reach out to their family or friends for assistance. About one-third (30%) indicated that bearing the financial expense is difficult for them.

The Kanwariyas were asked about their motivations for undertaking this pilgrimage. A majority of the devotees cited religious or spiritual reasons, viewing the offering of sacred water to Lord Shiva as a means to gain divine blessings. A substantial portion also indicated that they went entirely for company and personal enjoyment. A few devotees participated to fulfil a vow while some others were driven by family or community engagements. The Yatra



also serves as a social and celebratory event, with participants engaging in loud music and, in some cases, intoxication. While 79% of the devotees support the practice of playing loud music, one fifth (19%) also believe that celebrating via intoxication is acceptable during the journey. On the politics of the Yatra last month, the Uttar Pradesh police directed eateries along the route of the ongoing Kanwar Yatra to display names of their owners and staff. This was followed by similar directions from the Uttarakhand police and the Ujjain Municipal Corporation. A number of vague but seemingly neutral reasons had been cited by the agencies for issuing such orders. The Supreme Court subsequently stayed the implementation of these orders. However, as many as 79% of the pilgrims feel that the step taken by the respective governments was correct. This response opens up many questions about the complex issues surrounding the nature of religiosity and the political side of the pilgrimage. Though a majority supported the move to have the names of the shop owners identified, a large number of respondents stated that the religious or caste identity of the vendor is not important for them when buying food. Of course, a considerable section of the pilgrims are particular about knowing the social identity of those from whom they buy food. For three in 10 (30%) respondents, the caste of the shopkeeper is important and for more than four in 10 (46%), religion of the shopkeeper is important. Such an attitude arises out of the dietary habits of the pilgrims. Half of those (51%) undertaking the Kanwar Yatra are completely vegetarian while another 14% are egg-eaters. Non-vegetarian food is consumed by 34% of the pilgrims.

Support for the government order is higher among vegetarians with 79% complete vegetarians and 91% egg-eaters

endorsing it. A relatively lesser proportion of non-vegetarians (71%) have a similar opinion. Additionally, as many as 84% of the respondents feel that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has done the most for those undertaking the Kanwar Yatra. Given the sheer number of pilgrims that undertake the Kanwar Yatra, governments make every effort to cater to them. This is both out of legitimate responsibility as well as due to political reasons. At the same time, however, the close political link between the BJP and the Kanwariyas cannot be ignored. When asked which party they feel close to, the answers of the Kanwariyas were quite one-sided. An overwhelming majority of 74% of the pilgrims have an inclination for the BJP. This close connection with the BJP makes the Yatra an important political event. On facilities along the Yatra, this controversial order apart, governments generally have gone a long way in looking after the interests of the Yatri and to make arrangements for the convenience of those participating in the Kanwar Yatra. Nearly 90% of the pilgrims have availed various facilities provided by the government. It indicates the extent of the outreach by the government and the dependence of the Yatra on official patronage.

Pilgrims are generally satisfied with these arrangements made by the government. 61% were completely satisfied and only a small proportion of the pilgrims were unsatisfied. Those who undertook the Kanwar Yatra previously are also impressed by the steps taken by the government this year. 58% pilgrims hold that more facilities have been provided this year compared to the last two years. 17% feel that facilities are more or less like before. Despite extensive support by the government, the Kanwariyas expect more. 52% of the pilgrims expect the government to do more with regard to toilet facilities (Table 8). 42% want the government to divert traffic from the route of the pilgrimage more effectively. Besides these, a considerable proportion of the pilgrims seek improvements in safety and security measures (41%), resting facilities (39%) and food and water supply (36%), among other things. Suhas Palshikar is chief editor of Studies in Indian Politics. Devesh Kumar and Vibha Attri are researchers at Lokniti-CSDS. Sandeep Shastri is Director-Academics, NITTE Education Trust and the national coordinator of the Lokniti Network, Abhinav Pankaj Borbora and Jyoti Mishra are researchers at Lokniti-CSDS.

## US court rules Google must face lawsuit over Chrome data collection

San Francisco: Tech giant Google will face a class-action lawsuit in the US over alleged data collection via Chrome browser without users' consent, a court here has ruled. A federal appeals court in the state of California reversed a December 2022 ruling that dismissed the earlier case against Google. The lawsuit, filed in 2020, alleged that Google collected data

from Chrome users, regardless of whether they enabled Chrome sync. "The panel reversed the district court's summary judgment in favour of Google, LLC, in a class action alleging that the company surreptitiously collected users' data in violation of various state and federal laws, and remanded for further proceedings," read the court ruling.

# This summit is just the beginning of a series of events where we will explore how AI and machine learning can be interpolated into various sectors, including pharma, education, manufacturing, and defense says Mr Sai D Prasad, Chairman, CII Telangana

While addressing the conference, Mr Sai D Prasad, Chairman, CII Telangana & Executive Director, Bharat Biotech International Ltd shared his vision for integrating AI into the pharma industry and beyond. He remarked, "This summit is just the beginning of a series of events where we will explore how AI and machine learning can be interpolated into various sectors, including pharma, education, manufacturing, and defence." Mr Prasad also underscored CII's commitment to a trillion-dollar economy for Telangana, stating, "We at CII are not just thinking about Hyderabad and Telangana, but also other parts of the world, because your business requires that."

Mr Anil Bhansali, Vice President, Engineering and Head of India Development Center, Google Cloud emphasized Google's commitment to leveraging its advanced infrastructure and AI models to support businesses in their digital transformation journeys, ensuring scalability, security, and reliability. He stated "We are entering a new era of innovation, where the interaction between humans and machines is unprecedented. The pace of development in AI is breathtaking, and the opportunities it presents, from processing vast amounts of data to transforming industries, are limitless."

Ms Shilpa Reddy, Convener, CII Telangana Pharma and Life Sciences Panel & Managing Director - Saptagir Group Private Limited, emphasized the summit's alignment with CII Telangana's objectives for 2024-25. She stated, "Our key focus this year is on developing a practical learning framework and a sustainability roadmap. This collaboration with Google Cloud is a significant step towards achieving these goals, especially in addressing the rapid innovation and change in the pharma industry." Ms Reddy also highlighted the importance of understanding global trends and real-life success stories in AI to better equip business leaders in their operations. Mr Manni Kantipudi, Co-Convener, CII Telangana Pharma and Life Sciences Panel & CEO, Aragen Life Sciences Ltd expressed his appreciation for the event. The take-home value from the talks has been immense, covering AI applications from pharma to manufacturing and marketing. He also acknowledged the educational impact of the discussions on security, reflecting on his own experiences with ISO 27,001 certification.

Mr Phanimitra B, Chief Digital and Information Officer, Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd highlighted the critical need for technology to support the people involved in the production process at Dr. Reddy's Laboratories. He shared how their digital transformation journey was driven by principles that ensure technology serves business objectives and enhances the work of those on the ground. Starting from a focus on compliance and convenience, the company evolved to view technology as a tool for value creation. He underscored the importance of benchmarking against the best practices across industries to maintain continuous improvement and deliver better outcomes for patients. Mr Siddharth Bagga,



Head - Retail, CPG and Healthcare, Google Cloud emphasized the growing role of AI in healthcare and pharma, particularly in drug discovery and personalized medicine. He stated, "AI is revolutionizing the pharma industry by enabling the use of synthetic data for drug development, leading to a 4x increase in investments in therapies like cell and gene therapy." He also highlighted AI's impact on sustainable operations and

digital therapeutics, noting, "Generative AI is poised to drastically reduce drug development time by optimizing data utilization across the enterprise." Mr Vikas Arora, Director, Cloud Sales, Google discussed the role of digital systems in generating valuable data, highlighting its dual use for regulatory compliance and enhancing business processes. He emphasized the significance of data in transforming customer experi-

ences and its potential for driving innovation. Vikas also mentioned the integration of AI and machine learning in recent years, stressing the importance of combining scientific and data expertise to unlock new insights. As the industry moves towards generative AI, he pointed out the growing demand for data and the exciting possibilities it offers in adding differentiating value to businesses.

## Renowned Photographer Imar Farooq Celebrates 15 Years in the Industry and Continued Success with FA Digital Studio

Mohammed Abdul Raheem, known professionally as Imar Farooq, is proud to celebrate 15 years of exceptional photography and the 11th anniversary of his renowned studio, FA Digital. Imar Farooq's passion for photography was ignited during his 7th standard, when he began assisting his uncle, who was also a photographer. Over the years, Imar has honed his skills and established himself as a specialist in various genres, including weddings, events, press conferences, fashion, product shoots, model shoots, and celebrity photography.

With over 4,000 events under his belt, including 800 weddings and 300 fashion shows, Imar Farooq has become a highly sought-after photographer across India. He has steadily upgraded his equipment, progressing from a Canon 100D to his current setup, which includes a Canon 5D Mark 3 with a Shutter Grand, valued at 18 lakhs. Imar's dedication and expertise have earned him a loyal clientele, and he now charges in the lakhs per event. In 2011, he established his own studio, FA Digital, which is located in Himayatnagar. Imar



leads a team of 16 members, ensuring that every client's vision is brought to life through the lens. "I am truly grateful for the opportunity to pursue my passion for photography and to share my work with so many amaz-

ing clients over the past 15 years," said Imar Farooq. "As I celebrate this milestone, I am excited to continue pushing the boundaries of my craft and providing exceptional service to our clients at FA Digital."

# Sanatana Sindhu Satsang Trust Launches Level 1 - Online Sanskrit Course by Ekadantha The School of Ancient Indian Studies

The Sanatana Sindhu Satsang Trust is proud to announce the launch of Level 1 - Online Sanskrit Course by Ekadantha The School of Ancient Indian Studies. The course was officially launched on August 23rd, 2024, at Road Number 42, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. The launch event was graced by the presence of Swami Shritaprajnananda Saraswati, who blessed the occasion. The program was launched by Dr. Karanam Aravinda Rao, Ex-IPS and Former DGP of Andhra Pradesh, who served as the Chief Guest.

The event also saw the participation of esteemed guests, including Dr. P. Srinivas (Swami, Chairman, Sri MS Rama Rao's trust), Ms. Lakshmi Nathacharya (Chairman, Samskrita Bharathi), Dr. Vishaalaaksh (Vice Chairman, Veda Samskrita Samithi), Dr. Rajendra Prasad (Chairman, Sambhashanam Samskrita Varthaa Vaahini), and Mr. Kumaravelu (Convener for Aim for Seva, AP & Telangana). The Sanatana Sindhu Satsang Trust recognized the importance of reviving the Sanskrit language, which has been the foundation of Indian culture and spirituality since Vedic times. Through this online Sanskrit course, the trust aims to make the language more accessible and to create a new generation of Sanskrit enthusiasts. The first level of the course has been developed by Swami Tattvaidananda Saraswati's disciple, who has created a comprehensive learning platform with classes ranging from the alphabet to conversational skills. The project has received financial support from Bhagavad Gita teacher Acharya C.H.



Sadguna, film director M.V. Works under Satish Kumar, and Sri Dayananda and Kripananda. "We are thrilled to launch this online Sanskrit course, which aligns with

our vision of preserving and promoting the ancient language of India," said the spokesperson of the Sanatana Sindhu Satsang Trust. "With the blessings of our

esteemed guests and the dedication of the Ekadantha team, we are confident that this initiative will inspire a renewed interest in Sanskrit and its profound teachings.

## State Level Bankers' Committee, Telangana State Bank of India, LHO, Hyderabad

Pension Fund Regulatory Authority (PFRDA) Government of India has conducted through SLBC, Telangana, an Outreach Programme for the Banks, LDMs of Telangana, held on 23.08.2024 at SBILD, West Maredpally, Secunderabad

The Programme is attended by:

1. Ms. Mamta Shankar, Whole Time Member (Economics),

Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)

2. Shri. Ruby Vinayak Bhaosagar, Assistant General Manager, PFRDA

3. Shri. Priyabrata Mishra, DGM, SBI

4. Sri P Harish, Assistant General Manager, NABARD

5. Shri Rakesh Roshan Verma, DGM, Canara Bank

6. Shri B Srinivas, AGM, Union Bank of India,

7. Officers from the member banks of SLBC, Telangana

8. Lead District Managers

9. Business Correspondents

Speaking on the occasion, Ms Mamta Shankar, Whole Time Member (Economics), PFRDA, explained that Gov-

ernment of India, as a measure to create universal social security system for Indians, especially the under privileged and unorganised sector workers, introduced Atal Pension Yojana scheme and all Indian citizens aged between 18 years to 40 years are eligible to join the scheme. Under the scheme, an assured pension of Rs.1000/- to Rs.5000/- will be provided to the subscribers on attaining the age of 60 years.

She said that so far in Telangana State about 19.37 lakh citizens have subscribed to APY whereas 662 lakh citizens across India have subscribed to Atal Pension Yojana as on 30.06.2024. Shri Priyabrata Mishra, Deputy General Manager, State Bank of India representing SLBC said that Atal Pension Yojana scheme aimed at providing social security to the citizens in the old age needs to be promoted in a big way. He said that during the financial year upto 15.08.2024, Banks in the State have enrolled 1,21,259 subscriptions.

He further said that creating awareness amongst the general public is the key to increase the subscription base and Banks in the State are spreading awareness on the scheme through their Financial Literacy Centres. Sri Ruby Vinayak



Bhaosagar, AGM, PFRDA, Shri P Harish, AGM, NABARD, Senior Officials from Union Bank of India and Canara Bank also Spoke on the occasion.

(PRAKASH CHANDRA BAROR)

GENERAL MANAGER & SLBC CONVENOR

STATE BANK OF INDIA, LHO, HYDERABAD

Date: 23.08.2024

# Can the 'Kolhan Tiger' still roar, and eat into the JMM votebank?

Independent political observers said Soren's departure could hit the INDIA bloc more if he decides to form his own party. The former chief minister and senior leader of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) Champai Soren, who has rebelled against his party leadership, said on Wednesday that the Shibu Soren-led party is now a 'closed chapter' for him and is all set to embark on a new political journey. Addressing his supporters who had gathered in Jillinggora, his ancestral village in the Sraiakela-Kharsawan district, Champai said he was open to launching a new party, and the situation would be clear in a week. The developments related to Soren have created a political buzz in Jharkhand where Assembly elections are barely two months away. Both the JMM and the opposition BJP are closely watching Champai's next move, a six-term sitting legislator from Saraikela, who earned the tag of 'Kolhan Tiger' due to his organisational work in JMM and the resultant political influence he has enjoyed in the tribal-dominated Kolhan division of the state. Located in the southwestern part of Jharkhand, the Kolhan division is spread across the resource-rich and industrially developed districts of East Singhbhum (Jamshedpur), West Singhbhum and Saraikela-Kharsawan. The division has 14 legislative constituencies in the 81-member Jharkhand assembly. Soren is the third chief minister from the Kolhan division after Arjun Munda and Madhu Kora. However, the political stature of 67-year-old Soren towers over the other two because of his roots in the movement for a separate Jharkhand state when he had fought shoulder-to-shoulder with JMM-supremo Shibu Soren. And it is in this context that the politicians and experts are weighing the impact Champai could have on their electoral fortunes in the upcoming assembly polls.

"It's not that he is called Kolhan Tiger for nothing. While he worked under the watch of our tallest leader Shibu Soren, he is credited with single-handedly building the organisational network in the Kolhan region. In organisational matters, even Guruji (Shibu Soren) would depend on Champai Da in matters related to Kolhan. Though executive president Hemant Soren has literally been in command of the party for the past few years, it would surely be a test for the present leadership to hold on to its cadre in the wake of this crisis," a senior JMM leader said, requesting anonymity. "It is difficult to predict the real impact he would have as a rebel as a lot can change in politics in two months. Hemant Soren is no doubt the most established tribal face in the state, but Kolhan has its own ecosystem and the four-decade-old career of Champai has the potential to put a dent. What would be the extent of it is to be seen. It's not easy to form a new front barely weeks ahead of the polls and emerge victorious. A lot will depend on what decision Champai takes and how effectively he plays the victim card and how much we are able to mitigate it," the leader added. Traditionally, Kolhan, which has 14 assembly segments and two Lok Sabha seats, has been a stronghold of the JMM



and its ally Congress. Of the 14, nine assembly seats are reserved for scheduled tribes (ST), while one seat is reserved for scheduled castes (SC). In the 2019 assembly elections, the JMM swept the region winning 11 seats including the eight ST and the one SC seat.

Two seats including one ST seat went to the Congress while the 14th seat was won by independent Saryu Roy who defeated former chief minister Raghubar Das from Jamshedpur East, leaving the BJP empty-handed in Kolhan. JMM leaders said Soren has had a strong influence on the tribal seats due to his organisational work and personal connect with people. "People often talk about the way he helped around 3000 persons till now to get jobs at different levels in Tata Group alone, besides others in other industrial units in the area. After his return from Delhi, he started touring the region, basically a show of strength. It's good for us as well as that would help us in assessing the situation and making course corrections accordingly," said a JMM leader, who also has his roots in Kolhan.

The top JMM leadership has remained silent on Soren and his political moves and party spokespersons have been very guarded in their response. JMM spokesperson Manoj Pandey said while Soren is a respected leader, his exit won't make much of an impact. "This is Guruji's party. The history of our party shows that what matters in JMM is our symbol, the bow and the arrow. Some very senior leaders of the party had quit and contested elections on other symbols, but they failed and ultimately returned to the party fold. We still believe that Champai Da won't take any step that would prove to be self-destructive," Pandey said. The opposition BJP, expectedly, has rubbished allegations that they are behind the present crisis. However, party insiders are excited about the

development as they think it improves their chances in Kolhan region including in some of the ST seats. A senior BJP leader said while the result was 14-0 for the saffron party in Kolhan in 2019, things are set to change. "In 2019, the BJP- ALL Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) alliance broke. The Jharkhand Vikas Morcha-Prajatartrik (JVM-P) led by Babulal Marandi (Full party names please.) was also contesting separately. This time, there is no JVM and AJSU is back in the NDA fold. The Champai factor is only going to dent the INDIA bloc further. Take for example Chakradharpur, which is an ST seat. The JMM defeated the BJP here by around 12000 votes. On the other hand, AJSU and JVM candidates together got 34000 votes," a BJP leader, who asked not to be named, said. "In Jaganathpur, the Congress defeated the JVM candidate by around 12000 votes, and the BJP and AJSU together received almost similar votes to the victorious Con-

gress candidate. In Jugsalai, BJP lost to JMM by around 22000 votes, while the AJSU candidate got around 47000 votes. While the NDA gets stronger this time around, the Champai Soren factor is going to dent the INDIA alliance. Even if he dents around five to ten thousand votes in different assembly seats, it could change the dynamics in several seats helping the BJP in the process" the leader added. An independent political observer Sudhir Pal said Soren's departure could hit the INDIA bloc more if he decides to form his own front. "I don't think BJP has to gain much if he joins them because of the visible lack of trust among the tribals for it. At best, he can then win his own seat or help them in another one or two seats. But if he forms his own party, he can play the victim card and dent into INDIA bloc votes, which could prove crucial in a tight contest. All votes that Champai's party gets would be at the cost of JMM," said Sudhir Pal.

## Pesco-vegetarian diet may help reduce mortality in older adults: Study

New Delhi: Plant-based diet has long been touted as healthy, but it may not be enough for the sustenance of older people, claims a study on Friday, noting that including seafood may help. The study, conducted by Loma Linda University, US, showed that a pesco-vegetarian diet — which includes fish and other seafood as a primary source of protein, along with vegetarian elements — may be a more viable option for elderly people.

Vegetarian diets are linked to a decreased risk of several cause-specific deaths as well as overall mortality, particularly in middle-aged and male

participants. However, very old vegetarians were, in the study, found to have somewhat greater risks for neurological diseases such as Parkinson's disease, dementia, and stroke. But, the elderly on a pesco-vegetarian diet showed a small but noticeable advantage over other vegetarian and non-vegetarian diets. "A vegetarian diet appears to offer protection from risk of death through middle-aged years, but once it helps people get into their 80s that overall advantage seems to disappear for those adhering to a strict vegetarian diet," said Gary Fraser, professor at the Loma Linda University School of Public Health.

# Chandrayaan's Pragyan rover offers evidence of magma ocean on young moon

A long night awaited the Pragyan rover on the moon as it bid farewell to operators at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) one last time. The subzero temperatures proved too low for the suitcase-sized rover. Fourteen days after landing on the moon as part of India's historic Chandrayaan-3 mission, the rover went to sleep forever. But in this window, the machine had already met all of ISRO's expectations and completed its scientific goals. It had spent two weeks studying the lunar soil and relayed valuable scientific data back to the earth in anticipation of a slew of discoveries — from recording the presence of sulphur to confirming the presence of certain small rock fragments around crater rims near Shiv Shakti point, the place where the Chandrayaan-3 lander descended.

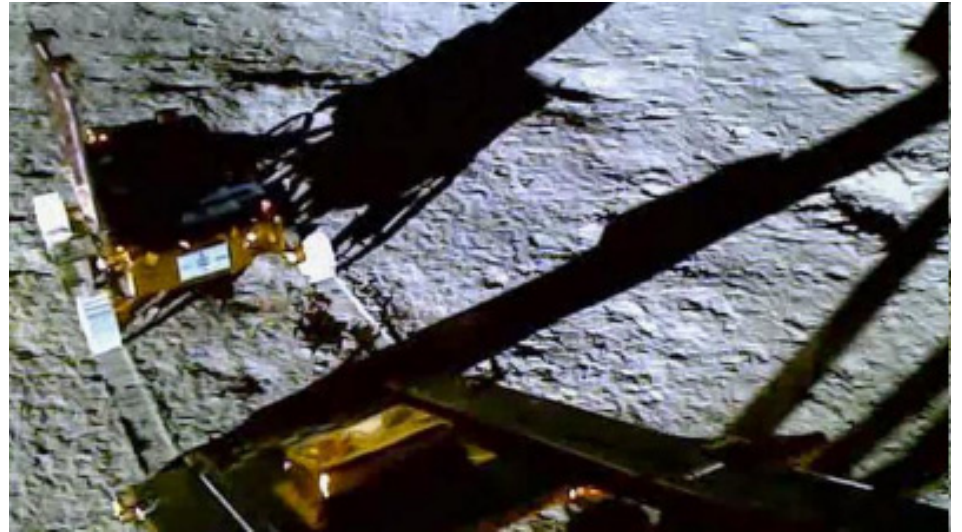
Today the Chandrayaan-3 team may have reported its most significant finding thus far, one that sheds light on the moon's origins. In a study published in the journal *Nature* on August 21, the research team has reported finding the presence of a rock type called ferroan anorthosite in the lunar soil. The sighting is important because it confirms what the U.S. Apollo missions and the erstwhile Soviet Union's Luna missions saw from the lunar equator in the 1960s; Pragyan operated in the lunar south pole region. The consensus among scientists is that these anorthosite rocks could be the remains of an ancient ocean of magma that blanketed the moon's surface some four billion years ago. Data from Pragyan builds support for this idea. The moon's origins "Ferroan anorthosite rocks are very common on the earth," Santosh Vadawale, the principal investigator of Pragyan's Alpha Particle X-ray Spectrometer (APXS) instrument and the first author of the study, told this reporter. In fact, the earth contributed all the anorthosite found on the moon today. As the consensus goes, the moon was born from the remains of a headlong collision between the early earth and some rogue planetary body aeons ago. The moon's rocky surface was initially molten. The minerals in there slowly crystallised as the lava cooled to form rocks of various kinds, including ferroan anorthosite. Meteorites raining down on the moon beat these rocks down to fine dust over many centuries. Similar weathering phenomena occur on the earth but the moon has a very thin atmosphere and lacks volcanic activity, so all meteors reach the surface and the surface isn't replenished with new rocks over time.

The Vikram lander onboard the Chandrayaan-3 mission landed on the moon just past 6 pm IST on August 23, 2023. The Pragyan rover rolled out a few hours later and gingerly moved about 100 metres from Vikram over the next two weeks. The slow pace was to make sure Pragyan didn't stumble over any stray rocks or ridges, jeopardising the high-stakes mission. During its journey, the rover occasionally stopped to observe moon dust with its instruments — from some 23 locations around Statio Shiv Shakti. Its APXS instrument, mounted close to the rover's navigation cameras, affirmed the dust's chemical and mineral composition by firing X-rays

and alpha particles at it produced from a radioactive mass of curium. Pragyan also stopped for a few minutes to around two hours to scan the soil. This is because the dust particles often deflected the alpha particles in some direction away from the APXS detector. Its stops allowed the detector to collect enough readings. In these readings, Dr. Vadawale & co. identified evidence of ferroan anorthosite as well as debris from another ancient relic strewn on Pragyan's path.

Deciphering the dust Vikram's landing spot, Statio Shiv Shakti, is about 300 km from the largest impact crater in the solar system: the South Pole-Aitken Basin. It's around 8 km deep and 2,500 km wide. Scientists have theorised that a powerful meteor strike created the depression, excavating material from deep inside the moon — perhaps from the upper mantle — and splashing it around the surface, probably all the way up to Statio Shiv Shakti. Subsequent meteor strikes on the moon created a pretty uniform mixture of this magnesium-rich content and the anorthosite dust. Dr. Vadawale said he was relieved when the team found Pragyan's data affirmed the unusually high magnesium content. "What we are finding matches very nicely in terms of the prediction of a magma ocean, plus the impact theory," he said. Such a feat wouldn't have been possible with a typical orbiter mission, he added. Orbiters can only identify elements in the soil, not their abundance. A closer look also helps elicit details that an orbiter might miss simply because a certain part of the surface isn't lit by the Sun. "You don't have full control over it in a typical orbital scenario." "That is why it's important to have actually landed on a surface and [conducted] a very close analysis there." He also said Pragyan established "ground truths" around the lunar south pole that could be ascertained with data already collected by instruments from the past, including during the Chandrayaan-1 and Chandrayaan-2 missions. This requires some daunting data tuning that, Dr. Vadawale said, has already begun. "All our teams are already working on it, and then we will continue with that, and will get those right."

While the rover itself has signed off, the data from its APXS and LIBS instruments live on and could lead to more science. "We do expect to get some science from APXS data itself. I mean, there are still some aspects of it which ... teams are working on," Dr. Vadawale said. "For example, the present paper is based on the overall bulk composition and all the major elements, but we do have observations of many minor elements and their concentrations. The changes in their concentration [from] what is expected also holds a certain key, so those aspects are still being worked on." In general, he added, the data from the rover's payloads as well as from instruments fit to the lander and the orbiter "hold up good progress. And I think ... the string of the results will continue in future." After the August 23 feat last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi designated the date India's new 'National Space Day'. According to Dr. Vadawale, the paper's



publication just ahead of its first commemoration isn't a "surprise". He said he had suggested to *Nature's* editorial team that the paper be published before Vikram Sarabhai's birth anniversary on August 12. Dr. Vadawale is with the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad. His coauthors include his colleagues at PRL

as well as the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru and the ISRO Space Applications Centre in Ahmedabad. Karthik Vinod is a freelance science journalist and co-founder of Ed Publica.

He has masters' degrees in astrophysics and science, technology and society.

## Instant stock market withdrawals now available on INDmoney



Mumbai: Money management startup INDmoney on Thursday announced UPI-based instant withdrawals for investors from their stock trading accounts on its platform. The feature enables users to withdraw their funds into their savings accounts instantly, even if they are trading on the same day, addressing a key problem for stock investors while boosting liquidity by ensuring real-time trade settlements. The feature allows investors to withdraw money up to Rs 1 lakh on the same day. Investors will get instant withdrawals in their bank accounts regardless of their trading activity. "Instant Withdrawals aligns with our commitment to simplifying financial management and ensuring our users have immediate access to their funds when they need it the most," said Ashish Kashyap, Founder of INDmoney. The 'Instant With-

drawal' service is initially made available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on trading days. In the coming months, the startup plans to extend this service to operate 24x7. In May, online brokerage platform Zerodha announced to let customers instantly withdraw up to Rs 1 lakh daily between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., at no additional cost. The government has been promoting UPI as a global payment platform. Merchants in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are now accepting payments via UPI in rupees to attract Indian customers. One of the biggest retail companies in the UAE, Lulu has started giving customers the option to accept payments through UPI in all its stores in the country. Indian citizens and NRIs in the UAE can easily pay through QR codes through Point of Sale (POS) machines.

# Ten ex-CMs who were 'hurt' by their ouster and rebelled

Story so far: Jharkhand's ex-CM Champai Soren, who resigned to make way for Hemant Soren to once again take the Chief Ministership, is likely to join BJP soon. The 67-year-old Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) veteran and tribal leader, who landed in Delhi on Sunday (August 18, 2024), stated that he felt "insulted" during his tenure and that "all options are open" for him until the upcoming Jharkhand Assembly polls. In a lengthy post on micro-blogging site X, Mr. Soren cited various instances where he was not allowed to convene a meeting of the legislative party and was suddenly asked to resign, prompting him "to seek an alternative path." Mr. Soren had been in contention for the CM post in 2002, 2006 and 2010, but took a backseat for JMM chief Shibu Soren and then his son Hemant Soren in 2013, according to Businessline. The ex-CM joins a long list of former CMs who have been miffed at their removal by their respective parties. Here's a look at ten such CMs.

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) founder N.T. Rama Rao's (NTR) third stint as Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister was cut short as rebellion began to simmer within the TDP ranks. As NTR's second wife Lakshmi Parvathi (whom he had married in 1993) began to interfere in party politics, NTR's son-in-law Chandrababu Naidu, who had been with NTR since 1984, protested. Rumours began to grow that NTR was grooming his wife to take over as CM, leading to Mr. Naidu's rebellion. Ousting the TDP founder from his own party in September 1995, Mr. Naidu staked claim to the CM post with the backing of NTR's sons and majority of the MLAs. Shocked at the betrayal, NTR urged the Governor to dissolve the Assembly but to no avail, as only 28 of 219 TDP MLAs pledged their support to him. As Mr. Naidu took oath as Andhra Pradesh CM, NTR embarked on a Side tour to highlight Mr. Naidu's betrayal. However, he failed to gain public support as Mr. Naidu along with NTR's sons had blamed his wife for swaying the old widower and leading him astray. The actor-turned-politician never recovered from Mr. Naidu's coup, and passed away in January 1996.

The late CM of Gujarat Keshubhai Patel - who formed the first BJP government in 1995 and then in 1998, stepped down from his post in 2001. His ouster, which was prompted by the BJP high command due to failing health and alleged 'irregularities in earthquake relief work' in 2000, paved way for Narendra Modi to become the CM. Miffed at his ouster and Mr. Modi's rising stature in the BJP, Mr. Patel quit the BJP in 2012 claiming that "the party under Mr. Modi had moved away from its principles towards personal glorification" to form the Gujarat Parivartan party. After his party was drubbed in the 2013 State polls, he rejoined the BJP in 2014. He passed away on October 29, 2020 due to health complications. Narayan Rane (Maharashtra CM: 1999) A grassroots 'shakha pramukh' (ward leader) who climbed up the ranks to the leadership of the Shiv Sena, Narayan Rane, struck gold in 1999 when he replaced Manohar Joshi as Maharashtra's Chief Minister. At the

time, Mr. Joshi was mired in an alleged land scam. As Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray began grooming his son Uddhav to take over as party president, Mr. Rane began nursing ill-will against him. He soon switched to the Congress and attempted to split the Shiv Sena by wooing 40 of its MLAs but failed to do so. In 2017, he quit the Congress too, alleging that he had been promised the CM post. He then floated his own party — the Maharashtra Swabhiman Paksh, which finally merged with the BJP in 2019.

Touted as AIADMK supremo J Jayalalithaa's 'chosen successor', Mr. O. Panneerselvam — a loyal AIADMK worker who rose through the party ranks from Periyakulam to Chennai — has served as Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister thrice. All his stints were cut short by his own 'voluntary' resignation to allow Jayalalithaa to take over the reigns again as CM; one instance was for Ms. Sasikala to take over. After taking oath as CM tearfully, on December 5, 2016, the night Jayalalithaa died, he once again resigned on February 2017 to allow Sasikala to be selected as CM. However, within two days, he alleged that he was compelled to resign and was repeatedly humiliated when he was CM. Sitting in protest on Marina beach outside Jayalalithaa's memorial, he claimed that only who enjoyed the cadre's support and the people's mandate should be named CM. He was expelled from the party and E Palaniswami was named CM. **ARIYALUR: TIRUCHI, TAMILNADU: 23/08/2017: Tamil nadu Chief Minister Edapaddi Palaniswami, and Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam at the MGR centenary celebration in Ariyalur**

**ARIYALUR: TIRUCHI, TAMILNADU: 23/08/2017: Tamil nadu Chief Minister Edapaddi Palaniswami, and Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam at the MGR centenary celebration in Ariyalur** By August 2017, the two factions of AIADMK led by Mr. Paneerselvam and Mr. Palaniswami merged once again, ousting Sasikala who was by then convicted in a disproportionate assets case and sentenced to a four-year jail term. In the aftermath of the poll drubbing in the 2021 State elections, tensions between the two factions rose again and Mr. Paneerselvam along with several supporters was ousted again from AIADMK. Mr. Palaniswami was appointed as party general secretary. With the BJP falling out with the AIADMK in 2024, Mr. Paneerselvam tried to woo the saffron party but to no avail as he failed to win the Ramanathapuram Lok Sabha seat as an independent candidate. Veteran Congress leader Captain Amarinder Singh was forced to step down as Punjab Chief Minister in November 2021 after a massive feud with then-State unit chief Navjot Singh Sidhu. Mr. Singh, a close peer of late PM Rajiv Gandhi was blindsided by the party high command's decision to elect Mr. Sidhu as State chief. While Mr. Singh and Mr. Sidhu had locked horns since 2019, the latter's continuous condemnation of the former's policies created a political crisis in Punjab which was due to go to polls in 2022. While Mr. Singh was the favoured pick for Congress' CM candidate in 2022, Mr. Sidhu opposed it saying the choice will



be made by the people. With the Gandhis tacit backing, Mr. Sidhu unleashed an all-out attack on Mr. Singh's government leading to his resignation. He was then replaced by Charanjit Singh Channi — a close aide of Mr. Sidhu. The ousted CM then floated a new party called Punjab Lok Congress, which later merged with the BJP.

Vasundhara Raje (Rajasthan CM: 2003-08, 2013-2018) Rajasthan's only woman Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje — one of BJP's early members, was denied the top post after the saffron party swept the State in the 2023 polls. The Scindia family scion, who is still the Vice-President of the BJP, was reduced to campaigning merely for her son in Jhalawar-Baran during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Ms. Raje first ran afoul with the BJP high command in 2015 due her close ties with former IPL commissioner Lalit Modi, who faced corruption charges and fled to the U.K. Her alleged role in facilitating his flight to U.K and her son's close business ties with the disgraced businessman raised the ire of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then-BJP chief Amit Shah. While she was allowed to complete her full term till 2018, she was then sidelined in the State.

In 2020, when Congress 'young turk' Sachin Pilot rebelled against CM Ashok Gehlot, Ms. Raje allegedly banded with BJP veteran Kailash Meghwal to 'save' the Gehlot government by sabotaging Mr. Pilot's entry into the saffron party's folds. While Ms. Raje herself has refuted these claims, local BJP leaders like Satish Poonia and Gulab Singh Kataria were allegedly miffed with Ms. Raje. Despite enjoying state-wide support, Ms. Raje's supporters have been denied party tickets and she herself was sidelined for the CM post, which ultimately went to Bhajan Lal Sharma.

Digambar Kamat (Goa CM: 2007-2012) Digambar Kamat, a Goa politician who has continuously switched between Congress and BJP, was elected as Chief Minister of the coastal State in 2007. After completing a full five-year term, Mr. Kamat remained with the Congress even in 2019 when 14 MLAs shifted to BJP. However, in 2022, Mr. Kamat, along with Leader of Opposition Michael Lobo and six others, switched allegiance to BJP, citing dissatisfaction with the party's high command. During this time, the Trinamool Congress and Aam Aadmi Party also were taking the

electoral plunge in the State and wooed miffed leaders from both parties. Chosen as the Chief Minister over rival Harish Rawat, Vijay Bahuguna was sworn in as Uttarakhand's sixth CM in March 2012. However, he was replaced in 2014 with Mr. Rawat by the Congress after the botched-up rescue operations by his government in the wake of the 2013 floods. Miffed at his ouster, in March 2016, Mr. Bahuguna along with eight other Congress MLAs rebelled against the Harish Rawat government, seeking a division of votes when the Budget was presented. While the Speaker refused their request and passed the budget, the rebels headed by Mr. Bahuguna, approached the Governor seeking a trust vote — leading to the imposition of President's rule in the State.

With both BJP and Congress scrambling to gain support to stake claim to a government, the Supreme Court intervened and re-instated the Harish Rawat government. Angered by their defeat, Mr. Bahuguna and the rebels joined the BJP. Prior to 2021, there were rumours of them rejoining the Congress, but it did not materialise. Jagadish Shettar (Karnataka CM: 2012-2013) A Jan Sangh loyalist, Jagadish Shettar rose up to become Karnataka CM in 2012. He had previously missed out on the post in 2008 after BJP favoured Lingayat strongman B.S. Yediyurappa for the top post. Mr. Shettar's stint as CM was short-lived, as ex-CM Yediyurappa parted ways with the saffron party in 2013, splitting the party's hold on Lingayat community and leading to a loss in the 2013 State polls. Mr. Shettar was then elected as Leader of Opposition. In 2019, when the BJP toppled the Congress-JD(S) government, Mr. Shettar chose to hold a ministerial portfolio in the Yediyurappa government. However, when Basavaraj Bommai was picked to succeed the 79-year-old CM in 2021, resentment flared in Mr. Shettar, who chose to remain out of the government. Karnataka, Belagavi (27/03/2024): Jagadish Shettar, BJP candidate from Belagavi Lok Sabha seat, B S Yediyurappa, former CM and senior BJP leader, and others join a party campaign rally in Belagavi on Wednesday. Karnataka, Belagavi (27/03/2024): Jagadish Shettar, BJP candidate from Belagavi Lok Sabha seat, B S Yediyurappa, former CM and senior BJP leader, and others join a party campaign rally in Belagavi on Wednesday.

# PM Modi attempts a tricky balance in Kyiv, as U.S. and Russia watch closely

Balancing India's position on the Russia-Ukraine war will be at the top of the agenda for Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he arrives by train in Kyiv on Friday (August 23, 2024) morning, for the first such high-level visit from India since the war began in 2022. While making the trip, six weeks after he visited Moscow and met with President Vladimir Putin is a part of that process, the outcomes of the visit will also be weighed carefully, say experts, given Ukraine's "disappointments" with India's position in the past.

In particular, India's position on the war in Ukraine, Mr. Modi's response to Ukraine's requests for reconstruction and equipment supplies, as well as a possible Indian role in ending the conflict and starting a peace process will be watched most closely, both in Moscow and in Washington. PM Modi one of very few leaders to have personally visited both Kyiv and Moscow during the war ( apart from leaders of Turkey, South Africa, Indonesia, Guinea-Bissau and Hungary).

"The visit comes at a time when the Swiss peace summit failed to decisively impact the war, European nations are increasingly worried about the rising costs associated with the war, and the U.S. is preoccupied with its domestic politics," said Happymon Jacob, professor at JNU and Director of the Council for Strategic and Defence Research. "This context presents an opportunity—if the Indian establishment chooses to pursue it—to initiate a new global conversation about bringing the warring parties to the negotiation table. India could play a small, though not insignificant, role in that process," he added. The optics of Mr. Modi's Ukraine visit, expected to span about 6-8 hours in the war-hit capital of Kyiv will be significant. While in Moscow, Mr. Modi had paid respects at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and not visited any memorial for Russian soldiers in the war, this may be more difficult in Kyiv, given the significant casualties and toll the war has taken in Ukraine. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had been particularly critical of PM Modi's embrace of Mr. Putin in July, calling it a "huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts" as it came on the same day as the bombing of a children's hospital in Kyiv, and it remains to be seen whether PM Modi will visit any of the bombed site or meet with those injured in hospital- as most other leaders visiting Ukraine in the past two years have done.

India's abstention from all UN resolutions critical of Russia's actions since 2022, and its decision to disassociate itself from the outcome document at the Swiss Peace conference in June was also received with some dismay in Kyiv, given PM Modi had met President Zelenskyy just prior to the conference. "While this visit could alleviate some of the negativity in the current India-Ukraine relationship, the visit is unlikely to lead to a direct Indian mediation in the Russia-Ukraine war or raise Ukraine's importance in India's strategic calculus at the cost of Russia," Mr. Jacob said.

According to Manav Sachdeva, a "goodwill ambassador" for Ukraine, ap-

pointed by President Zelenskyy to promote the "Grain from Ukraine" initiative after Russia's blockade of wheat exports, India could still seize the "strategic opportunity" in ensuring that Russia attends the next peace summit due to be held in November, and offering to mediate or promote dialogue. "India can play a critical role in facilitating peace, thereby reinforcing its global influence and commitment to a stable international order," Mr. Sachdeva, a former United Nations official who has served in several conflict areas and is now based in Delhi, told The Hindu. He said that India's willingness to participate in Ukraine's reconstruction will be key to future cooperation, especially in the areas of infrastructure, technology and healthcare. Thus far, while it has provided tents and medicines to Ukraine, New Delhi has yet to approve exports of items like telecom towers, medical equipment and construction and digging machinery, that have been requested, including during Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba's Delhi visit



in March this year. "There is no hiding the disappointment that India has yet to respond to Ukraine's previous requests for assistance. However, the post-war reconstruction period offers a valuable opportunity for India to provide substantial support,"

Mr. Sachdeva said. The trickiest part of Mr. Modi's agenda, however, will be to ensure that that support satisfies his hosts in Kyiv, while keeping India's traditional and far more substantial ties with Russia on an even keel.

## Company that sent AI calls mimicking Joe Biden to voters agrees to pay \$1 million fine

A company that sent deceptive calls to New Hampshire voters using artificial intelligence to mimic President Joe Biden's voice agreed Wednesday to pay a \$1 million fine, federal regulators said. Lingo Telecom, the voice service provider that transmitted the robocalls, agreed to the settlement to resolve enforcement action taken by the Federal Communications Commission, which had initially sought a \$2 million fine.

The case is seen by many as an unsettling early example of how AI might be used to influence groups of voters and democracy as a whole. Meanwhile Steve Kramer, a political consultant who orchestrated the calls, still faces a proposed \$6 million FCC fine as well as state criminal charges. The phone messages were sent to thousands of New Hampshire voters on January 21. They featured a voice similar to Biden's, falsely suggesting that voting in the state's presidential primary would preclude them from casting ballots in the November general election. Kramer, who paid a magician and self-described "digital nomad" to create the recording, told The Associated Press earlier this year that he wasn't trying to influence the outcome of the primary, but he rather wanted to highlight the potential dangers of AI and spur lawmakers into action.

If found guilty, Kramer could face a prison sentence of up to seven years on a charge of voter suppression and a sentence of up to one year on a charge of impersonating a candidate. The FCC said that as well as agreeing to the civil fine, Lingo Telecom had agreed to strict caller ID authentication rules and requirements and to more thoroughly verify the accuracy of the information provided by its customers and



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upstream providers.

"Every one of us deserves to know that the voice on the line is exactly who they claim to be," FCC chairperson Jessica Rosenworcel said in a statement. "If AI is being used, that should be made clear to any consumer, citizen, and voter who encounters it. The FCC will act when trust in our communications networks is on the line." Lingo Telecom did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The company had earlier said it strongly disagreed with the FCC's action, calling it an attempt to impose new rules retroactively. Nonprofit consumer advocacy group Public Citizen commended the FCC

on its action. Co-president Robert Weissman said Rosenworcel got it "exactly right" by saying consumers have a right to know when they are receiving authentic content and when they are receiving AI-generated deepfakes. Weissman said the case illustrates how such deepfakes pose "an existential threat to our democracy." FCC Enforcement Bureau Chief Loyaan Egal said the combination of caller ID spoofing and generative AI voice-cloning technology posed a significant threat "whether at the hands of domestic operatives seeking political advantage or sophisticated foreign adversaries conducting malign influence or election interference activities."