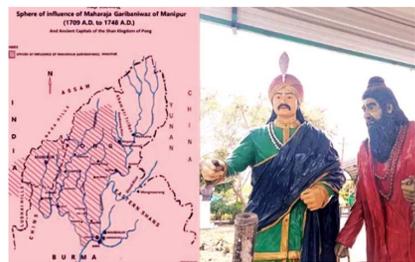


The Convention establishing the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was signed on December 14, 1960, by 18 European nations along with the United States and Canada, marking a major step towards fostering international economic collaboration. Created as a platform to promote sustainable growth, financial stability, and global trade, the OECD emerged from post-war efforts to strengthen economic ties and rebuild economies. The organisation brought together countries committed to democratic values and market-based policies, encouraging them to share data, coordinate strategies, and address global challenges collectively. Today, the OECD continues to shape international economic policy through research, analysis, and cooperation.

#MEITEI

## Kangleipak to Manipur

King Pamheiba and the Transformation of a Kingdom



Manipur, a small but culturally rich state in northeast India, holds within its history a powerful story of transformation, of religion, language, and identity. Before it became known as "Manipur," the region was called Kangleipak, a name deeply rooted in the indigenous Meetei (or Meitei) civilization. The shift from Kangleipak to Manipur took place during the reign of King Pamheiba (also known as Garib Niwaz) in the 18th century. This article explores how this change happened, what it symbolized, and the lasting legacy it left behind.

**Who Was King Pamheiba?**  
Pamheiba ruled from 1709 to 1748 and is remembered as one of the most influential, and controversial, kings in the region's history. Under his leadership, the Meetei kingdom expanded militarily, grew in administrative sophistication, and underwent major religious and cultural transformation. Originally a follower of the indigenous Meetei religion (Sanamahism), Pamheiba converted to Hinduism, specifically Vaishnavism, under the influence of Shantis Das, a Hindu missionary from Bengal. This religious shift laid the foundation for many sweeping changes that would follow.

**Religious and Cultural Reforms**  
Pamheiba's conversion to Hinduism marked a radical break from centuries of Meetei tradition. What followed was a campaign of religious reform and, at times, suppression. **Destruction of Indigenous Idols:** Temples and icons of local deities like Sanamahi, Leimarel, and Pakhangba were ordered to be destroyed. **Burning of the Puyas:** In what is now known as the Puya Mel Thaba (Burning of the Puyas), sacred Meetei texts were gathered and set on fire under royal command, with the intention of erasing 'heretical' or 'non-Hindu' knowledge. **Enforcement of Hindu Customs:** Hindu rituals,

caste systems, dress codes, and social norms were introduced and imposed at the royal court and across the kingdom. These moves were met with both acceptance and resistance. While some segments of the society adapted to the new religious order, others mourned the loss of their ancestral ways.

**From Kangleipak to Manipur: A Shift in Name and Identity**  
Before Pamheiba's reforms, the region was known as Kangleipak, a term derived from 'Kangla,' the traditional capital and sacred seat of Meetei kings, and 'Leipak,' meaning land.

- The name Manipur, which Pamheiba adopted, comes from Sanskrit, meaning 'Land of Jewels' (from 'man' meaning jewel, and 'pur' meaning place or city). The adoption of this name symbolized a formal alignment with Hindu India, particularly its cultural and religious identity.
- A break from indigenous roots and a move towards a pan-Indian image of legitimacy and power.
- A way to elevate the status of the kingdom by using a name with broader Sanskrit recognition.

This renaming marked the beginning of what many scholars describe as the 'Hinduisation' of the Meetei society. **Controversy and Legacy**  
The changes brought by King Pamheiba were not merely administrative or cosmetic, they touched the core of Meetei spiritual and cultural identity. To this day, his reign is remembered with both reverence and resentment.

Some celebrate him as a unifier and modernizer who connected Manipur with broader Indian civilization. Others criticize him for erasing traditional knowledge, burning sacred texts, and enforcing religious conversion. The name Kangleipak continues to hold emotional and cultural significance among many Meeteis. It is still used in literature, traditional songs, political discourse, and even by contemporary movements seeking to reclaim indigenous identity.

# The Tall And The Short Of It



Prakash Bhandari  
The writer is a senior journalist

It's truly the 'short' story of the South African skipper Temba Bavuma, who is the skipper of the South African team, and under whose leadership, South Africa won the World Test Trophy in which all

the Test playing nations participate. It's an International Cricket Council event and it's a biennial event, under short Bavuma's leadership, the South Africans defeated 'tall' champions 'Australia' to clinch the Test Mace awarded to the winners along with the cash prize. Under the leadership of the much-reviled Bavuma, South Africa handed India their heaviest defeat by runs to complete a compelling 2-0 series sweep. Bavuma, who was called 'Bauma' (dwarf) by India's speedster Jasprit Bumrah, won the last Test at Guwahati by 408 runs which was India's heaviest loss in the past 24 years, having lost to the



#MERCURY

## Mercury Can Eat Up Gold

The Liquid Metal That Devours Gold



In the realm of chemistry, few reactions are as captivating, and as dangerous, as the interaction between mercury and gold. When these two elements meet, they don't merely coexist; mercury dissolves gold, forming a substance known as an amalgam. This process is not just a scientific curiosity but a phenomenon with significant implications for jewelry, mining, and environmental health.

**The Alchemy of Amalgamation**  
The term 'amalgam' refers to a mixture of mercury with another metal. In the case of gold, when mercury comes into contact with it, the mercury doesn't just coat the gold; it dissolves the gold into itself, forming a soft, silvery paste. This isn't a chemical reaction in the traditional sense but a physical process where gold atoms disperse within the liquid mercury. This amalgamation occurs readily at room temperature, mak-

#CRICKET

Australians in Nagpur in 2004 by 342 runs. Bavuma stands five feet three inches (160 cms) in his shoes and is shorter than both Sunil Gavaskar and Sachin Tendulkar (both five feet five inches), but Bavuma is often described as the pint-sized bomb after South Africa won the 2025 World Test championship, their first trophy in 27 years. Bavuma is really short and has other attributes to his credit too, as he is the first black skipper of South Africa and the first black to hit a century for South Africa.

I quite liked the way Bavuma danced with his wife Phila Lobi at a reception to the ICC Test championship winners in their own country. He danced holding the mace, the trophy made from sterling silver and gold plate with a hardwood base, which is given to the Test championship winners. Its design features a handle resembling a cricket stump, wrapped in a silver-gilt laurel band. The top of the mace is a gold plated cricket ball within a global map. It's like a cricketer holding a stump as a souvenir and Bavuma was holding the silver stump trophy which was almost half the size of his height!

I am happy, more and more black cricketers are now finding a place in the national team.

South Africa has racial quota in cricket to ensure representation requiring a minimum six players of colour on the national team with two of them being black Africans. This is an average calculated over the full season, allowing for more flexibility in individual line-ups. These transformation targets were introduced in 2016 as a form of affirmative action to address historical inequalities and promote inclusivity.

Interestingly, left arm orthodox spinner, Keshav Maharaj, who is of Gujarati origin and is currently touring India, is considered 'coloured.' Talking of the tall and short again, Pakistan's Mohammed Irfan is the tallest international cricketer who stands at 7'11" (216 cms). His shoe size is believed to be Number 17. Marco Jansen of South Africa is 6' 10" (208 cms) and is currently touring India. Joel Garner, Boyd Rankin (Ireland), Kyle Jamieson (New Zealand) are all six feet eight inches in height. Kruger Van Wyk of New Zealand was the shortest cricketer with a height of four feet nine inches, followed by Tich Cornford of England with a height of just five

height or power. Bavuma's game is built on finesse and patience and has been since he moved up country for secondary school at St. David's Marist College in northern Johannesburg. Bavuma combined playing for his school with a commitment to Soweto Cricket Club, which was mentored by Geoffrey Toyana from a very young age. At 18, he made his first-class debut for Gauteng and three seasons later was playing in the franchise team, Lions. His sound technique, particularly off the back foot, helped him average over 45 in his second summer and he also demonstrated a temperament beyond his



released into the environment can contaminate water bodies, soil, and air, leading to widespread pollution. Due to these dangers, the use of mercury in gold extraction has been banned or heavily restricted in many countries. International agreements, such as the Minamata Convention, aim to reduce mercury emissions globally by banning mercury ore mining and requiring mercury reduction technology in power plants. Despite these efforts, mercury pollution continues to be a significant issue, particularly in developing nations where artisanal gold mining is prevalent.

**Beyond Mining: Historical Uses of Mercury-Gold Amalgam**  
The use of mercury to gild objects dates back centuries. One notable application was in the creation of ormulu, a decorative technique

where a gold-mercury amalgam was applied to bronze objects. The item was then heated, causing the mercury to vaporize and leaving behind a thin layer of gold. This process, known as fire-gilding, produced a brilliant gold finish but was hazardous due to the toxic mercury fumes. By the early 19th century the dangers of mercury exposure led to the outlawing of this practice in many countries.

The interaction between mercury and gold is a testament to the complexities of chemistry, where a liquid metal can dissolve a solid precious metal, creating both opportunities and hazards. While the process of amalgamation has been invaluable in gold extraction and decorative arts, the associated health and environmental risks cannot be overlooked. As we advance, it's crucial to seek safer alternatives and continue to mitigate the impact of mercury on our health and the planet.

#TABLE MANNERS

## Why Was Using a Fork Considered a Sin?

The fork was viewed as an affront to natural order, a symbol of excess, and a sign of vanity and moral corruption

The fork, a ubiquitous utensil in modern dining, once faced strong opposition and even condemnation in some cultures. In medieval and early modern Europe, the use of a fork was not only unusual but was also considered sinful by some religious and cultural groups. It was viewed as an affront to natural order, a symbol of excess, and a sign of vanity and moral corruption. To understand why the fork was once seen as a tool of decadence and sin, we need to explore the cultural, religious, and social context in which this perception arose.

**The Early History of the Fork**

Although the fork has existed in various forms since ancient times, it wasn't widely used in Europe until the 16th century. Early versions of the fork were used in the Byzantine Empire and later in the Ottoman Empire and Italy, where the aristocracy and nobility adopted it as a utensil for refined dining. However, it took much longer for the fork to become common among the general population, particularly in medieval Europe, where its adoption met with significant resistance.

In the Middle Ages, people typically ate with their hands or used spoons and knives for specific tasks. Forks, with their foreign, delicate appearance, were initially perceived as unnecessary and extravagant. At the time, eating with hands was viewed as both practical and humble, connecting the eater directly to the food and reinforcing the idea of being part of God's creation.

**The Fork as a Symbol of Excess and Vanity**

Several factors contributed to the view that using a fork was sinful, particularly within Christian communities. One major reason was the perception that it represented excessive luxury and vanity, both of which were regarded as morally corrupting. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Europe's elite began

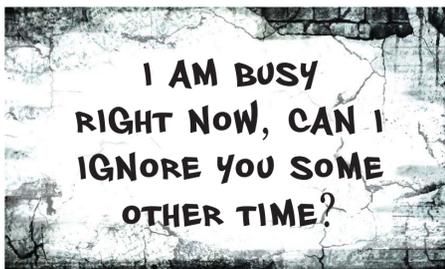


to embrace more elaborate table manners, using forks to eat with more refined, controlled gestures. The fork, a tool associated with the aristocracy, was seen as an extension of their opulent lifestyle. For many religious leaders, the rise of such utensils symbolized an immoral separation from the natural, humble ways of eating that aligned with Christian ideals. This growing disconnect from the natural order was considered sinful, especially in the context of religious teachings that emphasized self-restraint and modesty. In a time of deep Christian piety, where humility and modesty were held in the highest regard, using a fork was also seen as a rejection of spiritual humility. Many church leaders and theologians taught that excessive refinement in food preparation and consumption was not just impractical but sin-

ful. They encouraged eating with hands to remind oneself of the simplicity and humility that were supposed to be part of a good Christian life. **The Shift in Perception**  
Despite the early religious and social opposition, the fork gradually gained acceptance, especially among the European elite. By the 18th century, it had become a symbol of civility and refinement. Catherine de Medici, the Italian queen, is often credited with introducing the fork to the French court, and from there, it spread throughout Europe. Over time, the fork's association with luxury shifted towards a perception of it as a sign of cultured behaviour and etiquette. It became an essential part of formal dining. The fork's transition from sin to sophistication highlights the power of cultural values and religious teachings in shaping everyday practices. Once perceived as a tool of excess and pride, the fork was eventually integrated into mainstream culture and was seen as a necessary utensil for polite dining. As its use became more widespread, the moral objections surrounding it gradually disappeared, and the fork became a fixture of Western dining culture. Today, the fork is an essential part of most dining experiences and is no longer seen as a symbol of sin or immorality. Its journey from controversial utensil to universal tool serves as a reminder of how cultural values evolve, and how objects we take for granted today were once subject to profound moral and cultural scrutiny.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

