

Food poisoning cases show 'Vision 2047 has become Poison 2047': Harish Rao

Hyderabad: BRS MLA and former Minister T Harish Rao on Saturday lambasted Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi over food poisoning cases in the government-run schools in the State. Revanth Reddy keeps boasting about "Telangana Vision 2047", he said, adding that, "This is not Vision 2047 — it has turned into Poison 2047 for students".

Harish Rao, along with BRS MLAs Kaleru Venkatesh and Muta Gopal, visited Telangana Minority Welfare Residential School Bagh Lingampally students who are undergoing treatment at Government Hospital King Koti here for food poisoning. He enquired with doctors about the medical treatment being provided to children. Following the visit, Harish Rao came down heavily on the State government, alleging that Revanth Reddy has become "poison for children". Harish Rao said food poisoning cases were being reported in some or other government-run schools every day, citing Friday's case of food poisoning incidents at Minority Welfare School in Bagh Lingampally and Government School Chandu Nayak Thanda in Madhapur. He also pointed out a recent incident of BC Welfare Residential School Shameerpet students approaching police over worms in rice. While students were served quality food made with fine rice during the former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao led BRS government, now children in government-run schools were living with their lives constantly at risk due to food issues, he said. "Now students are complaining that they are being served with coarse rice, which is not cooked properly, and inadequate meals," he said. Stating that Revanth Reddy visited Delhi 61 times in the last two years, Harish Rao said the Chief Minister did not visit students who fell ill due to food issues on several occasions. Harish Rao took a dig at Telangana Congress government's slogan "Telangana Rising", stating that it exists only in TV and



newspaper advertisements, but in reality, gurukul and government school students were falling in hospitals. What is rising is corruption, lawlessness, arrogance and lab grabbing in the State," he said. The former Minister questioned Rahul Gandhi, who took the responsibility of six guarantees implementation, for not visiting the State when 300 farmers, 160 auto drivers, and 116 students died in the State. Despite there being several issues in the State, Rahul Gandhi was now visiting the State just to watch a football match with famous football player Lionel Messi, he said. "When students are suffering after eating rice full of worms in Gurukul schools, don't you have the responsibility to question your Chief Minister, Revanth Reddy," he asked the Congress MP. Stating that Chief Minister and Education Minister Revanth Reddy utterly failed, Harish Rao said instead of boasting about a three-trillion-dollar economy and Future City, the Chief Minister should first ensure hostel children are served rice without worms.

KTR unveils unique handloom shawl featuring QR code on Telangana history

Hyderabad: BRS Working President and former Minister K.T. Rama Rao on Saturday unveiled a specially designed handloom shawl embedded with a QR code at his Nandi Nagar residence today. The innovative shawl, woven by renowned weaver Nalla Vijay Kumar from



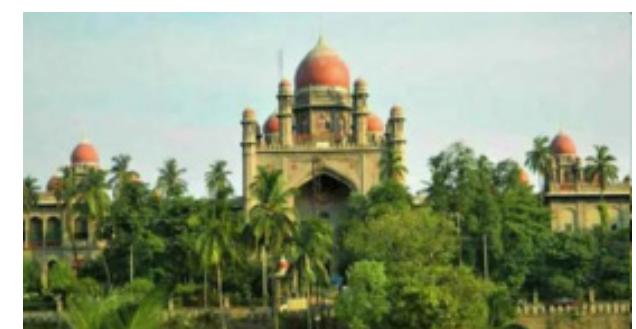
Sircilla, highlights Telangana's rich history, prominent temples, iconic structures, traditions, and the landmark

achievements of former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao, including the Mission Bhagiratha and Kaleshwaram projects.

The QR code woven into the shawl symbolizes the transition from traditional ties, 'pogu bandham' to digital connections, 'phone bandham,' allowing users to scan it for detailed information on Telangana's cultural heritage and developmental milestones. Rama Rao commended Nalla Vijay Kumar for his exceptional craftsmanship and creativity. He praised him for showcasing the greatness of Telangana through this unique handloom creation. The event was attended by several prominent leaders, including Rajya Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra, party General Secretary Ravula Chandrashekhar Reddy, senior leader Johnson Naik, and others.

Telangana High Court raps State, BookMyShow; issues contempt notices

Hyderabad: Justice NV Shravan Kumar of the Telangana High Court on Friday came down heavily on the State government and BookMyShow after learning that premiere shows of 'Akhand 2' were screened despite the court's interim suspension of permissions. The matter was taken up as a lunch-motion. The judge noted that although the court had earlier put all special-show



approvals on hold, screenings were still held across the city. Calling the development a direct affront to judicial orders, the court directed that contempt notices be issued to Home Department Secretary CV Anand and BookMyShow CEO Ashish Hemrajani.

Appearing for the petitioner, Advocate Vijay Gopal argued that the authorities had allowed additional, late-night special shows in violation of existing exhibition rules. The court had initially suspended these permissions to examine the legality of the government's approvals. Despite that suspension, reports indicated that the premiere shows went ahead, prompting the bench to initiate contempt proceedings. Justice Shravan Kumar observed that non-compliance with a clear judicial direction strikes at the authority of the court and cannot be brushed aside. Both the senior official and the platform head have been asked to explain how the screenings were permitted to proceed. The matter is expected to be taken up again in two weeks, with the contemnors directed to file their responses before the next hearing.

58 kids from government schools fall ill after meals in Telangana

HYDERABAD: As many as 58 students were taken ill in two separate food poisoning incidents at government schools in Hyderabad on Friday.

Sixteen girl students from the Telangana Minority Residential School in Baghlingampally were admitted to the government hospital in King Koti after reporting nausea, vomiting and stomach pain. They were later discharged. Hospital superintendent Dr Santosh Babu told the TNIE, "The students were admitted in the afternoon with vomiting and nausea. All 16 are stable."



Kavitha eyes CM post, pledges to uncover a decade of 'misdeeds'

Hyderabad: The Telangana Jagruthi President Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Friday declared that she would one day become the Chief Minister of the state and vowed to expose all the misdeeds of the previous BRS government from 2014 onwards.

The Jagruthi leader noted that her party had not supported her at all times. "My time will also come and with God's grace I will become Chief Minister. I will bring out the misdeeds from 2014 and till now. I will expose everyone," she said during a press conference here on Friday.

Kavitha apologised to the people, stating there should have been a stronger fight on behalf of the martyrs, but asserted her innocence: "I have not committed any mistake. When they are targeting me, why should I keep quiet? If they beat me, I will beat them twice. The reason I am going to the people is because I want to understand what their pain is."

The Jagruthi leader also targeted both the BRS and Congress parties over the lack of development in the city. "Even today, KTR (KT Rama Rao) says he has done something, Revanth Reddy says he has done something by organising a Global Summit, but there is still drainage water in taps. I am not going to step back, I will move forward," Kavitha asserted.

SCR announces special train services for Sankranti Festival

South Central Railway officials have announced the operation of several special trains to cater to increased passenger demand during the Sankranti festival.

The Secunderabad-Anakapalle train (07041) will operate on 4th, 11th, and 18th January (Sundays), while the return service from Anakapalle to Secunderabad (07042) is scheduled for 5th, 12th, and 19th January (Mondays). In addition, a special train will run between Hyderabad and Gorakhpur (07075) on 9th, 16th, and 23rd January (Fridays), with the Gorakhpur to Hyderabad service (07076) following on 11th, 18th, and 25th January (Sundays).

OFMK's BMP-II flotation trials display India's amphibious might

Hyderabad: The Ordnance Factory Medak (OF Medak) has successfully conducted its annual flotation trials of Infantry Combat Vehicles (BMP-II and its variants), reaffirming the amphibious capabilities and battlefield reliability of these indigenously manufactured machines. The trials were held at Malkapur Lake (Pedda Cheruvu) on Friday under the supervision of

(CMT), Armoured Engineer Reconnaissance Vehicles (AERV), Armoured Amphibious Tractors (AAT), Carrier Command Post Tracked (CCPT), Nuclear Biological Chemical Reconnaissance Vehicles (NBCRV), and other specialized variants deployed extensively by the Indian Army.

Beyond the Army, OFM has also contributed to

India's defense preparedness by producing CRN-91 vehicles for naval applications, Mine Protected Vehicles (MPVs/MMPVs), and bullet-proof vehicles supplied to paramilitary forces and state police departments. These products highlight the factory's versatility and its role in strengthening India's defense infrastructure.



SS Prasad, Chief General Manager, OF Medak, with officers from DGQA establishments and the User Directorate in attendance.

The annual trials are a critical exercise to validate the performance of Infantry Combat Vehicles (ICVs) in diverse terrain and water conditions. The BMP-II series, along with its specialised variants, demonstrated their ability to maneuver effectively in amphibious environments, underscoring their importance in modern combat operations.

Established in 1984, OF Medak has emerged as a premier manufacturing unit of the Ordnance Factory Board, equipped with advanced technology for producing a wide range of ICVs. The facility at Yeddu-mailaram in Sangareddy district manufactures BMP-II, BMP-IIK, Command and Control Vehicles

of the flotation trials not only validates the operational readiness of the BMP-II variants but also reinforces the factory's reputation as a hub of indigenous defense manufacturing.

The event demonstrated India's growing self-reliance in defense production, aligning with the national vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Officials present at the trials expressed satisfaction with the performance of the vehicles, noting that such exercises are vital to ensure the combat effectiveness of equipment deployed in real battlefield scenarios. The trials concluded with confidence that the BMP-II variants and their specialised counterparts remain reliable assets for the Indian Army in safeguarding national security.

Former SIB chief Prabhakar Rao surrenders in phone-tapping scandal

Hyderabad: Hyderabad police took custody of retired Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) chief Prabhakar Rao after he surrendered on Friday, complying with a Supreme Court order in an explosive phone-tapping case that involves allegations of political espionage and abuse of power.

Rao, a key figure in Telangana's intelligence machinery during the previous BRS regime, walked into the Punjagutta police station under tight security, marking a dramatic turn in the scandal that first erupted last year.

The case stems from allegations that Rao orchestrated illegal surveillance on opposition leaders, judges, activists, and even journalists, using state resources to tap hundreds of phones without legal sanction.

Hyderabad police booked him under charges of criminal conspiracy, unlawful interception, and privacy violations after raids uncovered call records and surveillance logs.

The Supreme Court intervened last month, criticising the state for delays and ordering Rao's immediate arrest if he failed to heed summons. Facing con-



tempt threats, the sixty-something former intelligence chief appeared before a magistrate, secured interim bail, but remains under investigation as police delve deeper into the network. Sources indicate evidence points to a web linking Rao to top BRS leadership, with intercepted chats reportedly revealing motives tied to political sabotage ahead of elections. The case is testing Telangana's cyber and intelligence wings, with fears that more high-profile names may soon be implicated.

CP warns transgenders on extortion complaints



India's nuanced stand at climate summit

On the surface, India's refusal to submit its plan for carbon reduction targets might have attracted criticism from some quarters at the United Nations Climate Summit — COP30 — but the reality is that having ambitious targets on paper means little if wealthy nations, the biggest carbon emitters, fail to honour their commitments on climate finance and technology support for developing countries. It is time for a candid reality check, as the industrialised world has failed to meet the USD 100 billion annual commitment made over a decade ago. However, they have been putting pressure on developing nations to meet 'Net Zero' (reducing greenhouse gas emissions to zero) targets early. At present, climate finance is the most contentious issue with nations disagreeing on who should pay, how much should be paid, what forms the funding should take — either loans or grants — and how the funds should be accessed. The success of climate negotiations, and thereby the energy transition, would hinge on climate finance by industrialised nations. Developed countries, which have historically contributed to most emissions leading to the temperature rise and climate change, must take responsibility for assisting developing nations financially by putting a compensation mechanism in place. India's position on loss and damage due to climate change is that developed countries have a bigger contribution to environmental damage and resultant calamities that have taken place in developing countries, in particular, island-nations.

On their part, developing nations are already doing what they can to achieve climate goals without climate finance. At COP30, held in Brazil's Belem city, India has done the right thing by calling for a major increase in global adaptation finance as the funding gap widens. India's Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav has stressed that adaptation is an essential investment, not optional. He highlighted that developing countries will need up to USD 365 billion annually by 2035, but current flows are drastically lower. While India is committed to domestic adaptation as part of climate action, it strongly supports the creation of a Just Transition Mechanism.

Hyderabad: Taking a serious view of increasing complaints regarding harassment and forced collection of money, Hyderabad Commissioner of Police V C Sajjanar on Friday issued a stern warning to the transgender community, stating that strict legal action would be inevitable against those resorting to extortion.

Addressing a special meeting attended by approximately 250 transgender persons at the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) in Ameerpet, Sajjanar urged the community to shun illegal activities and utilise opportunities provided by the State government to lead lives of dignity.

'Forced collections unacceptable'

The Commissioner highlighted the growing public grievance regarding groups of transgender persons descending on households during auspicious occasions and de-

manding exorbitant amounts.

"We have been receiving increasing complaints from the public. Harassing residents and forced collections are unacceptable. We will not tolerate such actions," Sajjanar asserted. He further cautioned that anyone taking the law into their own hands, regardless of their identity, would face imprisonment. "Cases registered against you will ruin your future. If you trouble innocent citizens, jail terms are certain," he warned. Sajjanar also expressed concern over internal disputes and clashes regarding dominance within the community, noting that such incidents were leading to law and order problems and, in some instances, tragic loss of life. He assured the gathering that while the police would deal strictly with violations, the department would always stand by those seeking to live respectfully.



Inter JAC strongly opposes merger of SSC and Intermediate Boards

Hyderabad: A proposal reportedly being considered to merge the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and the State Board of Intermediate Education has come under sharp criticism by the Intermediate Education Joint Action Committee (JAC).

Addressing the media on Friday, JAC Chairman Dr P Madhusudhan Reddy warned that such a move would seriously undermine the existing intermediate education system. He declared that the JAC would not accept the merger under any circumstances, arguing that the proposal was detrimental to the academic framework carefully built over decades and would erode the distinct identity and purpose of intermediate education in Telangana. He pointed out that support for the merger by some intellectuals only reflects a lack of understanding of ground realities, and stressed that the system introduced by former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao must be preserved in its current form.

Dr Reddy also highlighted the urgent need for student welfare measures in government junior col-

leges. He demanded the introduction of the mid-day meal scheme in all 430 government junior colleges, on the lines of the current mid-day meal scheme implemented in government schools. Further, he urged the government to provide two sets of uniforms and free RTC bus passes to junior college students, ensuring equitable access to education for those from economically weaker backgrounds.

The JAC chairman pointed to the pressing issue of staff shortages, calling on the government to immediately sanction and fill vacant posts of junior lecturers and regional inspection officers. He emphasised that without adequate teaching staff and administrative oversight, the quality of intermediate education would continue to suffer.

Reiterating the committee's stance, Dr Reddy said the JAC would intensify its opposition if the government moved forward with the merger plan. He asserted that safeguarding the integrity of intermediate education was essential for maintaining academic standards and preparing students for higher education and competitive examinations.

Donald Trump's \$100,000 H-1B visa fee draws legal challenge from U.S. states



California and 19 other U.S. states filed a lawsuit on Friday (December 12, 2025) seeking to block President Donald Trump's \$100,000 fee on new H-1B visas for highly skilled foreign workers. The lawsuit in federal court in Boston is at least the third to challenge the fee announced by Trump in September, which dramatically raises the cost of obtaining H-1B visas. Currently, employers typically pay between \$2,000 and \$5,000 in fees.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta's office said in a release that Trump lacks the power to impose the fee and that it violates federal law, which allows immigration authorities to collect only fees necessary to cover the cost of administering visa programs. The H-1B program allows U.S. employers to hire foreign workers in specialty fields. The tech industry, with many companies headquartered in California, is particularly reliant on workers who receive the visas. Bonta, a Democrat, said the \$100,000 fee would create unnecessary financial burdens for providers of vital services such as education and healthcare, exacerbating labor shortages and threatening to cut services. The states joining California in the lawsuit include New York, Massachusetts, Illinois, New Jersey and Washington. The White House, in response to other lawsuits, has said the new fee is a lawful exercise of Trump's powers and will discourage employers from abusing the H-1B program.

Critics of H-1B visas and other work visas say they are often used to replace American workers with foreign employees who will work for less. But business groups and major companies have maintained that workers on H-1B visas are a critical means to address a shortage of

IndiGo flight suffers tail strike during landing at Ranchi airport

Ranchi: An IndiGo flight suffered a tail strike while landing at the Ranchi airport, officials said on Saturday. The incident happened around 7.30 pm on Friday when the Bhubaneswar-Ranchi flight was landing with around 70 passengers on board, they said. "The tail of the aircraft touched the runway during landing. Passengers experienced a sudden jolt. However, they were all safe and unharmed," Ranchi airport Director Vinod Kumar told PTI. The plane was grounded following the incident, as it was found to be technically ineligible for takeoff, he said. "Its next departure from Ranchi to Bhubaneswar was cancelled. Some passengers cancelled their journey, while some rescheduled their travel. Some passengers were sent to Bhubaneswar by road," he added.

qualified American workers. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the country's largest business lobby, and a coalition of unions, employers and religious groups have filed separate lawsuits challenging the fee. A judge in Washington, D.C., is set to hold a hearing in the Chamber's lawsuit next week. Trump's order bars new H-1B recipients from entering the United States unless the employer sponsoring their visa has made the \$100,000 payment. The administration has said the order does not apply to existing H-1B holders or those who applied before September 21. Trump in the order invoked his power under federal immigration law to restrict the entry of certain foreign nationals that would be detrimental to U.S. interests. Bonta's office said on Friday the \$100,000 fee far exceeds the cost of processing H-1B petitions, rendering it unlawful. It added the U.S. Constitution bars Trump from unilaterally imposing fees to generate revenue for the United States, a job that is reserved for Congress.

Operation Sindoor continues despite ebb in intensity: CDS Anil Chauhan

Hyderabad: Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan said intensity of the operations may have ebbed but Operation Sindoor continues. "In an era defined by a high degree of operational preparedness 24/7, 365 days, the intensity of operations may have ebbed, but Operation Sindoor continues," he said. General Chauhan, who reviewed the Combined Graduation Parade (CGP) of 216 course at Air Force Academy here on Saturday, said wars were not won by rhetoric but by purposeful action. The CDS told newly commissioned officers that they were entering the Indian Air Force (IAF) during a phase of deep transformation of the armed forces, integrated structures, joint operations, and national pursuit of Atmanirbarta in defence, which are shaping the future of India's military strength.

Violence erupts at Kolkata's Salt Lake stadium after Messi visit; CM Mamata apologises for 'mismanagement'

Thousands of spectators, not only from Kolkata but from different parts of the country, had arrived at the stadium to catch a glimpse of their favourite football star. The convoy of Lionel Messi's entered the stadium at exactly 11.30 a.m. He was accompanied by footballers Luis Suarez and Rodrigo De Paul. The footballers looked happy to witness the frenzy of football fans gathered at the stadium. But as soon as Lionel Messi entered the stadium, a crowd of about 70 to 80 people which included the organisers, State's Sports Minister Aroop Biswas and representatives of football clubs surrounded him. The crowd was trying to take selfies and autographs from the football star, as a result, the spectators were unable to see Messi and other two footballers from the galleries. At one point, the angry football fans started chanting 'We want Messi'. Lionel Messi was taken out of the stadium about 11.52 a.m. even before Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Bollywood actor Shahrukh Khan arrived at the stadium.

Football fans were angry that despite buying tickets at steep prices they were not even able to catch a glimpse of their favourite star. Within minutes angry football fans started breaking chairs in the gallery and throwing them on the field. Bottles started falling on the field. People broke the fencing gate on the edge of the field and entered the field in large numbers. Hundreds of people took control of the stadium and overturned temporary structures in the field. The spectators also set temporary structures on fire inside the stadium. The police personnel tried to push back the crowd but they were outnumbered. Chaos ensued at the football stadium for several minutes. Even outside the stadium thousands of football fans gathered and shouted against the administration and the organisers. There was a large deployment of police which resorted to baton charge to control the crowd.

Lionel Messi on his G.O.A.T. India tour 2025, and he arrived in Kolkata in the early hours of Saturday (December 13, 2025). There were elaborate arrangements to welcome Messi and a 70ft long statue of the Argentinian football legend has been erected on the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass near the Sreebhumi Sporting Club in Lake Town. This was Lionel Messi's second visit to Kolkata that did not go as planned. The football star had visited the city 14 years ago. Mamata orders probe Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee apologised over the incident and ordered an enquiry. "I am deeply disturbed and shocked by the mismanagement witnessed today at Salt Lake Stadium. I was on my way to the stadium to attend the event along with thousands of sports lovers and fans who had gathered to catch a glimpse of their favourite footballer, Lionel Messi," she said in a post on



X. "I sincerely apologise to Lionel Messi, as well as to all sports lovers and his fans, for the unfortunate incident," she said. She said that an enquiry committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Justice (Retd.) Ashim Kumar Ray, with the Chief Secretary and the Additional Chief Secretary, Home and Hill Affairs Department, as members. "The committee will conduct a detailed enquiry into the incident, fix responsibility, and recommend measures to prevent such occurrences in the future," she added. Star footballer Lionel Messi on Saturday (December 13, 2025) virtually unveiled his 70-foot statue installed at the Sree Bhumi Sporting Club in Lake Town, Kolkata. The Argentine football legend is in the city as part of his GOAT Tour India 2025. The unveiling drew a huge crowd of fans who gathered in Lake Town to witness the moment. Argentine footballer Lionel Messi with TMC MLA Sujit Bose virtually unveils his 70-feet statue as part of his 'G.O.A.T. India Tour 2025', in Kolkata, on December 13, 2025. Argentine footballer Lionel Messi with TMC MLA Sujit Bose virtually unveils his 70-feet statue as part of his 'G.O.A.T. India Tour 2025', in Kolkata, on December 13, 2025 | Photo Credit: PTI. The Sree Bhumi Sporting Club completed the 70-foot iron statue in admiration for Lionel Messi at Lake Town in South Dum Dum, Kolkata. The statue depicts Messi holding the FIFA World Cup trophy and will be virtually unveiled by the legend himself on Saturday (December 13, 2025). West Bengal Minister and Sree Bhumi Sporting Club President Sujit Bose said on Saturday that Lionel Messi and his team are happy with the statue installed in Lake Town. Speaking to ANI, Sujit Bose said Messi and his team had given their consent to the statue and were happy with it. "We have talked to his manager, and today we will talk to Messi... He gave his consent for the statue and they are also happy...," Sujit Bose told ANI. The construction of the statue was completed in just 40 days. Bose earlier told

CBSE may conduct trials of open-book exams; no plans to adopt format in boards

The board has proposed a pilot run of open-book tests for classes 9 to 12 in subjects like English, Science, Math & Biology in line with National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE). The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is considering trials of Open-Book Examination (OBE) in select schools for classes 9 to 12 this year as part of the new national curriculum framework (NCF) recommendations of adopting innovative assessment methods, officials familiar with the development said, while emphasising that there is no such plan to adopt the OBE format in board examinations. "The plan to carry out an OBE pilot in some schools was discussed as a part of the NCF recommendations. It could be used in internal exams to promote innovative thinking among students. However, it is only in an ideation phase, and there is no plan to adopt the OBE format in the CBSE class 10 and 12 board examination," said a senior CBSE official, requesting anonymity. According to the curriculum committee meeting held on November 16, 2023, the board has proposed a pilot run of open-book tests for classes 9 to 12 in subjects like English, Science, Mathematics and Biology in line with the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE).

Under open book exams, students are allowed to access textbooks and other relevant resources to answer the questions asked in the test. These tests are usually composed of conceptual and analytical questions that make students read multiple texts, interpret the text, and apply the concept. The proposed timeline to design the test for select schools is June 2024 and pilot testing is November-December 2024. "The board will only consider adopting the mode of assessment as part of its multi assessment scheme after taking into account views of all stakeholders," the official quoted above said. The Delhi University had adopted the online OBE format for examinations amid the Covid-19 pandemic between 2020-2021. However, it resumed to the normal pen and paper format from 2022. Unveiling 'Elections 2024: The Big Picture', a fresh segment in HT's talk show 'The Interview with Kumkum Chadha', where leaders across the political spectrum discuss the upcoming general elections. **N**adu **T**elangana **T**ripura **U**ttar **P**radesh **U**ttarakhand **W**est **B**engal These Terms and Conditions ("T&C"), as amended from time to time are the complete and exclusive statements of understanding between HT Media Limited ("HTML") & the Users and shall enroll for availing the Services on (hereinafter referred to as the "BOARD RESULTS" <https://www.livehindustan.com/career/results/> or <https://www.hindustantimes.com/education/board-exams> and "EDUCATION SERVICES" "<https://www.livehindustan.com/career>" or "<https://www.hindustantimes.com/education>"). All representation or other communications between HTML & the User amounts to acceptance of these terms & conditions Board Result (<https://www.livehindustan.com/career/results/>) or <https://www.hindustantimes.com/education>



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Azerbaijan claims full control of breakaway region; holds initial talks with ethnic Armenians

Azerbaijan regained control of its breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh in a deadly two-day military offensive and held initial talks with representatives of its ethnic Armenian population on reintegrating the area into the mainly Muslim country, Azerbaijan's top diplomat told the UN Security Council on September 21. Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov reaffirmed Azerbaijan's determination to guarantee Nagorno-Karabakh residents "all rights and freedoms" in line with the country's constitution and international human rights obligations, including safeguards for ethnic minorities. He said the talks with Nagorno-Karabakh in the Azerbaijani city of Yevlakh will continue. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev declared victory in a televised address. Mr. Bayramov said there is now "a historic opportunity" to seek better relations with Armenia after 30 years of conflict. Nagorno-Karabakh came under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by the Armenian military in separatist fighting that ended in 1994. Armenian forces also took control of substantial territory around the Azerbaijani region.

Azerbaijan regained control of the surrounding territory in a six-week war with Armenia in 2020. A Russia-brokered armistice ended the war, and a contingent of 2,000 Russian peacekeepers was sent to the region to monitor it. The agreement left the region's capital, Stepanakert, connected to Armenia only by the Lachin Corridor, along which Russian peacekeepers were supposed to ensure free movement. But a blockade by Azerbaijan deprived Nagorno-Karabakh of basic supplies for the last 10 months, until Monday, when the International Committee of the Red Cross was able to make a delivery through another route. Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, who called for the emergency meeting of the Security Council along with France, accused Azerbaijan of an "unprovoked and well-planned military attack," launched to coincide with this week's annual meeting of world leaders at the UN General Assembly. "Literally the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh," including Stepanakert and other cities and settlements, came under attack from intense and indiscriminate shelling, missiles, heavy artillery, banned cluster munitions, combat drones and other aircraft," he said. Mr. Mirzoyan said the offensive targeted critical infrastructure such as electricity stations, telephone cables and internet equipment, killed more than 200 people and wounded 400 others, including women and children. "More than 10,000 people fled their homes to escape the offensive," he said. "Electricity and phone services were knocked out, leaving people unable to contact each other, and 'Azerbaijani troops control main roads in Nagorno-Karabakh, which makes it impossible to visit and get information on the ground,'" he said. "The Azerbaijani social media is full of calls to find the missing children and women, to rape them, dismember them and feed them to dogs," Mr.

Mirzoyan told the council. He said the "barbarity" of Azerbaijan's aggression and deliberate targeting of the civilian population "was the final act of this tragedy aimed at the forced exodus of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh." What Armenia has seen, Mr. Mirzoyan said, "is not an intent anymore but clear and irrefutable evidence of a policy of ethnic cleansing and mass atrocities." Mr. Bayramov strongly denied the allegations of ethnic cleansing. He said representatives from Nagorno-Karabakh asked during Thursday's talks for humanitarian aid, including food and fuel for schools, hospitals and other facilities that government agencies will provide soon. Russia's Deputy UN ambassador, Dmitry Polyansky, told the council: "We need to develop a gradual roadmap to integrate the population of Nagorno-Karabakh into the constitutional order of Azerbaijan, with clear guarantees over their rights and security," "Russia's peacekeepers will support these efforts," he said, adding that "the security and rights of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians are of key importance." The quick capitulation by Nagorno-Karabakh separatists reflected their weakness from the blockade.

"The local forces, they were never strong. The Azerbaijani Army is much better prepared, much better equipped. ... So it was quite obvious, you know, that any military action that was to take place in that area, it would lead to the defeat of the local Armenian side," Olesya Vartanyan, an analyst at the International Crisis Group, told The Associated Press. Mr. Bayramov said Armenia kept more than 10,000 "armed formations" and heavy military equipment in Nagorno-Karabakh after the 2020 agreement. "During the operation that started on Tuesday, more than 90 of their outposts were taken, along with substantial military equipment," he said. He held up photos of equipment he claimed was seized. Mr. Mirzoyan urged the Security Council to demand protection for civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh; to immediately deploy a UN mission to monitor the human rights, humanitarian and security situation; to seek return of prisoners of war; and to consider deploying a UN peacekeeping force to the region. Azerbaijan's move to reclaim control over Nagorno-Karabakh raised concerns that a full-scale war in the region could resume. The 2020 war killed over 6,700 people. White House national security spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. was "deeply concerned" about Azerbaijan's military actions and was closely watching the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In a phone call on Thursday with Mr. Aliyev, Russian President Vladimir Putin also urged that the rights and security of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh should be guaranteed, according to the Tass news agency. "Mr. Aliyev apologised to Mr. Putin during the call for the deaths of Russian peacekeepers in the region on Wednesday," the Kremlin said. Azerbaijan's prosecutor-general's office

later said five Russian peacekeepers were shot and killed on Wednesday by Azerbaijani troops who mistook them amid fog and rain for Armenian forces. One other Russian was killed by Armenian fighters. Meanwhile, protesters rallied in the Armenian capital of Yerevan for a third day on Thursday, demanding that authorities defend Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and calling for the resignation of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. "At least 46 people were arrested in a large protest outside the main government building in the city centre," police said. The conflict has long drawn powerful regional players, including Russia and Turkiye. While Russia took on a mediating role, Turkiye threw its weight behind long-time ally Azerbaijan. Russia has been Armenia's main economic partner and ally since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union and has a military base in the country. Mr. Pashinyan, however, has been increasingly critical of Moscow's role, emphasising its failure to protect Nagorno-Karabakh and arguing that Armenia needs to turn to the West to ensure its security. Moscow, in turn, has expressed dismay about Mr. Pashinyan's pro-Western tilt. While many in Armenia blamed Russia for the defeat of the separatists, Moscow pointed to Mr. Pashinyan's own recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan. "Undoubtedly, Karabakh is Azerbaijan's internal business," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. "Azerbaijan is acting on its own territory, which was recognised by the leadership of Armenia." French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna condemned Azerbaijan's offensive and said it is essential that the ceasefire announced on Wednesday is respected. What is at stake, Ms. Colonna said, is whether the ethnic Armenians in



Nagorno-Karabakh can continue living there with their rights and culture respected by Azerbaijan. "Today, they have the responsibility for the fate of the population," she said. If Azerbaijan wants a peaceful and negotiated solution, Ms. Colonna said, "it must here and now provide tangible guarantees" and commit to discussions and to not using or threatening the use of force. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock also condemned Azerbaijan's military assault, which she said was launched despite the government's assurances to refrain from the use of force. She called for a complete cessation of violence and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan that "can only be achieved at the negotiating table." Ms. Baerbock urged both countries to return to European Union-mediated talks.

Google mocks Apple in new video for lack of RCS messaging support

San Francisco: Google has mocked Apple in a new video by comparing the iPhone to an "iPager" because it does not use the RCS (Rich Communication Services) messaging protocol and still uses the decades-old SMS/MMS protocol for messaging with Android users. According to The Verge, Google last year launched a "Get the Message" campaign to put pressure on Apple to support RCS on the iPhone, which is still ongoing today with "iPager". "iPager isn't real, but the problems that Apple causes by using SMS are," said Google in the video description on YouTube. "Let's make texting better for everyone and help Apple #GetTheMessage and upgrade to RCS," it added. RCS enhances messaging by providing end-to-end encryption, read receipts, and the ability to share high-resolution photos and videos. iMessage provides similar features, but only for messages sent between other iMessage users, making Android users



appear as green message bubble nuisances in group messages — a real issue in countries like the US, where more than half of the population owns an iPhone, the report said. Google ended the video with a link to Android.com/GetTheMessage and the new animated mascot. The campaign has been underway for one year, and iOS 17 just became available as a new update to Apple's operating system. However, there's no support for RCS there.

Lakhs of objections for definition of 'sage-soyare' in draft notification

MUMBAI: While the Maharashtra government is all set to pass new legislation to accord a reservation quota to the Maratha community, it may also take a call on the objections raised by the other backward classes (OBCs) to its notification which allows Marathas to get Kunbi certificates based on the Kunbi antecedents of blood relatives. Based on the objections, the government is expected to make changes in the notification during the one-day special session on Tuesday.

In the last two weeks, ever since the notification was issued, the government has received more than 1.5 million objections and suggestions in response. Over 250 employees and officers have been deputed in the last three days to scrutinise the responses, and the social justice department has been asked to submit a report on these. Based on the latter, the state will make changes in the notification to ensure that the OBC community is not upset. OBC outfits and their leaders like Chhagan Bhujbal, Prakash Shendage, Vijay Wadettiwar and Shabbir Ansari had

raised strong objections to the draft notification issued by the government on January 26.

The draft notification on 'sage-soyare' (close relations) facilitates the issuance of Kunbi certificates to the blood relatives of Marathas with documents to prove their Kunbi antecedents as also to people in the same patriarchal lineage and to relatives by marriage, albeit of the same caste. The Kunbi certificates ensure the inclusion of Marathas in the OBC quota, which is why Marathas are up in arms, anticipating a major encroachment on their quota.

"We have submitted over two million objections to the draft notification," said Chandrakant Bavkar, working president of the OBC Janmorchha. "The definition of sage-soyare is erroneous and will help Marathas get certificates by dubious means. The definition will lead to the inclusion of lakhs of Marathas in the OBC category based on a convenient interpretation of the notification." Ansari, on his part, raised doubts about whether the OBC's objections and suggestions would be scrupu-

lised and said the community feared they would be trashed. The OBCs have objected to the definition of 'sage-soyare', claiming that it does not establish caste or class and is inappropriate in a caste reservation issue. They also claim that since marriages even within the same caste have a very vast ambit, these could be used to obtain Kunbi certificates; additionally, they have accused the government of attempting to change the definition of patriarchal and matriarchal lineage. The community's contention is that the draft notification has been issued only to favour Marathas, and the objections have even questioned the state government's right to draft such a notification.

"We have been compiling a report for the last three days, and it is expected to be mentioned in the state legislature during the special session," said a Mantralaya official. "Although the rough count of the objections to and suggestions on the draft, as also the letters in support of the draft, was 400,000 on Saturday, we are still receiving loads from our district offices. They are

being divided into various categories and the compilation will be presented to the government. The call on the changes in the draft notification will be taken on the basis of this." Meanwhile, the state government is expected to table a bill for separate reservation of 10 to 12 percent for Marathas in education and jobs on February 21. It will be based on the report submitted by the Maharashtra State Commission for the Backward Classes last week. The bill will be tabled in both the houses of the state legislature once the report and bill is approved by the state cabinet meeting to be held before the session.

Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil, who has been on a hunger strike for the last ten days, said that his further course of action would be decided based on what the government offered in the February 21 session. "Separate reservation will benefit just a few rich Marathas, but most of the community members are in favour of their inclusion in the OBC category," he said. "For this, the government should start issuing Kunbi certificates."

New study decodes the deep connection between eating disorders and depression

Recent research published in Cureus: Journal of Medical Science found an intrinsic link between eating disorders and depression. A cross-sectional study conducted in Saudi Arabia among adolescents found that the more severe the depressive symptoms were, the higher the prevalence of eating disorders existed.

The study noted that patients diagnosed with eating disorders (EDs) demonstrated higher risks of eating psychopathology, including distorted body image, and general psychopathology, such as depression, anxiety, impulsivity, and low self-esteem, surpassing anticipated levels. "Moreover, our findings underscored the pivotal role of age in influencing the prevalence of these conditions, as younger adolescents emerged as a distinct risk group susceptible to both EDs and depression," it said. In fact, according to a study published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in 2019, the global eating disorder prevalence increased from 3.4 per cent to 7.8 per cent between 2000 and 2018.

Concurring with the findings, Dr Jyoti Kapoor, founder-director and senior psychiatrist at Manasthali, told indianexpress.com that depression and eating disorders frequently co-occur. "Individuals with eating disorders often experience symptoms of depression, such as persistent sadness, feelings of worthlessness, and loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed. Conversely, people with depression may develop disordered eating patterns as a way to cope with their



emotional distress." Eating disorders and depression, Link between eating disorders and depression. Younger adolescents emerged as a distinct risk group suscep-

tible to both EDs and depression. (Source: Freepik) Dr Priyanka Rohatgi, chief nutritionist at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, added that a negative reinforcement cycle

exists between depression and eating disorders. "Depression's impact on motivation, energy levels, and self-care can make unhealthy eating habits spiral out of control more easily.

New twist to old problem in Maoist-hit regions

On Saturday, a joint team of the Chhattisgarh police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) broke new ground, opening a forward operating base in Sukma's Puverti village. Deep in south Chhattisgarh, Puverti has for the past three decades been an impregnable fortress for the CPI (Maoist); a village that has rarely, if ever, seen either the police or an administrative presence.

It has also been a key source of manpower for the rebels with over a hundred recruits in 20 years and home for two men who are cornerstones of the Maoist presence in Chhattisgarh, considered the architects of one violent attack after the other, Madvi Hidma and Barse Deva, both commanders of the People Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) battalion No 1 – the Maoist military formation that operates in the conflict affected districts of Sukma, Bijapur, Dantewada and Bastar. Yet Saturday was also evidence of the Maoist counter-reaction that this forward push is now eliciting — attacks on forward camps set up by security forces, once common in battleground Bastar, but rare over the past two decades.

On February 17, as forces just finished setting up the camp in the middle of the dense forests, they found themselves under fire from two dozen armed Maoists. "This was expected, and we hit them back hard," a senior police officer said. This time, the security personnel faced no casualties.

The attack was the third in a month. On January 30, three CRPF jawans were killed and 14 others injured in an attack at Sukma's Tekelgudem camp on the day that it opened. Two weeks before that, on January 16, Maoists attacked the Dharmaram camp in Bijapur district but there were no casualties in the exchange of fire — again, on the same day the camp opened.

The last time security camps were targeted in such coordinated fashion was in the late 2000s, security officials who have operated in the area said. In April 2007, for instance, Maoists launched a deadly attack on the Ranibodli camp in Dantewada district, leaving 55 security personnel dead. A year earlier, in April 2006, a similar attack at Murkinar in Dantewada left 10 dead. In February 2006, Maoists attacked a CISF armoury at the Bailadila mines, looting 50 tonnes of explosives, leaving nine dead. Security camps are a key cog in the state apparatus in Chhattisgarh, important because they establish a presence in hostile areas. A camp can have between 250 and 600 personnel, depending on the size and sensitivity of the area, and once established, they are used as landing points for the district administration to attempt to set up medical camps, schools, markets and building roads. P Sundar Raj, inspector general of police (Bastar) said, "In the fight against LWE (left wing extremism), the opening of camps can be divided into four phases. The first was before 2012, when camps were set up to connect places near the main districts of the state. The second was between 2011 and 2017, which helped connect district headquarters and

the blocks. The phase since 2017 can be characterised as the third phase which has been to open camps to make inroads into core areas. We are now in the fourth and final phase, which is setting up camps in core areas and ensuring the residents there are part of the country's democratic system. Puverti is one such core area."

Personnel on the ground said that since 2014, attacks on camps stopped as security arrangements improved, and Maoists were pushed back into core areas. But as forces now push into those same core areas, the threat of camp attacks are back. "Maoists attacking camps is a new trend we are seeing on the ground. Our brass is redrawing our strategy. This will be similar to the SOP (standard operating procedure) that we followed when these events were at their peak before 2010. Then LWE extremists controlled large areas and had strength in numbers, so they were proactive and launched direct attacks. The situation is now different. They are desperate with forces gaining ground everyday," a senior CRPF officer said. The officer did not reveal details of the new SOP, citing operational reasons, but added that one key aspect would be to monitor a perimeter area of 5 square kilometres around every camp to avoid an ambush or an attack. Kiran Chauhan, superintendent of police (Sukma) said, "Every month, the forces are entering the Naxal stronghold. For example, the January 30 ambush happened at the Tekelgudem camp where we established a post after more than 30 years. In the last 18 days, we moved 5km further south from Tekelgudem and set up camp at Puverti. On Saturday, we suspected Naxals would come to disrupt us. Some men came and fired but we successfully retaliated. Not a single person on our side was injured."

Senior police officers said that they expected more hostility from the Maoists because of the symbolism attached to villages such as Puverti. In the village on Sunday, security forces spent time speaking with, and posing next to an elderly woman, Hidma's mother.

"Yesterday she asked us for medical help, and our forces brought a doctor. Not every resident wants to join them (Maoists), and villagers are often used as a shield during encounters," Sundar Raj said. The forces believe that setting up camps in Puverti, and reaching out to families of the most storied commanders of the guerrillas, deals the Maoists a psychological blow. Madvi Hidma is named on NIA's list of India's most wanted men, and has a combined reward of ₹1 crore on his head. Barse Deva, too, carries a reward of ₹1 crore announced by central agencies and different state police forces. "Puverti has always been significant because it is the village of Hidma and Barse Deva, the two most significant commanders of the PLGA battalion number one, responsible for almost every attack in south Chhattisgarh. We will not stop here and move forward some more, setting up health camps, markets



and schools. But if villagers see that Hidma and other commanders cannot protect their own village, that affects their ability to recruit, and many will believe that these villages too will be liberated," Sundar Raj said. RK Vij, former special director general (anti-Naxal operations) of the Chhattisgarh police, warned that while these advances into core areas is welcome, there will be a sustained and targeted backlash over the coming months. "Maoists are firing at camps because it is now a question of survival for them. When forces are

setting up camps in their core zones, they have no option but to attempt to chase the forces away. Their ability to hold meetings in these villages has now been finished. In the next few years, as the government forces work to set up camps in core areas, such attacks will be more frequent," he said. "They will try to engage in mobile warfare — quickly attacking large groups of security forces and then returning back to their base. Our forces must be vigilant, secure the perimeter, and build contact with locals."

Air Canada forced to honour refund policy made up by AI chatbot



After months of trial, a civil court told Air Canada that it must refund a customer who was given incorrect information about refunds by an AI chatbot on the company's website. The company had argued that the chatbot was a separate legal entity and that it was not responsible for its actions.

Jake Moffat, the petitioner in the case, visited Air Canada's website immediately after his grandmother died, reports Ars Technica. He was unsure about how the airline's bereavement rates worked so he asked the chatbot on the website to explain. But the chatbot misled him by asking him to book a flight immediately and then to request a refund within 90 days. That was not how it worked.

This is what Air Canada's company policy says about the policy: "Air Canada's bereavement travel policy offers an option for our customers who need to travel because of the imminent death or death of an immediate family member. Please be aware that our Bereavement policy does not allow refunds for travel that has already happened."

Moffat followed what the chatbot told him to do and took the flight. He then asked Air Canada for a refund, which the company refused. At the time, the company argued that the chatbot's response had a link to the actual policy, and that meant Moffat

should have known bereavement rates could not be requested after the flight. After trying to get a refund for months, Moffat filed a small claims complaint in Canada's Civil Resolution Tribunal. In court, Air Canada suggested that the chatbot is a separate legal entity that is responsible for its own actions.

"This is a remarkable submission. While a chatbot has an interactive component, it is still just a part of Air Canada's website. It should be obvious to Air Canada that it is responsible for all the information on its website. It makes no difference whether the information comes from a static page or a chatbot," wrote a tribunal member in the court's ruling. This case in Canada is the first of its kind, according to Mashable. This could mean that the judgement from the case could have implications for future cases where other companies' AI-powered chatbots come under the scanner.