



Congratulations to CM for presenting people's welfare budget

“Jagithyal Correspondent , March 21 (Indian Chronicle) : Jagithyal Congress senior leader and prominent lawyer Gunti Jagadishwar has congratulated Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for allocating sufficient funds in the budget to implement the six guarantees given in the election manifesto. State Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka met Jagadishwar in Hyderabad and thanked him for presenting the people's welfare budget. He thanked the CM, Deputy CM, and PCC Chief for prioritizing welfare schemes in the budget.

Extensive Police Checks Across District to Curb Crime: Police Commissioner

“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam Staff Reporter March 21 indian Chronicle:“As part of efforts to control crime and prevent illegal activities, the district police have intensified large-scale inspections across the region, said Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt.“Police personnel conducted regular patrolling around ATM centers and bank premises, while also carrying out checks on suspicious individuals and vehicles during late-night hours. The Commissioner stated that strict vehicle inspections are being carried out to curb the illegal transportation of sand, ganja, and ration rice, especially across interstate borders.“He further instructed officials to register cases against trucks illegally transporting sand from neighboring states. Vehicles found violating transport department norms or lacking proper documentation are being penalized and fined accordingly.“In view of rising road accidents caused by drunk driving, the police have also intensified “drunk and drive” checks. Cases are being registered against those found driving under the influence of alcohol.“Additionally, to prevent thefts, police are closely monitoring the movements of known offenders and conducting thorough inspections across all police station jurisdictions. Whenever suspicious persons or vehicles are identified, detailed information is collected before allowing them to proceed.



Ramzan Greetings Extended to Muslim Community by Wyra Municipal Leaders



“Arvapalli Nagesh khammam Staff Reporter March 21 indian Chronicle:“On the occasion of the holy festival of Ramzan (Eid-ul-Fitr), Wyra Municipality Chairman Kapa Chandrakala Muralikrishna and 20th Ward Councillor Undru Varalakshmi Shyam Babu extended warm greetings to Muslim brothers and sisters.“As part of the celebrations on Saturday, the leaders visited several wards in Wyra Municipality at the invitation of Muslim families and personally conveyed their heartfelt Ramzan wishes. Former Khammam District Congress Committee President Puvvalla Durgaprasad and District Congress Doctors and Medical Health Wing Chairman Dr. Kapa Muralikrishna also joined in extending greetings to the community.“In their message, the leaders appreciated the Muslim community for observing the holy month of Ramzan with devotion through fasting, prayers, and charitable activities. They stated that such practices play a vital role in promoting peace, harmony, and brotherhood in society. They wished that the festival of Ramzan brings happiness, good health, and prosperity to all.“The leaders visited the homes of several community members across wards, including Sheikh Rahim Pandu (20th Ward), Mohammed Ghouse (14th Ward), Sheikh Khammam Meera, Sheikh Beba (4th Ward), Sheikh Babu Jani, Sheikh Afzal, Kausar, Syed Anwar (13th Ward), and Sheikh Sondu Saheb (12th Ward), and conveyed special festival greetings.“On the occasion, former DCC President Puvvalla Durgaprasad and Shyam Babu were felicitated with shawls. Several Congress leaders and local representatives, including Mandal Congress President Sheelam Venkata Narsireddy, Market Committee Chairman Bolla Gangarao, Sarpanch Association President Sheelam Chandrasekhar Reddy, District Congress leaders Podila Harinath, Pammi Ashok, Ratnakar, Pallapu Kondalu, Veeramshetty Sitaramulu, Pammi Tirumala Rao, Telluri Veeraiah, Prudhvi, Kaja, Guguloth Vijay, and others, participated in the program.“[8:03 PM, 3/21/2026] +91 96187 88997: End

Telangana Budget Sparks Outrage: Journalists Allege Gross Neglect and Broken Promises.



“P. S. ASHOKAN
“KARIMNAGAR BUREAU. “The
Telangana State Budget has triggered
sharp backlash from the journalistic
community, with leaders accusing the
government of completely sidelining
their welfare. Representatives of the
Telangana Union of Working Journal-
ists (TUWJ-H-143) and IJU National
Council members Ankari Prakash and
Tagarapu Shankar strongly con-
demned the budget, terming it a clear

act of injustice against media
professionals. “They expressed disap-
pointment that the government, led by
Revanth Reddy, failed to uphold expect-
ations of a compassionate and sup-
portive approach toward journalists. In-
stead, the absence of any dedicated
allocation for the Journalists’ Welfare
Fund in the budget has exposed what
they described as a lack of genuine
intent and accountability. “The leaders
criticized the government for ignoring
a crucial sector that plays a pivotal role
as a bridge between the administration
and the public. They stated that exclud-
ing welfare provisions for journalists is
not only unjust but also reflects a dis-
missive attitude toward the media
fraternity. “Highlighting unfulfilled
promises, they recalled that the ruling party
had assured an allocation of ₹100 crore
for journalists’ welfare in its election
manifesto. The failure to honor this
commitment in the current budget, they
said, amounts to a serious breach of
trust and raises questions about the
government’s credibility. “They also
voiced concern over the continued ne-
glect of the long-pending demand for
housing plots for journalists, noting that
the budget made no mention of this criti-

cal issue. Such omissions, they argued,
reveal a pattern of indifference toward
the legitimate needs of
journalists. “Further intensifying their
criticism, the leaders pointed out that
despite repeated appeals, the govern-
ment has not addressed the demand for
health cards for journalists on par with
government employees. The complete
absence of this issue in the budget
speech, they said, is both shocking and
unacceptable. “They warned that this
silence could indicate a move to per-
manently scrap the Journalist Health
Scheme, thereby putting the health se-
curity of journalists at risk. Such a deci-
sion, if true, would have far-reaching
consequences for media personnel
across the state. “Condemning what
they described as “mere rhetoric and
empty assurances,” the TUWJ leaders
accused the government of misleading
journalists with promises that lack con-
crete backing. They asserted that the
current budget stands as a clear ex-
ample of neglect and discrimination
against the media community. “The
leaders also questioned the silence of
Telangana Media Academy Chairman
Srinivas Reddy, asking why he has not



responded despite the evident injustice.
They demanded accountability and clar-
ity on his stance. “Making their position
clear, they declared that the Telangana
Union of Working Journalists, under the
leadership of Allam Narayana, will not
remain silent. They warned of intensi-
fied agitation and statewide protests if
the government fails to address the con-
cerns and ensure rightful welfare mea-
sures for journalists..

Grand Ramadan Celebrations Held in Mallapur



Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, March 21: The holy
month of Ramadan was celebrated with great fervor and devotion
in Mallapur. The events were marked by spiritual gatherings and
community participation. Special prayers were conducted at the
Old Mallapur Jama Masjid, drawing a large number of devotees
from across the area. “BRS leaders, including prominent figure
Usman, extended their warm Ramadan greetings to the Muslim
community, emphasizing the spirit of unity, peace, and compas-
sion that the festival represents. The prayer sessions were led by
respected religious leaders, including Maulana, Abdul Jabbar Khan,
and Imran, who guided the congregation in performing the rituals
and highlighted the importance of fasting, charity, and reflection
during this sacred month. “The celebrations also featured discus-
sions on fostering communal harmony and social responsibility,
encouraging the community to engage in acts of kindness and
support for the needy. The event concluded with a sense of to-
getherness and reinforced the cultural and spiritual significance of
Ramadan in the region.



Union Minister visits Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy

Special puja by Bandi Sanjay to Anjaneya Swamy

— “Jagithyal Correspondent, March 21 (In-
dian Chronicle): Union Minister of State for Home
Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, visited the
Kondagattu Anjaneya Swamy temple located in
Mutypeta, Mallial mandal, Jagithyal district, on
Saturday. As Bandi Sanjay Kumar entered the
temple, the priests welcomed him with a full pot
(Purnakumbham). He visited Kondagattu
Anjaneya Swamy and performed special puja. The
priests performed the archana with Sanjay Kumar’s gotra and nama, blessed, and
honored him. On the 14th of this month, the Anjaneya Swamy Blessing Yatra
started from Karimnagar to Kondagattu, and he arrived at the temple at 11 pm, but
the temple was closed. He said he would visit later and came for darshan on
Saturday. The Union Minister was accompanied by Karimnagar Mayor Srinivas,
Corporator Banda Ramana Reddy, BJP leaders, and others.



CI Ramakrishna Felicitated



“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, March
21: “Ramakrishna, who recently assumed charge as the Circle
Inspector of Chilakalaguda Police Station, was felicitated by
Greater Congress Vice President Naguluri Sai Baba with a
shawl and conveyed his best wishes. “On Saturday, he met him
courteously at his residence in Chilakalaguda and presented a
bouquet, extending his congratulations. Congress party lead-
ers Satish, Anjaneyulu, and Pramod, among others, were
present at the event. “On this occasion, CI Ramakrishna stated
that public participation is very important in maintaining law
and order.

Hyderabad gears up for Rockstar Anirudh Ravichander's landmark Stadium show; parking, entry and travel advisory announced

Hyderabad: The city is set to come alive as it prepares to host one of its biggest live music spectacles - Rockstar Anirudh XV – 15 Years With You concert at the Gachibowli Outdoor Stadium on March 21st, 2026. Marking 15 years of chart-topping music and electrifying performances, the highly anticipated stadium show is expected to draw massive crowds, with comprehensive on-ground preparations underway to ensure a seamless fan experience. The concert is produced by Brand Avatar, co-produced by TribeVibe Entertainment and presented by Ocean Vibes. With Hyderabad gearing up for this landmark event, organisers have put in place extensive parking, entry and transportation arrangements to ensure smooth access and crowd movement across the venue. Event Timings & Entry Information Gates Open: 4:30 PM (sharp) Stage Opens: 6:00 PM (sharp) Attendees are strongly advised to arrive early to allow sufficient time for entry procedures and avoid last-minute congestion. Parking & Shuttle Arrangements To manage high footfall efficiently, designated parking zones have been allocated based on ticket categories, along with limited shuttle services: Boulder Hills Parking Applicable for Silver & Gold ticket holders Car & Bike parking available (bike parking only here) Shuttle service available (limited buses) Access via Gate 1 and Gate 4 Parking on a first-come, first-served basis Sandhya Convention Parking (View Map) Applicable for Fan Pit ticket holders Car parking only Shuttle service available (limited buses) Parking on a first-come, first-served basis Gachibowli Stadium Parking (View Map) Applicable for Rockstar Fan Pit ticket holders Parking on a first-come, first-served basis Important Parking & Travel Advisory Park only in designated zones as per your ticket category Shuttle services will operate until 11:00 PM only Early arrival is highly recommended due to limited parking capacity Cab drop & pickup point (View Map) Taxi Drop & Pickup Point: Near the stadium gate



And it's a sixer! Edelweiss Life certified Great Place To Work 6th year in a row



Hyderabad Edelweiss Life Insurance today announced it has been certified a Great Place to Work for the 6th consecutive Year. This recognition reinforces the insurer's commitment to nurturing long-term careers, a fitting reflection of a business rooted in long-term promises. Saba Adil, Chief Human Resource Officer, Edelweiss Life Insurance said, "In a business like ours, where advice and service are at the heart of every customer relationship, our people are our greatest differentiator. Building a workplace where they can grow, contribute meaningful, and build long-term careers is not only a cultural priority, but also a business imperative. At this point in our growth journey, the depth and continuity of talent will directly influence our ability to deliver on business goals. When employees stay and evolve with us, it strengthens customer trust and creates the foundation for sustained performance.

Edelweiss Life has worked extensively on building its leadership strength internally through merit-based, structured talent building programmes like Business Leaders and Emerging Leaders. Today ~70% of its senior leadership is home grown, supported by a retention rate of more than 95% among its key talent pool.

Focused capability building in front line sales has raised women representation to 38% as of December 2025, 10% up from the last 5 years. Currently, women account of 34% of the organisation's workforce. Women value workplaces that understand and respond to their unique challenges. We have seen stronger outcomes by investing in their growth and enabling seamless work-life integration. Many of our women employees show higher stickiness and productivity because they see a longer-term path. Today, women form ~30% of the organisation's key talent pool", Adil added. "The life insurer remains committed to building a future-ready organisation, recognising that its people advantage will be a key driver of long-term growth.

Signify bets big on cricket: EcoLink becomes associate sponsor for Rajasthan Royals



“Hyderabad” As India gears up for the electrifying T20 season, Signify (Euronext: LIGHT), the world leader in lighting, today announced the partnership of its emerging electrical brand EcoLink with Rajasthan Royals. Through this collaboration, EcoLink becomes the associate sponsor for the team, strengthening the brand's presence on one of India's biggest sporting platforms and deepening the connect with millions of cricket fans across the country. “The partnership also aligns with the upcoming product portfolio from EcoLink, reinforcing the brand's commitment to delivering reliable and efficient solutions for Indian consumers. Much like the pursuit of excellence on the field by Rajasthan Royals, EcoLink aims to power comfort and convenience in millions of homes across the country. As part of the collaboration, the brand will feature prominently on leading head gear, supported by an integrated promotional campaign and digital activations throughout the tournament.

“Sumit Joshi, CEO and MD, Signify, Greater India said, "At Signify, we are committed to driving innovation and delivering meaningful value to our consumers. With EcoLink, our emerging electrical brand, we are focused on bringing reliable and accessible solutions to Indian homes. As we expand the brand's presence across the country, the Indian Premier League offers a powerful platform to connect with millions of consumers. Our partnership with Rajasthan Royals allows us to engage with passionate cricket fans while bringing EcoLink closer to households across India. This collaboration reflects our ambition to strengthen the brand's footprint and accelerate its growth in one of the world's most dynamic markets.”“Nikhil Gupta, Head of Strategy and Marketing for Greater India, Signify, added, "Cricket is deeply embedded in India's cultural fabric, and the upcoming season offers an unparalleled platform for brands to connect with audiences at scale. We have received a strong consumer response for our EcoLink BLDC fans across India. With our partnership with Rajasthan Royals, we aim to create high-impact visibility for EcoLink through on-ground presence, leading head gear branding, and integrated fan engagement initiatives. This partnership is a key part of our strategy to build a stronger consumer connect and reinforce EcoLink as a trusted, accessible BLDC fans brand for millions of Indian homes."

OnePlus launches OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro, combining brilliant noise cancellation with powerful bass“Quiet Space. Max Bass

“Hyderabad” Global technology brand OnePlus today unveiled its latest and greatest OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro in full, ushering in a new era of Pro-level audio quality at Nord-level pricing. The OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro will go on sale starting March 23. Priced at INR 3,999, the earbuds will be available at a special launch price of INR 3,799 for a limited time launch offer. “Quiet space“OnePlus has given OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro truly top tier technology to make listening to your music an even better experience than ever. This begins with flagship level active noise cancellation (ANC) technology that means OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro can block up to 55 decibels of noise, an effective noise reduction bandwidth of 5000Hz, the highest ever seen in the OnePlus Nord Buds series. Further, OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro use advanced AI algorithms to monitor noise in real time, blocking out the background hubbub instantly, while users can also choose between light, moderate and maximum ANC. All this combines to provide a truly quiet space for your music, which is why OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro has received TÜV Rheinland high-performance noise cancellation certification. “Maximum bass“OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro aren't just designed to offer silence however - they've been tuned to give an absolutely amazing listening experience. This starts with the new drivers inside each Bud, which provide 100% more power than those inside OnePlus Nord Buds 3 Pro, and feature titanium coating for rich, deep bass and clearer vocals. They're also equipped with spatial audio, to help deliver sound like it's coming from all around you, and even have a gaming specific spatial audio mode tuned to give fans of BGMI, Free Fire and Call of Duty a serious in-game advantage by helping them hear gunshots and footsteps clearer and earlier. “Terrific technology“OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro also support the latest and greatest audio technology. As well as supporting LHDC 5.0 for high definition music, they also support Bluetooth 6.0 which supports nearly lossless high resolution audio and gives even more stable connections in crowded environments as well as Google Fast Pair and Microsoft Swift Pair support. OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro also features six microphones, three in each Bud, which work together as a team to provide crystal clear calls in any environment, including in winds of up to 25 kilometers per hour, thanks to OnePlus Nord Buds 4 Pro's AI-powered call noise reduction model.



OnePlus
Nord Buds 4 Pro
Quiet Space. Max Bass.

Starting at ₹3,799*

*Limited time offer for launch

Sale Starts March 23 | 12 PM IST



Official Announcement of Thrithi 2026 – Undergraduate Cultural Fest



“Hyderabad” ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE) officially announced Thrithi 2026, the much-awaited undergraduate cultural festival, scheduled to be held on 2nd, 3rd and 4th April 2026 at the IFHE campus, Dontanapally, Shankarpally Road, Hyderabad. “Marking the beginning of the celebrations, the Thrithi Core Committee organized an energetic and vibrant flash mob, captivating students and faculty members, followed by the grand poster reveal ceremony. The high-energy performance reflected the spirit, creativ-

ity, and enthusiasm that Thrithi represents. “The event was graced by distinguished dignitaries including Prof. Koti Reddy, Vice Chancellor (I/c), Prof. Vijayalakshmi, Registrar, Prof. Ravishekhararaju, Director, Faculty of Law, Dr. A. Arun Kumar, Thrithi Convenor, Prof. Venugopal, Director, IBS, Dr. Anjana Matta, Associate Dean, FST, Dr. C.S. Pavana Jyothi, IBS, Dr. Pooja Chaudary, ISOSS, Dr. Asha, Architecture, and Shri Madhusudan, Additional Registrar. “The Vice Chancellor (I/c), Registrar, and the Convenor

formally unveiled the official posters and announced the festival dates, setting the stage for a three-day celebration of intellect, culture, creativity, and competition. “Thrithi 2026 promises to be a dynamic platform bringing together students from various undergraduate schools, featuring events across domains including Law, Management, Technology, Social Sciences, Architecture, Cultural Arts, Literature, and E-Sports. The fest aims to foster collaboration, showcase talent, and provide a vibrant space for academic and creative

excellence. “Speaking on the occasion, the Convenor, Dr. A. Arun Kumar, expressed gratitude to the university leadership, faculty members, Core Committee, and student volunteers for their enthusiastic support in making the launch event memorable and impactful. “With over 11,500 participants expected to take part, Thrithi 2026 is set to be one of the largest undergraduate cultural celebrations on campus, embodying the spirit of “Culture, Identity, and Heritage” while promoting innovation and student engagement.

A day in the life of women of Matunga railway station: When a death stops them in the tracks

About three hours into points woman Rupali Khare's 8 am day shift, the control room at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) had contacted Matunga Station Master Meena Santi's office: A loco pilot had spotted a body between Sion and Matunga stations in the down direction. "The body has to be removed immediately," the control room had informed Meena. The station master formed a team, including points women Rupali and Chanda Kumari, 26; two safai staffers; and personnel from the Government Railway Police (GRP), Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Home Guard personnel, left to retrieve the body. The team returned to Matunga station with the body in an ambulance nearly 30 minutes later. Back at the station after retrieving the body, 38-year-old Rupali gives the station master an update on track clearance and shares her observations on the victim. "The man probably died due to a fall from a moving train. He has sustained a head injury," says Rupali, her hair twisted in a neat bun, a tiny red bindi and a sandalwood tika adorning her forehead. She takes a moment to acknowledge the assistance the women staff members of Matunga station received from the police teams with the body on site.

"The body was lying between the tracks and that probably kept it from getting dismembered by passing trains," says Rupali, adding that she has moved at least 50 bodies from the station's tracks over the past five years. She shared later that the Railways had offered her a job on compassionate grounds after her husband died on duty nearly 12 years ago. Briefing Meena on what happened after the body was shifted to the stretcher, Rupali says she blew a whistle at an up train towards CSMT. "The local halted on the adjacent track and we (the team and the stretcher) squeezed into the luggage coach. But the local breezed past Matunga (since it was a fast local and not scheduled to stop at Matunga). We got off at Dadar station and decided to take an ambulance back to the station," she says. Matunga railway station all women team The six points women of Matunga, including Rupali Khare, 38, and Chanda Kumari, 26, work in three shifts of eight hours each. They are required to carry heavy metal equipment on the tracks, attend to instances of chain pulling, fix points failures (faults on tracks), connect or disconnect coaches, attend to injured persons and remove bodies from tracks. (Express photo by Amit Chakravarty) While waiting for the team's return, the police had readied a memo prepared by the station master. "The memo will have to be submitted at the hospital," explains the police. As the chaos comes to a stop and the police teams depart with the body, the station master remarks, "It would have been much more convenient for my team had the loco pilot stopped at Matunga."

'The most important thing' Stating that most deaths happen due to commuters falling from trains or trespassing, Meena says, "From July 2017 to August 2023, 155 deaths were reported at Matunga station. Hamals (porters) usually clear the bodies. The Railways allows a payment of Rs 200 per porter per body and I have a sanction

order to hire two porters. But long-distance trains don't halt here and there's no other source of income for them. So the points women clear the bodies from the tracks instead. The most important thing is to keep the tracks free of disruptions or lakhs of commuters will get affected."

Matunga railway station Matunga suburban railway station became India's first to be operated by an all-woman team in July 2017. The station has a staff of 40 members, including ticket checkers, ticket booking clerks, points women, sweepers, etc. The station caters to over 35,000 commuters each day. (Express photo by Amit Chakravarty) "People also die by suicide on the tracks," interjects Rupali, adding, "I have seen colleagues and even the police vomit at the sight of these remains, but it doesn't bother me. Perhaps growing up in an area with slaughterhouses made it easier for me to deal with bodies on the tracks." Clearing these bodies is only a part — even if the most unpleasant — of the routine of the all-woman team at Matunga.

Meena says they have 40 staff members, including ticket checkers, ticket booking clerks, points women, sweepers, etc. These women run a tight ship to ensure that travel remains a smooth experience for the over 35,000 commuters the station receives each day. While big stations like CSMT and Wadi Bunder Yard have over 100 points persons, smaller ones like Sion and Matunga have just three each. Matunga's points women play a critical role in ensuring that Mumbai's lifeline, the locals, run without a hitch. Wearing her "uniform", a half-sleeve bluish-grey shirt over her red suit and a whistle on a lanyard around her neck, Rupali says, "There are six points women here besides Chanda and me — Surekha Waghmare (41), Mangeeta Yadav (30), Sonam Waghchore (34) and Rajshree Kadam (31). We work in three shifts of eight hours each and usually have no idea what each day has in store for us. We could be asked to lug metal equipment like padlocks on the tracks, attend to instances of chain pulling, walk nearly 2 km up and down the tracks falling under the jurisdiction of Matunga station to fix faults (points failure), connect or disconnect coaches or attend to injured commuters, especially those who fall from crowded locals or are trespassing or asked to clear bodies from the tracks." Rupali Matunga railway station Rupali Khare, 38, has removed at least 50 bodies from the tracks at Matunga station over the past five years. She got the job on compassionate grounds after her husband died on duty 12 years ago. His death left their three children and her destitute. (Express photo by Amit Chakravarty)

Station Master Meena says she has written to higher ups to request for porters for Matunga station. "Clearing bodies from tracks is not a daily task. Which porter will agree to come to Matunga to move an occasional body for Rs 200? How can they be expected to survive in Mumbai on so little and that too so irregularly? Thankfully, my points women have demonstrated great strength in carrying out this gruesome task. Such is life; chalti ka naam gaadi (life goes on)," she says. 'On humanitarian grounds'



"The body was lying between the tracks and that probably kept it from getting dismembered by passing trains," says Rupali, adding that she has moved at least 50 bodies from the station's tracks over the past five years

According to the Bhar Vahak Sangh, the licensed porters' association, Central Railway (from CSMT to Kalyan) has just 519 porters at present. Promising to look into the porter situation at Matunga station, Rajnish Kumar Goel, the Central Railway Divisional Manager, said, "There is a provision at several stations to hire external workers." Stating that a greenhorn points person earns between Rs 30,000 and Rs 40,000 per month, Shivraj Manaspure, the Chief Public Relation Official for Central Railway, says that safai staff have been outsourced to Matunga station to move the injured and the bodies. "It's not the job of the points women to move bodies from the tracks," he adds. In response to his statement, Station Master Meena replies, "We have three outsourced staff members — two men and a woman — who work in different shifts. An accident can happen at any time. Whoever is available when the call comes, does the job. Anyway, the points women are required to check the tracks for obstructions at accident spots."

Chanda Matunga railway station Chanda Kumari, a 26-year-old migrant from Bihar, was posted to Matunga station a year ago. She said she wasn't aware that she would be required to attend to injured people or remove bodies at Matunga station when she was transferred here. (Express photo by Sweetie Adimulam) An official from Matunga station says four people are needed to carry a stretcher, which is impossible when just one staff member goes to the site. "The safai staff's primary job is to keep the station clean and not remove bodies from the tracks. But they have been helping us remove bodies from the track on humanitarian grounds," she adds. Points woman Chanda, a migrant from Bihar, says she took time to get used to the "gruesome" side of her job. "I have been at Matunga station for a year now.

This job can be difficult — we have to go to accident sites alone at times or deal with drug addicts or agitated individuals. At my last posting in Parel, I did coupling and shunting (moving trains from one track to the other). There was no moving of bodies from the tracks. When I got posted to Matunga, I wasn't aware we had to attend to injured people or remove bodies from the tracks. My first time dealing with a body was scary, there was blood everywhere, but my colleagues have made it bearable," says Chanda, who wears a "uniform" similar to Rupali's over her peach suit. Rupali, however, says dismembered bodies have never bothered her. "I remember an incident from two years ago. I arrived at the spot with RPF. The body was in pieces. Everyone but me threw up. So I picked up the pieces alone, tied them in a cloth and brought them to the station on a stretcher. As I was clearing the tracks that day, a colleague shot a video. That video was shared with seniors. The Mumbai Divisional Railway Manager saw the video and gave me an award later," she shares, as her eight-hour shift draws to a close. Still, what gets her through the task of picking up body parts from the tracks? "I shifted to my maternal home in Mumbai (a one-room house in a Malad chawl) after my husband died on duty 12 years ago. My youngest was barely two months old at that time. It was very tough for a while. Then, the Railways offered me a job as a points woman on compassionate grounds. I have studied till class 9 and this job is the only way for me to provide for my family. So I live alone here, while my children stay in Pune with my father. Picking up bodies from the tracks is the most gruesome aspect of the job, but I feel grateful to have a job. My family can only survive if I earn. And that makes it easier to stomach removing the dead from the tracks."

Explained | What the fate of Luna 25 means for Russia

The story so far: On August 11, Roscosmos, the Russian space agency, launched its Luna 25 spacecraft onboard a Soyuz 2 rocket from the Vostochny Cosmodrome. Luna 25 consisted of a lander and its mission was to soft-land near the moon's south pole, and there study the optical, physical, and chemical properties of moon dust and moon soil, and the atmosphere. But on August 20, Roscosmos issued a statement stating that Luna 25 had suffered a glitch and crashed on the moon's surface the previous day, ending the mission in a failure. While the event attested to the various challenges of autonomously landing a robotic instrument on the moon, the fate of Luna 25 also speaks to more than technical issues.

Why did Russia launch Luna 25?

The Luna 25 mission has technically been in the works for more than two decades. In the first decade or so, it was called Luna-Glob; the name was changed later to make the mission a part of the Luna series, the last edition of which, Luna 24, was launched in 1976. In its statement after Luna 25 failed, Roscosmos said one of the reasons to launch the mission was to "ensure Russia's guaranteed access to the moon's surface" – an allusion to the growing importance of the moon as a spaceflight destination and its importance as one of the sites of contest between the U.S. and China.

While Russia and China are together leading the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS), versus the U.S.-led Artemis Accords, Russia has not executed a successful interplanetary mission in 34 years. Some experts have also said that Russia intended Luna 25 as president Vladimir Putin's demonstration that the country's economy – including the spaceflight sector – haven't buckled under the weight of international sanctions following Putin's invasion of Ukraine in 2021.

Were Luna 25 and Chandrayaan 3 in a race?

Contrary to population perception, too many details are misaligned to expect that Luna 25 and Chandrayaan 3, or Roscosmos and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), were in a race. Both missions launched in a similar timeframe and were expected to attempt a soft-landing on the moon within days of each other. However, these mission parameters are determined by the launch vehicle, the mass of the spacecraft, the earth-moon trajectory, and availability of sunlight at a point on the moon (to power solar panels). In addition, while Chandrayaan 3 has been in development since 2019, Roscosmos was working on Luna 25 since the early 2010s, and couldn't have anticipated the fate of Chandrayaan 2. Both missions also suffered unpredictable delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, recall that Russia pulled out of building the lander for Chandrayaan 2 due to delays imposed by the failure of the former's Fobos-Grunt mission in 2011. Russia had otherwise been ISRO's partner, and is also helping train Indian astronauts for the inaugural

Gaganyaan mission. Taken together, Luna 25 and Chandrayaan 3 couldn't have been in a race.

What happened to Luna 25?

In its post-crash statement, Roscosmos said that it would put together a committee to investigate the precise mode of failure of Luna 25. Beyond that, Roscosmos has only said that the spacecraft suffered a technical problem that took its operation beyond the parameters within which the mission was designed to operate. While this statement is vague, it also suggests that the failure was related to some sort of extremum. Speculation on social media platforms by spaceflight experts has centred on one event: that as Luna 25 attempted to modify its circular orbit around the moon to a lower pre-landing orbit, it applied more thrust than required, sending it careening to the surface. Roscosmos itself lost contact with Luna 25 as it was performing this manoeuvre.

Why couldn't Roscosmos rescue Luna 25?

ISRO is receiving help from NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) to track Chandrayaan 3 around the moon. Their antennae will also maintain contact with the 'Vikram' lander as it attempts its soft-landing on August 23. But after Russia invaded Ukraine, it lost the goodwill of many countries worldwide, provoking stringent economic sanctions. One of the less-known consequences was that Russia also lost its privileges to use satellite tracking systems operated by countries in different parts of the world. As a result, Roscosmos could contact Luna 25, and receive signals from the spacecraft, only at three stations: two in Russia and one in Russian-occupied Crimea. In other words, Roscosmos could communicate with Luna 25 only when the moon was directly over Russia. As a result, the size of the window



that scientists had to fix the problem and salvage the mission was much smaller. This said, they did attempt to contact the lander in this window but it didn't respond. More details should be available in the failure analysis report.

What next for Roscosmos, and Russia?

Whatever the technical reasons for the failure of Luna 25, it's clear that Russia is falling behind in the race to the moon. Before the ILRS, Russia had joined hands with NASA to build a near-moon space station. But before it backed out of the partnership in January 2021, Roscosmos's role in the enterprise was found to be highly limited. In the ILRS setup, Roscosmos has already planned for Luna missions 26 and 27 as part of the first phase of operations, which include technology demonstration and site selection for future lander missions. Now, with the failure of Luna 25 and the sanctions imposed by Western countries – which will limit the components that Russia can import – their respective

launch dates could be pushed further from 2027 and 2028.

On August 11, Roscosmos, the Russian space agency, launched its Luna 25 spacecraft onboard a Soyuz 2 rocket from the Vostochny Cosmodrome. Luna 25 consisted of a lander and its mission was to soft-land near the moon's south pole, and there study the optical, physical, and chemical properties of moon dust and moon soil, and the atmosphere. The Luna 25 mission has technically been in the works for more than two decades. In the first decade or so, it was called Luna-Glob; the name was changed later to make the mission a part of the Luna series, the last edition of which, Luna 24, was launched in 1976. In its post-crash statement, Roscosmos said that it would put together a committee to investigate the precise mode of failure of Luna 25. Beyond that, Roscosmos has only said that the spacecraft suffered a technical problem that took its operation beyond the parameters within which the mission was designed to operate.

AI-generated art cannot receive copyrights, U.S. court says

A work of art created by artificial intelligence without any human input cannot be copyrighted under U.S. law, a U.S. court in Washington, D.C., has ruled. Only works with human authors can receive copyrights, U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell said on Friday, affirming the Copyright Office's rejection of an application filed by computer scientist Stephen Thaler on behalf of his DABUS system.

The Friday decision follows losses for Thaler on bids for U.S. patents covering inventions he said were created by DABUS, short for Device for the Autonomous Bootstrapping of Unified Sentience.

Thaler has also applied for DABUS-generated patents in other countries including the United Kingdom, South Africa,

Australia and Saudi Arabia with limited success.

Thaler's attorney, Ryan Abbott, on Monday said that he and his client strongly disagree with the decision and will appeal. The Copyright Office in a statement on Monday said it "believes the court reached the correct result."

The fast-growing field of generative AI has raised novel intellectual property issues. The Copyright Office has also rejected an artist's bid for copyrights on images generated through the AI system Midjourney despite the artist's argument that the system was part of their creative process. Several pending lawsuits have also been filed over the use of copyrighted works to train generative AI without permission.

"We are approaching new frontiers in copyright as artists put AI in their toolbox," which will raise "challenging questions" for copyright law, Howell wrote on Friday.

"This case, however, is not nearly so complex," Howell said. Thaler applied in 2018 for a copyright covering "A Recent Entrance to Paradise," a piece of visual art he said was created by his AI system without any human input. The office rejected the application last year and said creative works must have human authors to be copyrightable. Thaler challenged the decision in federal court, arguing that human authorship is not a concrete legal requirement and allowing AI copyrights would be in line with copyright's purpose as outlined in the U.S. constitution to "promote the progress of science and useful arts."

Bend it like Sanya: How an MP village beat odds to play football

Dressed in a red-and-black football jersey and blue shorts, 11-year-old Sanya Kunde glides across the field, effortlessly cutting through the defence line of men much older than her, many of them government officials well into their 50s.

With her teammates failing to match her pace, Sanya has so far failed to convert any of the chances – every failed opportunity ends up with the 11-year-old momentarily bending over, clutching her waist tight, before breaking into a sprint. It's 8 am and coach Raees Ahmed is watching from the sidelines of the Bicharpur village football ground in Madhya Pradesh's Shahdol as the young footballers take on the district's former national-level players, who now work in the Railways and forest department, for a practice match. Ahmed hopes his young players will one day be part of the Bicharpur A-team and win a national tournament.

The practice match ends in a goalless draw, but Sanya has no time to rest. Barely five minutes later, Sanya begins her second game. This time, it's a match between two sides of reserve and rookie footballers, all under 17. Sanya, the only girl on the field, is on the defensive line, waiting to strike. MP village Sanya Kunde (right) with her sister Pihu. Sanya is among Bicharpur's most promising players, with her coach predicting a prospect for her in future national games. "My dream is to play for Team India," she says. (Express Photo: Anand Mohan J)

Bicharpur and Shahdol are to Madhya Pradesh what a Kerala or Goa is to India. An unlikely football hub in an unlikely football state, since 2021, the district, which has more than 1,200 football clubs, has produced at least 40 national and state-level players – an achievement that got a nod from Prime Minister, who mentioned Shahdol's footballing prowess in his Mann ki Baat address on July 30.

During his visit to Shahdol in July, PM Modi had visited met some of its budding footballers, including Sanya, dubbed the district "mini Brazil" and lauded the 'Football Kranti' programme now underway in this region. Sanya is among Bicharpur's most promising players, with her coach predicting a prospect for her in future national games. "My uncle was a striker, my father played as goal-keeper in state-level matches. My sisters were national-level players and my whole village plays football. I have played with teams that have defeated Jabalpur, Bhopal and Indore. My dream is to play for the national team and one day play for Team India," she says.

Located around 5 km from Shahdol district, Bicharpur is nestled among the Vindhya hills in the northeastern part of Madhya Pradesh. While most people work as agricultural workers, growing rice, wheat and soyabean, many others work in Coal India's mines and the Railways. The Scheduled Tribes of Gond, Kol and Baiga, among others, make up 74.78% of Bicharpur's population of around 900. People here mostly live in mud-brick hutments surrounded by towering cactus and bamboo. Most homes have an elec-

tricity connection and draw water from hand pumps.

What sets Bicharpur apart, though, is its craze for football, triggered around half a century ago when workers of local coal and railway unions played the game. Shahdol Divisional Commissioner Rajeev Sharma says, "Football matches were organised by the unions of the railway and coal companies which had the funds to promote several games. While games like hockey were promoted in our neighbouring district of Umaria, in the 1960s and 70s, the unions introduced football in Bicharpur and the larger Shahdol district. The game quickly became a favourite among the tribals and they took to it." Ketransingh Gond, 58, a former defender who played in local tournaments, was among those who were fascinated by what they saw of the sport.

Ketransingh, who runs a kirana store in the village, says, "We used to watch football games that were held at the local railway ground. That generated a lot of interest. Then, in the 1990s, when only one family in the village owned a television set, people assembled to watch the World Cup. We never had any coaches so we gave up on the game and had to work for a living. If I had a coach, I would have become a good player." That's when Raees Ahmed arrived on the scene. A former national football player who has represented Madhya Pradesh in around seven national games, Ahmed was in 1995 posted as the Physical Training (PT) teacher at the Bicharpur primary school and ended up scripting its football story. MP Football A former national football player, Raees Ahmed's posting in 2002 as a PT teacher at the Bicharpur school changed the region's football story forever. (Express Photo: Anand Mohan J) In his Mann ki Baat, Modi had credited Ahmed with "teaching football to the youth with full dedication" and recognising their talent. Now "Coach Ahmed", 43, is the head coach of the Bicharpur football girls' and boys' teams and has been honing national-level players since 2002. Today, watching the practice match between the veterans and the youngsters, Ahmed winces as a forest official, Ram Kumar Baiga, 50, disciplines his players by making them do short sprints before a game.

"This is precisely what I don't want on my field. Ram is a football fanatic and plays Maradona-style old-school football – dashing into the opponents' goal line. I can't stop him from playing his style, but he doesn't realise that the game has changed, young players need to be tactically sound, not aggressive. I can't afford my players getting injured – they come from very poor families and can't be out of the team due to injuries," he said. Talking about the spark he saw in Bicharpur, Ahmed says, "I saw that the people here already had a footballing culture and a natural athletic ability. They only needed to learn tactics to become good footballers." MP Football A football player's home in Bicharpur. (Express Photo: Anand Mohan J) The first tackle: drugs Days into his new role, Ahmed hit a wall – the village had a drug



problem. "During the drills, I noticed some players playing under the influence. They did not see anything wrong with it. But before teaching them football, I had to rid them of the drug problem. I decided that I would start with the younger children," he says. Additional Director General of Police (Shahdol) D C Sagar, who is a regular on the Shahdol football scene, says, "Most of the tribal youth in the region are addicted to cough syrups, ganja, and intravenous injections and tablets. The challenge was to make football an important lifeline for them." Police data on cases registered between January 2022 and July 2023 under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act is telling – Shahdol has the highest number of such cases at 91, compared to Umaria at 29 and Anuppur at 28. Shahdol also has the maximum arrests at 104, followed by Anuppur at 36 and Umaria at 34. During this time period, police in Shahdol made their highest seizures ever of narcotic substances – 627 kg of Ganja, 4,719 bottles of cough syrups, 7,319 tablets and 438 injections.

Ahmed began his fight against drug abuse by bonding with his players over football. "If I straightaway tell them not to do drugs, why would they listen to me? So I built a relationship with the players and earned their trust, along with that of their parents, and explained to them why drugs are harmful," he says. Ahmed, with help from the local district officials, began targeting a new generation of players, and over the next decade, they finally got a batch of "clean" players. MP Football CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan with the Bicharpur under-17 girls' team that stood first in the state-level competition, winning the final match against Narmadapuram district 8-0. (Express Photo: Anand Mohan J) "Our senior players and village elders helped beat this menace. Our current crop of players don't use drugs and run anti-drug campaigns in the village. Now, if anyone doing drugs comes anywhere near the players, the children chase them away," says

Ahmed. Anil Singh Gond, 31, is an imposing figure on the football field. A maintenance worker in Railways' engineering department, he was once a striker. Part of Ahmed's first batch, in the early 2000s, he played the National Games in Jammu and Kashmir. "During my time, there were so many teammates who played under the influence. Many of them left the game forever. Ahmed sir was patient with them. We did not have shoes, jerseys or any kits and played barefooted. Sir used to buy us our kits with his own salary. That's how he won us over, by trying hard and not judging us," he says. A PT Usha story to inspire girls Ahmed, however, had a new challenge on his hands – how to get girls to play football. He noticed that while girls often hung around the football ground to watch the games, they were not allowed to play due to social taboos. Laxmi Sahees, 28, is preparing for her role as the head coach at Bicharpur's 'Freedom Centre' that is set to open soon. A centre that aims to groom the best players from Shahdol, the Freedom Centre will be equipped with modern facilities and coaches. Part of Ahmed's third batch, she has inherited much of Ahmed's patience as she gently coaches Shivanya, 5, a barefooted player who is unable to collect her passes.

"Our parents used to say that if girls keep playing, then you won't be able to do house work and homework. Setting up the women's team was extremely difficult. We had to go door to door and convince the parents to allow their girls to play the game. The girls also don't agree sometimes, as they were not ready to play in shorts. Plus, they have to go out of the state to play the matches, so there was the issue of safety too. We have to convince the parents about the pride involved in being part of the national level," she says. Ketransingh, the former defender, was among the senior players who worked to convince parents to allow their daughters to play. That's when P T Usha came in handy. "I was inspired by the story of PT Usha and her mother.