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Watershed moment for space industry

India's space journey has reached a historic milestone. The successful launch of Vikram-1, the first orbital rocket developed in the private sector, is a watershed moment because it achieved what is exceptionally rare in the space launch industry: a successful orbital mission on its very first attempt. Most new rockets suffer failures of major anomalies during maiden flights, making its flawless insertion of payloads into a 450-km orbit a remarkable demonstration of engineering maturity, rigorous testing and execution. Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace has now joined a small and elite group of global companies that have successfully developed and launched orbital rockets. India is only the third country, after the United States and China, where a private company has independently placed payloads in orbit. The seven-storey rocket carrying technology demonstration payloads and postcards, lifted off ISRO's First Launch Pad at Sriharikota and a little over 15 minutes later, placed its payloads in an orbit roughly 450 km above the Earth. Named 'Aagaman' (arrival), it was the first of two test flights Skyroot plans to do this year before starting commercial launches next year. For nearly six decades, the space sector was entirely in the hands of the government. Every celebrated milestone from Aryabhata to Chandrayaan-3, every Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) that became the workhorse of global commercial launches, every Mars and Moon mission bore the unmistakable signature of the Indian state. That monopoly has ended now. The achievement also validates India's 2020 space-sector reforms, which opened ISRO's infrastructure to private firms, proving that Indian startups can independently design, build and launch orbital-class rockets.

MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy launched the new RTC bus service



(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. July 21):- With the aim of providing better transport facilities to the people of Bhuvanagiri constituency, the newly established RTC bus service from Bhuvanagiri to Tekulasomaram via Namathpally was flagged off by Bhuvanagiri constituency MLA Sri Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy. On this occasion, the villagers expressed their joy that the long-standing desire of the people of Namathpally village, who had been facing difficulties due to lack of bus facilities for the last 25 years, has been fulfilled. They expressed their heartfelt gratitude to MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy for taking a special initiative for the establishment of this bus service. Later, the members of the Gram Panchayat administration felicitated the MLA with a shawl and congratulated him." Later, the principal and teaching staff felicitated and thanked MLA Sri Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy, who visited Tekulasomaram Government School. "They said that with the launch of the new RTC bus service, students have the opportunity to reach school on time and it will also be very beneficial for the people of the village. On this occasion, MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy himself drove the RTC bus and became a special attraction at the inauguration. Later, he traveled from Bhuvanagiri to Tekulasomaram in the bus and interacted with the passengers. The MLA said that this new bus service will provide convenient and timely transportation services to the people of the villages along the route, students, employees and passengers. Bhuvanagiri town, mandal and village public representatives, RTC DM Suresh, teachers, and local people participated in this program.

Paytm Reports Record Q1 FY27 Performance

"Hyderabad, July 21 (Indian Chronicle):-"Digital payments and financial services company Paytm(One 97 Communications Limited) has reported a record financial performance for the first quarter of FY27, according to a company statement released in Hyderabad on Tuesday. The company posted its highest-ever quarterly EBITDA of 203 crore, while Profit After Tax(PAT) increased by 79% year-on-year to 220 crore. Operating revenue grew by 28% to 22,448 crore during the quarter.

The company's Gross Merchandise Value(GMV) rose by 31% to 7.1 lakh crore, while consumer UPI payment volume increased by 45% to 75.9 lakh crore. Paytm also reported that its monthly transacting users(MTUs) reached 80 million(8 crore). Revenue from its financial services distribution business grew by 45% to 7814 crore, reflecting strong growth across its lending and financial services operations. This version is written in a standard English news style suitable for publication.

Allocate Funds to BC Welfare Department for Subsidy Loans: Rajaka Leader Jakkula Venkataramana



"Khammam, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): BC Association leader and Rajaka Sangham District Leader Jakkula Venkataramana has urged the Telangana Government to allocate adequate funds to the BC Welfare Department to provide subsidy loans to all eligible Backward Class (BC) communities through the BC Corporation." "In a statement, Venkataramana alleged that the government has not allocated any funds to the BC Welfare Department over the

past three years for the welfare and development of BC communities. He claimed that only limited funds are being sanctioned for the birth and death anniversary celebrations of BC icons, which he described as inadequate. He demanded that ₹50,000 be allocated for each such commemorative programme." "He further alleged that the BC Welfare Department is being weakened due to the lack of financial support. He called on the government to allocate ₹500 crore for unemployed BC youth and to sanction sufficient funds to improve infrastructure and facilities in BC government hostels." "Venkataramana stated that under previous governments, only a limited number of beneficiaries received ₹1 lakh assistance under the BC Bandhu scheme. He said that many members of the Rajaka, Nai Brahmin, and Vaddera communities registered cooperative societies consisting of 15 members each based on government announcements, but those societies have not received any financial assistance. He demanded that funds be released to these registered societies without further delay." "He also pointed out that several BC inter-caste couples have been waiting for years without receiving financial assistance under the inter-caste marriage scheme. He urged the government to increase the financial assistance under the scheme to ₹1 lakh per eligible couple." "Alleging that the government is neglecting BC communities, Venkataramana said political parties seek BC votes during elections but fail to address their concerns afterward. He demanded that funds be allocated to BC welfare in proportion to the BC population in Telangana.

SIR Process Should Be Conducted Smoothly Help Centres Must Function Effectively



MANDUMULA RAJITHA PARAMESWAR REDDY Calls Upon Congress Cadre""UPPAL, JULY 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Former Uppal Division Corporator Mandumula Rajitha Parameswar Reddy urged Congress party workers to actively ensure that the Special Intensive

Revision (SIR) process is carried out smoothly and efficiently. On Tuesday, she inspected the SIR Help Centre set up near Uppal Kachiguda School under the leadership of Uppal Division Congress President Eega Anjaneyulu Mudiraj. Speaking on the occasion, Rajitha Parameswar Reddy said that genuine voters should not face any inconvenience or loss due to the SIR process. She instructed party workers to coordinate closely with the Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and extend all necessary assistance to voters in completing the revision process without any difficulty. She emphasized that the help centres should function efficiently and provide timely support to every eligible voter. "The programme was attended by Division President Eega Anjaneyulu Mudiraj, Bazaru Jagannath Goud, Tummala Devi Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Manda Murali Krishna Reddy, Mashetty Raghavender, Bhoothkuri Madan Goud, Kannamaina Naresh, Bhaskar Reddy, Gorika Mahesh, Alugula Anil, Bacha Ramu, Ram Reddy, Rangula Shekhar, Mudigonda Ravi, Prashanth Reddy, Minampalli Kishore, Chandrashekar Reddy, Vijay, Asif, Batkiri Kumar, Tahsin, Mohsin, Atif, Waheed, and several other Congress leaders and party workers from Uppal.

MLA Bandaru Lakshma Reddy Responds to Venkat Sai Nagar Colony's CC Road Request

Colony President A. Vijayender Reddy Submits Representation on Civic Issues""UPPAL, JULY 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Venkat Sai Nagar Colony President A. Vijayender Reddy submitted a representation to Uppal MLA Bandaru Lakshma Reddy, requesting the immediate sanction and construction of long-pending CC roads in the colony. "During the meeting, Vijayender Reddy informed the MLA that several internal roads in the colony continue to remain as mud roads, causing severe inconvenience to residents. He explained that during the rainy season, the roads become slushy and waterlogged, making it difficult for children, senior citizens, and women to carry out their daily activities. He also pointed out that emergency vehicles such as ambulances and fire engines face difficulty entering the colony due to the poor road conditions." "He further stated that dust during summer and mud during the monsoon are adversely affecting the health of residents, while hundreds of families in the colony have been waiting for proper CC roads for several years." "Responding positively to the representation, MLA Bandaru Lakshma Reddy immediately took up the issue and forwarded his recommendation to the concerned Zonal Commissioner through WhatsApp. He requested the authorities to expedite the preparation of a comprehensive estimate for all the colony roads and complete the administrative approval process at



the earliest. The MLA said that providing basic civic infrastructure remains a priority for the government and assured the residents that he would extend full support in resolving the colony's issues. He also stated that he would personally monitor the process in coordination with the concerned departments to ensure the early sanction and execution of the CC road works. Senior BRS leaders Gandham Nageswara Rao, MD Jangir, and members of the colony committee were also present during the programme.

Jayamukhi Engineering College Playing with Students' Future: Dyagala Srinivas Mudiraj



"Narsampet, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): BC Welfare Association Warangal District President Dyagala Srinivas Mudiraj alleged that the management of Jayamukhi Engineering College in Narsampet constituency, Warangal district, has been playing with the future of students by failing to conduct semester and practical examinations for the past two months. He demanded that the State Government and the Higher Education Department take immediate and stringent action against the college management and ensure that the examinations are conducted without further delay." "Dyagala Srinivas Mudiraj, along with AISF District President Diddi Parthasaradhi and PDSU State Leader Gurram Ajay, visited the students who were staging a protest in front of the college's main gate and enquired about their grievances." "Speaking on the occasion, Srinivas Mudiraj said the students informed them that the college management had not conducted semester and practical examinations for the past two months, leaving them in deep uncertainty. He said the emotional distress in the eyes of students, who had studied throughout the academic year and were waiting for their examinations, was deeply painful." "He criticized the college management for collecting huge amounts from students under various fee heads while failing to conduct examinations on time. He termed it



highly irresponsible and alleged that the management was unfairly passing on its internal problems to students, causing them unnecessary anxiety and confusion." "He further said that despite repeatedly bringing the issue to the notice of higher authorities, no action had been taken. Students also alleged that the college principal was avoiding the campus instead of ensuring that the examinations were conducted as scheduled." "Srinivas Mudiraj urged the State Government, the Higher Education Department, and the District Collector to intervene immediately, take strict action against the management of Jayamukhi Engineering College, and ensure that the pending examinations are conducted at the earliest. He also appealed to the local Narsampet MLA to take the initiative in resolving the issue." "He warned that the BC Welfare Association and various student organizations would organize a mass protest on July 23 at the Amaraveerula Stupam (Martyrs' Memorial) on Warangal Road in Narsampet along with the students if immediate action was not taken." "The protest was attended by PDSU State Leader Gurram Ajay, AISF District President Diddi Parthasaradhi, BC Welfare Association Narsampet Town Vice President Maddela Shyam Kumar Yadav, Secretary Gandla Srinivas, BC leader Gatla Narsimha Ramulu, other association leaders, students, and activists.

Lathi Charge on Students at Jantar Mantar is an Attack on Democracy: JANUMPALLI VEMKATESHWAR REDDY"



"UPPAL, JULY 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Senior Congress leader from the Uppal constituency, Janumpalli Venkateshwar Reddy, strongly condemned the police lathi charge on students who were staging a peaceful protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi to press for their legitimate demands." "Speaking on the issue, he said that instead of addressing the concerns of the students, the government's use of force against peaceful protesters is against the principles of democracy. He stated that suppressing the voice of the people would not solve their problems and urged the government to immediately hold discussions with the protesting students and take a positive decision on their genuine demands. Venkateshwar Reddy demanded immediate action against the officials responsible for the lathi charge. He also called upon the Central Government to ensure proper medical treatment for the injured students and deliver justice to them. He emphasized that students are the foundation of the nation's future and that it is the government's responsibility to resolve their issues through dialogue rather than repression.

DCC President Inagala Extends Birthday Greetings to MLA Nayini



"Hanumakonda, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): On the occasion of the birthday of Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, Hanumakonda District Congress Committee (DCC) President Inagala Venkatram Reddy visited the MLA's residence at Balasamudram and extended his heartfelt birthday wishes." "On the occasion, Inagala Venkatram Reddy felicitated MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy by draping him with a ceremonial shawl and presenting him with a bouquet of flowers. He wished the MLA good health, happiness, and many more years of life, expressing hope that he would continue to achieve greater milestones in public service, work tirelessly for the welfare of the people, and lead the constituency towards further development." "Later, the two leaders reportedly held cordial discussions on various issues, including the development of the constituency, strengthening the Congress Party, and addressing public concerns. Congress leaders, public representatives, and party workers also conveyed their birthday greetings to the MLA and expressed confidence that, under his leadership, people would continue to receive better public service." "Several Congress leaders, party workers, and supporters participated in the programme and extended their warm birthday greetings to MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy.



Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Reddy, who gave an adjournment resolution to the Speaker to hold a discussion on the defections of MPs""(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle..July 21) MP Chamala Kiran Reddy, who gave an adjournment resolution to the Speaker to hold a discussion on the defections of MPs, Chamala Kiran Reddy, who demanded a discussion on the defections of TMC, Shiv Sena Uddhav Thackeray, and Aam Aadmi Party MPs by buying them from the BJP..They are obstructing the central government's investigation agencies and are inducting MPs into the BJP." "They want a discussion on the defections of BJP in Parliament.

CONG GOVT TRYING TO PUT FINANCIAL BURDEN ON THE PEOPLE: NRR

Hyderabad, July 21 : Launching a scathing attack on the Congress government, BJP State President N Ramchander alleged that it has opened the floodgates to extort the poor and middle-class people of Hyderabad under the guise of tax burdens and deposits. "Addressing a press conference at the party's State Headquarters here, Rao strongly criticized the implementation of the Core Urban Region Economy (CURE) Act introduced by the Congress government and the Indiramma Housing Scheme. He accused the Congress government of putting additional burden by imposing taxes under the guise of CURE." He said that while the party has no objection making necessary amendments to the 1955 Municipal Act to serve public needs. But key provisions within the CURE Act are designed to squeeze the public dry. He criticized the inclusion of provisions to increase taxes up to 5 per cent annually based on registration values without a scientific taxation policy, calling it outright tax extortion." BJP state chief alleged that attempts are being made to separate water and sewerage services to levy separate taxes which would put an additional financial burden on the public."

He affirmed that the BJP will strongly confront the government in the Assembly over this law, which undermines the spirit of the 74th Constitutional Amendment, lacks accountability, and fails to clarify the role of corporators, ward members, and elected representatives. He advised that unilaterally pushing this legislation without consulting key stakeholders, such as Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and the general public, is improper and deplorable." Rao lambasted the Congress government's Indiramma Housing Scheme, stating it is not for the welfare of the poor but another scheme for financial exploitation. He stated that while there are lakhs of eligible applicants across 24 constituencies, issuing a notification for only 7,680 flats and collecting a Rs 100 application fee along with an EMD deposit of Rs 10,000 from each applicant is highly unjust. He criticized this process as a conspiracy to collect nearly

Rs.1,000 crore from the poor, recalling the deposit exploitation carried out by the previous BRS government under the guise of sheep distribution."He highlighted that hundreds of double-bedroom houses constructed during the previous YSR regime in Sadbhavana, Abhiman (Jawaharnagar), Pocharam, Chandanagar, and Saheera (Gajularamaram) townships, as well as those built under the KCR government in Bholakpur and Jawaharnagar, remain vacant to this day. Even the previous BRS government backtracked on its promise of a CBCID probe into the Rajiv Swagruha housing irregularities. He stated that failing to repair and allot these previously built homes to the poor reflects the utter negligence of both the Congress and BRS governments." He stated that the Congress government is misleading the public by taking credit for providing houses worth Rs.11 lakh while utilizing funds and subsidies provided under the central government's 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana' (PMAY).

"Asserting that the Congress government has staged another drama keeping the upcoming GHMC elections in mind, he demanded that the government immediately allocate the previously constructed houses to eligible beneficiaries free of cost and order a comprehensive probe into why old houses have not been distributed yet." BJP chief said if the Congress government sincerely wants to provide homes to the poor, it should give houses to all eligible beneficiaries. Providing houses to just a few individuals merely for publicity is not the right approach. Prior to the press conference, several prominent personalities joined the BJP in the presence of N Ramchander Rao who welcomed them warmly into the party fold with saffron scarves. Those who joined the party include Joy Michael D'Souza, a prominent social worker from Sainikpuri, Dinesh Kumar, a businessman from Old Bowenpally and Sravan Kumar Sama, an entrepreneur from Kukatpally. While extending best wishes to them he called upon them to work diligently toward strengthening the party.

Districts Told to Eliminate Highway Black Spots, Strengthen Road Safety



"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, Hyderabad, July 21:"The Telangana Government has directed officials to strengthen road safety measures to prevent accidents on National Highways across the state, Transport Department Principal Secretary Vikas Raj said on Tuesday." "Addressing a statewide review meeting through video conference from the State Secretariat in Hyderabad, Vikas Raj, along with Additional Secretary Ilambarathi and senior officials from the Police, Transport, Roads & Buildings, and National Highways departments, reviewed road safety preparedness with District Collectors, Superintendents of Police, and district-level officials." "He instructed all districts to implement preventive measures in accordance with the Supreme Court's

guidelines and ensure that District Road Safety Committee meetings are conducted every month. He also directed officials to constitute task force committees, identify accident-prone stretches and black spots on National Highways, improve safety infrastructure, and keep ambulances readily available for emergency response." "The Principal Secretary stressed the need for immediate medical assistance to accident victims by ensuring their swift transportation to nearby hospitals. He also called for extensive road safety awareness campaigns and strict enforcement of seat belt and helmet regulations among motorists." "Participating in the review from the Integrated District Collectorate in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad, District Collector K. Haritha, Superintendent of Police Nithika Pant, and District Transport Officer Venkat Reddy informed the meeting that the district has a 52-kilometre stretch of National Highway and that comprehensive measures are being taken to prevent accidents." "The Collector said monthly Road Safety Committee meetings are being held regularly, accident-prone black spots have been identified for corrective action, highway patrolling has been strengthened, and ambulances have been positioned for quick emergency response." "Following the review meeting, spectacles were distributed to lorry drivers as part of a road safety and driver welfare initiative." "Officials from various departments also attended the programme.

Road Safety Measures Must Be Strengthened in Accident-Prone Areas



District Collector Divakara T.S. "Khammam, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): District Collector Divakara T.S. has directed officials to implement special measures in accident-prone areas to reduce road accidents and ensure strict enforcement of road safety standards on National Highways across Khammam district." "The directions were issued after a video conference conducted by State Transport Commissioner Ilambarathi with District Collectors, Police Commissioners, and officials of various departments. The meeting reviewed road safety measures, accident prevention, implementation of Supreme Court guidelines, compliance reports, hospital mapping along National Highways, removal of encroachments, emergency response systems, and other related issues." "District Collector Divakara T.S. participated in the meeting from the Khammam Collectorate, while Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt joined from the Khammam Police Commissionerate." "Following the video conference, the Collector held a review meeting with district officials. He instructed them to expedite safety measures at identified accident-prone locations and immediately undertake road safety improvements at major roads and critical junctions in municipal areas." "He directed officials to submit compliance reports on parking facilities, rest areas, toilets, and other wayside amenities at intervals of every 40-50 kilometres along National Highways." "The Collector also instructed officials to strictly enforce traffic rules in coordination with the Police Department, use modern technology to detect traffic violations, strengthen the e-challan system, ensure the availability of highway patrol vehicles, and integrate ambulance services for quick emergency response. He further directed that mapping of all government and private hospitals located near National Highways be completed." "Officials were instructed to remove all encroachments and unauthorized access points on National Highways, including illegal entries created by roadside eateries, commercial establishments, and other structures, in accordance with the National Highways Act. He also directed that no commercial activity should be permitted within the highway safety zone." "The Collector emphasized the need to permanently rectify identified black spots by fully utilizing available funds and instructed offi-

cials to prepare and implement proposals in coordination with the Police Department." "He further directed officials of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the Roads & Buildings Department to submit a comprehensive compliance report covering the Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS), encroachment removal, emergency response plans, lay-bys, wayside amenities, and black spot improvement works." "Divakara T.S. also ordered that the District Road Safety Committee meeting be held on the third Friday of every month to review the progress of road safety initiatives and ensure that all departments effectively discharge their responsibilities." "The review meeting was attended by R&B SE Yugandhar Rao, District Medical and Health Officer Dr. Rama Rao, NHAI Project Director Divya, and officials from various departments.



(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – July 21): "As per the instructions of the temple authorities, the Rath Yatra (chariot procession) of Lord Jagannath of Puri will be conducted at the Swarnagiri Temple on Thursday, the 23rd of this month, at 4:00 PM. The temple authorities request devotees to participate in large numbers and seek the Lord's blessings.

DCC President Thotakura Vajresh Yadav Participates in Jamadagni Maharshi–Sri Renuka Ellamma Kalyana Mahotsavam at Peerzadiguda“



"MEDIPALLY, KISHORE VADDEPALLI, JULY 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Jamadagni Maharshi–Sri Renuka

Ellamma Kalyana Mahotsavam was celebrated with great religious fervour and devotion at the Sri Sri Renuka Ellamma Temple in Peerzadiguda on Monday. "At the invitation of the temple committee, Medchal–Malkajigiri District Congress Committee (DCC) President Thotakura Vajresh Yadav, along with Medipally Division Congress Party President Tungathurthi Ravi, participated in the celestial wedding ceremony. They offered special prayers and sought the blessings of Goddess Renuka Ellamma. "On the occasion, Vajresh Yadav prayed for the well-being, good health, peace, prosperity, and happiness of the people of Telangana. "Among those present were DCC Official Spokesperson Satyanarayana, DCC Vice Presidents Balu Reddy and Kolthuru Sai, Congress leaders, temple committee members, Vishnu Goud, and several devotees.

International Award for Khammam Poet Mantripragada Srinivasa Rao

Khammam, July 20 (Indian Chronicle): Poet and writer Mantripragada Srinivasa Rao from Khammam has received a prestigious international literary award. "The Telangana Telugu Association (TTA) organized its Mega Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, USA, from July 17 to 19. As part of the convention, international Literary Excellence Awards were presented in various categories. Srinivasa Rao won the Second Prize in the Poetry Category." "He received the award from noted lyricists Kasarla Shyam and Mittapalli Surender, folk singer Dr. Aruna Subbarao, cardiologist and litterateur Dr. Alla Srinivas Reddy, TTA Literary Souvenir Committee Chairman Guduru Srinivas, Rajashri, and other committee members." "Along with the award, he was presented with a cash prize of approximately ₹9,000 and was honoured at the event." "Srinivasa Rao was visiting the United States to meet his daughter, son-in-law, and son. During his visit, he participated in the competition and earned this international recognition." "Speaking on the occasion, he appreciated the Telangana Telugu Association for its efforts in promoting the Telugu language, literature,



and cultural activities. He expressed happiness at receiving the award on an international platform and said the recognition would inspire him to continue serving Telugu literature with greater dedication and responsibility.

Every Student Should Be Registered on the MY Bharat Portal: Additional Collector Dr. P. Srija



"Khammam, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Dr. P. Srija directed officials to ensure that every student in the district is registered on the MY Bharat Portal, a Government of India initiative aimed at providing opportunities for youth." "Chairing the District Advisory Committee on Youth Programmes meeting at the Collectorate on Tuesday, Dr. Srija said that nearly 14,000 youth from Khammam district have already registered on the portal and instructed officials to significantly increase the number through a special enrolment drive." "She directed officials to visit Intermediate, Degree, Engineering, Medical, Nursing, and other educational institutions to register every eligible student on the portal. She also instructed that NCC and NSS volunteers be enrolled without fail." "The Additional Collector directed officials to organize a District Youth Parliament and select outstanding participants for the

state-level competition. She noted that youth who excel at the state level would get an opportunity to participate in the Indian Parliament Youth Parliament Programme." "She said that winners of quizzes conducted under the Viksit Bharat initiative would get an opportunity to visit India's border states, while outstanding performers in certain programmes may even get a chance to meet the Prime Minister. Officials were instructed to widely publicize these opportunities among students and youth." "Dr. Srija also directed that Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan competitions be conducted in eight categories, including essay writing and painting. District-level winners will be eligible to participate in national-level competitions." "To help students make informed career choices, she instructed officials to organize Career Guidance Programmes on the last Sunday of every month. Students should be educated about higher education opportunities after Class X and Intermediate, entrance examinations, employment opportunities, defence services, and various professional career options." "She further directed the formation of a special committee to prepare study material, career guidance resources, and information on competitive examinations, ensuring that students have continuous access to career-related information." "The meeting was attended by District Youth Officer Venkat Ram Babu, District Employment Officer N. Madhavi, BC Welfare Officer G. Jyothi, Lead Bank Manager A. Ravi Prasad, District Intermediate Education Officer K. Ravi Babu, District Education Officer, District Youth and Sports Officer T. Sunil Reddy, District Industries Centre General Manager Praveen Kumar, NSS District Programme Officer Srinivasa Rao, Additional DM&HO, and officials from various departments.

OU Students Protest Against Jantar Mantar Lathi Charge



"OU JULY 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Students' Joint Action Committees (JACs) at Osmania University staged a protest at the Arts College campus on Monday, condemning the alleged police lathi charge on students demonstrating at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. The protest was held with placards under the leadership of BC Students Federation State President Kommanaboyina Saidulu Yadav. "Addressing the gathering, student leaders alleged that the police action against students who were holding a peaceful demonstration amounted to an attack on demo-

cratic values. They urged democratic forces across the country to condemn the incident and demanded an end to what they described as the suppression of student movements. "The protesters also demanded stringent action against those responsible for the NEET question paper leak. Holding the Union Government morally accountable, they called for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. They further demanded compensation of ₹1 crore each for the families of students who allegedly lost their lives after being unable to cope with the impact of the NEET paper leak controversy. "The student leaders alleged that repeated examination paper leaks across the country reflected serious lapses in the education system and criticized the government's response. They called for comprehensive reforms to ensure transparency and credibility in the examination process. "Among those who participated in the protest were MSF National Vice-President Thokala Chiranjeevi, TSP State President Bhari Ashok, JVS State President Cheerla Vamsi, and OU student leaders Avula Sridhar Yadav, Siddu Yadav, Prabhakar, Shiva Yadav, Ganesh, Sai Kiran, Manoj Goud, Naveen, Hari, and others.

DOST Special Phase Admissions Notification Released for Government Degree College

, Uppal"Applications Open Till July 26; Limited Seats Available in B.Sc., B.Com., and B.A. Courses""UPPAL, JULY 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Government Degree College, Uppal has released the DOST Special Phase notification for admissions into the first year degree courses for the 2026-27 academic year. "College Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar stated that the Government has provided another opportunity for students seeking admission into degree courses. Students who have not yet registered under the DOST admission process can complete fresh registration and apply during this Special Phase. "He further explained that students who did not apply in the previous three phases, as well as those who secured a seat but are dissatisfied

with their allotted college, can exercise fresh web options during the Special Phase to seek admission in another college. "According to DOST Coordinator J. Viswanath Kumar, a limited number of seats are available in B.Sc. (MPC, MSCs, BZC, BZS), B.Com., and B.A. courses at Government Degree College, Uppal. Interested students are advised to make use of this final opportunity. "As per the Special Phase schedule, online applications will be accepted until July 26, while web options can be exercised until July 27. Seat allotment will be announced on July 30. Students must complete online self-reporting between July 30 and August 1, and report to the allotted college with original certificates between July 31 and August 1."

MMC Commissioner Conducts Comprehensive Field Inspection in Kapra's Nagarjuna Nagar Colony



Issues Key Directions on Encroachments, C&D Waste, Sanitation and Greenery”UPPAL, JULY 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation (MMC) Commissioner T. Vinay Krishna Reddy, IAS, conducted a comprehensive field inspection in Nagarjuna Nagar Colony under the Kapra Circle on Monday. He was accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner, Deputy Engineer, Assistant Engineer, Town Planning officials, Urban Biodiversity (UBD) officials, sanitation staff, representatives of Ramky and EPTRI. “During the inspection, the Commissioner reviewed the condition of roads and planter boxes and directed the Urban Biodiversity Department to identify all vacant planter boxes in coordination with Sanitary Field Assistants (SFAs), plant saplings immediately and ensure their regular maintenance. He stressed that every available planter box should be effectively utilized to enhance the city's green cover.”The Commissioner instructed the Town Planning Department to remove all unauthorized ramps and encroachments on roads without delay. He also ordered the immediate clearance of Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste dumped on roads and asked officials to explore the



use of suitable C&D material for filling low-lying areas wherever feasible.”Emphasizing scientific waste management, he directed that all new construction projects must be linked to an authorized C&D waste processing plant to ensure proper disposal and recycling of construction debris.”The Commissioner also instructed that all commercial establishments must prominently display their trade licences. Hostels, he said, should possess valid trade licences along with all mandatory statutory approvals and maintain the required records. He warned that strict action would be taken against establishments violating the rules.”Officials were further directed to identify owners of vacant plots and create awareness about maintaining their properties in a clean condition. They were also asked to take preventive measures to stop illegal dumping of garbage on vacant lands.Commissioner T. Vinay Krishna Reddy, IAS, emphasized that all departments should work in close coordination to strengthen sanitation, expand urban greenery, ensure scientific waste management and strictly enforce municipal regulations to provide citizens with a clean, safe and sustainable urban environment.

Former MLA Prabhakar Meets HYDRAA Commissioner on Uppal Lakes Development



Discussion on Increasing Water Storage Capacity, Beautification, Rehabilitation, and STP Construction”UPPAL, JULY 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Former Uppal MLA Prabhakar met HYDRAA Commissioner Ranganath to discuss the ongoing development works being undertaken by HYDRAA at Uppal Nalla Cheruvu, Ramanthapur Pedda Cheruvu, HMT Nagar

Cheruvu, and Kapra Cheruvu in the Uppal constituency.During the meeting, Prabhakar suggested measures to enhance the water storage capacity of the lakes, protect their boundaries, provide Transferable Development Rights (TDR) to landowners who lost land due to the projects, ensure proper rehabilitation for families residing in hutments, and take up comprehensive beautification of the lakes.”Prabhakar stated that the HYDRAA Commissioner appreciated the suggestions made based on his experience as an engineer and former legislator and assured him that they would be taken into consideration.”He further said that Commissioner Ranganath informed him that development works at Ramanthapur Chinna Cheruvu and Nacharam Erragunta Cheruvu would also commence soon.”Prabhakar also urged the Commissioner to establish Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in the upstream areas of the lakes to prevent pollution and ensure the long-term protection of the water bodies. He emphasized that lake development should be carried out in a manner that safeguards the environment while preserving ecological balance.

Complete SIR by July 24 and Make Parkal the No. 1 Constituency in the State:



MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy”Hanamkonda, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): Parkal MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy called upon Congress leaders and party workers to complete the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process 100% by July 24 and secure the top position for the Parkal constituency in the state.”A review meeting on the progress of the SIR process was held on Tuesday at the MLA Camp Office in Bhavani Nagar, Hanamkonda, with Congress Party Cluster In-charges from the Parkal constituency. The meeting was chaired by MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy. The chief guests included Shankar Naik, MLC from Nalgonda and

Political In-charge for the Warangal Parliament SIR process, Nasir, Parliament Observer, Inugala Venkatram Reddy, President of the Hanamkonda District Congress Committee, and M.D. Ayub, President of the Warangal District Congress Committee.”The leaders reviewed the implementation of the SIR process and congratulated the Booth Level Agents (BLAs) who had achieved 100% completion in their respective booths. They appreciated Parkal constituency for securing the 4th position in the state in the ongoing SIR process and praised every party worker who contributed to this achievement.”Speaking on the occasion, MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy said that the role of Booth Level Agents is crucial in strengthening the Congress Party and safeguarding democracy. He assured that every hardworking party worker would receive due recognition and urged everyone to continue working with the same dedication to complete the SIR process by July 24 and take Parkal to the No. 1 position in the state.”He also emphasized that voter verification must be conducted in a transparent manner and instructed party workers to remain vigilant to ensure that no irregularities occur during the verification process.”Congress Party leaders, Cluster In-charges, Booth Level Agents, and party workers attended the meeting.

Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya Questions Centre on Implementation of MGNREGS in Warangal



”Warangal, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): Warangal Member of Parliament Dr. Kadiyam Kavya raised questions in Parliament regarding the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in Warangal district. She sought details from the Union Ministry of Rural Development on the extent of employment provided to households that demanded work, the average number of employment days generated, and

whether there were any pending wage payments.”Responding to her query, Union Minister of State for Rural Development Kamlesh Paswan provided a written reply. According to the Minister, employment was provided to 99.99% of eligible households seeking work in Warangal district during the 2024–25 financial year and to 99.97% during the 2025–26 financial year. On average, each household received 41.12 days of employment in 2024–25 and 27.89 days in 2025–26.”Speaking on the issue, MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya expressed satisfaction that Warangal district has achieved commendable results in providing employment security to rural families through the MGNREGS. She stated that she continues to raise the concerns of rural people in Parliament and closely monitors the implementation of welfare schemes and the protection of their rights.”She also welcomed the Union Government's clarification that there are no pending wage dues under the scheme in Warangal district. She noted that the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system, under which wages are directly credited to workers' bank accounts, has enhanced transparency in the payment process.”Dr. Kadiyam Kavya further emphasized the need to increase the number of employment days under the scheme in the future and to expand the participation of women and other vulnerable sections. She also urged the Central Government to give special focus to the creation of durable rural assets and the implementation of skill development programmes in rural areas.

Rajanala Srihari Extends Birthday Greetings to MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy

”Hanumakonda, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): On the occasion of the birthday of Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, several Congress leaders and representatives of social organizations extended their heartfelt greetings and best wishes. They wished him continued success in public service and expressed hope that he would achieve many more milestones while fulfilling the aspirations of the people.”On this occasion, Greater Warangal Congress Working President Rajanala Srihari met MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy and conveyed his birthday wishes by presenting him with a bouquet. He wished the MLA continued success as an ideal public representative, remaining close to the people and effectively implementing developmental and welfare programmes.”The programme was attended by MRPS National Leader Manda Kumar Madiga, Kathula Abhilash, BC Cell General Secretary Maganti Shivakumar, along with several Congress leaders, party workers, and supporters. They extended their heartfelt birthday greetings



to MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, wishing him a long life, good health, and many more years of dedicated service to the people.

12-Year-Old Telangana Agitation Case: Jorika Ramesh Appears Before Hanumakonda Court



”Hanumakonda, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): As part of the trial in a Telangana agitation-related case registered nearly 12 years ago, Telangana activist, former Greater Warangal Corporator, and BRS leader Jorika Ramesh, along with Chaganti Ramesh, appeared before the 3rd Additional Metropolitan Magistrate (3rd MM) Court in Hanumakonda on Tuesday.”The case, registered as CC No. 3814/2022, pertains to the vandalism of the statue of former Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, located opposite the then Warangal District Collector's bungalow in Hanumakonda on June 1, 2014, a day before the formation of the State of Telangana. A case was subsequently registered at the Subedari Police Station.”During the hearing, the witnesses

were cross-examined by the lawyers representing both sides. The court adjourned the matter to July 27, 2026, for further proceedings.”Speaking to the media on the court premises, Jorika Ramesh alleged that the State Government had failed to fulfil its promise of withdrawing the pending Telangana agitation cases. He stated that during the previous BRS government, over 99 percent of such cases had been withdrawn, but a few remain pending due to the negligence of certain officials. He appealed to the Principal Secretary of the State Home Department to intervene and ensure that the remaining agitation-related cases are withdrawn.”Ramesh also alleged that the State Government was delaying the process by constituting a Telangana Agitation Activists Recognition Committee without fixing any time limit for its functioning. He noted that the committee is headed by K. Keshava Rao, with Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, Government Whip Addanki Dayakar, MLC Kodandaram, Ramulu Naik, and Shobhan Reddy serving as members. He demanded that, if the government is genuinely committed to the welfare of Telangana activists, it should implement the promises made in its election manifesto by August 15, Independence Day.”Representing the Telangana activists, advocates from the BRS Legal Cell, including Gurralla Vinod, Kondaiah, Pulla Praveen, M. Ambedkar, Venu Patel, Nagaraju, and others, appeared before the court and argued the case.

Congress Division President Kandi Sravan Kumar Reddy Participates in Banjara Seethla Bhavani Festival

”HABSIGUDA , JULY 21 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Banjara tribal communities celebrated the Seethla Bhavani Festival with great devotion at Habsiguda, praying for abundant rainfall, a prosperous harvest, growth in livestock, and the well-being and happiness of all people.”The special puja was held at the Sri Seethla Devi Temple on Velugugutta in Habsiguda. Habsiguda Congress Party Division President Kandi Sravan Kumar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest. On the occasion, members of the Banjara community extended a warm welcome to him by felicitating him with a traditional shawl.”Later, Kandi Sravan Kumar Reddy offered a coconut and performed special prayers to Goddess Seethla Bhavani, seeking her blessings. He also witnessed the traditional cultural performances presented by the Banjara community and appreciated their rich heritage, customs, and traditions.”Among those present were District ST Cell President Ganesh Naik, senior leaders Malu



Naik and Raju Naik, Youth Congress President Vasu Naik, Gundu Rajanna, Suman Naik, and a large number of Banjara tribal men and women.

Social Service Activities Should Bring Hope to Society: MLA K.R. Nagaraju



”Hanumakonda, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): Wardhannapet MLA and retired IPS officer K.R. Nagaraju said that extending support to those in need through service activities is the responsibility of every individual. He was speaking after participating in an umbrella distribution programme organized by the Rotary Club of Warangal Central for small roadside vendors at major junctions in Hasanparthy Mandal.”The programme was held at Mahalakshmi Banquet Hall in Hasanparthy, where MLA K.R. Nagaraju attended as the chief guest and distributed

umbrellas to the beneficiaries. Warangal District DCC President Inagala Venkatrami Reddy and Hanumakonda District Youth Congress President Dilip Raj also took part in the event.”Addressing the gathering, the MLA said the initiative was commendable as it aimed to provide relief to women, senior citizens, and other small vendors who earn their livelihood by working on roadsides and at busy junctions throughout the day, regardless of the scorching sun or heavy rain. He remarked that rendering service where it is most needed reflects true social responsibility.”He recalled that the Rotary Club of Warangal Central had earlier undertaken several public welfare initiatives, including the distribution of bicycles to students and eco-friendly clay Ganesh idols free of cost. He urged the club members to continue organizing more such meaningful service programmes for the benefit of society.”The programme was attended by umbrella donor Kore Chandramouli, Rotary Club of Warangal Central President Soma Venugopal, Secretary Nayini Anil Kumar, Treasurer Juluri Krishnamurthy, Kisan Cell District President Pingili Venugopal Reddy, Division President Gorre Kiran, Enumamula Market Director Rythu Raju, Vangapahad PACS Chairman Merugu Rajesh Goud, 65th Division President Sunil, senior leaders Thokala Lakshma Reddy, Kanaparthi Kiran, and Visam Surender Reddy, along with mandal and division leaders, party workers, and several others.

MLA Nayini Extends Grand Welcome to Minister Ponguleti; Minister Conveys Birthday Wishes

”Hanamkonda, July 21 (Indian Chronicle): Revenue and Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy received a grand welcome from Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy upon his arrival in Hanamkonda to participate in the review meeting on the implementation of government welfare schemes, departmental performance, and developmental activities across the erstwhile Warangal district.”On the occasion, Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy felicitated MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy with a ceremonial shawl and presented him with a bouquet to mark his birthday, conveying his heartfelt wishes. He expressed hope that the MLA would continue to remain close to the people and render distinguished service in implementing development and welfare initiatives.”Later, the Minister chaired a comprehensive review meeting with public representatives and senior officials on key issues concerning the development of the erstwhile Warangal district, expansion of infrastructure, mat-



ters related to the Revenue and Housing Departments, implementation of the government's priority schemes, and the resolution of public grievances.”

Kolkata Police seeks ex-editor’s passport application file; Kerala CM seeks Suvendu’s intervention

GNS News Agency, July 21

The Special Branch of Kolkata Police has sought details of the passport application of former editor of The Telegraph, R Rajagopal, after he alleged that his passport had not been renewed following the deletion of his name from the electoral rolls in West Bengal during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voters’ list.Assuring to resolve the issue “as quickly as possible”, Additional Commissioner of Police (Special Branch), Dhrubajyoti De told The Indian Express on Monday, “There was some issue of deletion of names of voters on the same address (Rajagopal’s address). I have sought the details of the file. Voter ID card may be asked for verification, and the absence of the voter ID card may raise a question, but it is not the definitive document for local enquiry for passports. I hope to get it resolved today itself. If it is found okay, another report will be sent to RPO (Regional Passport Office).”

Meanwhile, Kerala Chief Minister V D Satheesan wrote to his West Bengal counterpart Suvendu Adhikari seeking his intervention.“I understand that the adverse report is based on the deletion of his (Rajagopal’s) name from the electoral roll under the SIR. While the electoral issue is being dealt with through an appropriate appeal process, I am informed that the police report has had the effect of delaying the renewal process of his passport. I would like to request your good self to kindly look into the matter with urgency,” the Congress CM wrote.In a note on social media,

Rajagopal had said that he missed his daughter’s wedding in the United States because he did not possess an active passport. “I think, in the first week of April, a police official called me from the Ballygunge police station and summoned me for police verification. He told me to carry my documents. When I asked which document, he told me, ‘Voter ID card.’ Then I told him, ‘But my name has been deleted from the electoral roll on March 27,’” Rajagopal had said.Efforts to renew his passport since then have been unsuccessful, and he has received an appointment to appear before the Regional Passport Office (RPO) on July 17.In a statement on Sunday, the Editors Guild of India said it “condemns the manner in which Rajagopal is being treated by the bureaucracy that gets to decide who is an Indian citizen and who is not”.Meanwhile, “Wake Up Keralam,” a citizen-led cultural and political movement in Kerala, said, “If a prominent public figure with established credentials can be disenfranchised and face civic uncertainty, the predicament of ordinary citizens, particularly the marginalised and the less privileged, can only be imagined as far more severe and distressing.”“Rajagopal’s plight serves as a stark wake-up call. When a veteran editor encounters such difficulties, it lays bare the extreme vulnerability of the common citizen. Urgent judicial and administrative interventions are essential to safeguard the foundational rights to vote and travel, and to prevent the SIR from eroding the social fabric of Indian democracy,” the group said.

How many years for roads to be completely motorable: Bombay High Court questions BMC

GNS News Agency, July 21

While the BMC claimed that complaints by citizens were being resolved, the judges asked the civic body to produce relevant pictures of the situation before and after the complaint.The BMC, in its affidavit filed through Chief Engineer (Sewerage Operation) Anilkumar Bhoite, stated that of 73,437 manholes in the city, 71,426 have protective grills and such grills could not be installed on 2,011 manholes as they were buried or were non-accessible.The Bombay High Court on Monday questioned the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) as to how many years it would require to make a statement that all the roads in the city under its purview are completely motorable and are without any potholes or open manholes.

This came after the civic body denied the grievance in a suo motu PIL that it has failed to install protective grills on the manholes and stated that work for the installation of such grills is carried out by the respective Ward Officers.The BMC, in its affidavit filed through Chief Engineer (Sewerage Operation) Anilkumar Bhoite, stated that of 73,437 manholes in the city, 71,426 have protective grills and such grills could not be installed on 2,011 manholes as they were buried or were non-accessible.A bench of Justices Ajey S Gadkari and Kamal R Khata was hearing an interim application by lawyer Ruju Thakker in the suo motu PIL raising concerns over potholes, non-installation of protective grills on manholes in Mumbai and its surrounding areas, along with the issue of compensation for pothole-related

deaths.The judges orally questioned the civic body, asking that while one can drive at a speed of 100 kmph for a longer distance without any single pothole, how many years the BMC would take to claim that all its roads are completely motorable and comply with orders issued by the HC for over two decades.While the BMC claimed that complaints by citizens were being resolved, the judges asked the civic body to produce relevant pictures of the situation before and after the complaint.After Thakker, who appeared in person, referred to the BMC affidavit, which claimed that 957 protective grills were being stolen in the ‘A’ Ward of the city alone, the HC asked the civic body to inform it about how many FIRs it had lodged in connection with such incidents. As per the affidavit, H-West Ward of the BMC had the highest number of 1,144 cases of protective grills being missing, stolen or tilted.The Justice Gadkari-led bench on Monday also asked the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) Commissioner to personally look into the matter related to the delayed compensation for over six months to the victim or the kin of victims for injuries or deaths due to potholes, since the relevant committee’s meeting for the kin of the toddler who fell into a stormwater drain and died last year, as claimed by Thakker.The HC pulled up the authorities for bad roads in Thane city and questioned why the civic body did not find the issue of compensation to be serious, while it was bound to provide compensation within six weeks as per the court directions. Seeking the BMC’s response and the TMC’s compliance affidavit, the HC posted the further hearing for July 6.

Skyroot Aerospace set to launch India’s first privately built orbital rocket Vikram-1

GNS News Agency, July 21

New Delhi: Hyderabad-based space startup Skyroot Aerospace is set to create history on Saturday with the launch of its first orbital launch vehicle, Vikram-1, marking a major milestone for India’s rapidly expanding private space sector.The mission, named Mission Aagaman, is scheduled for lift-off at 11:30 A.M. from the First Launch Pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC-SHAR) in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.The test flight of Vikram-1 is expected to mark India’s entry into the global private orbital launch market. Developed entirely by a private Indian company, Vikram-1 is the country’s first privately built orbital launch vehicle and represents a significant step towards strengthening India’s commercial space capabilities.

Ahead of the launch, Skyroot Aerospace said all necessary airspace and maritime clearances have been secured. Authorities have also notified restricted airspace and maritime zones along the rocket’s flight path and impact corridor to facilitate the mission.Mission Aagaman will be Skyroot’s second space mission after the successful launch of the Vikram-S suborbital rocket on November 18, 2022.

Adding a symbolic touch to the landmark mission, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s handwritten postcard bearing the words “Vande Mataram” will travel to space aboard Vikram-1. Skyroot Aerospace announced that the Prime Minister’s handwritten message will be among several special payloads carried on the test flight.The company said



the mission will also carry handwritten notes from members of the Skyroot team, investors, policymakers and well-wishers from across the world. Describing the initiative as “a celebration carried by many hands and shared by millions,” Skyroot said the keepsakes represent the collective support and aspirations behind India’s emerging private space ecosystem.According to the company, the symbolic payloads reflect the shared vision and collaborative efforts that have helped shape India’s new era in space exploration and innovation.The successful launch of Vikram-1 is expected to further strengthen India’s position in the global space industry by showcasing the capabilities of the country’s private space enterprises and opening new opportunities in the commercial satellite launch market.

US-based advocacy groups back Sonam Wangchuk’s hunger strike

Washington: Activists from US-based advocacy groups gathered to express solidarity with Sonam Wangchuk, who has been on a hunger strike in New Delhi over alleged irregularities in the examination system, including NEET. Activists from Hindus for Human Rights and the Azadi Project gathered at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi near the Indian Embassy in Washington on Friday evening with placards carrying slogans in support of Wangchuk. The activists also raised slogans against the Indian government and demanded the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Climate activist Wangchuk began an indefinite hunger strike at Jantar Mantar on June 28, demanding the resignation of Pradhan over alleged irregularities in examinations.Earlier this week, Hindus for Human Rights urged the Indian government to reach out to Wangchuk and other protesters who are on a hunger strike.“The government must meet with the protesters, provide a substantive response to the examination and governance failures they have identified, and establish a credible, time-bound process for accountability,” the group said in an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.“The government must meet the protesters now, answer for the failures that brought them here, and act before indifference takes a life,” Sunita Viswanath, Executive Director of Hindus for Human Rights, said in a statement.The group also appealed to Wangchuk



US-based advocacy groups, including Hindus for Human Rights and the Azadi Project, expressed solidarity with Sonam Wangchuk over his hunger strike in New Delhi. The groups urged the Indian government to engage with protesters and address concerns over alleged examination irregularities.

and the fasting students to prioritise their health and lives.“Their concerns have been heard by people across India and around the world. They should not be required to sacrifice their health to demonstrate the seriousness of their demands,” the group said.

23 parties, Independent MP write to CJI on Election Commission’s SIR exercise

GNS News Agency, July 21

New Delhi: The Congress on Tuesday said that a joint letter, now signed by 23 political parties and one Independent MP, has been sent to the Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant, regarding the Election Commission of India’s (ECI) Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process and other election-related issues.Congress MP Jairam Ramesh took to social media ‘X’ and said, “21 political parties plus one Independent attended the INDIA janbandhan meeting on June 8, 2026 where a decision was taken to address a joint letter to the Hon’ble Chief Justice of India on the SIR process of the Election Commission of India and other election-related issues.”“Accordingly a joint letter now signed by 23 political parties plus one Independent has been sent to the Hon’ble Chief Justice of India today. The Opposition parties are firmly anchored in SURE – Solidarity, Unity and Resistance,” he said.

On June 8, a meeting of the INDIA bloc was attended by leaders from several Opposition parties. Those present included Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, Trinamool Congress President Mamata Banerjee, senior National Conference leader Omar Abdullah, and NCP(SP) leader Supriya Sule. However, some Opposition parties, including the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), stayed away from the meeting.

Addressing the media after the meeting, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge had said that representatives from several political parties had participated in the discussions. He stated that a wide range of issues were deliber-

‘Why special privilege?’ Telangana HC pulls up Narsingi police over delay in arrests

GNS News Agency, July 21

Hyderabad: Justice T Madhavi Devi of the Telangana High Court on Monday questioned the Narsingi police over their failure to arrest the accused in an attempt to murder case despite filing a chargesheet concluding that an offence under Section 109 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) was made out, and asked, “How are these accused special? Why are they being given special privilege?”The observations came during the hearing of a writ petition alleging an unfair investigation in a case registered by Narsingi Police Station, Cyberabad, against two private individuals for offences punishable under Section 109 read with Section 3(5) of the BNS.

Counsel for the petitioner submitted that though Section 109 of the BNS is a cognizable offence and the police

ated upon and that all leaders shared their views during the meeting.Kharge had also announced that the INDIA bloc had agreed to hold meetings every two months, with the next meeting scheduled to take place in August in Hyderabad, Telangana.Meanwhile, it has been one year since the Election Commission began the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process for the comprehensive verification of electoral rolls. According to the Election Commission, the exercise is aimed at ensuring the accuracy of voter lists and strengthening the integrity of the electoral process. A pilot phase of the campaign was launched in Bihar on June 24, 2025, ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections.As part of the exercise, around six crore names have reportedly been removed from electoral rolls across the country so far. The revision process is still underway in 19 states and union territories. In Bihar alone, around 65 lakh names were removed from the electoral rolls following the initial implementation of the campaign.Opposition leaders, including the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, protested against the SIR exercise and held several press conferences on the issue. Congress and other Opposition parties have alleged on multiple occasions that the SIR process is an attempt by the Election Commission to undermine democracy.On the other hand, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has repeatedly stated that the government’s objective is to identify and remove the names of illegal infiltrators from the electoral rolls and, where applicable, deport them from the country. He has maintained that the revision exercise is intended to ensure that no genuine Indian citizen is excluded from the voter list while illegal infiltrators are identified and removed through a systematic process.

themselves had concluded in the chargesheet that the offence was made out, no steps had been taken to arrest the accused or remand them to judicial custody.Taking exception to the police action, Justice Madhavi Devi orally observed that in simple cases, individuals are frequently summoned to police stations, but in the present case, despite a serious offence of attempt to murder being alleged and a chargesheet having been filed, no action had been taken against the accused. Questioning the apparent inaction, the Court asked the State as to what special category the accused belonged to and why they had been extended such treatment.Directing the Government Pleader for Home to file a detailed counter explaining the circumstances under which the accused had not been arrested despite the chargesheet, the Court adjourned the matter by two weeks.

Delhi medical procurement fraud: Role of supplier who ‘manipulated’ tenders under scanner

As probe deepens into the Rs 700-crore fraud case linked to the Central Procurement Agency (CPA) and the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in Delhi, the role of a “contractor” — accused of manipulating tenders and siphoning off public funds — is under scanner, The Indian Express has learnt.

Described by investigators as a broker, he reportedly created multiple shell firms in an alleged attempt to benefit a few manufacturers and played a central role in rigging tenders for medicines, surgical items, consumables and equipment. He is accused of tying up with manufacturers, fixing supply rates and arranging cash kickbacks, said sources.Said a senior officer, “The FIR mentions the name. His role is being probed and he is on the radar. If required he will be called for questioning and may be arrested also.”A complaint regarding the alleged scam and irregularities in procurement for health facilities in the Capital was filed by the Department of Vigilance with the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Delhi Police, which was later converted into an FIR on June 2. The alleged irregularities first came to light in May this year when the Department of Vigilance conducted raids at the CPA offices following complaints regarding procurement discrepancies.The complaint from the Vigilance Department names several firms allegedly used as fronts and alleged the “liaisoner” was the real operator behind those entities, sources said.“Tender specifications and terms were prepared to favour the pre-decided firms... with the liaisoner/supplier drafting restrictive specifications in collusion with manufacturer contacts. Those documents were then reportedly routed to Dr Vinod Kumar Ranga, Head of Office (HOO) of CPA, who presented them to the tender committee,” the complaint stated.Tender committees were allegedly coerced into approving these tailor-made specifications, according to the complaint and former DGHS Dr Vatsala Aggarwal, who was arrested over the weekend in

the case, allegedly gave final sanction to the skewed tender terms.The “broker” then allegedly ensured that the front firms submitted bids, criteria such as turnover, experience and performance were set at exorbitant levels to discourage genuine competitors, yet the shell firms were allowed to qualify.

The complaint further charges that technical evaluation sheets were prepared by the “broker/ supplier” and handed to Dr Ranga for fast approval, while financial bids were opened secretly the same day. Award approvals and purchase orders, the FIR claims, were issued manually and outside the e-procurement or Government e-Marketplace (GeM) workflows — often within hours of bid opening.

The FIR alleges deliberate manipulation of online tender statuses to conceal completed awards. Long-closed procurements, for which full payments were allegedly released, reportedly remained listed as “Active” or “Under Process” on public procurement portals, preventing scrutiny by other suppliers and the public. Payments to existing, legitimate suppliers allegedly stalled for up to two years, while orders tied to the “liaisoner” saw payment re’leased within one-to-two days. The complaint contends that tenders worth several hundred crores may have been awarded under this arrangement.The ACB has confirmed registration of an FIR and said preliminary inquiries are underway. Investigators will examine tender files, procurement portals, payment records and the corporate structures of the named firms to establish links alleged in the complaint. Officials contacted for comment have not yet responded to questions about the timeline for arrests or asset tracing.The allegations add to scrutiny of procurement practices in the Delhi health department after recent action against senior officials. The probe aims to determine the extent of the financial damage and to recover any proceeds of the alleged malpractice, said sources.

‘Governments fell over onions, why not education?’ asks Sonam Wangchuk on Day 20

New Delhi: Educator and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk on Friday said he has lost nearly 20 per cent of his body during his indefinite hunger strike but remained resolute, asserting that if governments could fall over rising onion prices, seeking accountability for students could also bring political change.

In a video message shared at the end of the 20th day of his fast, Wangchuk urged people to join the Cockroach Janta Party’s (CJP) proposed Parliament march on July 20 in large numbers, saying public participation was the movement’s biggest strength.“Yes, I am still alive. Twenty per cent of my body is gone. After fats, muscles are gone. After that, organs will go. Finally, the brain. The time has not come yet,” Wangchuk said.

Seeking to reassure supporters about his condition, he added, “The 20th day is coming to an end. Let me prove that my mind is still fine.”Referring to questions over whether the ongoing agitation would lead to accountability or the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Wangchuk said people often underestimated the power of mass movements.“I ask you — do the people of India love their children’s lives and education more, or onions?” he said, before recalling that governments had fallen in the past over public anger triggered by soaring onion prices.

“Three times governments fell in India because of a people’s movement. Once in 1980, the central government fell. In 1998, the Delhi government fell. That year, the



Rajasthan government also fell. And what was the movement about? Onion prices,” he said.“And here we are talking about the lives of children. More than 20 suicides have taken place this year. There will be more in the years to come. Can we not ensure accountability through this movement? Will the education minister not resign?” he asked.Appealing for a massive turnout for the July 20 “Chalo Sansad” march, Wangchuk said the strength of the movement lay in public participation.

“March with me to Parliament on July 20. You are our strength. Otherwise, who am I? What am I? I am a lonely, hungry, worthless human being. You are the strength,” he said.“Your numbers are our strength.

Before Russia-Ukraine war, Western oil firms ‘cut deals’ to favour Moscow’s allies



FOR all the current discourse on global sanctions and censure, before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Western oil giants, including affiliates of Chevron, Shell and Exxon Mobil, signed off on allegedly inflated budgets, rigged bids, and gave lucrative contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars to allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Kazakhstan elite. This is one of the key revelations of Caspian Cabals, an investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, of which The Indian Express is a partner, into the 1500-km Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), one of the world’s largest crude oil pipeline systems used by both Russia and Kazakhstan. The CPC takes crude from large oil fields in western Kazakhstan and also from Russian producers to Russia’s Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, from where it is transported to buyers globally through tankers. In 2023, CPC carried 63.5 million tons of oil to international markets — around 10 per cent of CPC crude is Russian, the rest is from Kazakhstan’s large oil fields Kashagan and Karachaganak. Since the start of the Ukraine war in 2022, CPC paid at least \$816 million to shareholders Transneft and Rosneft, Russia’s biggest oil company – and \$321 million in taxes to Russian authorities. Western companies, led by Chevron Corp., made payments to subcontractors who didn’t perform the work. In one case, they authorized a \$48-million advance payment for work — including building electricity lines to a new pumping station in southern Russia — that went missing as soon as it was paid. Western oil companies — affiliates of Chevron, ExxonMobil, Italy’s Eni S.p.A. and Shell — sought to curry favor with Putin allies and the politically influential Kazakh elite by granting them hefty contracts CPC cut corners on safety and downplayed the severity of a 2021 oil spill that didn’t just lead to environmental damage but also to allegations of financial corruption. The consortium ultimately lost a Russian court case and paid a \$98.7-million fine for environmental damage. At least five whistleblowers alleged that Western oil companies’ dealings in Russia or Kazakhstan included improper payments in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a US law that prohibits bribes to foreign officials. Although the Russian government effectively controls the pipeline, since the war on Ukraine, Kazakhstan hired a US lobbying firm for a nearly \$4-mn annual contract, to help the pipeline remain sanctions-free.

Caspian Cabals Caspian Cabals is an investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists into the 1500-km Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), one of the world’s largest crude oil pipeline systems used by both Russia and Kazakhstan. In a statement to ICIJ, Sally Jones, a senior media adviser for Chevron, said Chevron and international oil companies “have sought to provide critical technical support to enable safe and reliable operations of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium.” “Chevron is committed to ethical business practices, operating responsibly, conducting its business with integrity and in accordance with the laws and regulations of each of the jurisdictions in which it operates,” she said. She did not respond directly to ques-

tions about Chevron’s role in the pipeline or complaints about overpriced contracts, alleged kickbacks or conflicts of interest. Exxon did not respond to requests for comment, nor did the governments of Kazakhstan or Russia. A spokesman for Shell said the company does not tolerate bribery in any form. An Eni spokesperson said, “We are committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency, ethical conduct and environmental responsibility.” Eni referred questions about the pipeline to CPC, which did not respond to multiple requests for comment. Notably, India did not feature on the destination map for CPC oil — Kazakh as well as Russian — until early 2022. Now, India has emerged as the biggest market for CPC-Russia (CPC-R) oil, followed by Turkey and China. Tanker data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler shows that nearly 67 per cent of CPC-R crude made its way to India in the first nine months of 2024, while the figure for 2023 was even higher at 83 per cent. Consider this: Between March 2022 and March 2024, 82 of the 117 oil tankers carrying CPC-R oil, that set sail from the Black Sea loading terminal, discharged the oil at Indian ports. Between January 2021 and February 2022, just five of the 72 tankers hauling CPC-R had undertaken the long journey to Indian ports. The reason, industry insiders and experts say, is rather simple. When Russian oil was allowed to flow freely globally, it made little sense financially and logistically for Indian refiners to buy crude from a far-away geography like Russia. The discounts, however, have turned that argument on its head.

While India’s private sector refining giant Reliance Industries (RIL) has been the biggest buyer of CPC-R crude, public sector players Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL), and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals (MRPL) have also been buying this oil, vessel tracking data shows. In the first nine months of 2024, Indian refiners cumulatively imported over 30 million barrels of CPC-R crude, with shipments coming in every month, vessel data shows. In all, 45.56 million barrels of CPC-R crude were shipped globally during the period, the other notable importers being Turkey and China, while some volumes went to Pakistan. CPC-R accounted for over 6 per cent of India’s overall oil imports from Russia for the period. Russia accounts for over 40 per cent of India’s total oil imports.

In contrast, the CPC-Kazakhstan (CPC-K) crude purchases by Indian refiners have been few and far between, with isolated cargoes coming to India sporadically, just as the case was with CPC-R oil before Russia invaded Ukraine. “The Kazakh part (of CPC oil going to India) is still minimal. The CPC-K is really mostly traded in the Mediterranean region. So, it would be going towards the Mediterranean refiners,” said Viktor Katona, head of crude analysis at Kpler. RIL, IOC, BPCL, HPCL, and MRPL did not respond to The Indian Express’s request for comments. But officials in the Indian government and refining sector The Indian Express spoke to underlined that Indian oil and gas companies are neither part of the CPC project nor its stakeholders, but they are its customers. “We buy oil from many countries and many companies. As customers, we can only ensure that our deals are clean. What happened or what may happen internally in a supplying company or country is something beyond our control and most often also beyond our knowledge,” an oil industry source in India said. India is the world’s third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 85 per cent of its requirement. New Delhi has time and again emphasised that its priority is to secure its energy supplies and that the country is willing to buy oil from any country or company that is not under sanctions. Russian oil is technically not under any sanction by the US or its allies, and is only subject to the

Why do we have Governors in every State? | Explained



The Supreme Court on April 8, 2025 delivered a significant verdict delineating the powers of the President and the Governors, on the issue of grant of assent to Bills passed by State legislatures, under Articles 201 and 200 respectively of the Constitution. The judgement has sparked a debate across the country and therefore, it becomes imperative to look into the history of the institution of Raj Bhavans in every State. Interestingly, the 415-page judgement of the top court itself provides a valuable insight into the past.

When did the office of Governor come into existence? In their exhaustive verdict, Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan point out that the administration of country transitioned from the East India Company to the British Crown with the enactment of the Government of India (GoI) Act of 1858 which brought about a new administrative framework in which the Governor, as an agent of the Crown, operated under the general supervision of a higher authority titled as Governor General. Though this structure prevailed for quite a few years, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 aimed at increasing increased Indian participation in governance, led to the enactment of the GoI Act of 1919. Even after the enactment of the new law, the Governor remained central to the provincial administration in the country and continued to wield significant authority. Subsequently, the GoI Act of 1935 ushered in the era of provincial autonomy and formally required the Governor to act on the advice of the Ministers. Yet, the 1935 law too safeguarded the discretionary powers of the Governor such as vetoing a Bill passed by a legislative council. When the country was nearing Independence, almost every other document including the Commonwealth India Bill of 1925, the Nehru Report of 1928 and the Constitution of Hindustan Free State Act, an aspirational document prepared by the All India Hindu Mahasabha in 1944, advocated for adopting the Westminster style of polity and insisted on retaining the office of the Governor.

What were the changes made to the office of Governor?

Justice Pardiwala points out that the declaration of Independence brought about a fundamental transformation in the role of the Governor. Until the Constitution came into effect in 1950, the provisions of the GoI Act of 1935 as modified by the India (Provisional Constitution) Order of 1947 governed the administration of the country. Significantly, the 1947 Order omitted the expressions ‘in his discretion,’ ‘acting in his discretion,’ and ‘exercising his individual judgment’ from the Act, signaling a departure from the colonial framework. One of the key decisions that the framers of the Constitution had to take was to decide whether the Governor should be elected by way of a direct election or selected from a panel of names suggested by the State legislature or nominated by the President. While in the early days, the Constituent Assembly leaned towards having an elected Governor; as the framing of the Constitution neared its conclusion, there was increasing support in favour of having a Governor nominated by the President. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru attributed this shift of opinion to the bitter experience of partition, which, according to him, opened the eyes of the Constituent Assembly to the dangers of separatism and the need for having a political structure which focused more on the character of the nation as a Union of States rather than a federation.

How did the Constituent Assembly deal with the office of Governor?

Constituent Assembly member H.V. Kamath argued that an elected Governor, being a partisan figure, would inevitably clash with the Chief Minister, thereby disrupting the functioning of a cabinet style government. According to him, the role of a constitutional head should be impartial and symbolic, and therefore, the nomination system was better suited to uphold these principles. Hukam Singh treaded a middle path by acknowledging the difficulties inherent in both pure election and pure nomination for the purpose of appointment of Governors. Recognising the high costs involved in conducting elections, he proposed a balanced alternative,

suggesting that a panel of candidates be nominated by the State legislature and a Governor be chosen from the said panel.

Rohini Kumar Chaudhari was prophetic in his argument before the Constituent Assembly. He opposed the nomination of Governors by cautioning that a Governor appointed by the Centre and belonging to a different political party than the provincial government, could lead to discord between him and the provincial governments and thereby undermine provincial autonomy. While many other members too expressed their opinions, Nehru felt that an elected Governor could exacerbate provincial divisions and weaken ties with the Centre. “I feel that if we have an elected Governor that would to some extent encourage separatist provincial tendency more than otherwise. There will be far fewer common links with the Centre,” he told the Constituent Assembly which finally agreed upon appointment of Governor through Presidential nomination.

Does the Governor enjoy discretionary powers?

Article 163 of the Constitution states that the Governor shall exercise his functions on the aid and advice of a council of ministers headed by the Chief Minister “except in so far as he is by or under this Constitution required to exercise his functions or any of them in his discretion.” When the Constituent Assembly debated the necessity for providing such discretion to the Governor, B.R. Ambedkar said, the discretion was of limited nature and could be exercised only within the parameters of the constitutional provisions. He pointed out that the words intended to be included in Article 163 (then numbered as draft Article 143) were ‘except in so far as he is by or under this Constitution’ and not ‘except wherever he thinks that he should exercise this power of discretion against the wishes or against the advice of the ministers.’ When the discussion turned towards Article 200 (then numbered as draft Article 175), which mandates Governor’s assent to a Bill passed by the legislature for it to become an Act, Ambedkar himself moved an amendment on July 30, 1949 to remove the expression ‘in his discretion’ from the Article. He felt that “in a responsible government, there can be no room for the Governor acting on discretion.” The amendment was successfully carried out after a debate and the expression was removed.

What has the Supreme Court held now?

It is by relying upon the Constituent Assembly debates to understand the intent behind the framing of Article 200, the Bench comprising Justices Pardiwala and Mahadevan have now held that the Governors do not enjoy either the power to veto (withholding assent to a Bill indefinitely without assigning reasons) or pocket veto (keeping a Bill pending without taking any decision for an indefinite period) a legislation passed by an elected legislature. Since neither Article 200 nor 201 lays down timeline for grant of assent, the court has prescribed timelines for the President as well as the Governor when it comes to granting assent to Bills. The judges took note that the first Administrative Reforms Commission established by the Union Home Ministry in 1966 as well as the Rajamannar Commission set up by the Tamil Nadu government in 1969 had recommended framing of guidelines on the discretionary powers of the Governor. Similarly, the Sarkaria Commission established in 1983 and the Punchi Commission constituted in 2007 had recommended adoption of definite timelines for processing State Bills. What is difference between prescribing and reading in timelines? Taking a cue from those recommendations as well as a February 4, 2016 office memorandum of the Union Home Ministry which insists on clearing State legislations sent for President’s assent within three months, the judges ordered that the President must take a decision on grant of assent within three months. Similarly, they prescribed a time line of one to three months for the Governors to either grant assent, withhold assent or refer the Bill to the President. The judges made it clear that they were only prescribing the timelines and not reading them into Article 200 since the latter course would amount to amending the Constitution. Explaining the need for prescribing the timelines, the judges said, failure to adhere to these timelines would enable the State government concerned to approach the court for an appropriate remedy and also provide an opportunity for the office of the Governor to explain the delay thereby enabling the court to take a decision on a case-by-case basis. “Any deliberate inaction on part of the Governor in assenting to Bills or reserving them for the consideration of the President, thus, has to be viewed as a serious threat to the federal polity of the country and the aggrieved governments cannot be left remediless, desperately waiting for a decision at the hands of the Governor,” the Bench said thereby bringing in a new dimension to the functioning of the age-old office of the Governor.

As malaria cases fall, a look at Tamil Nadu’s strategies for elimination

Reports from the World Health Organization and the Commonwealth Malaria Report have indicated that India is set to eliminate malaria by 2030. The number of deaths from malaria has significantly fallen, with better surveillance and access to diagnosis and medicines, the reports add. Malaria, the WHO says, is a life-threatening disease spread to humans by some types of mosquitoes. It is mostly found in tropical countries. It is preventable and curable. The infection is caused by a parasite and does not spread from person to person. Malaria can be prevented by avoiding mosquito bites and with medicines. Treatments can stop mild cases from getting worse.

In Tamil Nadu, for the past two years, only around 340 cases were reported, says Director of Public Health T.S. Selvavinayagam. This turnaround was made possible due to steady surveillance, he adds. “When fever is reported the entire area is brought under surveillance. All institutions must be notified of fever surveillance. This enables the Health Department to get details of where the fever has occurred, who is affected and in which location,” he explains. Dr. Selvavinayagam goes on to detail: “Once we identify the location where there has been a fever case, the environmental factors are identified. These could be water stagnation or issues with water storage containers. Then we expand the periphery of surveillance and we continue to monitor intensively, undertake anti-vector activities etc. We rapidly search for hidden cases as we know what the precipitating factor is. The idea is to explore the hidden cases and bring them to light.” The Health Department then takes up routine anti-malarial activities. “We continue to monitor the area for years together if it is a high risk area,” he says. The female Anopheles mosquitoes that spread malaria breed in fresh water, coastal and dirty water. Four types of malaria are commonly found in the country: Plasmodium vivax, plasmodium falciparum, plasmodium ovale and plasmodium malariae. “In Tamil Nadu we see two varieties of malaria commonly – vivax and falciparum. The latter is imported,”

says former DPH K. Kolandaisamy. “Uncovered overhead tanks, wells, riverine areas and quarries are breeding sources,” he explains. Other areas include coconut groves and places of religious congregations such as Rameswaram. Symptoms of malaria can be mild or life-threatening. Because some malaria symptoms are not specific, getting tested early is important. The most common early symptoms of malaria are fever, headache and chills. Severe symptoms include extreme tiredness and fatigue, impaired consciousness, multiple convulsions, difficulty breathing, dark or bloody urine, jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin), abnormal bleeding. Infants, children under 5 years, pregnant women and girls, travellers and people with HIV or AIDS are at higher risk of severe infection. Malaria elimination strategy includes taking a peripheral blood smear of the patient. “A health inspector should carry with them a needle and a slide box to collect the blood smear; a ladle, and a torch,” says Dr. Kolandaisamy. The last two items would help the inspector identify the disease-causing mosquitoes. They should also have a chloroscope to check for chlorine in water body, he adds. All fever is tested for suspicion of malaria. If the malaria is suspected to be imported (travel-related), we ask for travel history to help control the spread of the disease, Dr. Kolandaisamy says. Healthcare workers are deployed to spray insecticides. Years of surveillance and publicising the requirement to cover overhead tanks and wells has resulted in eliminating mosquito breeding spots, the doctor says. Malaria is introduced into the State by travellers however, says the public health expert. The Falciparum variety of malaria spreads through travel. The challenge lies in identifying the source of the infection, he points out. “The biggest challenge is lack of health and sanitary inspectors. The number of posts have been reduced. These are ‘invisible jobs’ of the public health sector. This invisible force, if not maintained, could increase the burden on staff and lead to a surge in the disease, Dr. Kolandaisamy avers.

The road to gender-equal pay

Gender inequality is a global phenomenon ingrained into the fabric of society, manifesting itself in all aspects of life. In November 2024, India spoke on its commitment to gender equality in the UN Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review. The statement by the Women and Child Development Ministry highlights the progress made since 2019. This year, India boasts an allocation of \$37 billion to gender equality budgeting and has the highest proportion of women in STEM disciplines globally. However, the Ministry’s statement also acknowledges that many issues have yet to be addressed, such as the gender pay gap. Indeed, a key component of gender inequality is the global gender pay disparity. Closing India’s gender wage gap is the first step towards gender equality in India, allowing women to equally contribute to, and benefit from, India’s economic growth. What is India’s progress on the fight for gender-equal pay, and what measures will it take to reach such equality?

Regarding the wider global context, the fight for gender equality has greatly progressed around the world — with key milestones such as the international Suffrage Movements of the 17th and 18th centuries, which fought for women’s right to vote, and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which defined gender-based discrimination and committed signatories to increase gender equality. Furthermore, the UN Sustainable Development Goals from 2015 included global women’s empowerment and gender equality within its agenda. Despite the UNSDGs’ 2030 target, however, the gender gap remains significant. A 2024 report by Focus 2030 says it would take a staggering 131 years to achieve worldwide gender equality.

Falling participation Overall, women’s global workforce participation has reduced compared with previous years, with a World Economic Forum (WEF) analysis of 2024 LinkedIn data showing that women account for 42% of the global workforce and 31.7% of senior leaders. A factor that perpetuates gender inequality in the workplace is the notion that women bear the responsibilities of the house (especially regarding childcare); this affects promotions and negotiation outcomes and restricts access to high-paying professions. Additionally, as women’s careers advance, the wage gap between them and men in the same position grows.

While India has ratified a number of conventions relating to women in the workplace, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Employment and Occupation Convention recognising discrimination as a “violation of rights”, it still has a long way to go. The WEF’s Global Gender Gap Report, 2024 places India at 129th out of 146 countries, with 64.1% of its gender equality gap closed. A 2023 report by Azim Premji University indicates that salaried women in India still earn an average of 76% of what salaried men do per year, with self-employed women earning 40% of what self-employed men do. While Azim Premji’s 2023 report found that wage equality for women has been improving since 2004, they also uncovered cause for concern. Controlling for factors such as caste and class revealed increasing discrimination against women that hin-

Vessels to and from India among top applicants for Strait of Hormuz passage



MERCHANT VESSELS to and from India were among the top applicants for passage through the Iran-recommended routes to cross the Strait of Hormuz in the three weeks following the June 17 US-Iran peace MoU, as per Iranian data. According to Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA), set up by Iran to regulate the flow of maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, over 200 non-Iranian vessels coordinated with it to receive passage permits and insurance coverage during the three week period.

Among the transit requests to exit the Persian Gulf received by the Islamic Republic's PGSA set up recently by Tehran, those bound for India had a 20% share, second only to China's 21%. The share of the rest of Asia was 29%, while that for intra-region (in the Persian Gulf) movements was 22%. The share of the rest of the world was 8%.

To enter the Persian Gulf, of all transit requests, India topped the list of origins with a 21% share, followed by China at 19%. Other Asian countries had a combined share of 20%, intra-region movement requests accounted for 24%, while the rest of the world had a share of 16%. The PGSA didn't provide the absolute number of transit requests received. This data also doesn't include vessels that crossed or attempted to cross the strait without seeking Tehran's permission. Vessels to and from India among top applicants for Hormuz passage Source: Persian Gulf Strait Authority Post these three weeks after the MoU, tensions resurfaced in the region, leading to a significant drop in maritime traffic. While vessel movements have not completely stopped, they are sharply down following the resurgence of conflict around the critical trade artery. On its part, Iran and the PGSA maintain that the strait is closed. The data is in line with trade patterns considering India and China have traditionally been the major destination for cargo, particularly energy shipments, exiting the strait, with the rest of Asia making up a bulk of the remaining traffic.

Around 40% of India's crude oil imports, 60% of its LNG imports, and a whopping 90% of its LPG imports came from West Asia through the strait. The country's dependence on imports stands at over 88% for oil, 60% for LPG,

and about 50% for natural gas, which is imported as LNG. Before the war broke out late February, the Strait of Hormuz usually accounted for a fifth of global oil and LNG flows. Given the high dependence on West Asia for energy and other imports like fertilisers, it was expected that vessel traffic between India and the Persian Gulf would pick up. What is now playing out in the Strait of Hormuz is a battle between Iran and the US to effectively control the waterway. The US and its allies have been encouraging vessels to use the strait's waters hugging Oman as an alternative to Tehran-designated lanes. The stark differences in the MoU's interpretation and the vagueness in its terms have now emerged as the flashpoints between Tehran and Washington. Maritime data shows that ever since last week's fare-up, which followed Iran's targeting of a few vessels taking the Omani route through the strait, even the vessels crossing the strait are mostly doing so using paths designated by Iran.

During the war, Iran actively regulated the flow of vessels through the strait, allowing only a handful to pass, that too using routings dictated by it. Following the June MoU with the US, Iran continued to insist that vessels cross the strait only through the routings designated by it, and that too after seeking permission from the PGSA. Tehran also plans to impose a service fee for transits, but at a later date. Earlier this week, US president Donald Trump even proposed a 20% charge by the US Navy to facilitate safe passage of commercial ships through the strait, only to backtrack the very next day. According to the data released by the PGSA, of the 200-plus transit applications it received in the three weeks following the MoU, 53% were for exiting the Persian Gulf, while 47% were to enter the Gulf. The PGSA said that it approved 79% of the applications, while 14% were under process as of July 14. It said that the average time taken to process the transit applications was 50 hours. As for requests by type of vessels, tankers had the highest share at 41%, followed by bulk carriers at 27%. Container ships, LNG carriers, and service vessels accounted for 18%, 2%, and 1%, respectively, with other vessel types accounting for an 11% share. According to vessel tracking data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler, there were just 14 vessel crossings on Sunday (July 12), down from 24 on July 11 and 19 on July 10. As per data from S&P Global, the last time ship transits were lower than this level was on June 14, three days before the US and Iran inked their peace deal MoU. There are reports that transits have grown slightly over the past three days, but most pertain to Iran-linked vessels. Since mid-June, vessel movements through the strait had risen meaningfully, even crossing 90 on June 24, with the average being between 40 and 50 on most days in the three weeks that followed the MoU, industry data shows. But these were still lower than the pre-war levels of up to 140 daily transits.

RIL eyes AI ecosystem and private satellite constellation

Reliance Industries Chairman and MD Mukesh Ambani on Friday unveiled the company's plan to build a sovereign artificial intelligence (AI) ecosystem in India through its newly-launched Reliance Intelligence initiative. "Reliance Intelligence is building India's sovereign AI backbone in Jamnagar. This cutting-edge infrastructure will be powered entirely by clean energy from Reliance's own solar generation from the Kutch renewable platform," Ambani said at the RIL AGM. "The first 120 megawatts will be commissioned by the end of 2026," he said. In addition, RIL is operationalising an initial fleet of advanced NVIDIA GB300 GPUs. "This next-generation compute capacity is equivalent to more than 75,000 H100 GPUs on an AI-inference basis," he said. As the first 120 megawatts becomes fully operational, this capacity can scale to over two lakh H100-equivalent GPUs, he said. "This capacity places Reliance among the largest AI infrastructure platforms being built anywhere in the world. When compute becomes affordable, innovation becomes inevitable," he said.

"Our Google partnership has deepened into a truly AI-first collaboration. For hundreds of millions of Jio users, Google AI Pro, powered by Gemini, is already accessible free of cost. Our second major partnership is the joint venture with Meta, which operationalises the LLaMA open-source AI for Indian enterprises," Ambani said. He said Reliance Intelligence will deliver sovereign hosting within India, with full model transparency and portability that allows every enterprise to own its AI journey. It will be accessible in 22 Indian languages. Evaluating satellite constellation for connectivity. Jio Platforms is evaluating the development of a sovereign Low Earth Orbit satellite constellation for India. "We are also partnering with the leading global constellation providers by leasing satellite capacity, so that we can accelerate service availability while building our own long-term sovereign capability," RIL Chairman Mukesh Ambani said.

AI skills feature in 15.4 per cent of tech job descriptions: Naukri report

New Delhi: AI fluency is rapidly emerging as a baseline workplace capability, with AI-related skills now featuring in 15.4 per cent of technology job descriptions, while AI skill mentions in non-technology roles have increased nearly six-fold, says a report. According to Naukri's latest World AI Day Report 2026, AI-related skills now appear in 15.4 per cent of technology job descriptions, up from 0.9 per cent in 2020, reflecting a nearly 17-fold increase in employer demand over the past six years.

The report drew insights from nearly 27,000 professionals across 80+ industries and 15+ cities and analysed over 3 lakh job descriptions. Interestingly, AI adoption is spreading beyond traditional technology functions. Mentions of AI-related skills in non-technology job descriptions have increased from 0.26 per cent in 2020 to 1.59 per cent in 2026, reflecting nearly six-fold growth. As AI talent becomes increasingly valuable, professionals with AI skills continue to enjoy a measurable salary advantage. "AI is no longer a future trend, it is already reshaping how India works. It's showing up in job descriptions, hiring patterns, workplace tools and career decisions. The real question now is readiness," Sumeet Singh, Group CMO, Info Edge (India) Ltd, said.

According to the report, professionals with AI skills earn higher median salaries across both IT and non-IT roles than peers without AI skills. AI-enabled roles have also recorded stronger salary growth over the past four years, reinforcing the growing business value of AI expertise. AI hiring has

grown fastest among professionals with 13 to 16+ years of experience, followed by those with 16+ years, as per the report. Recruiter demand has also increased significantly for higher salary brackets, including Rs 40-49 lakh and Rs 50 lakh and above, indicating that organisations are investing in experienced professionals capable of leading enterprise AI transformation. AI usage is particularly high among professionals working in AI-intensive functions. Product Management, Data Science and Analytics, and Engineering, Software and QA report the highest proportion of professionals who rely heavily on AI in their work. The report noted that India's AI journey has entered a new phase. While organisations are accelerating AI adoption and demand for specialised skills continues to grow, sustained investment in workforce development will determine how effectively businesses and professionals realise AI's full potential.

‘What have they done to deserve...’: Why Farah Khan makes her children fly economy



Farah Khan recently talked about why her children sit in economy even though she sits in business class while travelling. Speaking on Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbachiyaa's podcast, she shared, "Pooch rahi thi abhi, 'Aap holiday par ja rahe ho. Bachche kaise hain?' Main bola, Economy mein baithe hain teeno... Maine kaha, 'Kaise hote hain aapke bachche long flight mein?' Kehte hain, 'Peeche hote hain,' Maine kaha, 'Peeche matlab economy mein?'... 'Main aage business mein.'... To kehti, 'Unhone kiya kya hai jo aa aaye woh? Bachchon ne aisa kya kiya hai, kya deserve kiya hai ki abhi se unko main first class ya business mein bithaungi? Phir aage jaakar to meri hi vaat lagne wali hai na.'"

(She asked me, 'You're going on a holiday. What about your children?' I said, 'All three of them travel in economy.' Then I asked, 'How do your children travel on long flights?' She replied, 'They sit at the back.' I asked, 'You mean in economy?' 'I travel in business class. What have they done to already deserve to fly business or first class? Why should I seat them there at such a young age? If I get them used to that now, it'll only make life difficult for me later.'")

Farah's remark speaks of "humble parenting"—the idea of exposing children to comfort without letting privilege define their worldview.

But can keeping children away from certain luxuries actually make them more grateful and resilient?

According to Dr Satyahanumasree (BPT, MSc Psychology), Student Counsellor & Psychologist, VNR Vignana Jyothi Institute of Engineering & Technology, privilege itself is not the problem. "Privilege and comfort are often subjective, and by themselves, they do not determine a child's values or personality. What makes the difference is whether children are also exposed to experiences that help them understand different realities, appreciate diversity, and value the effort behind what they have," she says. Rather than

Meet the animals that breathe through their skin, gut, and more

When we think of breathing, lungs and gills usually come to mind. But in the animal kingdom, evolution has produced some truly bizarre ways of taking in oxygen. Some species absorb oxygen through their skin, others use specialised organs near their tails, while one marine creature even breathes through its rear. These remarkable adaptations help animals survive harsh environments, escape predators and endure long periods underwater. Here are five animals with some of the most fascinating breathing mechanisms in nature.

1. Freshwater turtles: The famous "butt breathers"

Some freshwater turtles, including the Fitzroy River turtle and Murray River turtle of Australia, can absorb oxygen through their cloaca—a multi-purpose opening used for excretion and reproduction. During winter, when they hibernate underwater for weeks or even months, specialised sacs inside the cloaca extract dissolved oxygen from the surrounding water. This process, known as cloacal respiration, reduces the need to surface for air and helps the turtles survive in cold rivers where metabolism slows dramatically.

2. Sea cucumbers: Breathing through their rear end

Sea cucumbers have one of the strangest respiratory systems in the ocean. They draw seawater into their cloaca, where it passes through highly branched respiratory trees that extract oxygen before the water is expelled. Although this has earned them the nickname "butt breathers," the adaptation is a highly efficient solution for animals that spend their lives on the ocean floor.

3. Lungless salamanders: They breathe through their skin

Members of the Plethodontidae family don't have lungs at all. Instead, they absorb oxygen directly through their moist skin and the lining of their mouths. Because of this,

material comforts, exposure to different social environments shapes emotional intelligence. "Children who regularly interact with people from varied backgrounds are more likely to develop empathy, resilience, humility and a sense of gratitude. Simple experiences, such as travelling by school transport where they meet students from different walks of life, help broaden their perspective and encourage inclusiveness. It is these everyday interactions, rather than material comforts alone, that help children stay grounded and grow into emotionally mature and socially responsible individuals," explains Dr Satyahanumasree.

Can making children fly economy teach them responsibility?

Dr Satyahanumasree believes that there is no one-size-fits-all answer. Its impact depends largely on the child's age, emotional maturity and the way parents communicate their decision. "If explained thoughtfully, it can help children understand that privileges are earned, encourage delayed gratification and reinforce the value of responsibility over instant rewards. However, if not communicated with sensitivity, children may perceive the arrangement as exclusion or unequal treatment, leading to feelings of rejection, especially at a younger age," she explains. She also points out that if families are travelling together, it is generally preferable for parents and children to travel in the same class, whether economy or business, so that children do not misinterpret the experience.

How can parents provide comfort without raising entitled children?

According to Dr Satyahanumasree, the goal isn't to deny children comfort but to help them appreciate it. "Providing comfort to children is not a concern in itself. The real challenge is ensuring they understand the value of what they have and the effort that goes into earning it. Children can enjoy privileges without developing a sense of entitlement when parents consciously instil values of gratitude, responsibility and empathy from an early age," she says.

She recommends involving children in everyday responsibilities instead of shielding them from life's realities. "Striking a balance between providing comforts and making children realise the effort behind those comforts makes them more responsible. Parents can involve children in age-appropriate discussions about financial responsibility, encourage them to take on small household responsibilities, expose them to diverse social environments and help them understand that not everyone has the same opportunities," she says.



they must remain in cool, damp environments where their skin stays wet enough for efficient gas exchange. They are among the most successful salamanders on Earth despite lacking lungs entirely.

4. Loaches: Fish that breathe using their intestines

Several freshwater loaches, including the weather loach, have evolved an unusual survival strategy for oxygen-poor waters. They gulp air at the surface, pass it into their intestine, where oxygen is absorbed into the bloodstream, and then expel the remaining gases. This adaptation allows them to survive in muddy ponds and stagnant waters where dissolved oxygen levels are extremely low.

5. Birds: Their lungs are powered by an extraordinary air-sac system

Birds don't breathe like mammals. Instead of air moving in and out of the lungs in a simple cycle, they possess a network of air sacs that creates a continuous, one-way flow of fresh air through the lungs. This highly efficient system allows birds to extract more oxygen than mammals, helping them sustain long-distance migrations and fly at extremely high altitudes, including over the Himalayas.

Vidya Malavade shares 'best way to hack the vagus nerve' and we are taking notes

Vidya Malavade recently shared the "best way to hack the vagus nerve." Sharing an Instagram reel where she is doing yoga poses, the Mismatched actor can be heard saying: "Everyone always says work hard, train hard, party hard. I wonder why no one talks about resting hard. That's what the mind, body and soul actually need—to rest hard. Sleeping 7-8 hours a day is non-negotiable, along with shavasana after yoga." To that, she further added: "Every stressful activity, mind or body, must be followed by active rest."

Dr Lokesh B, Senior Consultant – Neurology, Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore, says that the vagus nerve is the longest cranial nerve in the body and is an important part of the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps the body rest, recover, and digest food. Not only does it connect the brain to many organs, including the heart, lungs, and digestive system, it also helps regulate heart rate, breathing, digestion, and stress responses. When the vagus nerve is working well, it helps the body shift from a state of stress to a state of calm, he adds.

According to Dr Lokesh, the idea of 'resting hard' can be helpful if it means taking intentional time to relax without distractions or work. While you cannot directly calm the vagus nerve, he says that healthy relaxation practices can improve vagal tone, which is a measure of how well the vagus nerve supports the body's relaxation response. "When you rest properly, stress hormone levels may reduce, your heart rate can slow down, your breathing becomes steadier, and your body enters a more relaxed state. This can help improve emotional well-being, sleep quality, and overall health," he explains. However, resting alone is not a treatment for anxiety, depression, or medical conditions affecting the nervous system.



How else can you improve vagus nerve function?

Dr Lokesh suggests several simple ways to support healthy vagal function. Slow, deep breathing is one of the most effective methods because it naturally activates the body's relaxation response. Regular meditation, yoga, mindfulness, gentle physical activity such as walking, spending time in nature, and getting enough sleep can also help. Eating a balanced diet, staying hydrated, maintaining good gut health, and managing stress in healthy ways are equally important because the vagus nerve is closely connected to the digestive system.

To add to that, Dr Lokesh says that spending time with loved ones, laughing, singing, humming, and practising gratitude may also promote relaxation and improve overall well-being. "If a person experiences ongoing dizziness, fainting, digestive problems, abnormal heart rate, or severe anxiety, they should consult a doctor instead of relying only on wellness trends," he reiterates, adding that a healthy lifestyle supports the vagus nerve, but it is not a substitute for proper medical care when symptoms persist.

‘That really makes me nervous’: Spain coach’s worry, and it isn’t Argentina



Two days before the final between Argentina and Spain, a match of engrossing subplots, managers Scaloni (R) and Luis de la Fuente (L) were in a mood of wit, jokes and eloquent explanations. (AP Photo) Two days before the final between Argentina and Spain, a match of engrossing subplots, managers Scaloni (R) and Luis de la Fuente (L) were in a mood of wit, jokes and eloquent explanations. Gulping a mouthful of water from the table, Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni cleared his throat and told the media manager sitting beside him: “You need to translate this, it’s important now, in English. Very, very clean English.”

The media manager looked amusedly at him, even though he could have understood the premise. “I don’t have any superstition,” he clarified, resisting laughter and trying to put on a stern face but failing horribly. The reporter’s question was on Scaloni’s habit of wearing the same shoe (or rather, sneaker) for every game. The manager, after another swig of water, narrated how he forsook the ritual. “I had one in the previous World Cup. I used the same pair of shoes during a winning streak. Then we lost to Saudi Arabia, and I had to take it off. So I said, ‘bye shoes.’ From there on, I didn’t have any.” The reporter interrupted again: “What about entering the ground with the right foot?” Scaloni wanted to negate it, but couldn’t: “No, no, yes, yes. It’s an old one, I enter with my right foot, but I did that when I played too, right?” It was the last question of the interaction, and he left the reporter and the floor for another story trail: “I imagine that the rest of the coaching staff must have some superstition or other. I don’t have many.” Two days before the final between Argentina and Spain, a match of engrossing subplots, managers Scaloni and Luis de la Fuente were in a mood of wit, jokes and eloquent explanations, deflecting from the central themes of the game. Perhaps that’s how they wanted the interaction to be — a light-hearted affair. Both had the charm and way with words to pull it off as well. Spain’s Rodri listens as head coach Luis de la Fuente speaks during a news conference ahead of the World Cup final against Argentina in New York. (AP Photo/Stephanie Scarbrough) Spain’s Rodri listens as head coach Luis de la Fuente speaks during a news conference ahead of the World Cup final against Argentina in New York. (AP Photo/Stephanie Scarbrough) Rodri and Emiliano Martinez, Spain’s captain and Argentina’s goalkeeper/wind-up merchant, were rather curtly matter-of-fact, resorting to platitudes. More worried than the players were the journalists of the two nations. Before the session, some of them assembled in a corner and animatedly discussed who would ask which questions. “De la Fuente always gives headlines,” one would say. He didn’t give headlines, but plenty to laugh about. De la Fuente, an imposing presence with his piercing eyes and stocky frame, found the funnier side of everything. He called reporters by their first names and whipped up wisecracks with a straight face.

“Are you worried about anything before your first World Cup final?” He thought for a second, and then came up with

a gem: “We came by a helicopter, and we have to fly back once the press conference is over. That really makes me nervous.” Cue ripples of laughter. A few smartphones mounted on monopods fell off, as the videographers were lost in his humour. The obvious question didn’t take too long to strike. Lionel Messi and Lamine Yamal, the two titular figures of the game. Yamal is not only predestined to be Messi’s spiritual successor at Barcelona, but also his country’s first footballing megastar. Spain, of course, had Alfredo Di Stéfano and Raúl, Xavi Hernández and Andrés Iniesta, but none exuded a superstar persona. “Messi is one of a kind; he’s an immense talent and, above all, an example for younger athletes,” he said. “But Lamine has to be Lamine.”

A predictable question struck Scaloni too. On his bond with mentor De la Fuente. “Well, it’s not that we know everything about each other. We are friends, but he doesn’t know exactly what I think about football,” he emphasised. He lucidly elaborated on their styles. “What we’d know is how each other’s teams play; he knows how mine plays, and I know how his team plays. We haven’t sat down to discuss our respective patterns, but they’re evident. Both like time on the ball,” he said. Both are possession-reliant. “But with some nuances,” he added. Argentina enjoy passive possession, wherein they pass the ball between themselves simply to frustrate the opponent. Spain, contrastingly, are quicker in advancing to attacking positions with the ball. “They string together a lot of passes and are vertical.” What Scaloni didn’t say was that they are equally comfortable without the ball. They could go minutes without having the ball and then suddenly launch a blizzard from nowhere. He also has a penchant for tactical surprises, like playing Ángel Di María in the 2022 Qatar World Cup final. A wide-man took France aback; a narrow midfield suddenly became wider, and France didn’t have the personnel to cope with it. De la Fuente is not prone to impulses; the alterations he makes are carefully weighed before they are executed. Both admired each other’s teams. “If Spain leaves the hotel, I am already concerned,” said Scaloni. “Once they are on the bus and they leave the hotel, I am concerned.”

De la Fuente dwelled on the trophies Argentina have won in the last four years: “Copa, World Cup, Copa... they have won all tournaments in which they have reached the final. But I focus on what I can control, which is the performance of our own players.” Argentina head coach Lionel Scaloni speaks during a news conference Scaloni then spoke about the reason he has cried after almost every other game, unlike in the past where he had been famously cold-faced. “It’s because you see your people celebrating, see how happy they are... that gets to you; it really touches you, and it’s impossible for it not to move your heart.”

De la Fuente had half a jab at Argentina’s intense physicality: “Referee Slavko Vincic must not be lenient or allow anyone to cross the limits of the law or go beyond what the rules of football permit.” He then turned to Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius’s quotes: “What brings no benefit to the hive, brings none to the bee. Players should have that mindset where you need to work for the collective good.” He scanned his eyes from one corner of the room to the other, where at least a hundred journalists were assembled, and said philosophically: “You ask me about the trick of winning. I will tell you. Work, work and work. I see that most of you are younger than me, and you should keep working. Never stop. The experience is amazing, when everything works out,” he said.

Ballon d’Or winner’s career to a seamless video game. • “Your career is like a video game, you keep unlocking new levels until you reach the final.” “I already completed the game at the last World Cup. The game is already over” Messi jokingly claimed on the sidelines of a World Cup final pre-match event on Friday. Messi also highlighted the nerveless character that his side has carried throughout the tournament, affirming that the Argentina camp are not focusing on the pressure that accompanied the occasion. Pressure, no pressure “We grew up playing football with a lot of passion, always eager to play, have fun and enjoy ourselves, wherever we were. Whether it was at school, on the street or on a team, since we all started in a neighborhood team when we were little,” Messi was quoted as saying by TyC Sports. “I think we never think about the pressure, we take it as something natural, to play and have a good time. We are a competitive group, we like to win but it is a team sport, the opponent plays and you can’t always win. As a kid I learned that you lose more than you win and that made me grow as a person and as a player,” said Messi, downplaying the magnitude of the summit clash. Messi, who leads the Golden Ball race ahead of the final, will spearhead Argentina’s bid to become the first team in 64 years to defend the title after Brazil in 1962. The FC Barcelona legend last squared off against Spain 16 years ago, powering Argentina to a 4-1 win.



“I think Egypt has had a few more hours (to recover), not a huge difference, but I believe that as the World Cup reaches its final stages, rest becomes even more crucial.” On Friday, Scaloni stressed again that his contingent will prioritise rest and recovery ahead of their fifth match in 15 days. “We are focused on rest and based on that we will see how they arrive, because there are players who are not at 100 percent and we will evaluate how they are,” the coach acknowledged. “We play thinking about ourselves, but seeing the good things that the opponent has.” Argentina are on the brink of history, aiming to become the first team to defend the title in 64 years since Brazil in 1962.

Salima Tete confident India can create history at FIH Women’s Hockey World Cup 2026



New Delhi: As anticipation builds for the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium and Netherlands 2026, scheduled for August 15 to 30, the Indian Women’s Team will enter the tournament with confidence, belief and a renewed determination to challenge the world’s best. Riding on the winning momentum and an unbeaten run to clinch the FIH Nations Cup title, India captain Salima Tete is optimistic about the team going the distance and creating history. Drawn in Pool D, India will open their campaign against China on August 16, followed by matches against South Africa on August 18 and England on August 20. Salima will lead the team for the first time at a World Cup, shouldering the responsibility of guiding the squad that comprises experienced campaigners and promising young talent. As the 20-member squad enters the final phase of its preparations under Chief Coach Sjoerd Marijne, Salima took time out from a busy schedule to talk at length about the team’s aspirations.

Q. This is going to be your first World Cup as captain. How excited or nervous are you as you step into this prestigious tournament as a leader?

It is a very special feeling for me. Of course, I am excited, but I am also a little nervous because this is the biggest tournament in hockey and leading India is a huge responsibility. Every player dreams of playing in a World Cup, and now I have the opportunity to captain the team, which makes it even more meaningful. We played good hockey in the last World Cup, but the results did not go the way we wanted. This time, we are all talking about going much further and reaching the final. That is the dream we all share. Personally, I know that my first responsibility is to perform well because when I lead through my performances, I can support the team even better. I also want to be there for every player, especially the younger members of the squad, and help them in every way I can.

Q. The squad is a mix of both young and experienced talent. How do you ensure the squad gels together, especially on a World Cup stage that can overwhelm youngsters?

One of the biggest strengths of this team is communication. The younger players are never hesitant to approach the seniors, whether it is for advice on the field or simply to discuss something. At the same time, all the experienced players are always ready to guide and support them. As

captain, I want everyone to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. It is important that we listen to each other, learn from one another and stay united. Bonding is very important in a tournament like the World Cup because everyone has a role to play. When we trust each other and communicate well, it becomes much easier to handle pressure and perform as a team.

Q. What do you think can be one of the most important challenges India may face?

Every World Cup has a different challenge because you are competing against some of the best teams in the world. In our pool, we have strong opponents and every match will demand our very best. For us, the biggest challenge is to embrace pressure instead of worrying about it. We believe in taking pressure positively. We have prepared well and now it is about trusting ourselves and sticking to our plans. If we stay mentally strong, support each other and remain confident, we can overcome every challenge that comes our way.

Q. In your opening match, you will be facing China — your toughest opponent in the pool stage. What will be your message to the team before that game?

We are ready for the challenge. We know what happened the last time we played them, but this is a new tournament and a fresh opportunity for us. My message to the team will be simple: play with confidence and a fighting spirit. We should not change our game because of the opposition. Instead, we want to play our own style of hockey and make them play according to us. Most importantly, I want every player to fight until the very last second. Our fighting spirit should be visible from the first whistle to the last, and if we do that together, I believe we can achieve the result we want.

Q. What is that one specific piece of advice you have shared with the young players ahead of the World Cup?

I have told them to trust all the hard work they have put in because they have earned their place in this team. There is no need to put extra pressure on themselves just because it is a World Cup. I always encourage them to play freely and express themselves. Mistakes are part of the game and every player makes mistakes, including the senior members of the squad. What matters is having the right mindset, staying confident and playing to your strengths. If they enjoy the occasion and back themselves, they will give their best.

Q. What motivates this team the most and how does your coach ensure that the level of motivation stays up?

Representing India is our biggest motivation. Every time we wear the Indian jersey, we step onto the field knowing that we are playing for the country; that gives us immense pride. Before matches, we always try to keep the atmosphere positive and energetic. We remind ourselves that we are one team and that we have to fight for each other. The coaches also keep their message very simple. They always tell us to believe in ourselves and play the hockey we know. They have confidence in our abilities, and that confidence gives us the motivation to perform at our best. When we trust our preparation and stay united as a team, we know we can compete with anyone.

France and England battle for third place at FIFA World Cup 2026



Miami: France and England will conclude their FIFA World Cup 2026 campaigns on Sunday when they face off in the third-place playoff at Miami Stadium in Florida. After falling short in the semifinals, both European heavyweights will be aiming to finish the tournament on a positive note, even if the bronze-medal contest falls well short of the occasion they had targeted.

France’s hopes of reaching a second successive World Cup final were ended by an impressive Spain side, while England endured a heartbreaking exit after conceding late against defending champions Argentina. Although neither team would have envisioned ending its campaign in a playoff for third place, pride, momentum and a podium finish remain on the line. The fixture also carries added significance for France manager Didier Deschamps, who will oversee Les Bleus for the 187th and final time after a remarkable 14-year spell in charge. The former World Cup-winning captain leaves behind one of the most successful managerial eras in French football and will hope to sign off with a victory.

History slightly favours England, who have won 17 of the previous 32 meetings between the two nations, with five ending in draws. However, France prevailed in their most recent World Cup meeting, edging England 2-1 in the quarterfinals of the 2022 edition after Harry Kane missed a crucial late penalty. France enter the contest with greater consistency and could again lean on the attacking brilliance of Kylian Mbappé, who remains in contention for a second consecutive World Cup Golden Boot. England, led by Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham, have enough firepower to trouble any opponent, but will need a sharper all-round display to deny France a winning farewell for Deschamps. How to watch France vs England third-place playoff live in India: Live streaming and live telecast of the FIFA World Cup 2026 matches will be available on the Zee5 platform and app in India. A subscription will be required. Live telecast of the FIFA World Cup 2026 will be available on the Unit8 Sports 1, Unit8 Sports 1 HD, Unit8 Sports 2 and Unit8 Sports 2 HD TV channels in India. Defenders: Lucas Digne, Malo Gusto, Lucas Hernandez, Theo Hernandez, Ibrahima Konaté, Jules Kounde, Maxence Lacroix, William Saliba, Dayot Upamecano. Midfielders: N’Golo Kanté, Manu Koné, Adrien Rabiot, Aurélien Tchouaméni, Warren Zaire-Emery. Forwards: Maghnes Akliouché, Bradley Barcola, Rayan Cherki, Ousmane Dembélé, Desire Doué, Jean-Philippe Mateta, Kylian Mbappe, Michael Olise, Marcus Thuram. Defenders: Ezri Konsa, Nico O’Reilly, John Stones, Marc Guéhi, Tino Livramento, Dan Burn, Reece James, Djed Spence, Jarell Quansah. Midfielders: Declan Rice, Elliot Anderson, Jude Bellingham, Jordan Henderson, Kobbie Mainoo, Morgan Rogers, Eberechi Eze. Forwards: Bukayo Saka, Harry Kane, Marcus Rashford, Anthony Gordon, Ollie Watkins, Noni Madueke, Ivan Toney

Yamal fit for Spain’s World Cup final against Argentina, says De la Fuente

New York: Spain forward Lamine Yamal has overcome fitness concerns and will be available for Sunday’s World Cup final against Argentina, head coach Luis de la Fuente said. Yamal, 19, was seen limping after Spain’s 2-0 win over France in the semifinals and missed his team’s training session on Thursday. “He had a strong knock, which was very painful,” De la Fuente was quoted by Xinhua as saying. “Just to err on the side of caution, we decided to give him some rest. He was fine in training today. He participated with his teammates. He is fine and in optimal condition.”

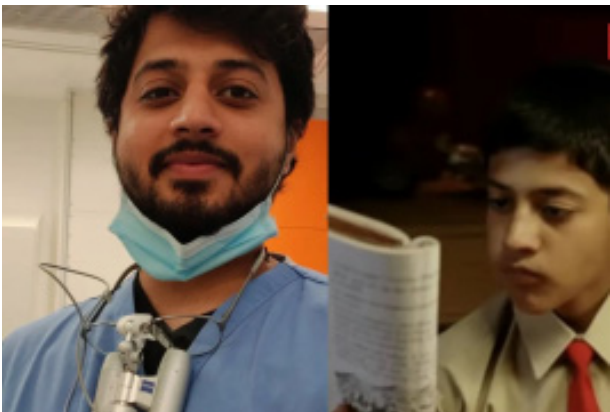
De la Fuente said Saturday’s final training session would be the last opportunity to catch any late setback before Sunday’s match at New York New Jersey Stadium. “That’s the most critical time,” he said. “If there are any setbacks, there won’t be time to recover.” The match will be Spain’s first World Cup final since it won the tournament in 2010. Argentina is chasing back-to-back titles and a fourth overall, having previously won in 1978, 1986 and 2022.

De la Fuente, whose side has reached the final unbeaten with only one goal conceded, said both teams were deserved finalists and saw similarities in the way they play. “On Sunday we will watch a great show,” he said. “Two

super teams, in my opinion, very similar in many respects in terms of attitude and talent. I believe both Spain and Argentina will have a game plan where talent and good football will rule over everything else.” The teams have had starkly different routes to the final. While Spain has largely controlled opponents with its possession-based game and miserly defense, Argentina has relied on late goals to win each of its four knockout games. De la Fuente said no lead was out of reach for Lionel Scaloni’s side. “They have been down on the scoreboard and been able to come back,” he said. “But we’ve also had situations like this in the history of our national team.

“Lionel Scaloni and myself, we both share many concepts, values and principles that drive teams. We’re similar, and that shows that in the biggest teams you require those attitudes. When things are so level, it’s all down to details.” De la Fuente admitted he did not plan to man-mark Argentina captain Lionel Messi, who has had a direct hand in 12 of Argentina’s 19 goals this tournament. He shared his own personal experience facing the eight-time Ballon d’Or winner when he was coaching Sevilla’s youth team. “We went to Barcelona, and I had heard great things about a kid named Messi,” the 65-year-old said. “So we assigned a player to mark him man-to-man, but in the 70th minute,

Taare Zameen Par's Yohaán left Bollywood, is now a gold medalist dentist and pilot in the UK



When Taare Zameen Par hit theatres in 2007, it wasn't just another Bollywood release. The Aamir Khan directorial became a cultural phenomenon, sparking important conversations about parenting, the education system, and the challenges faced by children with learning disabilities. More importantly, it introduced audiences to two memorable young actors — Darsheel Safary and Sachet Engineer. While Darsheel continues to explore opportunities in the entertainment industry, Sachet seemingly vanished from the spotlight after the film's success. Nearly two decades later, fans who remember him as Ishaan Awasthi's loving elder brother might be surprised to learn that he is now a successful dentist based in the UK — and a licensed pilot in the making.

Yohaán aka Sachet is now a dentistSachet Engineer, who played Yohaán Nandkishore Awasthi in Taare Zameen Par, portrayed the ideal elder sibling. Academically bright, skilled at table tennis, and fiercely protective of his younger brother, Yohaán was everything Ishaan wasn't. While Ishaan struggled with letters and numbers, Yohaán excelled in the classroom. Interestingly, life seems to have imitated art for Sachet.Unlike many child actors who continued chasing fame, Sachet chose academics. According to his LinkedIn profile, he completed his M.Clin.Dent in Periodontology from the prestigious UCL Eastman Dental Institute in London and is a registered member of the European Federation of Periodontology (EFP). He has also cleared both parts of the

Overseas Registration Examination (ORE), making him eligible to practise dentistry in the UK.Before moving abroad, he graduated from DY Patil University and even earned a gold medal in Periodontology — proving that Yohaán's academic excellence wasn't just limited to the screen. But dentistry isn't his only passion.Sachet is also a pilot in the makingAlthough his Instagram account is private, occasional glimpses into his life reveal another impressive achievement. In 2024, Sachet shared a photograph from the cockpit of an aircraft, revealing his love for flying. "Being in control up here makes the fiercest challenges down below shrink to insignificance. A true reminder that the horizon is endless, and so are possibilities. My first flight, but certainly not the last," he wrote.For someone who once charmed audiences as a child actor, the journey to becoming a dentist and pilot may seem unexpected. Yet, acting was never really part of his grand plan. In a 2022 interview with Bollywood Hungama, Sachet revealed that landing Taare Zameen Par was nothing more than a happy accident."I am from a film family. My grandmother, Krishna Kumari Seth, was an actress while my grandfather, Suraj Prakash, was a producer. So I was always surrounded by the world of films, though I didn't plan to get into the field. The makers were originally auditioning my younger brother. I just happened to be there and they asked me, 'Why don't you also audition?' I did, and a month later, I got a call. I was 11 at that time," he recalled.The film's massive success made him an instantly recognisable face. Film offers followed, but Sachet turned them all down.Sachet Engineer aka Yohaán Awasthi Sachet Engineer aka Yohaán Awasthi. (Photo: Sachet Engineer/Instagram)"People started recognising me on the streets. I would just smile. I've grown quite a bit, but still people are able to guess. Or they feel they've seen me somewhere. I did a couple of commercials later on. I got a few film offers but didn't take them up because I wanted to pursue my education before I got sidetracked," he said.Interestingly, Sachet had not completely shut the door on acting. During the same interview, he admitted that he would love to return to the industry once he completed his education. Four years later, however, there has been no sign of a comeback.

Sshura Khan hits back at troll calling husband Arbaaz Khan an 'old man': 'Vintage model'

Ever since actor Arbaaz Khan tied the knot with makeup artist Sshura Khan in 2023, the couple has frequently found themselves at the receiving end of online trolling over the age gap between them. Now, once again, a social media user took a swipe at Sshura, but this time she chose to respond with humour.During a recent Q&A session with her followers on social media, a user asked her whether she was happy with an "old man," seemingly referring to Arbaaz. Sshura responded with writing, "Are you for real? He's not an old man; he's a limited-edition vintage model."Two years ago, in an interview with The Indian Express, Arbaaz had addressed the age gap between him and Sshura. He said, "Though my wife is much younger than me, it is not like she is 16 years old. She knew what she wanted in her life, and I knew what I wanted in my life. We spent a lot of time together in that one year to really see what we expect out of each other, what do we want, and how are we looking at our future. Such decisions are not made in a hurry."Speaking about the trolling that followed their marriage, Arbaaz had added, "It's not like we were not aware of it or we hid it from each other. As a girl, she knew what she was getting into, and as a man, I knew what I was getting into. Two people of the same age can be together and probably separate in a year. So, is age the only factor that keeps relationships going? Ask



yourself. In fact, whenever you see there is a very big age gap between marriages, they have far higher success rate."Arbaaz and Sshura fell in love on the sets of the film Patna Shukla, where she worked as a makeup artist for lead actor Raveena Tandon. The couple got married in an intimate ceremony in 2023 and welcomed their daughter, Sipaara Khan, in 2025.Before marrying Sshura, Arbaaz was married to actor Malaika Arora for nearly two decades. The former couple divorced in 2017 and share a son, Arhaan Khan.

NYC Mayor Zohran Mamdani drops hint about Taylor Swift-Travis Kelce wedding venue, date

Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce are set to get married in New York, reveals Mayor Zohran Mamdani.Zohran Mamdani has confirmed that Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce's wedding will take place in New York.Swifties worldwide are currently on cloud nine, as an official confirmation of sorts has arrived regarding the date and venue of the highly anticipated wedding of their queen bee, American singer-songwriter Taylor Swift, and professional football player Travis Kelce. Interestingly, the city's mayor himself has dropped a major hint about their impending wedding, much to their fans' delight.

While addressing the media about the security measures being taken for the ongoing FIFA World Cup 2026, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani revealed that the "Swelce" (a portmanteau for Swift and Kelce) wedding ceremony will take place in New York at the start of July, confirming rumours that had been circulating for quite some time. Mamdani, however, admitted that he hasn't been invited to the wedding."I am fully confident in the work of the New York City Police Department (NYPD), as well as our state partners, in delivering that safe experience," Page Six quoted him as telling the reporters on Monday, June 15, while discussing the city's preparedness for the July 5 World Cup match at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford.He added, "We are the biggest city in the country. We are used to big events, and we are incredibly excited for this one. We know it coincides with the Knicks' [NBA] Finals run. We know it coincides with July 4, America 250, Taylor Swift's wedding — all happening at the same time — and we are so excited to welcome the world here."When asked if he had been invited by the couple to their wedding and if he was planning to go, Mamdani replied, "No and no. I wish them a lovely wedding. I'll listen to 'Only the Young' (Taylor Swift's 2020 hit track) at home on my own."

For those unaware, Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce announced their engagement on social media on August 26, 2025, by sharing photos of their proposal. "Your English teacher and your gym teacher are getting married," she wrote.[CYMI] | Taare Zameen Par's Yohaán left Bollywood, is now a gold medalist dentist and pilot in the UKThey have been dating since the summer of 2023 and made their relationship public later that year. Since then, the two have made frequent appearances together, with Taylor attending the Kansas City Chiefs' matches, in which Travis plays, and the latter supporting her during her concerts.While the wedding planning was underway, several reports emerged earlier this month, mentioning that the iconic Madison Square Garden might host the celebrity wedding. Page Six and TMZ reported that the couple was eyeing the July 3 weekend for



a ceremony in New York, with Madison Square Garden as the leading venue. However, neither Taylor nor Travis has publicly confirmed any wedding plans thus far.

Steven Spielberg scrapped opera film with Colman Domingo

Los Angeles: Oscar-winning filmmaker Steven Spielberg says he wanted to make a film on Broadway duo Ira and George Gershwin with Colman Domingo, but decided not to go ahead with the project."I was going to make a movie about Ira and George Gershwin, and I was going to make a movie about the process of writing and staging Porgy and Bess," Spielberg at Good Hang podcast.The filmmaker, who recently collaborated with Domingo in "Disclosure Day", said he met the actor when he was casting for his scrapped opera film."I had a script, and I was excited, and I was casting it. And I was looking for Todd Duncan, who played Porgy, and I met a lot of actors, and when Colman came in to the meeting, that was the first time I met Colman



New Delhi | July 21, 2026"

K. Shailaja, Vice President of the Telangana Mahila Congress, paid a courtesy visit to Mallikarjun Kharge, President of the Indian National Congress, at his residence in New Delhi and conveyed her heartfelt birthday greetings

"On the occasion, she presented him with a bouquet and wished him good health, happiness, and a long life. . K. Shailaja stated that Mallikarjun Kharge's leadership has been a guiding force in safeguarding the Constitution of India, upholding social justice, and strengthening democratic values.

"She expressed her hope that he would continue to lead the Indian National Congress with strength and dedication while serving the people of the country with renewed energy and commitment.

"Congress leaders and party workers were also present during the courtesy meeting.

Sanchita Ugale's grandfather breaks down: 'Didn't have a godfather, she had work'

The Indian entertainment industry is yet to come to terms with the shocking death of actor Sanchita Ugale, who rose to fame with her role in the television serial Kumkum Bhagya. The 22-year-old actor was found dead at her home in the Nallasopara area of Palghar district, Maharashtra, on Sunday, June 14. According to news agency PTI, the police suspect that she died by suicide.Speaking to the media, Sanchita's grandfather, Gopinath, said she rose through the ranks of show business on her own, without any support system. Fondly remembering her, he was overcome with emotion. "She was an extremely talented girl. She had progressed on her own merit and through her hard work. She did not have a godfather," NDTV quoted him as saying.If you or someone you know is experiencing feelings of distress, depression, or emotional instability, please reach out to a certified professional or a dedicated mental health service."What she was going through mentally at that time... what the real issue was... because she had no disputes with anyone. Nobody ever spoke ill of her. Nothing was lacking in her life. She had achieved everything through her own efforts. She was a very capable girl. She had made a big name for herself across our entire taluka and Ahmednagar district," he added.Why fans knew her as Pooja instead of SanchitaGopinath shared that she gained popularity with her performance as Pooja in the television show Saajan Ghar. He revealed that people subsequently began recognising her by her character's name rather than her own. "Those who watched her television serials knew her by the name Pooja. She became so popular through that character that people across the Ahmednagar district would call her Pooja." "Whenever I went somewhere and told people she was my granddaughter, all our relatives and acquaintances across the taluka and district knew her only as Pooja. Hardly anyone there recognised her as Sanchita. Everyone knew her by the name Pooja, which was her character's name in the serial," he recalled."It is very painful. Why she did this... only God knows what was going on in her mind. It is completely beyond our understanding," he said, while also refuting speculations that a lack of work pushed her to suicide. "No, she had work as well," he added.

AICWA requests investigationMeanwhile, the All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) has stepped forward, requesting Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to order a high-level investigation into her death. However, her father has maintained that he does not suspect any foul play and reportedly informed the Achole police that he doesn't have suspicions about anyone regarding Sanchita's death. At the time of the incident, she was alone at her home.From Kumkum Bhagya to Chhaava: Sanchita Ugale's acting journeyWhile it was her performance as Diya Tandon in



Kumkum Bhagya that earned Sanchita widespread fame and acclaim, she had also acted in soap operas such as Wagley Ki Duniya and Dilwali Dulha Le Jayegi. Sanchita also played Tarabai in the Vicky Kaushal-Rashmika Mandanna starrer Chhaava (2025) and made an appearance alongside Manoj Bajpayee in Silence 2: The Night Owl Bar Shootout (2024).After learning about her suicide, Sanchita's close friend and colleague Megha Sharma revealed that the late actor had been undergoing treatment for depression. "I am in deep shock and out of words. She had some health issues and was suffering from depression since January. She had some personal reasons and was undergoing treatment," Megha told Moneycontrol.

She added, "But she was a happy-go-lucky person. In fact, I met her 10 days ago and took her for an audition. She was convinced that she could make it. Later, her phone was switched off. She often said that she would end her life, and we all, including her mother and family, motivated her to stay positive and not think about such negative things. But this time we could not save her. She loved herself."According to news agency ANI, Sanchita's remains were found in a room that was locked from inside. Although her family members rushed her to the Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation Hospital, she was declared dead after examination."A police team inspected the scene immediately after being alerted about the incident. We did not find anything suspicious at the spot, and no suicide note was recovered," a police official told PTI. The officials have registered a case of accidental death and launched a probe to ascertain the motive.Urgent Support: If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health issues, depression, or thoughts of self-harm, please know that support is available. Professional help makes a difference, and you do not have to go through this alone.

Kala Hiran makers issue legal notice to Govind Namdev; demand Rs 50 lakh, public apology

The controversy surrounding Kala Hiran, a film allegedly inspired by the 1998 blackbuck poaching case associated with Salman Khan, continues to deepen. In the latest development, producer Amit Jani has sent a legal notice to veteran actor Govind Namdev after the actor publicly disassociated himself from the project.

Taking to X, Jani claimed that Namdev had been served a legal notice as he sought an apology from the actor within seven days. He also claimed that the actor had been asked to pay Rs 50 lakh in damages to the production house. "Govind Namdev has been issued a legal notice. He must publicly apologise within seven days and pay Rs 50 lakh in damages to the production house, failing which legal action will be initiated."Kala Hiran has been under scrutiny since the release of its first poster, as it appeared to be based on Salman Khan's 1998 blackbuck poaching case. The makers later released a teaser where the lead character, named Ayaan Khan, looks strikingly similar to Salman. Speaking to Amar Ujala, Govind Namdev said he was shocked when he watched the teaser and realised that the film being promoted was vastly different from the project he had agreed to be part of."As soon as I watched the trailer, I was shaken. I immediately realised that the project was completely different from what I had shot for. We were never told that a character resembling Salman Khan would be created and portrayed in this manner. The moment I saw the trailer, I felt I had been kept in the dark and used. There is a world of difference between what I was told and what has actually been made," he said.The actor further claimed that the project had originally been pitched to him under a different title. "I was told we were making a film called Sambhal. At that time, I had absolutely no idea that the story would later take a completely different direction," he said. Namdev maintained that his involvement in the film was limited to courtroom sequences and that he believed the narrative

would simply recreate proceedings that were already part of the public record."I was informed that there was a long courtroom sequence and that was all I had to do. It was also mentioned that nothing new was being added from our side and that we were merely presenting what had happened in court. I felt there was nothing wrong in depicting facts already on record, which is why I agreed to be part of it," he said. Addressing the Bishnoi gang controversy, which has frequently surfaced in discussions surrounding Salman Khan, Namdev clarified that he did not endorse any such association. "I cannot consider any Bishnoi gang as my ideal. I cannot even think of such a thing. I believed I was only performing the courtroom portion. However, what has come to light now has made me uncomfortable as well," he said.Amit Jani claims Govind Namdev agreed to do the sequel as wellPreviously, on June 14, producer Amir Jani took to X and shared a video claiming that Govind Namdev was fully aware of the contents of the film as he had agreed to become a part of it after reading the script. He also shared that the actor shot for the courtroom sequence wherein it was obvious that the film was based on the real life case. He alleged that the cheating claims against the makers are false, and instead accused Namdev of cheating the makers, as contractually, he is bound to not defame the film.Amit also claimed that Govind was signed not just for this film, but also for a potential sequel of the film and added that Namdev was only distancing himself from the project to stay in the good books of Salman Khan.Notably, Govind Namdev is not the first actor to distance himself from the film. Earlier, actor Sonu Mishra, who appeared alongside Salman Khan in AR Murugadoss' Sikandar, revealed that he had initially signed Kala Hiran and even shot for a few days before deciding to exit the project. Mmishra was reportedly offered the lead role, a character believed to be inspired by Salman Khan.Explaining his decision on the YouTube channel Bollywood Crazies, he said: "