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Sonam Wangchuk sets conditions to end fast Seeks Written Assurance From Centre



New Delhi: Climate activist and education reformer Sonam Wangchuk has appealed to the Centre to provide an unequivocal assurance that no punitive or retaliatory legal action will be taken against young protesters before he agrees to end his indefinite fast.

In a letter dated July 22 addressed to Union Ministers JP Nadda and Dr Jitendra Singh, Wangchuk thanked them for visiting him in hospital and appealing to him to end his fast. He said the ministers had assured him that the gov-

ernment would positively consider two key demands: adequate compensation for the families of students who allegedly died by suicide following the examination paper leak, and a meaningful discussion in Parliament to ensure accountability, including consideration of the resignation of the Union Education Minister.

Referring to the 'Chalo Sansad' march held on July 20, Wangchuk said the protest remained peaceful despite what he described as "atrocities and disproportionate use of force" by the

police. He urged the government to ensure that no legal cases, harassment or vindictive action are taken against those who participated in the demonstration.

Wangchuk revealed that around 65 Members of Parliament from across political parties had written to him or visited him, urging him to end his fast and continue his work in education. While acknowledging their appeal, he said he could not do so "at the cost of the very young people for whom this movement began." He said the protest-

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ers' only "offence" was raising their voices for a fair and accountable education system and requested a clear assurance that none of them would face retaliation. "If such an assurance is given, I shall end my fast," Wangchuk wrote, adding that in its absence he would be compelled to continue his fast indefinitely. He also expressed hope that there would be no further use of excessive police force against the movement.

"Why Are You So Selective?" Centre On Rahul Gandhi's Paper Leak Charges

New Delhi: The Central government on Wednesday mounted a counteroffensive against Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi amid his barrage of attacks over NEET protests, accusing him of being "selective" and ignoring paper leaks in states and union territories ruled by the Congress and its allies.

Hours after Gandhi alleged that over 150 paper leaks had taken place over the past 10 years under the BJP rule, Union Minister JP Nadda accused the Congress leader of attempting to gain political mileage from the students' protest.

"If I talk about the paper leak in the Service Selection Board examination in Jammu and Kashmir, where the government is of the Congress and the National Conference. Similarly, in Himachal Pradesh, the paper leak took place in the Himachal Pradesh School Examination Board; Congress rules there. Similarly, in Jharkhand, Hindi and Science papers were leaked in JAC, where the government is of the Congress and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha...", he said.

"I'd like to ask the Leader



of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi -- why are you so selective? Why haven't you discussed the UPA and UPA-supported governments? This clearly shows that your objective isn't the welfare of students. Your objective is not to improve education, improve the quality of education, and ensure justice for students...You want to gain political mileage from students' issues and demands. You want to make political gains, which is unfortunate," he added.

"We should move beyond blame and counter-allegations and discuss this.

The best medium for discussion is Parliament, and we are ready for that discussion. Let there be a thorough discussion, delving into the details through in-depth discussion. What are the factors leading to the paper leak? Who are the people involved, and how has the Central Government responded? How have we addressed this issue when a paper leak has come to our attention, and how should other governments address it? What is the point we should deeply consider and find a solution to so that injus-

tice is not done to our students, numbering in the millions?" he said. "I urge the opposition to fulfil its responsibility, and we should all work together to address this issue and move forward toward a lasting solution," he added. A day after clashes at Delhi's Jantar Mantar during the Cockroach Janta Party's protest against NEET leaks, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and other Congress leaders held a sit-in protest outside Prime Minister Narendra Modi's house on Tuesday.

"The Trust Given by the People Is My Strength" – Minister Nara Lokesh

Mangalagiri City, July 22: Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh said that despite facing several humiliations after the 2019 elections, the trust reposed in him by the people of Mangalagiri has become his greatest source of strength. Speaking at the launch of the second phase of house-site title deed distribution for the poor under the "Mana Illu – Mana Lokesh" (Our Home – Our Lokesh) initiative in Mangalagiri constituency on Tuesday, Lokesh shared his experiences from the 2019 elections. "I faced many humiliations after the 2019 elections. Before the local people could fully understand me, the elections were over, and I lost by 5,300 votes. People even insulted my father, saying he could

not ensure the victory of his own son," he said.

The two-day program is being held at C.K. Convention on the Mangalagiri Bypass Road. Addressing the beneficiaries, Lokesh said that he had appealed to the people to convert his previous defeat margin of 5,300 votes into a victory by simply adding a zero to it. "In a manner that nobody expected, the people of Mangalagiri elected me with one of the top three majorities in the state in the 2024 elections. After the elections, they became my source of confidence. The trust they placed in me is what gives me the courage to move forward today," he said.

The minister stated that his goal is to develop Mangalagiri into a model



constituency for the entire country. He recalled that over the past five years, many local residents had approached him seeking permanent ownership rights over their lands. Since it was not possible to regularize all lands at

once, he had promised that, if elected, he would provide permanent rights in phases. "Keeping that promise, we are now distributing house-site title deeds to the poor," he said. Nara Lokesh also expressed gratitude to Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan for their support toward the development of both Andhra Pradesh and Mangalagiri.

CM Chandrababu Meets Prime Minister Modi; Discusses Key Andhra Pradesh Projects

New Delhi, July 22: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is on a visit to New Delhi on Wednesday. As part of his visit to the national capital, the Chief Minister is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several Union Ministers. The Chief Minister's schedule is packed with meetings, during which he is expected to discuss various developmental projects and issues related to Andhra Pradesh.

Chandrababu Naidu met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and held discussions on a range of issues for more than an hour. He is expected to invite the Prime Minister to inaugurate the Bhogapuram International Airport on August 1.

The Chief Minister is also scheduled to meet Union Ministers Amit Shah, Piyush Goyal, Manohar Lal Khattar, and C.R. Patil, among others.



his meeting with Amit Shah, he is expected to discuss the implementation of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act commitments and the release of pending funds. With Piyush Goyal, he is likely to discuss new industrial projects for Andhra Pradesh as well as issues concerning tobacco and aquaculture farmers. The Chief Minister will brief

Manohar Lal Khattar on the need for Central assistance and funding for the construction of Amaravati, the capital city of Andhra Pradesh. In his meeting with C.R. Patil, Chandrababu Naidu is expected to discuss funding and progress of the Polavaram Project, along with other irrigation projects in Andhra Pradesh.

Farmers' Cooperation Is Crucial for Amaravati's Development: Minister Narayana



From Our Staff Reporter Guntur, July 22: A village meeting was organized by the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) at Tadikonda regarding land pooling for the Amaravati

railway line, Inner Ring Road, and the capital region's radial roads. Andhra Pradesh Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P. Narayana participated in the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, Narayana said that although land pooling began in 2015, actual construction works started only in 2018. He stated that no significant work was carried out during the five-year tenure of former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, but after the coalition government came to power, development activities have accelerated. He said that buildings whose

construction has already been completed will soon be put to use. The minister noted that additional land is now required for the railway line and the Inner Ring Road and urged farmers to come forward quickly for land pooling so that the projects can begin without delay.

He also assured that the road connecting Tadikonda to the capital city would be completed at the earliest.

Majority of Farmers Favor Land Pooling

Narayana said that the Inner Ring Road and railway track would pass through Tadikonda, Kantheru, Mothadaka, and

Koppuravuru villages. He explained that farmers were consulted on whether land should be acquired through the traditional land acquisition process or through land pooling. According to him, a majority of farmers at the village meeting expressed support for the land pooling model. The minister stated that farmers owning about 50 acres had already submitted the necessary documents and that the government had addressed all their concerns.

He assured farmers that returnable developed plots would be allotted in locations convenient to them.

The government would present two or three layout designs and allocate plots based on the preferences of the farmers, he added.

Key Amaravati Development Targets

Narayana announced that 350 kilometers of trunk roads would be completed by March 2027, while the Amaravati layouts would be fully completed by the end of 2027. He said that the MLA Quarters would be handed over to the government on July 25, the MLC Quarters by August 15, and the Ministers' Residential Complex during the first week of September.

"My Salute to Every Mother Educating Her Children": Minister Nara Lokesh

From Our Staff Reporter

Amaravati, July 22: The coalition government will release funds under the "Talliki Vandanam" (Salute to Mother) scheme across Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday. An amount of Rs.13,000 will be deposited into the bank accounts of mothers of eligible students. On the occasion of the fund release, Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh shared a message on social media platform X, stating that the coalition government's goal is to ensure that no child is deprived of education.

"Children are our wealth. Their education is our everlasting asset. Education is an invaluable investment for our state," he said. The minister explained that the Talliki Vandanam scheme was designed to benefit every child in a family who is studying, without imposing restrictions on the number of children eligible for assistance.

Nara Lokesh said that for the second consecutive year, the scheme funds are being released at the beginning of the academic year. He stated that 67.47 lakh stu-



dents are expected to benefit from the scheme this year. According to the minister, a total of Rs.10,120.78 crore will be deposited into the bank accounts of 42.70 lakh mothers. The fund transfer process will continue from today until July 24. In his post on X, Nara Lokesh wrote: "My salute to every mother who educates her children."

EDITORIAL

The Hydrogen Train Sounds Its Arrival

In today's world, energy is the foundation of almost everything. The ongoing conflicts in West Asia have highlighted for nations across the globe the importance of developing alternative energy sources. India recognized this need several years ago and began actively pursuing the exploration and production of alternative fuels. One of the latest achievements in that direction is the development of the Hydrogen Train. The hydrogen-powered train, which began trial operations four days ago between Jind and Sonipat railway stations in Haryana, is raising hopes for the wider use of alternative fuels in public transportation. This pollution-free and environmentally friendly train requires neither diesel nor conventional electric traction, making it particularly suitable for densely populated countries like India. With the introduction of the hydrogen train, India joins countries such as Germany, the United States, Japan, South Korea, and China, where hydrogen-powered trains are already in operation. A notable feature of India's hydrogen train is that it has been developed using entirely indigenous technology. It is also considered one of the most powerful hydrogen trains in the world and is capable of covering longer distances than many of its international counterparts. Another remarkable aspect is its capacity. While hydrogen trains in many countries typically operate with three or four coaches, India's version is designed to run with up to ten coaches. Instead of manufacturing an entirely new train, an existing diesel train has been converted into a hydrogen-powered train. Germany was the first country to seriously explore the idea of using hydrogen, the most abundant element in the atmosphere, to support railway transportation. Inspired by Germany's pioneering efforts, India launched the National Green Hydrogen Mission four years ago, aiming to produce 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030. The successful development of the hydrogen train demonstrates that the mission is progressing in the intended direction. Hydrogen fuel emits only water during use rather than carbon dioxide, making it a clean energy source with virtually no carbon emissions. However, producing green hydrogen remains relatively expensive, meaning it cannot immediately replace the existing electric railway system. Nevertheless, as renewable energy costs continue to decline, green hydrogen is expected to become increasingly competitive and important in the future. One of the major challenges is hydrogen storage, which remains technically demanding. Countries around the world are actively researching solutions. India has also taken significant steps in this direction by inaugurating a Copper-Chlorine Thermochemical Hydrogen Production Facility at the Kalpakkam Nuclear Research Centre, thereby entering the field of nuclear-powered hydrogen production. Significantly, many countries have not yet taken comparable steps in this area. Green hydrogen currently costs about twice as much to produce as conventionally produced grey hydrogen. Therefore, while hydrogen trains may not immediately replace electric trains on electrified routes, they are particularly well-suited for non-electrified regions and mountainous terrains. The Government of India's initiative to introduce 35 hydrogen trains under the "Hydrogen for Heritage" program on historic and hill routes should be viewed in this context. Just as tensions with China accelerated the "Make in India" movement, the energy uncertainties arising from the West Asian crisis are encouraging India to intensify its search for alternative fuel sources. As the world's third-largest importer of crude oil, India spends nearly Rs. 13.5 lakh crore annually on oil imports. To reduce this burden, the country is promoting alternative energy sources such as solar power, ethanol, and hydrogen. With abundant sunlight and extensive access to seawater—both essential for green hydrogen production—India possesses significant natural advantages. If hydrogen production scales up successfully, the country could emerge as a global green hydrogen hub in the not-too-distant future.

A Snub, A Cancelled Visit: Why Trump Doesn't Even Want To See Netanyahu Anymore

It was just over five months ago that President Trump invited Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, to the White House's Situation Room, a rare honour for a foreign leader. The highly classified event, attended by the top security teams of both countries, was arranged at Netanyahu's request to persuade Trump to launch a joint military operation against Iran. The Israeli leader managed to convince the President that this was an opportunity for the US to secure a quick victory, similar to the one it achieved in Venezuela a month earlier. But that proved to be not only a major miscalculation but also the worst foreign policy decision by a US president in decades.

Trump is now so annoyed with Netanyahu that he doesn't even want to meet him. After failing to get an appointment with the President, the Israeli leader had to cancel his planned Monday visit to Washington. In recent weeks, Trump has humiliated Netanyahu by calling him 'crazy' and using expletives during phone calls. Last month, he told the Financial Times, "I call all the shots." Referring to Netanyahu, he added, "he doesn't call the shots". It is a remarkable fall from grace and power for the veteran Israeli leader, who, for over three decades, openly confronted and sometimes even lectured US presidents, without jeopardising his position or damaging Israel's special relationship with the United States. But that has now changed.

Shifting US Opinion

For the first time since the State of Israel's establishment in 1948, the US political consensus in Israel's favour is under the most serious strain, largely due to Netanyahu's actions. Last week, more than 100 Democratic members of the House of Representatives (about half of their strength) voted to end \$3 billion in mili-



tary and humanitarian aid to Israel. Although the proposal was defeated, prominent Democrats, including Nancy Pelosi, Katherine Clark of Massachusetts (the minority whip), and Ro Khanna, backed it. Israel has been the largest recipient of US foreign aid since World War II, receiving over \$300 billion between 1946 and 2025. The proposal to cut aid was intended as a protest against the actions of the Israeli government in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon. Israel can't survive without military and economic aid from the United States. A week earlier, Rahm Emanuel, chief of staff in the Obama White House and a potential Democratic Party nominee for the 2028 Presidential election, delivered a stern message to Israel. Emanuel, who is Jewish and whose father was born in Jerusalem, told Tel Aviv University that the US-Israel alliance "can not stand or survive as it has been" and needs significant changes and a new direction. He attacked Netanyahu's leadership, which he said had turned Israel into a "territorial pariah", adding that

America's "unconditional support has allowed you to deny food and medical relief to innocent Palestinians in Gaza, leaving the world to conclude that Israelis not only want to kill Palestinians, but are completely indifferent to their death, to their destruction and completely indifferent to their suffering". Even sections of the Republican Party, which were earlier staunch supporters of Israel, are now openly critical of its government. The Vice President, JD Vance, who warned Netanyahu a month ago that President Trump was Israel's only ally, last week accused it of funding a campaign to manipulate US public opinion about the Iran war and to undermine negotiations to end the conflict. These developments reflect shifting public opinion in the United States about Israel, particularly since Netanyahu's disproportionate military campaign in Gaza following the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. More than 72,000 Palestinians were killed in that campaign. In February, a Gallup survey found - for the first time in the poll's history -

that more Americans now sympathise with Palestinians than with Israelis. In April, a Pew survey found that 60% of Americans have an unfavourable view of the Israeli government. The survey also found that, across both political parties, majorities of adults under 50 now rate Israel and Netanyahu negatively. Among Democrats, the figure was 84%.

Trump - Netanyahu Bromance

Soon after taking office, Trump announced a plan to 'relocate' Palestinians from Gaza to new homes elsewhere and presented a stunning proposal. He suggested that the US would take ownership of the strip and build what he called the "Riviera of the Middle East". Netanyahu was thrilled, as it gave him a political lifeline. However, Trump soon realised the plan was unrealistic, and the Gaza war was becoming increasingly unpopular in the US. With some Israeli hostages still held by Hamas, the dealmaker in Trump saw an opportunity. Within months, he presented his 20-point peace plan for Gaza and imposed a

ceasefire on both Israel and Hamas. This marked the first setback for Netanyahu, who wanted the conflict to continue.

Lasting Damage

But Netanyahu had a bigger plan: to invade Iran. He had been trying to persuade American presidents to attack the Islamic Republic for more than three decades, but all had turned down the idea, except Trump. The Israeli leader had already convinced him during his first term to abandon the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), negotiated by President Obama. In June 2025, Trump decided to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities during the war started by Israel, even though the US and Iran were negotiating a new nuclear agreement at the time. The US decision to join Israel's war in February was seen in Israel as a major success for Netanyahu. But as we know now, the war has trapped Trump, forcing him to sign a humiliating MOU with Iran, which has emerged as a more radical and uncompromising country. Tehran now has leverage to halt a fifth of the world's energy supplies passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

A Rs 5,000 Fine Can't Fix India's 'Babu' Raj. But It's A Start

One small step for the government, and a giant leap for governance? That's the question that popped up in my mind this week as I read about an interesting decision by the Delhi government's cabinet to fine officials a maximum of Rs 5,000 if their service for citizens is delayed without a valid justification. If it is approved as expected, the Delhi (Right of Citizen to Time Bound and Ease of Delivery of Service) Bill replaces/upgrades a similar 2011 Act. As the name suggests, it holds itself accountable to citizens with a proposal to impose a fine of Rs 250 a day, with a Rs 5,000 ceiling.

In principle, this is a great idea and also reflects an increasing democratisation of governance in which elected leaders pressure the bureaucracy to do what is expected of them. But there is a very long way to go, because in India, which the UK's The Economist magazine once described as "a natural habitat of the clerk," there is a lot to do to undo the process-driven bureaucratisation that the magazine's land of birth itself left in its imperial stamp on its colony. The very same magazine recently ran a self-explanatory editorial titled, "Why can't India's government build a decent website?", and moaned about clunky online experiences among "failures of 'Indian officialdom'". Any casual watcher of the old BBC comedy series, "Yes, Minister", would be assured that "Great

Britain has been not so great in political control over bureaucrats. The culture is such.

It does get tricky. How do you hold bureaucrats and lower-level government officials re-



sponsible in a system in which incentives and disincentives have to be balanced with costs, processes, and public accountability to legislators and institutions like the Comptroller and Auditor General? A rule-based system cannot easily function like an incentive-based culture or a severe hire-and-fire mechanism. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is officially aware of the bureaucracy problem, but the solution requires re-engineering a culture from the bottom up. The ongoing controversy over the alphabet soup of state-run public examinations, NEET, CUET, and CBSE school exams, suggests that ministers and bureaucrats need to be sensitive to an increasing mass of aware citizens demanding accountability and efficient ser-

vice. Again, the buck-passing involving politicians and so-called autonomous bodies, such as the National Testing Agency, shows that you cannot have autonomy without accountability,

and you cannot absolve yourself of a responsibility by pointing to a structural autonomy designed to reduce bureaucratisation. Much like the inflation-interest rate trade-off in macroeconomics, this requires a trade-off between empowerment that improves efficiency and transparency that ensures there is no abuse of power. Outsourcing things to private agencies, often risking underhand corruption as well as the "L1 syndrome" in which the lowest bidder in a contract need not necessarily be the best service provider, is a trade-off between transparency at low cost and the public's desire to get better services.

In this context, any attempts to backpedal the Right to Infor-

mation (RTI) Act or its procedures must necessarily be seen as regressive. A culture of transparency needs to be baked into the bureaucracy to avoid the cloak of official secrets over government muddles. But, as anyone who has stood in a long queue at railway stations or electricity offices in India would testify, a lower-end government servant facing the public has to go through stresses that match that of the suffering citizen in the queue. New technologies can help only so much, as The Economist magazine's editorial comment would testify. Officially, India's civil servants do receive formal training in citizen-centric work, with emphasis on ethics and empathy. There is a National Training Policy framed in 2012 to help. There are specific training institutes, behavioural curricula, and digital grievance mechanisms. But I could not suppress a chuckle as I stumbled on a bureaucratic online file on this very thing whose language, structure, and communication style were a throwback to old "babudom". It had long, jargon-filled paragraphs on processes that would go over the heads of even media outlets, not to speak of ordinary citizens. What we perhaps need are recruitment of people based on personality traits that reveal higher EQs (emotional quotient). In casual conversations in India, some workers are often described as having a "good nature" or "helpful attitude" - and these often have less to do with training and more to do with the way human beings are. An emphasis on EQ over IQ (intelligence quotient)

in recruitment, training, and deployment can go a long way to make services that appeal to the public. We need smart but sensitive civil servants -including lowly officials who directly face disadvantaged citizens. This requires the courage to recognise that "soft" people skills are as important, if not more, than high scores in public examinations. Union Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan recently sent out a note to all secretaries (top bureaucrats) in various departments, asking them to take care of small things and avoid bureaucratic repetition of processes. Such moral nudging is desirable but of limited utility. Recognition of various kinds, not just plum postings, should be matched with disincentives of the kind the Delhi government has proposed. As is often said in management lessons, leadership is set by example. You cannot have authoritarian ministers lording over empathetic bureaucrats, or authoritarian bureaucrats managing empathetic clerks at railway counters! You do need tough authority, but one that is consciously aware of where and how it is to be used. The Modi government has been running a corporate-style assessment system with scorecards for ministries presented by the cabinet secretary. This is a welcome beginning. Cultural transformation requires a different DNA. Neither a purely corporate style, nor a monarchically authoritarian structure, and nary the lapsed colonial bureaucratic process serves the purpose. The holy grail lies between efficiency and empathy.

A New Era in Air Travel!
Bhogapuram Airport Ready for Grand Inauguration



Vizianagaram, July 22: A new chapter in India's aviation history is set to unfold as the state-of-the-art Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram is all set to be dedicated to the nation on August 1. Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the airport. The airport is not merely a transportation hub but is expected to serve as a major catalyst for economic growth, industrial development and employment generation in the North Andhra region.

World-Class Infrastructure and Key Features
Built under the aegis of leading airport infrastructure company GMR, the greenfield airport has been developed to international standards. A 3,800-metre-long Code 4E runway has been constructed to facilitate the smooth operation of large aircraft. In its first phase, the airport

will have the capacity to handle 6 million passengers annually, with plans to expand the capacity to over 40 million passengers in a phased manner. Dedicated cargo facilities are also expected to give a major boost to local exports.

All Statutory Approvals in Place
The airport has secured all necessary statutory approvals to commence commercial operations soon after the inauguration. These include the Aerodrome Licence from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, approvals from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, Immigration Check Post and Customs notifications, as well as clearances from the Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board.

Regional Connectivity and Economic Growth
The Bhogapuram Airport is expected to emerge as a major aviation gateway for the people of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts, as well as the bordering districts of southern Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

Improved Road Connectivity
To ensure easy access for passengers, the Centre and the State have developed advanced highway connectivity from Visakhapatnam with seven approach roads leading to the airport. Plans are also underway to improve connectivity from other districts.

The Bhogapuram Airport is set to open a new chapter for Vizianagaram district, which has long been considered a backward region, and is expected to play a key role in transforming it into one of the backbone districts of the State.

Admissions, Pass Percentage
Must Improve: Collector



Markapur, July 22: District Collector M. Vijaya Sunitha directed officials to focus on increasing student admissions and pass percentages in welfare hostels, residential schools and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas. Reviewing the functioning of welfare hostels and educational institutions at the Collectorate on Wednesday, she instructed officials to ensure proper food, sanitation, drinking water and healthcare facilities

for students. Officials were also asked to regularly inspect hostels, monitor students' behaviour and work towards improving academic performance compared to the previous year.

The Collector warned that negligence in duty and in caring for students would invite strict action. Joint Collector P. Srinivasulu, DEO Subbarao and other officials participated in the meeting.

All Departments Must Work Together to
Achieve 15% Annual Growth: Collector



Vijayawada, July 22: District Collector Dr. Lakshmisha directed all departments to work collectively to achieve an annual growth rate of over 15% and increase the district GDP from ₹93,112 crore in 2024-25 to ₹1.64 lakh crore by 2028-29. Addressing a one-day capacity-building workshop on district and mandal development, the Collector called for department-wise action plans focusing on agriculture value addition, food processing, industrial growth, services, tour-

ism and skill development. He stressed the need to link agricultural produce with processing and marketing units to increase farmers' incomes. The Collector also urged officials to promote skill training for youth, encourage MSMEs and make effective use of Vijayawada's commercial, hospitality and tourism potential. He called for data-driven planning, inter-departmental coordination and sustainable development to transform the district into a model district in the State.

Collector Harendra Prasad Inspects Welfare
and Development Programmes in Kajuluru



Kakinada, July 22: District Collector M.N. Harendra Prasad conducted an extensive tour of Kajuluru mandal and reviewed the implementation of government welfare and development programmes at the field level. During surprise inspections of the Gollapalem Primary Health Centre, a drinking water project, village secretariat, Anganwadi centre and Kajuluru Zilla Parishad High School, the Collector reviewed

healthcare services, drinking water supply, sanitation, nutrition, school facilities and the mid-day meal programme.

He directed officials to ensure quality public services and uninterrupted drinking water supply. At the school, he interacted with Class X students and instructed teachers to give special attention to weaker students and prepare them for public examinations.

Ensure Foolproof Arrangements
at Every School: Collector

Vijayawada, July 22: District Collector Dr. Lakshmisha directed education officials to make foolproof arrangements for the Mega Parent-Teachers Meet 3.1 to be held on July 24 in all 910 government schools across the district. The Collector said the programme aims to improve educational standards, strengthen parent-teacher coordination and increase community participation in school development. He instructed officials to discuss students' academic progress, learning levels, attendance and school development with parents, while also organising exhibitions, cultural programmes and sports activities. Parents should also be sensitised on using the LEAP app to monitor their children's educational progress.



Mega Parent-Teacher Meeting
in Government Schools

Guntur, July 22: A Mega Parent-Teacher Meeting will be held across 1,048 government schools in the district, involving the parents of 90,596 students. Discussions will focus on students' academic progress, learning levels and school development. Cultural programmes, student talent shows and competitions for parents will also be organised. District Collector Saikanth Varma urged parents to download the LEAP app to track their children's academic progress regularly.



‘Thalliki Vandanam’ Paves the Way for Students’
Bright Future: Minister Vasamsetti Subhash



Amalapuram, July 22: State Labour Minister Vasamsetti Subhash said the coalition government is bringing revolutionary changes to strengthen the education system and secure the future of students. He said the ‘Thalliki Vandanam’ scheme provides direct financial assistance to mothers of students through their bank accounts, benefiting students studying in government, private and aided schools. The Minister stated that financial assistance of ₹10,120.78 crore has been provided to 67.47 lakh students across the State. He said the scheme aims to ensure that no student is forced to discontinue education due to financial difficulties.

Congress Protests Rahul Gandhi's Arrest,
Demands Protection of Democracy



Sulurpet, July 22: Congress party leaders and activists staged a large-scale rally in Sulurpet constituency under the leadership of DCC President Balaguravam Babu to protest the alleged illegal arrest of Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi. The protesters took out a massive rally and laid floral tributes at the statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, raising slogans to uphold the Constitution. Speaking on the occasion, DCC President Balaguravam Babu said that democracy is being ridiculed in the country today and the future of lakhs of students has been pushed into darkness. He alleged that this is a complete failure of the central government and demanded that the Union Education Minister take responsibility and resign immediately.

Srikalahasti Constituency Congress Party Coordinator Talapa Damodaram Reddy said that authoritarian rule is prevailing in the country. He stated that while Rahul Gandhi was peacefully protesting, authorities assaulted him to the point of causing bleeding injuries and arrested him, which is undemocratic. He added that the Gandhi family has sacrificed their lives for the country, and suppressing voices that question the government is not right. He also demanded immediate punishment for those responsible for the NEET paper leaks.

The programme was attended by district leaders, presidents of district affiliated wings, constituency coordinators, mandal presidents and Congress party workers and others.

Venkatagiri MLA Attends Cordial
Meeting at Somireddy's Residence



Nellore, July 22: A cordial meeting of MLAs and key party leaders from the Tirupati Parliamentary constituency was held at the residence of Sarvepalli Constituency MLA Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy in Nellore city. Venkatagiri Constituency MLA Kurugondla Ramakrishna participated in the meeting and held extensive discussions with the leaders on the development programs being implemented by the state government, comprehensive development of constituencies under the Tirupati Parliamentary segment, resolution of public issues, strengthening of the party, and future action plans.

The leaders shared their views on providing more effective governance to the people, ensuring government welfare schemes reach every eligible family, speeding up development activities, and formulating an action plan for party cadres to work in coordination. On the occasion, MLA Kurugondla Ramakrishna said that the government is committed to implementing development programmes in line with the aspirations of the people, and added that he will work further for the development of Venkatagiri constituency and uphold the trust of the people.

'Not An Isolated Incident'

Delhi HC Questions Police Stand, Seeks Reply On PILs Alleging Excessive Force During CJP Protest, Orders CCTV Preservation



Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday sought responses from the Delhi Police and the Union Government on a batch of public interest litigations (PILs) alleging excessive use of force against students during the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) "Sansad Chalo" march over the alleged NEET paper leak on July 20. According to LiveLaw, a division bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia directed the authorities to file their counter affidavits within four weeks. The Court also ordered preservation of all relevant records, including CCTV footage and videography, related to the incident. The matter will next be heard on September 11. During the hearing, the bench questioned the Delhi Police's argument that individual victims should pursue separate legal remedies instead of a PIL. "Is it a case

of some isolated incidents? Perhaps not. If it was an unlawful assembly, as you say, there is law on how to deal with it. If these issues are raised in a PIL, how can you say every individual should lodge an FIR?" the Court observed as per Live Law. The High Court clarified that it was not expressing any opinion on the truthfulness of the allegations or the authenticity of the videos relied upon by the petitioners. Referring to the Supreme Court's judgment in Anita Thakur v. State of Jammu and Kashmir, the bench observed that alleged violations of fundamental rights arising from police action could also be examined under public law. Without commenting on the merits of the case, the Court directed preservation of "the relevant record in relation to the incident as mentioned in the writ petitions, including CCTV foot-

age and videography, if any," in accordance with the standard operating procedures issued by the Delhi Police and the Union Government. As reported by LiveLaw, the petitioners alleged that the July 20 protest began peacefully and that the police resorted to disproportionate force. Senior advocates appearing for the petitioners claimed that students were beaten with lathis, tear gas and other measures were used without following due procedure, and sought an independent probe into the incident. One of the petitioners alleged, "There are policemen who were molesting women, beating them on private parts. It is so ghastly... At least identifiable policemen, against their FIRs should be there. It is all in videos. An enquiry be made into the entire incident." Another petitioner alleged that verified videos showed senior police officers assaulting protesters and argued that authorities had failed to follow the Supreme Court's guidelines on dispersing crowds. Opposing the petitions, Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju argued that the PILs were based on unverified social media videos and suppressed material facts.

He maintained that the protest had turned violent, with police personnel injured and government property damaged. According to LiveLaw, the ASG argued, "The petition, though it looks very attractive at first blush, is not so. It is based on suppression of facts and social media recordings. Social media is known to be tampered with. These are all publicity petitions with ulterior motives." He also contended that those claiming assault should pursue appropriate legal remedies instead of invoking the court's public interest jurisdiction. According to the Delhi Police, nine FIRs have been filed in connection with the alleged violence, stone-pelting, and vandalism during the march. The charges include rioting, assaulting public servants, destroying public property, and attempting to murder a Rapid Action Force (RAF) member. Earlier, the Delhi High Court had declined urgent listing of a similar plea, orally observing, "Don't drag Court into all this. It will come up tomorrow." The Supreme Court, too, refused urgent listing of a similar plea earlier in the day, remarking, "Don't waste our time, and don't waste your time."

EAM Jaishankar Raises Safety Of Indian Seafarers With Russia's Lavrov After Black Sea Attack



New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday raised India's concerns over the safety of Indian seafarers operating in the Black Sea region during talks with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, days after four Indian crew members

were killed in an attack on a merchant vessel off the coast of Ukraine. The two ministers met in Manila on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-related meetings and reviewed bilateral ties, including cooperation in trade, investment,

energy and other key sectors. "An in-depth review of our bilateral relations with FM Sergey Lavrov of Russia," Jaishankar wrote on social media. "Reiterated our strong concern regarding the safety of Indian seafarers in the region. Discussed various aspects of our partnership, including trade and investment, energy and connectivity, science and technology, and mobility," he said. India summoned Russian Chargé d'Affaires Vladimir Ladanov and conveyed its "grave concerns" over the attack on the commercial vessel MV Golden Leo, in which four Indian nationals were killed. The meeting came a day after India summoned Russian Charge d'Affaires Vladimir Ladanov to convey its "grave concerns" and "unequivocal condemnation" over Sunday's Russian attack on the Guinea-Bissau-flagged merchant vessel MV

Golden Leo, in which 10 people, including four Indian crew members, were killed. During the meeting at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India described the attack as "unacceptable" and stressed that such incidents must not be repeated. The attack marked the first reported deaths of Indian seafarers since the Russia-Ukraine conflict began. "The Russian Charge d'Affaires was requested to convey India's strong concerns to his authorities that the targeting of commercial shipping and the resulting loss of innocent civilian lives are unacceptable and must be avoided," the MEA said. Jaishankar said he and Lavrov also exchanged views on the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the situation in West Asia. India has consistently maintained that the Ukraine conflict should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.

Silent Claws: Mahe Class' Second Anti-Submarine Vessel INS Malvan Commissioned Into The Indian Navy; To Strengthen Shallow-Water Surveillance



Malvan Town: The Indian Navy commissioned INS Malvan, the second of eight indigenously designed and built Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC). The vessel, which officially entered service during a formal ceremony held at the naval base in Karwar, is said to give a major boost to India's littoral combat capabilities. The newly inducted warship inherits the proud legacy of her namesake—an inshore minesweeper that served the Indian Navy for 19 years before being decommissioned in 2003. The name itself connects to the

historical coastal town of Malvan in Maharashtra, a region deeply tied to the legendary maritime heritage of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Reflecting this warrior lineage, the ship's crest prominently features the 'Bagh Nakha' (Tiger's Claw), the iconic weapon used by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Encircling the claws are ocean waves, symbolising agility, tactical audacity, and constant vigilance along the nation's coastlines. Meanwhile, the ship's motto "Silent Claws" reflects the vessel's primary doctrine to hunt silently in coastal waters and strike

adversary underwater threats swiftly. **Water-jet propulsion reduces acoustic signature for shallow operations** The vessel's capabilities include shallow-water surveillance, mine-laying and anti-submarine operations where larger surface ships face maneuvering constraints. Notably, the Mahe-class vessels are the largest warships in the Indian Navy to utilise water-jet propulsion rather than conventional propellers. This design minimises underwater acoustic signatures, drastically improves agility in shallow littoral

zones, and reduces susceptibility to underwater obstacles. The commissioning ceremony was presided over by Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, in presence of Western Naval Command's Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, alongside senior officers, shipbuilders from Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), and naval veterans. The Air Chief Marshal emphasised the pivotal role of maritime security in protecting sea lines of communication. He noted that uninterrupted oceanic trade forms the bedrock of national economic prosperity in an increasingly turbulent geopolitical climate. Highlighting the warship's 80% indigenous content, he praised the Indian Navy's long-standing leadership in self-reliance and commended the Navy's practice of embedding design and engineering officers directly inside shipyards during construction.

Assam Flood: Death Toll Rises To 31, Over 5.65 Lakh People Affected As Relief Efforts Face Challenges

Dispur: The flood situation in Assam has worsened sharply, with 21 more people losing their lives over the last 24 hours, taking the death toll in this year's floods to 31. More than 5.64 lakh people across 12 districts are now affected as incessant rain continues to batter the state, worsening the crisis and leaving several areas cut off. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday visited flood-hit areas in Upper Assam, met affected families and announced an ex gratia of Rs.4 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased. Acknowledging the scale of the devastation, he said the government would stand by those affected during relief, rehabilitation and the rebuilding of livelihoods. The flood situation in Assam deteriorated severely on Monday, with more than 1.7 lakh people affected across 12 districts as incessant rain triggered a fresh rise in the water levels of various. The worsening flood situation has also exposed the difficulties in reaching stranded residents. Responding to complaints about inadequate relief, Sarma admitted that many submerged villages remain inaccessible as roads and communication links have been washed away. "There is no road or any mode of communication to reach out to those people who are still in their homes. The administration accepts that. We have not been able to reach many places," he said, adding that relief would reach such areas once floodwaters recede. He also said airdropping



supplies was not feasible at present but assured that there was no shortage of relief materials at camps where displaced people had taken shelter. Sarma further said the government would provide 74 lakh as immediate assistance to the families of every deceased and would also extend support in the future. During his visit to a relief camp in Charaideo, he assured people that those suffering from serious illnesses or unable to move would be shifted to hospitals. Medical teams and essential services, he said, have already been deployed. The Chief Minister also promised that the government would help residents replace important documents lost in the floods. According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), 21 people died in flood-related incidents during the last 24 hours. Thirteen deaths were reported from Sivasagar district, including four women and two children. Charaideo recorded five deaths, including two children, while two people died

in Golaghat and one woman lost her life in Jorhat. The latest ASDMA report said more than 5.64 lakh people have been affected in Biswanath, Charaideo, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Jorhat, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Karbi Anglong, Nagaon, Sivasagar and Tinsukia districts. Sivasagar remains the worst-hit district with nearly 3.6 lakh people affected, followed by Jorhat with almost 88,000 people and Charaideo with more than 72,500 residents impacted. The flood situation has deteriorated significantly since Monday night, when around 3.63 lakh people across 15 districts were affected, highlighting how rapidly the crisis has escalated, PTI reports. The administration is currently operating 273 relief camps and relief distribution centres across 10 districts, where 12,284 displaced people are staying. Rescue teams from the Army, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Fire and Emergency Services, police and civil agen-

cies have rescued more than 6,000 people from Charaideo, Golaghat, Jorhat and Sivasagar. During the last 24 hours, authorities distributed 5,011.07 quintals of rice, 956.53 quintals of dal, 265.18 quintals of salt and 20,115.42 litres of mustard oil among affected residents. The disaster has also caused extensive damage to infrastructure and agriculture. At present, 872 villages remain submerged, while 24,210.35 hectares of crop area have been damaged. Embankments, roads, bridges and other public infrastructure have also suffered damage in several districts. In addition, 1,85,029 domestic animals and poultry have been affected by the flooding. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for Assam, forecasting thunderstorms and heavy rainfall at isolated places over the next four days. The weather office said an upper air cyclonic circulation over Central Assam and adjoining Nagaland has become less marked, but warned that rain is likely to continue.

CJP Warns Of Massive Delhi March, Calls Youth Agitation India's Biggest Post-Independence Movement

New Delhi: Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) National Spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka asserted that the ongoing youth-led agitation is the "biggest movement in India's post-independence history," warning that an even larger mobilisation would take place if the government failed to address the protesters' demands. Addressing the media, Ranka said the protest held on the 20th was merely a "trailer" and claimed that millions of people would march to Delhi if the government continued to ignore the movement. "This is the biggest movement in India's post-independence history. We have said this very clearly, what happened on the 20th was a trailer. If the government doesn't agree, millions more will come to Delhi because this time we will not hold back and stay silent. The government really needs to get its act together, otherwise the youth of this country is going to take them down very badly," he said. Rejecting allegations that the agitation could turn violent, Ranka maintained that the movement has remained peaceful and accused the police of provoking unrest during the march on the 20th. "A narrative is trying to be built that we will not be peaceful, but we are. The march on the 20th was peaceful too, but there was chaos only at the point where police unleashed brutality and beat up students. The youth is sitting here peacefully for 31 days because we follow the principles of Gandhi and Ambedkar," he said. Ranka also reiterated the party's demand that no First Information Reports (FIRs), including any future FIRs, be registered against protesters participating in the



agitation. "We have placed a very clear demand, and Abhijeet Dipke had spoken about it. We will not let any kind of FIR or future FIR be lodged against any protester. The protest won't end without that," he said. The CJP spokesperson further said the party's leadership was prepared to face legal action and arrests if necessary. "As far as our team's leadership is con-

cerned, we are not scared of any FIR. We are ready to be arrested under UAPA and NSA from day one. Jail is a small price to pay for our fight," he said. Calling for wider political support, Ranka appealed to leaders across party lines to join what he described as a genuine public movement. "Be it any political party, even if they are people from the BJP, they should

come together because this is a huge movement and the demand is genuine. We welcome all of them," he added. The remarks come amid the continuing protest led by the Cockroach Janta Party, which has entered its 31st day, with demonstrators demanding action from the government while insisting their agitation remains peaceful.

Dr Abhay Bang to Launch Mental Health Book in Navi Mumbai

Navi Mumbai: Noted public health expert and Padma Shri awardee Dr Abhay Bang will attend a multi-faceted social initiative and literary programme organised by Prabhat Trust at the Marathi Sahitya Mandir Auditorium in Vashi on Wednesday evening. The event, scheduled for 5.30 pm on July 22, will feature a unique 'Granth Tula' (book donation drive), under which books authored by Dr Bang will be symbolically offered and distributed free of cost to libraries as part of the trust's campaign promoting social transformation through reading. A

major highlight of the programme will be the release of the Marathi book Homeless Mentally Ill on the Streets, published by Dimple Prakashan and written by Ramon Magsaysay Award recipient and Padma Shri awardee Dr Bharat Vatwani. The book will be formally launched by Dr Bang, while Dr Girish Kulkarni of Snehalaya, Ahmednagar, will introduce the publication. The event will also honour waste-picker women who have resumed their education under the "Ata Thambaycha Nay" (Now

We Will Not Stop) initiative. Women who overcame years of educational disruption to pass their Class 10 examinations and gain admission to Class 11 will be felicitated, along with teachers who have voluntarily contributed to their education through free teaching and educational support. Dr Bang will also deliver a lecture on "Health Swarajya", focusing on community-led healthcare and public health. The programme will be held at the Marathi Sahitya Mandir Auditorium, Sector 6, Vashi. It is open to the public.

50% Reservation, No Test: Ex-Agniveers Can Join Central Armed Police Forces



Former Agniveers looking to join India's paramilitary forces once their four-year military stint ends will get half the Constable and Rifleman vacancies set aside for them, no written exam to clear, and a lighter physical test bar to boot. This is what the government told Parliament on Tuesday, in one of its most detailed public accountings yet of how the Agnipath to Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) pipeline is supposed to work. The information came in response to a question from BJP MP Janardan Singh Sigiwal, who asked what, exactly, the government had done to secure a second career for soldiers exiting the Agnipath scheme. Minister of State for Home Affairs

Nityanand Rai's written reply, placed before the Lok Sabha on July 21, laid out the answer in three parts.

A 50 Per Cent Quota
Half of all Constable (General Duty) and Rifleman vacancies across the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Assam Rifles will now go to Ex-Agniveers as a matter of policy. Not as a preference, but as a hard reservation written into the recruitment rules.

More Room On Age
Every Ex-Agniveer gets a three-year bump on the usual upper age limit for these posts. The very first batch to leave the Agnipath

scheme, the ones who signed up before any of this was worked out, get an extra five years on top of that. It is a one-time concession, and it is easy enough to see why. This cohort took a chance on a scheme without knowing what the landing would look like.

No Written Test, No PST, No PET

This is probably the part that will draw the most attention. Candidates will not have to sit the written exam, or clear the Physical Standards Test (PST) and Physical Efficiency Test (PET) that every other CAPF aspirant has to go through. Four years of soldiering, the government is effectively saying, is proof enough of both fitness and discipline. Alongside all this, the min-

istry says it has set up a dedicated Ex-Agniveer wing inside the Ministry of Home Affairs. Its job is to track and coordinate where these soldiers land once their term of engagement is over.

How Many Ex-Agniveers Have Actually Got In?

Here is the catch. There is no number of vacancies filled, no force wise tally, nothing to point to as proof that this is already working. The reason is almost anticlimactic. Nobody is eligible yet. The first batch of Agniveers, recruited when the scheme launched in 2022, has not finished its four years of service. While the rulebook is written and notified, it has not actually been run through a single full recruitment cycle. The Agnipath scheme has taken plenty of heat since it began. Critics, including several opposition leaders, have repeatedly questioned what happens to the roughly three quarters of recruits who will not be retained by the armed forces after four years. The government's answer, again and again, has been some version of "we have built pathways for them", pointing to CAPFs, state police forces, and defence public sector undertakings.

Tuesday's reply is the government putting real detail behind that promise, at least for CAPFs, with specific age relaxations, specific test exemptions, and a specific quota.

A Policy Still Waiting To Be Tested

A policy on paper and a policy that is actually placing people in jobs are two different things. The real test begins only once the first wave of Agniveers actually leaves service in the next couple of years, and the CAPFs have to absorb them at scale, potentially tens of thousands of candidates a year once the scheme is in full swing. Whether that 50 per cent reservation translates into real recruitment numbers, whether the exemption from PST and PET holds up as forces scale their intake, and whether the Ex-Agniveer wing can actually manage a pipeline of this size, none of that has been tested yet. The government's reply also left the door open for change, saying it "proposes to expand or modify" the policy going forward, without spelling out what that might mean. For now, what exists is a framework, a fairly generous one on paper, waiting for its first real batch of applicants.

Abhishek Banerjee's Legal Notice To Rebel Who Called Him "Criminal, Murderer"

Kolkata (West Bengal): Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Abhishek Banerjee on Tuesday sent a legal notice to rebel TMC MLA Madan Mitra, who joined Ritabrata Banerjee's faction a few days ago, alleging that the legislator made false, reckless and defamatory statements against him. According to the legal notice shared by the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), Mitra allegedly made remarks accusing Abhishek Banerjee of criminal activities, including allegations of involvement in killings and hiring contract killers. The notice stated, "You made several false, reckless, malicious and highly defamatory statements against my client (Abhishek Banerjee). You went to the extent of describing my client as a 'criminal', 'murderer', alleged that my client gets persons killed by paying money and/or engaging contract

killers ('supari'), and further imputed that he possesses a criminal instinct. Each of these allegations is demonstrably false, fabricated, malicious, and entirely devoid of any factual foundation and most importantly you are well aware that each such defamatory statement made by you is absolutely false." The legal notice comes days after Madan Mitra, a senior TMC leader and MLA, joined the faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee, amid developments within the party. The notice accused Mitra of making statements that were "highly defamatory" and claimed that the allegations against Abhishek Banerjee were without any factual basis. Earlier, Trinamool Congress (TMC) MLA Madan Mitra joined hands with the Ritabrata Banerjee-led rebel faction, blaming General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee for his exit. Following the addition

of another to the dissidents' group, former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that she can "restart" the party if needed. Mitra told ANI that he resigned from Mamata Banerjee's TMC as he was unable to work effectively. He said that his concerns went unaddressed by the party leadership. "I resigned because I was no longer able to work effectively within Mamata Banerjee's TMC. I have stepped down from all the committees I was part of. More and more of Mamata Banerjee's long-time associates are leaving the party because, in my view, the leadership is focused on promoting Abhishek Banerjee rather than strengthening the organisation. TMC is not one person's party," Mitra said. "I raised these concerns with Mamata Banerjee on several occasions, but they were not addressed. In my view, Abhishek Banerjee



wants decisions to be made solely on his terms and does not allow others to play a

meaningful role. As a result, I believe the party's position is weakening," he added.

Day After Dharna, Opposition's Black Dress Protest At Parliament



New Delhi: A day after the dramatic dharna by Congress leaders led by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi outside the Prime Minister's residence, Congress MPs continued their protest in the Parliament complex on Wednesday morning. The Congress contingent turned up dressed in black at Parliament and protested outside the gate. Congress

MPs were joined by several other Opposition MPs as they demanded the resignations of Home Minister Amit Shah and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Samajwadi Party MPs also wore black scarves to join the Opposition protest against the government. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav had also joined the Congress dharna outside

the PM's residence and was detained along with the Congress leaders. The Opposition has been demanding a discussion in Parliament on the NEET issue and the police crackdown on student protesters in the capital on Monday. Opposition leaders gathered at the gate of Parliament and raised slogans against the government and the police action on

students. But on Wednesday they maintained that any discussion can only happen after Education Minister's resignation. "Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan must resign first, and then there will be discussion. After the lathi charge on so many students, what will be the discussion now? Dharmendra Pradhan must resign," Congress MP Pawan Khera told. Sources told that the government has agreed to a discussion in both Houses of Parliament, as demanded by the Opposition. The rule under which the debate will take place will be decided by the Speaker after meeting leaders of all parties, sources added. Rahul Gandhi on

Tuesday accused the government of exploiting students and demanded the resignations of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Home Minister Amit Shah over the NEET paper leak controversy. He placed five demands before the government, including the resignations of Shah and Pradhan, action against police officials who attacked students, and an apology from the Prime Minister. The BJP, on its part, hit back at Gandhi, accusing him of using students as "ammunition for his politics". The BJP is also planning to hold protests outside Congress offices across the country against the party's dharna outside the PM's residence.

Woman, 21, Injured At Delhi CJP Protest Taken Off Ventilator, Is Stable: Doctors



New Delhi: A 21-year-old woman, who was injured in police action at the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) protest in Delhi on Monday, has been taken off ventilator and is recovering, a health bulletin issued by the Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital read.

The woman is fully conscious, the hospital confirmed. She is responding to the doctors' instructions and breathing on her own.

The Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) reports of her brain and spine are also normal. The hospital has reported consistent improvement in the woman's health ever since the treatment began on Monday. She is still under close monitoring and is receiving all necessary medical care. According to sources, a total of 90 students were injured during Monday's protests in the national capital. Currently, the 21-year-old is the only patient admitted to RML Hospital in connection with this incident. All other protesters, who suffered injuries, have been discharged.

Thousands of people gathered at Jantar Mantar to participate in 'Sansad Chalo' - Parliament march on Monday. Protesters demanded the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged irregularities in examinations, including the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak. Chaos erupted during the protest. Police used force, including lathicharge and tear gas shells, after protesters attempted to march towards Parliament. Both police personnel and protesters suffered injuries and blame each other for violence. Sources said that the woman collided with a barricade during police crackdown on protesters at Jantar Mantar. Delhi Police said more than 118 police personnel and around 60 protesters were injured during the clashes. The force also said more than 20 police vehicles were damaged. Union Health Minister JP Nadda visited both Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and Lady Hardinge Hospital on Tuesday. During the visits, he met injured pro-

testers, enquired about their condition and held discussions with doctors at RML Hospital regarding their treatment. Despite clashes, protesters have returned to the protest site at Jantar Mantar and are demanding three things: Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation, Rs 1 crore compensation for all the NEET aspirants who died by suicide following the paper leak and scraping of FIR against all protesters. Abhijeet Dipke, the founder of the Cockroach Janta Party, a satirical movement that began two months ago, has made it clear that if the government wants to talk, it has to come to the protesters and "abide by our conditions." "We request the government to agree. Its arrogance must end," Dipke added. The government, however, has put the onus of talks on the protesters. "If the protesters come to talk, we are ready," government sources have told NDTV. CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka said talks can be held at a "neutral venue or at Jantar Mantar."

Queues, Confusion As Delhi Metro Shuts 16 Stations Over Security Concerns

New Delhi: To wait or to take an alternative route? That is the one question and confusion many commuters travelling via Delhi metro are facing as entry and exit gates of 16 stations have been shut. The closures come amid the ongoing Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest at Jantar Mantar. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) today around 11:30 am announced that 16 stations across several lines including blue, yellow, and violet have been shut owing to "security reasons."

The 16 stations are:
Lok Kalyan Marg
Rajiv Chowk
Patel Chowk
Ramakrishna Ashram Marg
Barakhamba Road
Supreme Court
Seva Teerth
Janpath
Mandi House
Central Secretariat
ITO
Delhi Gate
Indraprastha
Khan Market



Jor Bagh
Shivaji Stadium
The DMRC did not give a timeline for when the gates would be open. The interchange facility shall remain available at Rajiv Chowk, Mandi House and Central Secretariat, it added. Though DMRC communicated the route change on time, confusion and long queues followed at several stations. NDTV took a ride on Delhi Metro's violet line, travelling from Kashmere Gate to Ballabgarh in Faridabad. On this route, entry and exit gates of six stations are shut. The metro stopped at each station and even the gates opened, but

as one proceeded to exit out of either of the above-mentioned 16 stations, they faced barricades and police deployment. NDTV tried to exit from Mandi House station but saw a long queue of people waiting for the gates to open. A fellow traveller wanted to get down at Mandi House, but it was shut. Five stations before and after his location were also shut. Speaking to NDTV, he talked about taking an alternative route and from there a bike taxi to reach his office. Commuters also gathered outside Mandi House metro station as it was being closed.

Man Beaten To Death With An Iron Rod Over Job Dispute In Punjab: Police

Hoshiarpur: A 45-year-old man was beaten to death with an iron rod after a dispute over a worker's sacking from a grocery shop here, police said on Wednesday. Police have charged five men for the killing of Mukhtiar Singh alias Billa, a resident of Bassi Bahad village in Punjab's Hoshiarpur district, of which one has been arrested, officials said. The incident took place on July 19, a day after Amandeep was sacked from his job at the grocery shop. He allegedly reached the shop along with Sham and attacked the shop owner's brother with an iron rod. When



Mukhtiar Singh and the village sarpanch intervened, Amandeep allegedly struck Mukhtiar on the head with the rod, police said. He was taken to the community health centre at Bhunga, where he succumbed to his injuries, they said. The police on Tuesday charged five persons -

Amandeep alias Manu, Sham, Anil Kumar alias Bunty, Rahul Kumar and Govinda, all residents of Bassi Bahad village - under relevant provisions of the BNS. Of these, Amandeep has been arrested, and efforts are on to nab the remaining accused, police said.

Union Minister Prataprao Jadhav Inaugurated Prakriti Café at Ayush Bhawan

*"Prakriti Café" Reflects Our Vision of Promoting Wellness Through Healthy Everyday Choices: Prataprao Jadhav
Prakriti Café Initiative Promotes Ayush-Inspired Healthy Eating at the Workplace*



New Delhi, July, 22 (PIB): Prataprao Jadhav, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Ayush and Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare, today inaugurated Prakriti Café at Ayush Bhawan, a first-of-its-kind workplace initiative of the Ministry of Ayush aimed at promoting healthy dietary practices inspired by Ayush Ahaa. Highlighting the significance of the initiative, Union Minister Shri Prataprao Jadhav, said, "Prakriti Café is a reflection of our vision of promoting wellness not

only through healthcare, but also through healthy everyday choices. Food is an integral part of our overall well-being, and nutritious food in itself can be a form of nourishment and support for good health. Through initiatives such as Ayush Ahaa, we seek to encourage greater awareness about nutritious, wholesome and balanced eating. Jadhav also noted that today, our dietary habits are changing, and the growing culture of junk food is adversely affecting health and contributing to lifestyle-related

diseases. We must recognise the risks associated with such unhealthy habits, particularly among young people, and encourage healthier choices. Prakriti Café will provide a space where people can experience the values of healthy living in their daily lives, with wholesome Ayush-inspired food available at affordable prices." Emphasising the importance of mindful nutrition as part of a healthy lifestyle, Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, said, "The idea behind

Prakriti Café is to bring the principles of Ayush closer to everyday life. A healthy lifestyle is built through simple and consistent choices, and mindful eating is an important part of that journey. We hope Prakriti Café will become a space that encourages healthy food habits, community, and a greater appreciation of India's rich traditions of wholesome nutrition." The café offers a range of fresh and wholesome food options inspired by the Ayush Ahaa initiative, which seeks to promote nutritious dietary practices

rooted in India's traditional knowledge systems. The initiative also aims to create greater awareness about the importance of food and nutrition in supporting a healthy and balanced lifestyle. The menu features a variety of nutritious preparations, including beetroot and oats cutlet, kosambari, millet dhokla, khandvi, oats poha, little millet vegetable upma and makhana kheer prepared with jaggery, along with refreshing options such as coconut water and herbal beverages including tulsi-ginger

tea and green tea. The offerings reflect the principles of Ayush Ahaa by encouraging balanced, wholesome and nutritious food choices in everyday life. The inauguration ceremony was attended by senior officials and employees of the Ministry of Ayush. The launch of Prakriti Café marks another step in the Ministry's efforts to foster a workplace culture that promotes health, wellness, and mindful living by integrating the principles of Ayush with contemporary approaches to preventive healthcare.



TRAI Assesses Mobile Network Quality Across Lunglei, Lawngtlai and Siaha Districts and adjoining areas in the State of Mizoram under North East LSA

New Delhi, July, 22 (PIB):

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released findings of Independent Drive Test (IDT) conducted across Lunglei, Lawngtlai and Siaha Districts and adjoining areas in the State of Mizoram under North East LSA, during the month of May 2026, for information of general telecom consumers. The purpose of this drive test is to assess and verify real time quality of mobile network services (both voice & data) provided by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). During the IDT, TRAI captures performance of TSPs for key Quality of Service (QoS) parameters like Coverage, Call Drop Rate (CDR), Call Setup Success Rate (CSSR), data Download (DL) and Upload (UL) throughput etc., which are then published to inform Consumers and encourage TSPs to improve their services. These IDTs have been designed to capture on ground mobile network performance of all TSPs across diverse usages environment like cities, hotspots, public transport hubs, etc. In this type of drive testing, live data and voice sessions are established using SIM cards from all TSPs over 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G networks. Multiple advanced test handsets are used, and the sessions are monitored and analysed in real-time using advanced Software Systems. TRAI, through its appointed agency, conducted drive tests across City drive – 342.4 KMs, Hotspot locations - 11, Walk Test – 1.3 KMs in Mizoram State during 20th May 2026 to 23rd May 2026 in North East LSA. These tests were conducted under the supervision of the TRAI Regional Office Kolkata. The observations presented in drive test reports represent the performance of the TSPs on the area/ route under test on the day/ time of conducting the drive test.

Blue Economy of Odisha under PMMSY

New Delhi, July, 22 (PIB): The Department of Fisheries (DoF), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D), Government of India, has been implementing the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) across all States and Union Territories, including Odisha, since 2020–21. During this period, the Department has approved fisheries development proposals submitted by the Government of Odisha, amounting to ₹1,301.18 crore, including a Central share of ₹484.64 crore, covering a wide range of interventions to strengthen the fisheries and aquaculture value chain. Under PMMSY, DoF, GoI, accorded approval in January 2025 for the establishment of the Integrated Aqua Park at Basantapur, Sambalpur with a project cost of ₹100 crore. As reported by the State Government, key preparatory works such as land procurement, issuance of the letter of intent to the executing agency, and construction of the approach road and boundary walls, have been completed. Construction of the in-house hatchery facility, grow-out ponds, processing units, research facilities and the effluent treatment plant are at various stage.

(b) The Department of Fisheries (DoF), Government of India, under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), has also approved the construction of the State of Art Wholesale Fish Market at Pandara, Bhubaneswar, at a total project cost of ₹59.13 crore, comprising 44 wholesale units and 99 retail units. The market is designed with modern sustainability features, including a renewable-energy-based power system and rainwater harvesting infrastructure, aimed at reducing dependence on conventional energy sources and improving resource efficiency. As reported by the Government of Odisha, land reclamation stage has been completed.

(c) and (d) The Government of India has extended the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) facility to fishers and fish farmers since FY 2018-19, thereby ensuring timely and affordable working capital for fisheries-related activities. The Department of Fisheries (DoF), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, is actively engaging with all States/UTs and the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) to raise awareness and disseminate information among fishers and fish farmers for availing KCC benefits.

As per the Government of Odisha, the State Government conducts regular awareness programmes through Matsya O Prance Sampad Melas and fishermen meetings at the district, block, and village levels to enhance uptake of the scheme. Further, the State Government provides an additional interest subvention of 4% for loans up to Rs.1.00 lakh and 2% for loans above Rs.1.00 lakh and up to Rs.3.00 lakh. This makes KCC loans interest-free up to Rs.1.00 lakh and reduces the effective interest rate to 2% for loans between Rs.1.00 lakh and Rs.3.00 lakh, thereby significantly improving credit affordability for beneficiaries. This Information was given by Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh in the Rajya Sabha in response to a question asked.

Government Orders Removal of Unauthorised E-Rickshaw Battery Management Apps from App Stores to Protect Consumers

New Delhi, July, 22 (PIB): The government has taken cognizance of reports regarding the misuse of certain Battery Management System (BMS) mobile applications that enabled unauthorised remote control of e-rickshaw batteries. On 3rd July 2026, the Government issued orders for removal of such applications on app stores.

Further, Government has institutionalised a nationwide integrated and coordinated framework to strengthen cybersecurity and digital resilience across digital ecosystems, which, inter alia, includes: i. National Cyber Security Coordinator (NCSC) under the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) to ensure coordination related to cyber security amongst different agencies. ii. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is designated as the national agency for responding to cyber security incidents under the provisions of section 70B of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000. iii. National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC), implemented by CERT-In, examines cyberspace to detect cyber security threats. It shares the information with concerned organizations, state governments and stakeholder agencies for taking action.

Today's Horoscope



Aries

Mould your thoughts to some positive thinking as you fight the fearsome monster of fear otherwise you would become the passive and unrelenting victim of this arch demon. Even though funds will slip easily through your fingers- your lucky stars will keep the finances flowing. Friends will invite you over to their place for an enjoyable evening. Quite complicated life for romance today. Today you will have a hidden adversary who will love to prove you wrong. If travelling make sure you carry all-important documents. If you are giving more opportunity to others to control you other than your better half, you might get an adverse reaction from your partner. Remedy :- Sun is the planet which represents discipline. Hence, living a disciplined life will automatically bring cheer to the family.



Taurus

Friends supportive and will keep you happy. You may witness tremendous profit in business today. You can give new heights to your business today. You will also make important contacts through friends. Your soulmate will think about you all day. Promotions and monetary benefits for dedicated professionals. You can waste your free time in any useless activity. Today, your spouse will make you feel that you are the only one in the world. Remedy :- Water stored and kept in Sun in a green colored glass bottle will bring plenty of happiness to family members.



Gemini

Best day to restart to improve your health. Financial position will improve through speculation or unexpected gains. Friends will brighten up your day as they plan out something exciting for the evening. Don't allow your romantic views to be aired. You might get compliments at work. Your ability to act swiftly to problems will bring your recognition. You might have an argument with your spouse during the day, but it will be settled down while having dinner today. Remedy :- Helping poor and needy students, with books, writing materials, uniforms, and educational material will increase the benefic influence of Mercury, thereby removing the roadblocks in your love life.



Cancer

Your continuous positive thinking will be rewarded. As you are likely to succeed in your endeavour. Control your expenses and try not to be too lavish in your spending today. Social get-together with family members will keep everyone in a good mood. Unable to cross the social barriers. Good day to send your resume or appear for an interview. You may give advice to your children regarding time management and how to utilize the time in the most fruitful way. Today, expenses might harm your relationship with your life-partner. Remedy :- Enrich your love life by feeding black-white dogs with rotis/bread.



Leo

Elderly people need to take care of their health. Perfect day to purchase items that would grow in value. Do not share your personal matters with the casual acquaintances. Try to coax your partner into understanding, otherwise you might get in trouble. This is one of those great days when you will feel good at the workplace. Today, your colleagues will appreciate your work and your boss will also seem to be happy with your progress. Businessmen can also earn profits in business today. Today, you may get some bad news from your in-laws' side, which can make you sad. As a result, you may spend a lot of time just thinking. Your spouse will come to you with some beautiful words today describing your value in his/her life. Remedy :- Have faith in God and prevent yourself from psychological violence, doing this will help you to maintain good health.



Virgo

Don't hesitate to express your views. Let not allow confidence deficiency take over you as it will only complicate your problem and could retard your progress. Express yourself to regain your confidence and smile hearty to tackle the problem. Those who are operating small-scale businesses can get any advice from their closed ones today, which can benefit them financially. People will give you new hopes and dreams-but lots will depend on your own efforts. Once you are met with the love of your life, nothing else is required. You will realize this truth today. Looks like your seniors at work are acting angelic today. Those who were very busy for the last few days will finally get to enjoy their own time. Remedy :- Lighting Loban incense (dhoop) at home will be good for domestic life.



Libra

Take proper care about your diet especially migraine patients who should not miss their meal otherwise it could give them undue emotional stress. The arrival of money today can relieve you from many financial troubles. Invitation in a award function of your child would be the source of happiness. You would likely to see your dream coming true as he lives up to your expectations. Your devoted and unquestioned love has a magic creative power. Don't hand over important files to your boss until you are sure that it is complete in all respects. You can spend your free time at any temple, gurudwara or any religious place today, away from unnecessary troubles and disputes. Remedy :- Keep water in a Copper vessel near bedside at night, and next morning, pour this water at the root of a nearest tree, for excellent health benefits.



Scorpio

Today is not a very high-energy day for you and you will get irritated over small matters. A new financial deal will get finalized and fresh money rolls in. You will be in the limelight at the social get-together that you attend today. Love life going to take a turn for the better as you develop a good Your rivals at work will get the result of their bad deeds today. Due to some reason, you may leave early from the office. Hence, you will take advantage of it and go for a picnic or outing with your family members. Your spouse will push the rewind button of those early stage love and romance today. Remedy :- Wear a Copper bangle for continued good health.



Sagittarius

Divine knowledge from a saintly man provides solace and comfort. Financially, you will remain strong. Due to the benefic placement of planets and nakshatras, you'll come across numerous opportunities to earn money today. Make sure you have approval of others before you make changes to your home environment. If you feel that your beloved does not understand you, then take some time out and spend it with them. Talk openly and speak out your heart clearly. Today is a day for high performance and high profile. Excellent day for social as well as religious functions. Your spouse will give you ample of time to listen your heart out. Remedy :- Family life will run smoothly if old and torn books are discarded.



Capricorn

Meditation and yoga will prove to be beneficial for spiritual as well as physical gains. You could find yourself in an exciting new situation-which will also bring you financial gains. Enjoy a peaceful and quiet day with family members-If people approach you with problems- Ignore them and don't let this bother your mind. Thoughts of meeting your friend after a long time may increase your heat beats like a rolling stone. You will be perfect in what ever you do- Prove your worth to those around you by showing how efficient you are. Your personality is slightly different from others, and you like to spend time alone. Today, you will get time for yourself, but will be occupied by office work. Remedy :- Include more of green colour in your daily attire/dressing to improve your health.



Aquarius

Do not shout for the sake of your health. Financial problems ruin your ability to think constructively. Your brother will be more supportive to your needs than you had thought. The day is fabulous in terms of your love life. Keep making love. Good day for retailers and wholesalers. Good day for some recreation and entertainment. Eyes tell it all, and you are going to have an emotional eye-to-eye talk with your spouse today. Remedy :- Worship your family and personal deity by offering red vermillion, for great health benefits.



Pisces

Your lack of will power may make you a victim of emotional and mental attitude. Investment in stocks and mutual funds recommended for long-term gains. Do not rush after fantasies and try being more realistic-Spend some time with your friends-as it will do a world of good. Spell of love is all set to bind you this day. Just feel the bliss. Interacting with eminent people will bring you good ideas and plans. Today, you can surprise your spouse by spending your time with them, leaving all your work. Life becomes really mesmerizing when your partner is really awesome, you are going to experience it today. Remedy :- Have faith in God and prevent yourself from psychological violence, doing this will help you to maintain good health.

SC Bar Bodies Condemn Police Action on Protesting Students, Seek Independent Inquiry



New Delhi: Two Supreme Court bar bodies on Wednesday condemned the police action on students and lawyers during the July 20 protests in Jantar Mantar and called for an impartial inquiry on the “excessive use of force” and fixing accountability. The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), headed by its president and senior advocate Vikas Singh, in a resolution, said the police action left several students and members of the legal fraternity, including members of the association, injured. In a separate statement, the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Asso-

ciation (SCAORA), expressed deep concern over “reports and visuals showing the use of force by Delhi Police against students and young protesters who had assembled to peacefully voice their grievances over the integrity of public examinations and the future of the country’s youth”. The SCBA resolution, issued by its secretary Pragya Baghel said, “The use of excessive and disproportionate force against peaceful students and members of the Bar is deeply disturbing and wholly unacceptable in a democratic society.” The bar body urged the authorities con-

cerned to conduct an immediate, impartial and time-bound inquiry into the incident, identify those responsible for the alleged excessive use of force, and initiate appropriate action in accordance with law. It also called on the authorities to ensure proper medical treatment and assistance for all injured students and members of the legal fraternity, while taking necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. “The association stands in solidarity with all those injured and reiterates its commitment to protecting constitutional rights, human dignity and the

rule of law,” it said. The SCORA, in its resolution, also said, “In a constitutional democracy, peaceful dissent is not an act of defiance but an exercise of the fundamental freedoms guaranteed under Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(b) of the Constitution. While the State is empowered to maintain public order, every restriction on these freedoms must satisfy the constitutional requirements of legality, necessity and proportionality.” It urged the authorities to ensure that allegations of excessive force were independently and impartially examined, those injured received immediate medical assistance, and future engagement with peaceful protesters was guided by restraint, dialogue and constitutional values. “The strength of our Republic lies not in suppressing dissent but in protecting it within the framework of the Constitution. The true measure of constitutional governance is not how the State responds to agreement, but how it responds to peaceful disagreement,” it said. On Monday, thousands of students demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak issue and alleged irregularities in the examination system attempted to march to Parliament but were pushed back with tear gas and batons.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi backs process, stays confident ahead of Zimbabwe T20Is



Harare: Acknowledging that the last four months have been a rollercoaster of ‘ups and downs,’ teenage Indian batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi said his confidence still remains intact and he is focused on trusting his process ahead of the three-match T20I series against Zimbabwe starting. Sooryavanshi, 15, made history during India’s 4-0 T20I series defeat in England by becoming the country’s youngest-ever international cricketer and breaking Sachin Tendulkar’s long-standing record. However, after failing to cross 20 in three innings, he was dropped for the final match of the series in Southampton. “Yes, kaafi ups and downs aaye hain 4 mahine mein (there have been several ups and down in the last four months). It’s part of cricket, it will keep happening. But I have to follow the process and give

my 100 per cent for the team. “It’s an obvious thing that whatever I want (guidance etc), the coaches are making it available and whatever practice I require I am getting that. Feeling very good, there is confidence also,” said Sooryavanshi in a video posted on bcci.tv. Through the upcoming series against Zimbabwe, Sooryavanshi is also making a return to the Harare Sports Club, where he smashed a match-winning 175 off 80 balls against England in the Under-19 World Cup final in February this year to help India lift the trophy. “It’s a very memorable ground for me. Just four months back, we had played the U-19 World Cup Final and won, so a very special ground. To represent India is everyone’s dream and it’s a very special moment. “I’m playing on a ground where we won the U-19 World Cup four months back and made

history (and) to return to the ground and play here will be an altogether different feeling... really enjoying it,” added Sooryavanshi. With senior opener Sanju Samson rested, Sooryavanshi is expected to feature in the top order as India look to bounce back from consecutive T20 series defeats in Ireland and England. “The pitches and the conditions here, I’ve got a fair idea about them when I last played here during the U-19 World Cup. So, I will try what all I gathered during that tournament to apply those learnings during the matches now and do well. “I will back my practice which I have done so far and try to back my game and whatever contribution I can make for the team I will try to give that. I have played two matches on this ground (and) it went well, I will try to carry it forward,” concluded Sooryavanshi.

First-ever Mixed Disability Ashes series announced for 2027 between Australia and England



Hyderabad: Australia and England will compete in a men’s Mixed Disability Ashes series for the first time in 2027. Mixed Disability cricket was first introduced at international level in 2025, with England and India contesting the first two international editions of the format. Next year’s Ashes series

will mark Australia’s first international event in the new disability cricket format, which brings together cricketers with a physical, intellectual or hearing impairment in one team. To prepare for the series, a Mixed Disability feature match has been added to the schedule for the 2027 National Cricket Inclu-

sion Championships (NCIC). The feature match, along with the NCIC more broadly, will form part of the selection process for the Mixed Disability Ashes series. Dates and venues for the 2027 Mixed Disability Ashes series will be released in the near future.

James Allsopp, Cricket Australia Chief of Cricket, said:

“The Mixed Disability Ashes series will allow cricketers with a disability in Australia to add a new chapter to one of sport’s greatest rivalries, along with the Men’s, Women’s and Blind Ashes series. “We’re excited to align with other nation’s cricket boards in fielding Mixed Disability teams, and have followed England’s and India’s series with interest the past two years.

“The National Cricket Inclusion Championships in in Ballarat next January will be an important part of the selection process for the Mixed Disability Ashes, including our first feature match in the format.

“We can’t wait to take part in the new Ashes series next year and have our elite cricketers with a disability take on our oldest rivals in England.”

Ian Martin, England Cricket Board Head of Disability Cricket, said:

“It really signals the next step of Mixed Disability Cricket to be able to introduce an Ashes, it’s a hugely meaningful progression for the game. “All cricket fans understand the importance of an Ashes series. England v Australia is for so many the peak of the game and I’m delighted that our Men’s Mixed Disability squad will get a chance to compete in such a series. “We’ve had a fantastic series against India, with another one due this summer, and we’re keen to continue growing this format. I’m delighted we’ll be able to welcome Australia to the UK next summer and I can’t wait for our first Mixed Disability Ashes series.”

‘I’ve never seen a talent like him’: Harbhajan Singh hails fearless Vaibhav Sooryavanshi



New Delhi: Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh has described teenage batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi as an ‘unbelievable’ talent, saying he has never seen or faced a player with such fearless ability while praising the 15-year-old’s bold approach to the game. Speaking about the youngster’s rapid rise, Harbhajan said modern cricket has become more accepting of players who back their natural instincts instead of playing conser-

vatively. “The difference between today’s youth and the youth back then is the reach of today’s media and social media. Things happened back then too, but today they get highlighted a lot more. What Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is doing today, no one has ever done before. He is unbelievable, a great talent. I don’t think I have seen or faced a talent like that,” Harbhajan told Jio Star. Harbhajan also credited the changing mindset in Indian cricket,

where young players are encouraged to express themselves freely. I think the biggest change is that people are accepting players with that fearless mindset and their approach of playing the way they want to,” he added. Recalling Sooryavanshi’s memorable Indian Premier League debut, Harbhajan narrated an interaction between former India head coach Rahul Dravid and the youngster before his first appearance. “Rahul Dravid was the coach of

that team, and he asked Sooryavanshi, ‘What will you do on the first ball?’ He said, ‘If the first ball is in my arc, I will smash it.’ And he actually did. He hit a six off the very first ball he faced in his IPL career, against Shardul Thakur,” Harbhajan added. Sooryavanshi recently etched his name into the record books during India’s 4-0 T20I series defeat in England by becoming the country’s youngest-ever international cricketer, surpassing Sachin Tendulkar’s long-standing record. The teenager, however, endured a difficult start to his international career with the bat, failing to cross 20 in his three innings before being left out of the fourth and final T20I in Southampton. Despite the early setback, has retained the faith of the selectors and is part of India’s squad for the upcoming T20I series against Zimbabwe, where he will be hoping to convert his fearless approach into substantial runs and further strengthen his place in the national side.

Kuldeep Yadav signs with Yorkshire for One-Day Cup and County Championship matches

Leeds: Premier Indian left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav has signed with English county side Yorkshire as an overseas player for the ongoing domestic season, the club announced on Wednesday. As per the deal, Kuldeep will feature in five One-Day Cup fixtures before returning to Headingley to play three of Yorkshire’s final four County Championship matches in September. His stint begins from Friday’s 50-over match against Glamorgan at Neath. Kuldeep was recently a part of India’s 2-1 ODI series defeat in England, where he didn’t get to play a single game, a decision which left many baffled. “I’m really pleased to be joining Yorkshire and grateful for this opportunity. It will be a real privilege to represent a club with Yorkshire’s proud history. “I’ve always enjoyed the challenge of playing in English conditions, and after speaking with the management, I became really excited to join up with the team and I’m looking forward to making a positive contribution during my time at Headingley,” said Kuldeep in the club’s statement. He has taken 79 wickets in 18 Tests at an impressive average of 22, including a stellar 19-wicket haul against England in the five-match home Test series in 2024. In ODIs, he has picked



up 194 wickets with best figures of 6-25. Gavin Hamilton, Yorkshire’s general manager of cricket, noted that Kuldeep’s inclusion will bolster their bowling attack during the crucial final phase of the season. “Kuldeep is an accomplished, international-quality player who will add incredible strength to our lineup for these blocks of fixtures. “Given the dry summer we’ve experienced, we expect spin to play an important role during the closing stages of the season.

Kuldeep gives us another dimension with his left-arm wrist spin and brings a wealth of experience at the highest level. We’re delighted to welcome him to Yorkshire,” he added. Apart from Kuldeep, Yuzvendra Chahal (Northamptonshire), Jaydev Unadkat (Sussex), Manav Suthar (Warwickshire), R. Sai Kishore (Gloucestershire) and Ashutosh Sharma (Hampshire) are the other Indian players with county deals in various stages of the ongoing season.

Record over 1.7 bn people watched FIFA WC related videos on YouTube: Sundar Pichai

New Delhi: Google CEO Sundar Pichai said on Wednesday that YouTube drew over 1.7 billion unique global viewers to watch World Cup-related videos and lifted lifetime views of related content to over 200 billion. “It was our most viewed World Cup ever on YouTube, bringing lifetime views of related content to over 200 billion!,” Google CEO said on X. CEO, YouTube Neal Mohan’s post was shared by Pichai to mention additional audience figures. Mohan said that the platform’s first Creator Cup drew over 10 million live views. He also mentioned over 2.5 million views “from our creator cohort who brought iconic

commentary and perspectives throughout the tournament,” in his X post. “Congrats on an incredible championship, Spain! And a huge thanks to our partners, creators and teams at YouTube who made the fan experience unlike any other,” the post said. US President Donald Trump said that over 6.5 million spectators had attended the tournament, exceeding the combined attendance of the previous two World Cups. Trump called the tournament “the most successful sporting event, maybe in the history of the world”, adding that fans from 200 countries attended 104 matches across 16 cities in the United States,

Canada and Mexico. The FIFA World Cup disrupted US workplaces and may have shaved as much as \$11.7 billion off the country’s productivity as millions of workers adjusted their schedules to watch matches, according to a report. The tournament’s global impact was nearly \$17 billion, due to higher absenteeism, late arrivals and early departures during the competition, the data from UKG showed. In addition, the data from workplace platform Envoy showed highest work disruption coming the day after the United States men’s team was eliminated from the tournament. Office attendance dropped 26 per cent on July 7, while employee entries dropped 11.5 per cent.

Akhil Needs a Big Boost in the Overseas Market

Akhil Akkineni finally scored a big success with the new film Lenin. After working across multiple genres, he finally hit with the regular, formulaic commercial mass actioner.

The latest success boosted Akhil's confidence, and he is now going to be unstoppable in keeping the momentum going forward. However, the critics opine that achieving success is a cause for relief, but he has to expand his market, which is a big challenge for him. Akhil Akkineni debuted with the commercial entertainer Akhil, but it was too much to handle at the time. Later, he worked in the romantic genre, and his last film was also an action drama. But Akhil believed in the commercial action drama Lenin, which is packed very well. Since this genre brought him a big success, the usual tendency is to try more films in the same genre, but the audiences would expect variations from Akhil. Even with Lenin, the film performed so well in the domestic market but not overseas, especially in North America. It is



partially because of the genre. Even though \$800k is not a small number, it could have been bigger considering the run it gets in India. If not for the genre, the market value of Akhil also contributes to this. Now that Lenin has become a hit, his

market will surely expand, but it will sustain only if he consistently delivers good results, irrespective of the genre. Over time, similar genres could bring good results for Akhil overseas, but what is important now for him is not to get carried

away by the genre success but to try different genres, with story being the driving factor. Akhil learned his lessons the toughest way, and we are sure that his moves would reflect his learnings. Let us see what Akhil will take up next.

Nidhhi Agerwal Is Every Bit A Modern Cinderella

Nidhhi Agerwal looks nothing like a white Indian Cinderella in her photoshoot. Dressed in an elegant lehenga paired with dazzling jewellery, the actress radiates grace. Her soft glam makeup, hair, and princess-like charm make these pictures an instant visual light.

The intricate embroidery on her outfit, statement choker, matching earrings, and delicate accessories perfectly complement the overall ensemble. With minimal yet sophisticated styling, Nidhhi strikes a balance between royal elegance and modern glamour making every frame look effortlessly stunning. On the work front, Nidhhi was last seen in The Raja Saab, which unfortunately failed to make an impact at the box office. Despite maintaining a strong presence on social media with glamorous photoshoots, the actress currently has no officially announced upcoming film projects, leaving fans waiting for news of her next big screen appearance.



Sai Rajesh's Involvement Raises Expectations for Chennai Love Story

Chennai Love Story emotional content has gained audience curiosity. Makers promising a classic love story. The censor report and positive buzz, strengthening confidence ahead of its July 24 theatrical release. Starring Kiran Abbavaram and Sri Gouri Priya under the direction of Ravi Namburii, Chennai Love Story features music by Mani Sharma.

The biggest driving force behind the project is brilliant writer and director Sai Rajesh, whose contribution spans story, screenplay and production. After winning the national award with Colour Photo and Baby, Sai Rajesh chose to personally produce Chennai Love Story to preserve the emotional depth and authenticity of the narrative he envisioned.

His multi-faceted involvement has become one of the film's strongest selling points. Producer SKN also pushed the vision to the next level. Sai Rajesh has also remained deeply invested in promoting the film. He has travelled extensively with the team, participated in promotional events, interacted with audiences and supported every stage of the campaign.

His active presence has amplified interest in the film, with many viewers expecting another emotionally impactful romantic drama from the filmmaker known for creating memorable love stories.

Positive word from the censor board, an encouraging response to the trailer and songs, and Sai Rajesh's reputation for



emotionally resonant storytelling have together positioned the film as one of the

notable romantic releases of the season. Grand premieres Tomorrow, July 23rd.

Gayatri Bharadwaj Oozes Elegance In Little Black Dress



Gayatri Bharadwaj is keeping the spotlight firmly on her as she gears up for the release of her much-awaited film Cult. The actress dropped a fresh set of pictures on social media, striking a relaxed yet sultry pose lounging on a beige couch. Dressed in a fitted black spaghetti-strap dress that hugged her figure perfectly, she let her tousled waves and a subtle collarbone tattoo do the rest of the talking, keeping her makeup soft with a nude-toned glam. Gayatri has a lot riding on Cult, India's first slasher film, directed by and starring Vishwak Sen, which draws inspiration from real events in Vietnam and follows a deadly survival game at a Goa party. The film comes after a rocky patch for the actress, whose last two Telugu outings, Tiger Nageswara Rao and Buddy, both failed to click at the box office, making Cult a crucial one for her career.

Nolan Effect: Housefull Board For Next Few Months!



Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey has unprecedented craze for Real IMAX 70mm screenings across the world. While IMAX theatres are available in many countries, the true 70mm IMAX experience is limited to just 41 screens globally. Out of these 41 screens, 26 are located in the United States, while the remaining theatres are spread across countries including the UK, Australia, the Czech Republic and a few others. India has IMAX screens, but none of them support the 70mm IMAX format. Film lovers say Nolan's latest epic is best experienced in Real IMAX 70mm, as it was designed to take full advantage of the format's larger aspect ratio and immersive visuals. That has led to an overwhelming demand from moviegoers. The rush has become so intense that most Real IMAX 70mm theatres in the US are sold out for weeks, with several venues fully booked for nearly two months. Similar demand is being seen in other countries as well, with some theatres in London reportedly having no tickets available until September. To accommodate the huge demand, theatres are running back to back screenings from early morning until after midnight. Even with extended show schedules, tickets continue to disappear within minutes, highlighting the extraordinary global excitement surrounding The Odyssey and the rare Real IMAX 70mm experience.

Krishna's throwback remark on Mahesh Babu and Rajamouli's Varanasi

Even years after his passing, legendary actor Superstar Krishna's words about his son Mahesh Babu continue to resonate with fans, especially as "Varanasi", directed by SS Rajamouli, generates massive anticipation. Long before the film went on floors, Krishna was aware that Rajamouli and Mahesh Babu were collaborating on a globe-trotting adventure inspired by the spirit of Indiana Jones. During an interview, he was asked whether Mahesh would suit such a rugged, adventurous look.

Krishna's response reflected his complete confidence in his son's versatility. "Mahesh Babu can suit any getup and any role, whether it's an Indiana Jones-style adventurer or even Lord Rama," he implied.

His remarks have gained renewed relevance as "Varanasi" features Mahesh Babu in dual roles: an adventurer named Rudra and Lord Rama from the Ramayana era.



In the same interview, Krishna recalled an interesting prediction made by veteran filmmaker Doondi, who produced the spy thriller "Goodachari 116." After watching Mahesh Babu as a child actor in "Poratam" (1983), Doondi reportedly predicted that the youngster would one day become one of Telugu cinema's biggest stars. Krishna also said it became

evident during Mahesh Babu's childhood itself that he possessed the qualities of a future superstar. Although Krishna had expressed a desire to see Mahesh remake one of his own classic films, that wish remained unfulfilled. Mahesh Babu has consistently maintained that he does not believe in remaking films, choosing instead to focus on original stories.