

EYE SECRETS

Spy in every blink

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Two devotees die of suffocation in Puri during Rath Yatra



Bhubaneswar, July 16

: Two devotees are feared dead and several others injured following an incident during the Rath Yatra in Odisha's pilgrim city of Puri on Thursday evening. While initial reports suggested that the incident may have been caused by overcrowding or a stampede-like situation, the state government denied any stampede and said the deaths occurred due to "suffocation".

However, there was no immediate official confirmation regarding the exact number of casualties or injuries.

One of the deceased was identified as Anant Chandra Dash (35), a resident of Shirilonabagram in

Cuttack district.

The injured devotees were admitted to the Puri District Headquarters Hospital, where medical teams attended to them. At least 20 persons were reported to be in critical condition.

Speaking about the incident, law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi had directed Health Minister Dr Mukesh Mahaling to visit the hospital and ensure all necessary arrangements for the treatment of the injured.

The Health Minister later visited the hospital and reviewed the medical arrangements. He ruled out reports of deaths due to a stampede and said the casualties were caused by "suffocation."

CM Revanth To Review Drought, Irrigation Measures

Hyderabad, July 16

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will chair a state Cabinet meeting at the Secretariat on Friday, with irrigation projects, drought management and measures to tackle the impact of the prevailing El Niño conditions expected to dominate the agenda. The meeting comes as Telangana faces a severe rainfall deficit, dwindling reservoir storage and falling groundwater levels.

Official sources said the Cabinet will deliberate on strategies to meet irrigation and drinking water requirements amid poor storage in reservoirs and rapidly depleting groundwater. It is also expected to consider long-pending proposals for revising the cost estimates of several key irrigation projects.

Among the proposals are revised cost estimates for Packages 7, 11, 15 and 17 of the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, the final revision of estimates for the J. Chokka Rao Devadula Lift Irrigation Scheme and enhancement of the storage capacity of the Gattu Reservoir. These proposals have remained pending after the finance department raised objections, delaying Cabinet approval and the implementation of assurances made by the Chief Minister during his recent visit to irrigation projects in the erstwhile Mahbubnagar district.

The issue figured prominently at the previous Cabinet meeting on July 2, when irrigation min-



ister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy reportedly expressed displeasure over the delay in clearing irrigation proposals. Following his objections, the Chief Minister assured that all pending irrigation proposals would be taken up as the first agenda item at the next Cabinet meeting.

Following the Chief Minister's directions, the finance department is understood to have sought detailed clarifications from the irrigation department before clearing the revised estimates.

The Cabinet is also expected to discuss the government's strategy to counter allegations by BRS leaders that the Congress government has failed to lift Godavari waters through the Kaleshwaram and Devadula projects.

Apart from irrigation, the Cabinet is likely to finalise an agriculture contingency plan for the on-going kharif season in

view of drought-like conditions. Telangana has recorded a severe monsoon deficit, with only five districts receiving normal rainfall between June 1 and July 14, while 27 districts reported deficient rainfall and one district fell under the "large deficit" category.

The deteriorating groundwater situation is also expected to come up for review. Average groundwater levels declined in 18 districts in June 2026 compared with the corresponding period last year and are projected to fall further if rainfall remains about 30 per cent below normal through August.

The Cabinet is expected to approve measures to reduce the impact of drought by encouraging farmers to shift to less water-intensive crops, avoid expanding water-intensive cultivation, adopt short-duration and drought-tolerant crop varieties, diversify into

pulses, oilseeds and millets, and promote rainwater harvesting.

The package is also expected to include district-wise contingency crop recommendations, crop management practices to mitigate the impact of El Niño and farmer advisories tailored to local conditions.

The meeting comes amid a sharp decline in water availability across Telangana. Storage in major, medium and minor irrigation reservoirs has fallen to, or is close to, the Minimum Draw Down Level (MDDL). Reservoirs in the Godavari basin currently hold only 27.69 tmc ft of utilisable storage, while those in the Krishna basin have just 14.81 tmc ft. Officials said the available live storage is sufficient mainly for drinking water needs, leaving little scope for irrigation releases unless substantial inflows are received during the remaining monsoon period.

Govt issues monsoon session agenda, delimitation Bill not listed

NEW DELHI, JULY 16

Ahead of the monsoon session of Parliament commencing on Monday, the government on Thursday issued the legislative agenda, which lists several major Bills but excluding the 131st Constitution Amendment Bill, 2026, which seeks to link delimitation with women's reservation.

The delimitation Bill can, however, be brought at any time should the government manage the two-thirds majority it needs in the Lok Sabha to pass it.

Among the key legislations listed is the Foreign Contribution Regulation Amendment Bill, 2026, which seeks to tighten regulations on NGOs receiving foreign funding. The Bill gives government powers to seize foreign funds and physical assets of NGOs if an organisation fails to comply with licensing and regulatory norms.

Also listed is a Bill to amend the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, which seeks to make the insult and obstruction of the singing of national song "Vande Mataram" a punishable offence.

The Income Tax Amendment Bill, 2026, listed in the legislative business will replace the IT Amendment Ordinance, 2026, promulgated by the President on June 5. This ordinance fully exempted foreign portfolio investors from income tax payments on interest and capital gains earned from government securities.

"The Bill seeks to deepen India's sovereign debt market, attract stable global capital inflows and enhance liquidity amid the prevailing global macro economic environment, marked by significant volatility arising from geopolitical uncertainties and sharp increases, including oil prices and disruptions in global



supply chains," the government said.

Yet another controversial Bill to be taken up is the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, which seeks to create a uniform higher education regulator subsuming the UGC and the AICTE.

The Supreme Court Number of Judges Amendment Bill, 2026, which seeks to increase the number of judges from 33 to 37 excluding the CJI, has also been listed.

The Foreign Contribution Regulation Amendment Bill; the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Amendment Bill; the Registration of Births and Deaths Amendment Bill; the Supreme Court Number of Judges Amendment Bill; the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill-2025; the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Amendment Bill; and the IT Amendment Bill.

ister despite the importance of safeguarding the education system. It further questions why the Home portfolio continues to remain with the Chief Minister instead of a separate Home Minister, expressing concern over law and order and the government's handling of sensitive issues." "The statement alleges that the state government is pursuing policies of religious appeasement while failing to address repeated complaints concerning educational institutions. It further claims that if allegations of religious indoctrination and conversion activities involving Success School are found to be true, those responsible should be held accountable." "Bhagyanagar District President Niranjana Yadav has demanded that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy order a thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations concerning Success School and ensure that educational institutions remain free from any form of religious indoctrination or coercion.



Drug case against BRS MLC's son

Hyderabad: The Mangalhat police registered a case against Bharat Raj (A5), the son of former IAS officer and BRS MLC P Venkatrama Reddy, in connection with a drugs case. This followed the alleged confession by two detained persons that they consumed and shared narcotic drugs with Bharat Raj.

An FIR under Sections 8(c) read with 20(b)(ii)(A) and 27(b) of the NDPS Act has been registered against Bharat Raj at the police station.

According to the police, based on credible information, a raid was conducted at a house in Purana Pul, Hyderabad. During the search, police found Abhishek Yande and Bottu Yuvaneeth inside the house.

They seized 24 grams of hash sachets, 22 grams of ganja, two mobile phones and two weighing machines. During questioning, police said Abhishek allegedly confessed that he procured hash sachet from Manoj of Manala village in Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh, and ganja from Tulja Singh of Dhoolpet, Hyderabad.



He allegedly stated that he used to consume the drugs and share them with his friends, including Bharat Raj, Khoushik, Sugandhi alias Kunal and Subham Soni.

Police further stated that Yuvaneeth allegedly confessed that he had the habit of consuming ganja and hash oil and used to collect the drugs from Abhishek

Telangana CM's gunman dies in accident in Gajwel

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's gunman, Kiran, died in an accident in Gajwel on Tuesday, July 14.

Kiran, 35, was a 2009 batch constable and a native of Siddipet district. He was serving in the Intelligence Security Wing in Hyderabad.

The accident occurred when he was travelling from Siddipet to Hyderabad. As he reached Gajwel, his car rammed into a stationary lorry, leaving him dead on the spot.

After being alerted, the Gajwel Police arrived at the spot and shifted the body for a postmortem.



Success School Under Fire Over Alleged Religious Indoctrination of Primary Students; Protest Leader Detained After Raising Concerns

"HYDERABAD: Success School, located on Saidabad Main Road in Bhagyanagar district, has come under scrutiny following allegations that its management has been systematically promoting religious influence and encouraging the alleged conversion of Hindu students, particularly those in the primary section, over the past several months." "The controversy intensified after Bhagyanagar District President Niranjana Yadav publicly questioned the school's alleged practices. According to the statement, police allegedly placed him under house arrest before forcibly detaining him and taking him to Madannapet Police Station. The action has been condemned by supporters as an attempt to silence those raising concerns over the allegations against Success School." "The statement also criticizes the Telangana government for not appointing a dedicated Education Min-

EYE SECRETS
Editorial

Why Singeetham deserves
Dadasaheb Phalke Award

An American poet and author once famously noted: "Creativity is the language we use to communicate the urgency of our dreams for a better future".It aptly reflects the remarkable record-breaking feat of the 94-year-old Telugu and Indian filmmaker Singeetham Srinivasa Rao, who has just released his 61st film, Sing Geetham (a pun on his surname). The film is a one-of-a-kind musical, the first of its kind in Telugu cinema, and arguably in Indian cinema, demonstrating his unending passion and enthusiasm to realise a dream he had nurtured for more than 40 years.The life of Singeetham, the son of a school headmaster from Gudur, Andhra Pradesh, is an inspiring journey — from a young physics graduate at Presidency College to a legendary filmmaker who consistently pushed the boundaries of storytelling with innovative ideas and scripts in every film he directed.

The cultural theory of Stuart Hall suggests that culture is not a fixed entity but a 'fluid' process that interacts with its geography and people and responds to changing social realities. Indian cinema, however, has traditionally focused on the commercial viability of films and the star system associated with them. As a result, innovative storytelling takes a back seat.It is in this context that Singeetham Srinivasa Rao stands out as a rare filmmaker who successfully married art and commerce in mainstream Indian cinema.Coming from the Telugu cinema industry, currently India's biggest filmmaking industry, Singeetham made bold creative choices. He explored diverse genres, pioneered several, and remained contemporary by keeping pace with the evolving global cinematic landscape.

Singeetham started as an assistant to legendary Telugu filmmaker KV Reddy in 1954, and soon became his associate during the making of classics such as Mayabazaar (1957) and Jagadekaveeruni Katha (1961).The choices Singeetham made later in his career were directly influenced by his apprenticeship under KV Reddy. His mentor effortlessly moved across genres — directing the social drama Donga Ramudu (1955), the mythological classic Mayabazar (1957), the family drama Pellinaati Pramanalu (1958), the folklore fantasy Jagadekaveeruni Katha (1961), and the mythological Sri Krishnarjuna Yuddhamu (1963), among others.With the release of Sing Geetham, his 61st film, the veteran filmmaker further cements his legacy as one of India's greatest cinematic visionaries after more than seven decades of pioneering filmmaking When Singeetham made his directorial debut with Neeti Nijayiti in 1972, he chose an unconventional story about a wealthy mute man manipulated by his elder brother and a young woman who reforms and empowers him. At a time when heroes were celebrated for their lengthy dialogues and larger-than-life personas, this was an extraordinary creative decision.His decision to place a strong woman at the centre of the narrative became a recurring feature of his work. All his movies portray independent women, whether professionals or homemakers.Singeetham ventured into Tamil cinema with another bold choice — adapting Dikkatra Parvati, the novel by statesman and writer C Rajagopalachari. The film narrates the story of a village woman and her struggles with an alcoholic husband. It earned him his first National Film Award in 1974 for Best Tamil Feature Film and introduced him to Tamil cinema, where he later collaborated extensively with actor Kamal Haasan across several genres.

Cooling failure in
Mumbai AC local leaves
commuters gasping during
rush hour; one hospitalised

A cooling system failure on a Mumbai AC local train at Mulund left passengers gasping for breath during rush hour.A cooling system failure on a Mumbai AC local train at Mulund left passengers gasping for breath during rush hour.Passengers aboard a crowded AC local train struggled to breathe after a technical failure shut down the cooling system while the train remained halted at Mulund station during Monday morning's peak rush, forcing one commuter to be hospitalised.The incident occurred around 9.26 am, when the 8.33 am Titwala-CSMT AC local developed a fault in its air-conditioning system while standing at Platform 2 of Mulund station. The cooling system stopped working for nearly 15 minutes, causing temperatures inside the packed coaches to rise rapidly.Unlike non-AC local trains, the doors of AC locals remain locked through an automatic door-closing system and cannot be opened manually by passengers. With the cooling system shut down, ventilation inside the coaches was severely affected, leaving commuters struggling to breathe.According to railway officials, three passengers complained of breathing difficulties and sought medical assistance.One commuter, identified as Fahim Ansari, was shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment, while the other



two recovered and continued their journeys. Videos shared on social media showed railway personnel and fellow commuters assisting affected passengers after the train reached the platform.Officials said the rake was withdrawn from service after it reached Kurla station. The AC local was subsequently sent to the workshop for repairs after an air-conditioning fault was detected. Two scheduled services operated by the same rake were cancelled.The incident is not unprecedented. In 2018, an air-conditioning malfunction on a Borivali-Churchgate AC local left commuters sweating profusely and complaining of suffocation. Western Railway had then attributed the problem to a technical glitch and carried out restoration work on the rake.The latest incident has once again raised concerns over the reliability of Mumbai's AC suburban train services, particularly during peak hours when packed coaches rely entirely on functioning air-conditioning systems for ventilation.Railway officials said the cause of Monday's malfunction is being examined.

Farmers protest in Morbi
against Adani power project



Farmers in Morbi have announced a padyatra on July 14 as part of their ongoing protest at Jetpar village against installation of 756 kV D/c line by Halvad Transmission Limited, a special purpose vehicle of Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) – the country's largest private-sector power transmission and distribution company — from Khavda in Kutch to Halvad in Morbi across a length of 246 km.People from across Gujarat will participate in the 3.5 km foot march, to be flagged off at 9 am from Mahendranagar Chokdi and concluded at the Collector office in Morbi at noon.

"We will hold the padyatra against the state government's latest resolution which is anti-farmers and a strategy to divide the farmers," Vaibhav Amrutiya, one of the protesting Jetpar farmers, told The Indian Express.The farmers will submit a representation to the Morbi Collector, raising their objections to the Government Resolution (GR) issued on July 4.As reported by The Indian Express on July 7, the farmers are unhappy with the state government resolution. Though the farmers called off their fast, they announced the stage-3 of the protest, what they called 'satyagrah'.Following the GR issued on July 4 that has 'superseded' the provisions of all the resolutions issued earlier by the state government regarding compensation for damage caused to land and crops during the laying of transmission lines and transmission towers, the farmers said that they would continue their protest demanding clarity on these guidelines.While the first phase was a symbolic fast that started on June 7, the farmers started the stage 2 of the protest on June 17 with the indefinite hunger strike. The 'part 3' of the protest, 'satyagrah', will be launched in a "planned manner", they said."We are against the lottery system which the state government has

Bomb hoaxes, gripe about cops'
'plight', a probe stalled over VPN



More than three months after the Regional Passport Office in Baner received two bomb threats by email—one claiming to draw attention to the "humiliation" of constables in Tamil Nadu—the Pune city police have failed to get any clues about their origin because the senders used a virtual private network (VPN) to hide their identities.As per police records, the first threat message was received on the official email address of the Regional Passport Office at around 10.07 am on February 26. The message sent from sunniya_dasan@outlook.com stated that "Tamil Nadu Constables are being forced to clean their clothes and dirty utensils" of an actress and "concubines" of a political party in the state, due to which "many have experienced humiliation and diarrhoea".

"Therefore, the former Q branch members of Azad Kashmir Pak ISI cells" operating in Mysuru have targeted the Passport Office "to make a statement against this practice and to implement the recommendations of the Nainar Das Police Union of 1979 in Tamil Nadu for the constables. We have no other way to hear our demands, sorry," it added.The email further stated that "19 RDX IEDs made

introduced to decide the market price of the land. A farmer can never be benefitted from a lottery system. Also, when the compensation for the tower has been revised, why not the 'Right of Way' for the cables which remains 30, 45 and 60 per cent. In this case, a farmer, whose land is used for laying cables, will be at a major loss," Vaibhav Amrutiya had told this paper.Already, discussions with farmers from village till taluka, district and state level have been started to formalise the demands. Farmers and sarpanches from 12 districts including Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and Vadodara met at Jetpar village on July 9 to decide the future course of action.Farmers' committees will be formed at the district, taluka and gram panchayat levels and after that, the demands will be decided, they said.The farmers warned that if they are not given adequate compensation for the electricity poles and cables being installed on their land, they will not hesitate to vote against the BJP in the coming elections.

The Government Resolution issued by the Energy and Petroleum Department on July 4 states that the final market price will be determined by the Market Rate Committee (MRC) based on the 'reference market rate' as well as a 'lottery system'. Under the process, evaluators have to submit reports in a sealed cover directly to the District Collector within 21 days of their appointment by the committee. After receiving all three reports — one by the land-owners' representative, one by the TSP (Transmission service provider) and one by the District Collector — two reports will be opened by the District Collector after selecting them through a 'lottery system'.For the valuation of the land, the committee will appoint land valuers who are empanelled by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) — 'desirable' that these valuers should be primarily state valuers. Three valuers will be appointed on the day of the committee meeting itself.As per the new guidelines, the 'method' laid down for determining the 'Reference Market Rate' states that if the difference in the market rates determined by the two selected valuers is less than 20 per cent of the lower value, the average value of both the valuations will be considered as the reference market rate.In the second case, if the difference between the two is more than 20 per cent, the reference market rate can be fixed at 10 per cent more than the lower valuation. "Only if this is not acceptable, the sealed report of the third valuer shall be opened and the reference market rate shall be finalised by taking the average of the two lowest valuations," the guidelines state.

using c-4 RDX" were planted at important places in the passport office and would explode during lunchtime. "....The IED will automatically detonate when the ex-Tamil Nadu policeman-Pakistan ISI members carrying remote control" would trigger it within 100 feet of the premises and "if for some reason, they do not activate, the members themselves will come inside the building and blow themselves up along with all the staff like in the Sri Lankan Easter suicide operation".The email also mentioned "Tamil Nadu Retrieval Troops-Khalistan Tigers" along with the name of a Tamil film producer. The police said the email's content was "irrelevant" and had nothing to do with anybody at the passport office.The passport office received a second email threat, from sourav_biswas21@hotmail.com, on March 20. It stated that "19 Cyanide gas bombs were placed in the wash-room of the passport office and they would explode at 2.18 pm".After receiving the threat emails, the passport office immediately contacted the police, who, along with a bomb detection and disposal squad, checked the premises thoroughly. Nothing suspicious was found, but the bomb hoaxes disturbed work at the passport office.The police launched an investigation against unidentified people on charges including endangering life or personal safety, criminal intimidation, and statements conducing to public mischief causing fear.Senior Police Inspector Chandrashekhar Sawant said, "The probe revealed that a VPN was used for sending the bomb hoax messages through emails. There are no clues yet about the accused persons. The probe is underway."A police officer said a VPN hides the user's internet protocol address, making it difficult to trace the location from where they access the internet.Jatin Pote, Public Relations Officer at the Regional Passport Office, is the complainant in both cases.Passport offices at Chennai and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu and in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, also received similar bomb hoaxes this year.

Will Sharad Pawar leave the MVA?
Mixed signals unsettle NCP (SP)

Will Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (SP) remain with the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) or move closer to the BJP-led NDA? The question is no longer confined to political circles. It is now dividing the party itself, with at least half its MLAs telling the leadership they would rather join the ruling alliance than remain in the opposition, according to senior party leaders.The pressure is being driven as much by governance as by politics. According to party sources, at least five of the party's 10 MLAs have argued that joining the NDA would make it easier to secure development funds and administrative approvals for their constituencies. For them, the issue is increasingly administrative rather than ideological.

"The meetings and talks are happening almost on a daily basis. At least five MLAs have told the leadership that instead of merging with the Congress or staying within the opposition front, it is better to join hands with the NDA," a senior leader said.Several legislators, sources said, have also expressed frustration over what they describe as the party's inconsistent political positioning."Sometimes we abstain from voting or sometimes we don't oppose the government on several issues. It is better to take a stand of joining the ruling alliance instead of staying within the opposition," another MLA said.Sharad Pawar has so far remained silent on the speculation and, according to party leaders, has not convened any formal meeting to discuss the party's future political course. His daughter and Lok Sabha MP Supriya Sule has stopped short of either ruling out or endorsing the possibility of joining the NDA. Senior leader Jayant Patil, meanwhile, has told colleagues in informal meetings that at least half the party's MLAs are

inclined towards joining the ruling alliance.The debate intensified after six Lok Sabha MPs from Shiv Sena (UBT) joined the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, citing easier access to government approvals and development funds for their constituencies as one of the reasons for their decision. Their move triggered speculation that the NCP (SP) could instead explore a merger with the Congress to prevent further erosion of its organisation and legislative strength.Congress leaders in Maharashtra, however, are learnt to have advised the party high command against a formal merger, favouring instead the induction of individual leaders willing to join the Congress.Although the NCP (SP), with 10 MLAs in the Assembly and eight Lok Sabha MPs, is the smallest among Maharashtra's six major political parties, its parliamentary strength has assumed significance at a time when the BJP-led NDA is looking to bolster its numbers ahead of key legislation, including the proposed delimitation Bill. Party leaders believe the NDA would be open to support from smaller parties such as the NCP (SP).A series of political meetings over the past few days has only fuelled the speculation.During his visit to the legislature to attend a high-power committee meeting on the Maharashtra-Karnataka border dispute, Sharad Pawar made an unscheduled visit to Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's office. Shinde left the ongoing Cabinet meeting to receive him.Days later, senior NCP (SP) leader Jayant Patil met BJP Rajya Sabha MP Vinod Tawde. That was followed by a meeting between NCP (SP) MLC Eknath Khadse and Tawde, after which Khadse also met Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray.

New Karnataka High Court
building: State to allocate
Bangalore Turf Club land



The state government Monday informed the Karnataka High Court that it will soon pass a resolution allocating Bangalore Turf Club land for the construction of a new high court building.Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty informed the high court about the government's decision orally during the hearing of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by one Sharan Desai, who sought a direction to the state government to grant 30 or more acres of land in Bengaluru, for the construction of a new high court building complex.

During the hearing, a division bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice K S Hemalekha permitted the request made by Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty to relist the matter after a month so that he could place on record further details.The bench on the previous hearing had orally observed that the building to be constructed should be able to cater to the needs for at least the next 30 to 50 years. The bench has now posted the matter for further hearing on August 28.In February, the Karnataka Cabinet had approved leasing 110 acres and 20 guntas of land at Kunigal Stud Farm near Tumakuru to the Bangalore Turf Club for 29 years to conduct horse racing.A petition has been filed challenging the proposed shift. The high court had earlier issued notice on the petition and sought the state government's response.The petition was filed by urban conservationist Vijay Nishanth, claiming that the impugned order of shifting is vitiated by the complete non-application of the Environment Impact Assessment notification, 2006.On October 26 last year, Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who was then deputy chief minister, had said during a citizen outreach event held at Cubbon Park that the Karnataka government was exploring the possibility of relocating the high court to a new and larger site. The present building where the high court is functioning is called 'Attara Kacheri' and is located inside the lawns of Cubbon Park, opposite Vidhana Soudha, which houses the State Legislature, and the Secretariat.The Attara Kacheri originally comprised the general and revenue secretariat of the erstwhile Mysore state. It was renamed as the High Court of Mysore in 1929. The administrative offices of the state also functioned in the Attara Kacheri till 1956, when they were shifted to Vidhana Soudha.

KPSCchairman
Shivashankarappa Sahukar
suspended over illegal
selection of daughters



A statement issued by Lok Bhavan said Sahukar "failed to recuse himself or formally declare a conflict of interest while his dependents participated in the KPSC selection process."

Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot suspended the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) Chairman, Shivashankarappa S Sahukar, Monday, following allegations that he facilitated the unlawful selection of his two daughters for government posts and failed to disclose a conflict of interest.A statement issued by Lok Bhavan said Sahukar "failed to recuse himself or formally declare a conflict of interest while his dependents participated in the KPSC selection process."

According to complaints received by the Governor, Sahukar facilitated the illegal selection of his daughters to the posts of Industrial Extension Officer."One of the daughters of the Chairman has obtained the income and caste certificate by declaring the family income of Rs 40,000 per annum. This evidence indicates that the Chairman's daughter has claimed OBC Reservation and Creamy Layer exemption by deliberate suppression of facts and using manipulated lower-income declarations in spite of having income more than the prescribed limit and knowing that his father is working as the Chairman of the Commission," Governor said.

The statement also noted that, as per a 2002 government order, the children of the KPSC chairman are not eligible to claim a reservation under the backward classes quota. "In spite of this restriction, the Chairman and his daughters have suppressed the vital information to get undue benefit, which is an act impossible without administrative oversight or deliberate blindness by the head of the Commission," it said.

The Governor's office noted that the income and property returns submitted by Sahukar, along with other facts, point to the chairman of KPSC with some certainty, adding that this constituted misbehaviour."Hence, the Hon'ble Governor has recommended to the President of India to make reference to the Supreme Court of India under Article 371(1)of the Constitution of India for necessary inquiry into the allegations made" against the KPSC chairman. The Governor suspended the chairman to ensure a fair, impartial and uninfluenced investigation. "The Governor has ordered that the next senior-most member of the Commission act as Chairman, KPSC, until further orders," the release said.Last Friday, a First Information Report (FIR)

North Chennai residents, experts to propose alternatives to waste-to-energy plant in Kodungaiyur



As the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) advances the ₹1,268.38 crore Integrated Solid Waste Processing Facility (IWPF) in Kodungaiyur, residents of North Chennai have roped in experts to propose alternatives to the Waste-to-Energy (WtE) plant planned for the area. Residents, under the aegis of the Federation of North Chennai Residents' Welfare Associations, have opposed the project since its proposal. T.K. Shanmugam, president of the federation, stated that during a recent meeting with Chennai Mayor R. Priya, she said the project could not be scrapped. "She asked us to propose alternative plans and mentioned that, if a suitable and less invasive plan is developed in consultation with experts, it could be considered," he said. Alternative proposal D.K. Chythenyen of the Centre for Financial Accountability (CFA) has confirmed that the CFA is preparing a proposal for an alternative.

He noted that a study is being drafted in consultation with experts who have worked with the Kerala government on decentralised waste management. The alternative model under preparation includes zero-waste strategies, such as biomethanation and enhanced public participation in waste segregation. The first draft is currently under preparation. Carnatic singer T.M. Krishna at a signature campaign organised by the Federation of North Chennai Residents, demanding the scrapping of the Kodungaiyur incinerator project in May 2025. Carnatic singer T.M. Krishna at a signature campaign organised by the Federation of North Chennai Residents, demanding the scrapping of the Kodungaiyur incinerator project in May 2025 | Photo Credit: B. Jothi Ramalingam. According to another expert involved in developing alternative proposals, cities that work in partnership with communities are implementing cost-effective methods, biomethanation, composting, recycling, and proven combinations of less-invasive approaches that function effectively upto the Panchayat level. For example, in the Philippines, 90% of waste is reportedly managed through recycling and composting, with only 10% sent to landfills. These systems employ significant manpower, thereby generating local employment. Similar decentralised models have also been documented in India, the expert added. Gaps flagged in Delhi incinerator

When does the gender gap emerge with respect to mathematical abilities?

Across the world, women are under-represented in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Their absence has consequences: it narrows perspectives in STEM, potentially hinders progress in research, and perpetuates gender differences at the workplace. This inequality stands in stark contrast to the fact that boys and girls begin school with the same mathematical abilities. A gender gap begins to emerge only after boys and girls start learning the subject formally in school, that is, during the first year. These are the findings of a study published recently in Nature by researchers in France. Understanding this data and the underlying reasons are crucial as they can help policymakers intervene at the right time and in the right ways to narrow the gap. Findings of the study

In the past, educationists, economists, sociologists, psychologists, and others have conducted several studies. One study in the U.S. showed that a maths gender gap favouring boys emerged within the first few years of schooling. Another study that followed 2,633 children in France found that a maths gender gap was absent in kindergarten but became favourable to boys by ages 7-8. The latest study in Nature reinforces what other studies have found in the past, but by using "an exceptionally large and exhaustive dataset," according to the researchers. The researchers studied 26.53 lakh children aged 5-7 years in France over four years. They analysed four consecutive cohorts from 2018 to 2022. All these children took the EvalAide, a nationwide battery of tests given to first and second grade students to assess their language and maths abilities. When boys and girls entered school, their average maths performance was nearly identical in 2018. There were more boys clustered among the top and bottom performers. However, just after four months of schooling, the researchers found a small but highly significant gap emerging, which favoured boys. By the next year, there were twice as many boys as girls among the top 5% of performers. Importantly, this gap was found in every cohort across the four consecutive years. This meant that it was not due to any specific societal, economic, or curricular changes in a particular year. The gap was found in each region of France, in schools serving communities at both high and low socio-economical levels, in private as well as public schools, and regardless of family composition.

Curiously, the gap between boys and girls was wider if the children were from high-income families — a phenomenon not found for language. It was also larger among high-income families where both parents held scientific occupations. Analysing the gender gap. Since the children had similar abilities when they started formal education, we can conclude from the data that the gap is not related to any fundamental gender differences in aptitudes. So what explains the gap? First, a few caveats. Researchers write that since the data is descriptive in nature, it can't be used to pin down causes. Second, a study conducted at intervals prevents any evaluation of the potentially continuous effect of school exposure or the effect of vacations. Third, the tests were not strictly identical at all points of time during the study. Fourth, the data is limited to one country. Nevertheless, they offer some explanations consistent with their findings. Maths problems are solved in a particular time frame and in a competitive setting, and these are conditions that girls are taught to fear. Their consequent anxiety could be exacerbating the gap. The researchers say this explanation is congruent with their finding that greater test difficulty enhances the gender gap.

Earlier, the CFA had authored a related study on WtE operations in Delhi. It had said Delhi currently operates four WtE plants, located at Okhla, Ghazipur, Bawana, and Tehkhand. These facilities incinerate a total of 7,250 ton of municipal solid waste (MSW) per day, amounting to 66% of the city's daily waste. By 2027, authorities plan to increase WtE capacity to handle 14,250 ton per day, it had stated. According to this study, the combustion process in WtEs releases residual heat into the environment through multiple pathways, including flue gas, hot bottom ash, condensers, and storage pits. Each ton of incinerated waste produces around 5,500 cubic metres of flue gas at 200°C. Collectively, the four plants emit an estimated 3,98,75,000 cubic metres of flue gas and 12,325 ton of CO2 daily. Residents under the Federation of North Chennai Residents Association form a human chain at Kodungaiyur in May 2025

The report also noted that, as per Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data submitted to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in April 2025, regular monitoring of WtEs had not occurred between 2020 and 2024, with sampling outsourced and infrequent. Opposition continues. In a letter dated June 23, 2025, to the GCC, the Federation of Residents Welfare Associations stated that the current dump yard at Kodungaiyur is situated within an 'Institutional Use Zone', as defined in the Second Master Plan for Chennai Metropolitan Area, 2026. Referring to Development Regulation No. 19, the association noted that the dumping and storage of waste in this zone is a prohibited activity and urged for the immediate removal of the dump yard. The letter further highlighted that continued operations at the site have resulted in "severe respiratory, cancerous and innumerable irretrievable diseases" among the local population, composed largely of wage-earners and those living below the poverty line. Residents under the Federation of North Chennai Residents Association form a human chain at Kodungaiyur in May 2025. Residents under the Federation of North Chennai Residents Association form a human chain at Kodungaiyur in May 2025 | Photo Credit: B. Jothi Ramalingam. "No plans to scrap project" A senior official from the GCC's Solid Waste Management Department, meanwhile, confirmed that there were no plans to scrap the WtE project. The GCC recently floated a tender worth ₹8.53 crore for the appointment of an independent engineer to oversee the project's implementation, including infrastructure development at the dump yard. The IWPF project is expected to come up adjacent to the Kodungaiyur dump yard, and comprises a WtE power plant, an automated material recovery facility (MRF), a composting unit, and a bio-CNG plant. The WtE and MRF units account for ₹1,026.41 crore of the total cost, while ₹142.97 crore and ₹99 crore have been allocated for the composting and bio-CNG facilities, respectively. The capital outlay for Phase I stands at ₹853.20 crore, with Phase II projected at ₹415.18 crore.



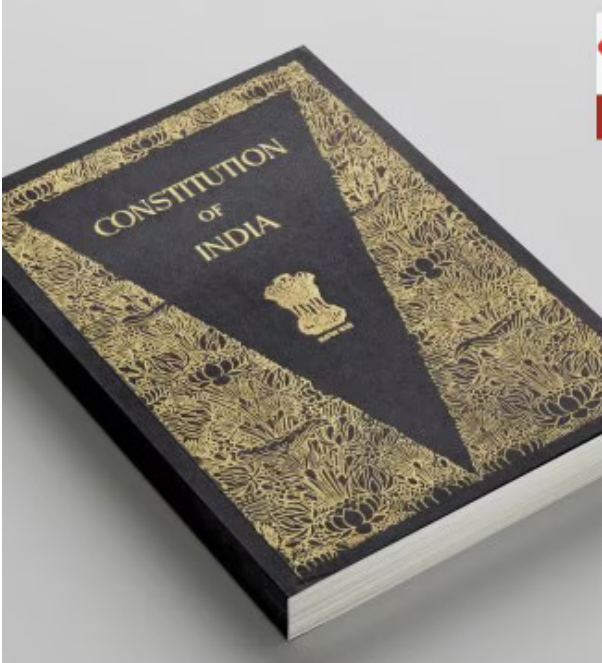
Stereotypes that boys are better at maths could also be widening the gap. The researchers write that "maths-related activities or exercises (for example, counting and subtracting) start to be more clearly identified as belonging to the maths domain" in primary school. They believe that this "sudden labelling of maths-related activities as 'maths' (whereas language activities start earlier in pre-school) might give space for gender stereotypes surrounding maths to emerge, to be internalised by children and, eventually, to affect their self-concept and performance." The attitudes of primary school teachers may be a factor as well. For example, teachers may encourage girls to read more and boys to do more division and subtraction. That is, they may attribute intellect to boys and diligence to girls. Parents may also have such assumptions about aptitudes. Suggested interventions. As the problem begins after children start schooling, the researchers believe improving teacher training will be a crucial intervention. If teachers are encouraged to question girls and boys equally often during maths and science classes, and also to focus equally on the talents and efforts of children of both genders, it could lead to improved outcomes. Also, if teacher training in maths is increased to improve their confidence and interest in this topic, it could effectively reduce the gap. This, the researchers say, is especially true of a country such as France, where most primary school teachers are female. Interventions could also be directed towards children. For boys and girls to become convinced that maths is worth the effort, they should be exposed to both male and female role models with whom they can identify. The researchers also suggest that girls should be provided with ways to cope with anxiety related to competition. They suggest implementing self-affirmation tasks. They also express belief that accentuating an incremental view of intelligence — that is, emphasising that abilities and intelligence are malleable and can be developed through effort and learning — would help. In short, it takes just a few months for a gender gap to emerge, so quick interventions could help close the gap effectively.

India's Russian crude imports hit record high in June: CREA report

New Delhi: India's imports of Russian crude oil climbed to a record high in June, even as Russia's overall oil export revenues declined amid softer global prices, according to a report by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

The report said India imported Russian crude worth EUR 4.5 billion during the month, a 34 per cent increase over May.

What makes the Indian Constitution 'secular', even without the word in the Preamble



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar on Saturday called the Emergency-era addition of expressions "socialist" and "secular" to the Constitution's Preamble a "sacrilege to the spirit of Sanatan". Leaders such as Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and RSS general secretary Dattareya Hosabale have echoed the VP's critique in recent days. The words "socialist" and "secular" were added to the Preamble through the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act of 1976, which made wholesale changes to India's founding document. While the Janata government reversed most of these changes through the 44th Amendment in 1978, the Preamble was left untouched.

The Preamble is a vision statement to the Constitution, or as the Supreme Court described in its 1961 ruling in In Re: The Berubari Union, "a key to open the mind of the makers" of the Constitution. In 1950, when the Constitution was adopted, the Preamble read: "We, the People Of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic" that would secure to all its citizens "Justice... Equality... Liberty... and Fraternity". The 42nd Amendment in 1976 changed this to "...Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic..." and added the expression "integrity" to the description of fraternity as a right, which now reads "assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation...". These were just a few of a whole host of changes made by the 42nd Amendment, which introduced the chapter on Fundamental Duties, added new Directive Principles on State Policy, diluted powers of judicial review, and froze delimitation. These changes reflected Indira Gandhi's political objectives during the Emergency, a 21-month period during which the Prime Minister ruled by decree.

* Since the 1950s, the tussle between Parliament and the judiciary had revolved around land reform: the political class saw the Court's upholding of fundamental rights, especially the right to property, as placing individual rights over collective rights of people. With Indira Gandhi taking an explicit leftward turn — she nationalised banks in 1969, abolished privy purses in 1971, and romped to victory in Lok Sabha polls later that year with "Garibi Hatao" ("End Poverty") as her campaign slogan — the inclusion of "socialist" was to indicate the Constitution's alignment with the Prime Minister's economic roadmap. As the 42nd Amendment's Statement of Objects and Reasons read, the addition was meant to "make the directive

principles more comprehensive and give them precedence over those fundamental rights which have been allowed to be relied upon to frustrate socioeconomic reforms...".* The reason for adding "secular" to the Preamble was not as explicitly spelt out. But it came at a time when the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, predecessor of the BJP, was emerging as a potent political force.

In the 1967 general elections, the Jana Sangh had won 35 seats, its best performance till then, and the Congress' tally dropped to 283. While the Congress bounced back in 1971, the Jana Sangh nonetheless remained among Indira Gandhi's foremost political opponents through the Emergency, when a number of its leaders, including Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani were jailed. "The founding fathers of our Constitution and of our country had intended Indian society to be secular and socialist... All we are doing now is to incorporate them in the Constitution itself for they rightly deserve to be mentioned there," Indira had told Lok Sabha.* The word "integrity" was brought into the Preamble at a time when Indira's political rhetoric — and justification for imposing the Emergency — centred around "forces dividing the nation". "When we talk of integrity, it is really the quality or the state of being undivided... Whereas a nation is composed of the people and the country, when we talk of the integrity of the country, we talk of... maintaining the indivisibility of the country along with the unity of the nation," then law Minister H R Gokhale had said in the Parliament while speaking on the Bill.

While symbolic, the additions to the Preamble made no substantive changes to the Constitution. As the SC had noted in Berubari Union, "[the] Preamble is not a part of the Constitution, and it has never been regarded as the source of any substantive power..." Secularism is a theme that permeates through the Constitution in several other provisions. For instance, secularism is a key facet of the right to equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution. Article 15 explicitly prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Article 16 guarantees equality of opportunity in matters of public employment. These rights against the state make the Constitution inherently secular.

This view has repeatedly been emphasised by the Supreme Court. Even before the 42nd amendment altered the Preamble, a 13-judge bench in the landmark 1973 Kesavananda Bharati ruling held that secularism is a basic feature of the Constitution that cannot be done away with. The secular character of the state, according to which the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of religion only, cannot likewise be done away with," the ruling states.

In the 1994 Bommai ruling, that dealt with Centre-State relations, the SC again upheld secularism as a basic feature of the Constitution. In another landmark ruling in 1980, Minerva Mills v Union of India, which also debated more constitutional amendments made during the Emergency, the Court recognised "socialism" was a constitutional ideal for the framers. It cited Part IV of the Constitution, which deals with Directive Principles of State Policy, a non-enforceable policy outline for the state that has several socialist ideas. "We resolved to constitute ourselves into a Socialist State which carried with it the obligation to secure to our people justice — social, economic and political. We, therefore, put part IV into our Constitution containing directive principles of State policy which specify the socialistic goal to be achieved," the ruling said. In November 2024, a two-judge Bench led by then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna dismissed writ petitions challenging the addition of "secularism" and "socialism" in the Constitution. "The additions to the Preamble have not restricted or impeded legislation or policies pursued by elected governments

Why US Supreme Court decision makes it easier for Trump to implement controversial laws

The United States Supreme Court on Friday removed a significant roadblock to President Donald Trump's controversial executive order ending birthright citizenship for immigrants. The Court, in a 6:3 opinion, limited the powers of federal judges to issue nationwide injunctions. Now their decisions will apply only to parties in a specific case they are hearing rather than universally to other similar cases. The US Supreme Court is yet to rule on the legality of Trump's executive order issued on January 20, the very first day of his second stint as President. However, it has removed protections granted by federal judges which have thus far hindered the implementation of the law. Ending birthright citizenship

A part of his larger anti-immigration policies, one of Trump's key poll promises was to end birthright citizenship for immigrants. Essentially, children born in the US to parents unlawfully present or present on temporary visas would not automatically be granted citizenship. Citizenship in the US is defined by the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution, ratified in 1868. The provision was introduced to extend citizenship to Black Americans, who had been excluded till then. It states: "All persons born or naturalised in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." The 14th Amendment also bars the state from making any laws that infringe the rights of any US citizens. These protections are similar to those in Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. Trump's executive order plays on the interpretation of the words "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" to hold that certain people — undocumented immigrants or those without legal status — are not covered by the 14th Amendment, and hence not automatically eligible for birthright citizenship. India has a unitary legal system. High Courts issue injunctions against the state but are, in some cases, limited by jurisdiction, while the SC's orders have a nationwide impact. That said, universal injunctions against non-state actors are common in certain kinds of orders, such as content takedown directions or in intellectual property disputes.

In contrast, the US legal system has a complex dual structure where both federal Courts (established under Article III of the US Constitution) and state courts (established by each state's constitution and laws) operate. The federal courts are a three-tiered system, with 94 federal District Courts, 13 Courts of Appeals over them, and at the top, the US Supreme Court. These federal courts are not limited by state jurisdiction. This is what allowed several federal district courts to immediately block the enforcement of Trump's January 20 order. On January 23 itself, a federal district judge in Washington issued a temporary restraining order, followed by a preliminary in-



junction on February 6. And those challenging the law include state governments — a collective suit by Washington, Arizona, Illinois, and Oregon got the first injunction — and advocacy groups. The US government made an appeal to the Supreme Court against relief granted in a suit filed by advocacy groups CASA de Maryland and Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project on behalf of pregnant women whose children could be denied citizenship.

Universal injunctions by federal courts have dealt a blow to several of Trump's policies — from a law requiring voter ID and proof of citizenship at the polls, freezing of federal funding to the states, to making federal funding to schools conditional on their removing all diversity and equity policies. The New York Times quoted a report by the research arm of the US Congress that currently "more than two dozen nationwide injunctions" are in place blocking Trump's policies. The White House appealed against the Maryland injunction, and the Supreme Court, which now has conservative judges (appointed by Republican Presidents) in majority, ruled in favour of Trump. The Court did this by limiting the power of federal judges to issue universal injunctions. Taking note of the argument that universal injunction "give[s] the Judiciary a powerful tool to check the Executive Branch," Justice Amy Coney Barrett said in her opinion, which is essentially the majority view in the case, that it is not for district judges to act as a check against the executive. Even when "a (federal) court concludes that the Executive Branch has acted unlawfully, the answer is not for the court to exceed its power," she wrote.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer waters down welfare cuts to quell Labour revolt



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has sharply scaled back planned welfare cuts to quell a damaging rebellion by lawmakers in his governing Labour Party. More than 100 Labour lawmakers had publicly opposed Mr. Starmer's reforms, which sought to shave 5 billion pounds (\$6.9 billion) per year off a rapidly rising welfare bill. They had argued that the plans failed to provide support for disabled people and those with long-term health conditions.

Faced with the prospect of a defeat in parliament next week — just a year after he won a landslide majority in a national election - Starmer's office confirmed that the cuts would be scaled back. "We have listened to MPs (members of parliament) who support the principle of reform but are worried about the pace of change for those already supported by the system," a spokesperson said. The reforms are set to be put to a vote in parliament on July 1. In a letter to lawmakers, work and pensions minister Liz Kendall said only new claimants would be subject to the planned tightening of eligibility for certain benefits payments. Existing recipients, some of whom had faced

China purges senior military official Miao Hua from top ruling body

China's top legislature has voted to remove senior military official Miao Hua from the Central Military Commission, its highest-level military command body, according to a statement published on Friday (June 27, 2025) by state news agency Xinhua. Miao, 69, was put under investigation for "serious violations of discipline" in November. The former political ideology chief of the People's Liberation Army was also suspended from his post. The Xinhua statement did not contain any other details, but the move marks another stage in President Xi Jinping's ongoing anti-corruption purge of China's military, in which over a dozen PLA generals and a handful of defence industry executives have been implicated.

Miao's photo had been removed from the senior leadership page of the Chinese defence ministry's website in recent weeks. He was also removed from China's national legislature for "serious violations of discipline and law," according to a communique released by the legislature last month. "The Political Work Department of the Central Military Commission held a military representative conference on March 14 this year and decided to remove Miao Hua from his position as a representative of the 14th National People's Congress," the statement said. Miao was stationed in the coastal province of Fujian when Xi worked there as a local official, according to his official biography. Mr. Xi personally elevated Miao to the Central Military Commission. Another Central Military Commission member and China's second-ranking general, He Weidong, has not been seen in public since the March 11 closing ceremony of the annual parliamentary

Brazil's outspoken First Lady is coming under fire, but she refuses to stop speaking out

In early May, an air of triumph filled a dinner in Beijing, where Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva celebrated a diplomatic victory: businessmen travelling with him said they had secured billions of dollars in investments as the veteran leader renewed his international prestige standing alongside his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping. But then Brazilian first lady Rosângela da Silva, better known as Janja, raised her hand. Although no one was expected to speak, Ms. da Silva addressed Mr. Xi, saying that Chinese social media company TikTok posed a challenge for leftists, claiming its algorithm favors right-wingers. China's President reportedly answered. The exchange was leaked to Brazilian media by the time dessert was served. Mr. Lula's government is grappling with unpopularity that has dented his credentials as the frontrunner for reelection next year. Some analysts, including members of his government, attribute this partly to his wife's perceived overstepping in what was once a ceremonial role. Ms. Janja, a 58-year-old sociologist, has drawn criticism for insulting tech billionaire Elon Musk, mocking the suicide of a pro-Jair Bolsonaro supporter and advising the President on how to use the military during the Jan. 8, 2023 riots in the capital, Brasília. Still, she insists she will speak out whenever it serves the public interest. A Datafolha poll released June 12 found that 36% of Brazilians think the first lady's actions hurt the government, while 14% say they are helpful. It was the pollster's first measure of the First Lady's approval. The same poll showed Mr. Lula with a 40% job disapproval rating, an 8 percentage point increase from October 2024. Brazil's presidency said in a statement to The Associated Press on June 20 that Ms. da Silva adheres to the Solicitor-General's office guidelines, adding that she "acts as a citizen, combining her public visibility with the experience she has built throughout her professional career in support of relevant social issues and matters of public interest." Under guidelines published by the Solicitor-General's office, the President's spouse primarily fulfills "a symbolically representative role on behalf of the president in a social, cultural, ceremonial, political or diplomatic nature." For many of her critics, this does not grant her the authority to speak as a government representative. Brazilian media have reported that government Ministers, lawmakers and staunch leftist campaigners are privately raising concerns about the First Lady being a hindrance more than an asset. These worries have skyrocketed since the incident in China — even as Mr. Lula himself has praised his wife for speaking out. "It looks like Brazil is governed by a couple," said Beatriz Rey, a political science postdoctoral and research fellow at the University of Lisbon. "When (the First Lady) says there won't be any protocols to silence her, she disrespects our democratic institutions for she has no elected office, no government position. It is not about being a

losing those benefits, would now be unaffected." Our reform principles remain; to target funding for those most in need and make sure the system is sustainable for the future to support generations to come," Kendall said. Labour lawmaker Meg Hillier, who chairs an influential parliamentary committee and had spearheaded the efforts to water down the bill, welcomed the government's move as "a good and workable compromise". U-turn

However, opponents slammed the changes as another government U-turn following a reversal in cuts to winter fuel payments and a decision to hold an inquiry into grooming gangs. The opposition Conservative Party's work and pensions policy chief, Helen Whately, said the decision was humiliating, and represented a missed opportunity to cut the welfare bill. "Starmer ducked the challenge - leaving taxpayers to pick up the bill," she said in a post on X. The government has argued that cutting the ballooning welfare budget is necessary to shore up the public finances and get more people into work. The government did not set out the cost of the change in policy. Care minister Stephen Kinnock said that details would come in the next budget, which is due in the autumn. Annual spending on incapacity and disability benefits already exceeds Britain's defence budget and is set to top 100 billion pounds by 2030, according to official forecasts, up from 65 billion pounds now. But the plans to cut payments to some of the most vulnerable in society have proven particularly painful for lawmakers in the centre-left Labour Party, which founded the state-run National Health Service and traditionally sees itself as the protector of the country's welfare state built after World War Two. Despite Starmer's concessions, one Labour lawmaker, Peter Lamb, said after learning of the changes that he would vote down the bill "alone" if necessary.



sessions in Beijing. Since then, he has not appeared at a series of high-level Politburo and military public engagements. He is the third-most powerful commander of the People's Liberation Army and is considered a close associate of President Xi Jinping, the army's commander-in-chief. China's defence ministry said in March it was "unaware" of reports he had been detained. His photo remains on the defence ministry's website. Two former Chinese Defence Ministers have been removed from the Communist Party for corruption. One of them, Li Shangfu, was suspected of corruption in military procurement, Reuters has reported. Last year, the Defence Ministry denied reports that Defence Minister Dong Jun was being probed on suspicion of corruption. Dong has continued to appear at public events, attending the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation defence ministers' meeting in Qingdao this week.



woman or a feminist. It is undue interference." Mr. Lula's first wife, Maria de Lourdes, died in 1971. His second, Marisa Leticia, died in 2017. Mr. Lula, 79, and Ms. Janja said they met in 2017 and started seeing each other frequently during the leftist leader's 580 days in jail in the city of Curitiba between 2018 and 2019. They married in 2022. Many supporters of Mr. Lula's Workers' Party partly attribute the criticism against the First Lady to misinformation and disinformation. In May, the party launched the "I am with Janja" social media campaign in her defense. But the week-long effort garnered less than 100,000 views and only a few hundred comments. "Ms. Janja is an asset because she rejuvenates Mr. Lula, everyone in the government understands that, even her critics," a Brazilian government source told the AP. "No one wants to alienate her. But many important people in Brasília, friends and allies of Mr. Lula, do understand that by overstepping she brings some of her rejection to the President." The source, who spoke under condition of anonymity for lack of authorization to speak about the matter publicly, often travels with the President and the first lady. Adriana Negreiros, a journalist who profiled the First Lady for a 2024 podcast titled "Janja," said that allies of the President who criticize her do it with extreme caution. "Ms. Janja dances, sings, speaks out, appears at official events and meetings with heads of state. She insists on being present and vocal," Ms. Negreiros said. "There's a lot of sexism and misogyny directed at her, no doubt. But not all criticism is sexist." Ms. Da Silva said she doesn't go to dinners "just to accompany" her husband. "I have common sense. I consider myself an intelligent person. So I know very well what my limits are. I'm fully aware of that," she told a podcast of daily Folha de S. Paulo. Ms. Da Silva did, however, express remorse during the same podcast for the expletive she used against Ms. Musk in 2024, once a close ally of U.S. President Donald Trump. Many of Mr. Lula's adversaries say they want the first lady to remain in the spotlight. "The more she speaks, the more she holds a microphone, the more she helps the right wing," said Nikolas Ferreira,

Telangana's medical college expansion: Built to heal, left to rot



On the otherwise quiet stretch of Road Number 4 in Telangana's Siddipet district, about 100 kilometres north of Hyderabad, one building stands out — not for its design, but for the activity it draws. Rickshaws, hatchbacks, private cars and ambulances are parked in a haphazard line along the narrow tar road. With little room for four-wheelers inside, the road outside becomes a makeshift parking lot for those visiting the Government General Hospital, Siddipet.

Step past the entrance and a rectangular lobby opens up. To the left, a queue snakes around the Outpatient Registration counter. To the right, rows of plastic chairs are packed with patients and attendants — women in saris fanning themselves, elderly men on walking sticks, young parents cradling toddlers. Though outpatient hours run from 9.30 a.m. to 2 p.m., the hallway is full by 11 a.m. Adding a splash of colour to this scene is a strip of Cherial painting across the top of the hospital walls — vivid red panels telling traditional tales, a nod to Telangana's folk art legacy. It is an oddly comforting juxtaposition: cultural flourish amid clinical fatigue.

Down the corridor is the duty doctor's room — a modest 15x8 feet, with two foldable metal beds lining opposite walls. What catches the eye isn't the squeeze, but the far wall, or the lack of it. In its place is a large corrugated metal shutter, the kind one would see fronting a kirana shop. Only two brick pillars frame it; a white ceramic washbasin clings to one side. Perched on a metal bed is a young doctor, white coat on, stethoscope around her neck. She speaks in a calm, practiced voice about juggling medical education with long government hospital shifts, her words painting a picture of exhaustion, resilience, and a system stretched thin.

"Though it is now a teaching hospital, Siddipet still runs on the infrastructure of its old identity: an area hospital with 780 beds. There is no space to add more. That is why a new 1,000-bed hospital was built nearby. But that is stuck in limbo — political disputes, budget delays, commissions. The building is ready, but has not been handed over," she says. She gestures towards what lies just five kilometres away — a gleaming new hospital building inaugurated with much fanfare by Siddipet MLA and former Health Minister T. Harish Rao in October 2023. Built adjacent to the Government Medical College, the new Government General Hospital is a sprawling, palace-like structure, strikingly similar to a high-end corporate hospital. But behind the glossy facade lies silence. One and a half years since its inauguration, the building remains non-functional, caught in bureaucratic limbo. When the first batch of medical students enrolled in 2018, they were promised an integrated campus: hospital, hostels and college, all in one place. That vision remains unrealised. What has arrived instead is a faculty crisis too big to ignore. "In some departments, there are 12 to 15 post-graduate students and only three faculty members — one professor and two assistant professors. So PGs end up doing everything: teaching, ward rounds, you name it. Recruitment has not happened. The Directorate of Medical Education keeps saying notifications will be issued, but they never do," the doctor says. She also points to a persistent safety concern — commuting after night duty. "The road to the college becomes eerie after dark. It is so unsafe that we have to ask the boys to escort us. There have been cases of women doctors being followed. It is frightening," she says.

Across Telangana's 34 government medical colleges, the same problems recur. Before 2014, the State had just five government-run medical colleges. Over the last decade, the Bharat Rashtira Samithi government pushed to open one in every district. By 2024, as many as 29 new colleges had come up as part of that ambitious expansion. "The rapid establishment of so many government medical colleges (GMCs) has resulted in impressive buildings that resemble fully functioning medical institutions. But inside, there are serious gaps — faculty shortage, insufficient clinical exposure and other systemic deficiencies," says a senior official from the State Health department. A system under strain At GMC Karimnagar, a second-year student sums up the classroom situation bluntly: "There is not enough space to sit. Two batches share one lecture hall; some of us stand or sit on the floor. The hostel is no better. It is overcrowded and temporary. We are still waiting for the promised building."

Over at GMC-Nalgonda, transportation is the biggest hurdle. "The hospital is seven kilometres away, but there are no dedicated buses. Our principal sent a request to the Director of Medical Education and even to our MLA, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who is also a minister. He promised two to four buses, but not a single one has arrived," a student says.

At GMC-Asifabad, the problems cut deeper. "We don't have MBBS-qualified faculty. Our labs don't function. We are expected to learn without tools, without guidance," says a first-year student. Things are no better in Bhadradi Kothagudem, where a post-graduate student shares, "Departments like Anatomy and Biochemistry are run by non-MBBS staff. That is a direct violation of National Medical Commission (NMC) norms. We have raised complaints but nothing has changed." Most students here live in rented flats, often cramped and unhygienic. At Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences-Adilabad, the situation is downright bleak. "We stay in quarter clusters with no clean water, no streetlights. The mess food is inedible, the quarters stink, and there is no CCTV cameras or security. We are working 12-hour shifts and studying through the night in such conditions," says a first-year PG student.

At GMC-Narayanpet, the daily commute is a risk in itself. "We lost our college bus last year. Now we travel eight kilometres at our own expense. Many of us live in distant, unsafe hostels. After 7 p.m., the road turns pitch dark. There is no fencing, no security," says a junior doctor. The conditions are equally grim at GMC Jangaon too. "We girls are put up in an old-age home. The boys are crammed into tiny rooms. There are no labs, no gym, no sports, nothing. And we are charged ₹1,000 a month for transport," says a student. The duty doctor room at Gov-

ernment General Hospital, Siddipet, having a large corrugated metal shutter in place of a wall. In Maheshwaram, students attend classes on borrowed premises. "There are no proper labs. We do physiology practicals in lecture rooms. The subsidised hostels they promised never came. We are paying ₹7,000 a month in rent for rooms infested with cockroaches and spiders," a student shares. At GMC-Kamareddy, the gap between college and hospital — just 3.5 kilometres — is a daily hurdle. "With no transport, we often miss clinical postings. Some of us even skip meals just to save time," a student says. Even at established institutions like Gandhi Medical College, cracks are showing. "We have only one assistant professor each in Radiology and Microbiology. Everything else is handled by postgraduates. Forget learning, we are barely surviving," says a student. The infrastructure hasn't kept pace either. "The elevators are constantly breaking down. There are water shortages, outdated pipelines and stray dogs keep biting students. This is not a campus, it is a battlefield." From broken hostels and pitch-dark roads to missing faculty and absent labs, the accounts echo a common story: of systemic neglect wrapped in glossy expansion. A post-graduate student from Vikarabad puts it plainly: "We are the face of public healthcare. But we are studying in the shadows of unfinished buildings, of missing mentors, of apathy." Telangana's 34 government medical colleges collectively offer 4,140 MBBS seats. The top three — Gandhi, Osmania, and Kakatiya Medical Colleges — have the highest intake at 250 seats each. The rest range between 50 and 175. In early June, the National Medical Commission issued show-cause notices to 26 of them, citing critical shortfalls in infrastructure, clinical material and faculty.

A vacancy list accessed by The Hindu, released by the Directorate of Medical Education in July 2024, lays bare the extent of the staffing crisis in Telangana's government medical colleges and teaching hospitals. Of the 3,143 sanctioned Assistant Professor posts, only 1,399 have been filled — leaving 1,736 positions vacant. The shortage extends to professors as well, a senior doctor confirms. "These gaps would not exist if the State government had a consistent, calendar-based recruitment process," says a doctor working as a contract Assistant Professor at a government medical college. "Even under contractual appointments, our salaries have not been paid this year because the contract itself has not been renewed. And this isn't just about Assistant Professors — it affects faculty across all levels."

The doctor warns that the system is nearing a breaking point: "Morale is low. Many are wondering how long they can go on without pay or clarity about their future. Some are seriously considering quitting altogether." Another doctor points to repeated delays. "Regular recruitment was promised last year. But after the SC sub-division notification came out, everything was put on hold. Even after receiving Cabinet clearance, officials keep saying the notification will come 'next week'. It has been over two months and nothing has moved." Fixing the cracks

Meanwhile, in response to the NMC's show-cause notice, the Telangana government has set up 10 Medical College Monitoring Committees to conduct field inspections and comprehensive assessments of all 34 GMCs and their affiliated teaching hospitals across the State. The move was formalised through a Government Order issued by Health Secretary Christina Z. Chongthuo on June 19. The GO states that the aim is to develop a detailed action plan to ensure full compliance with NMC standards by June 2028. The committees are tasked with identifying on-ground challenges and recommending institution-specific, sustainable solutions.

Each committee includes officials such as district collectors, medical college principals and hospital superintendents. Their mandate covers a wide spectrum — from infrastructure and lab facilities to the availability of medical equipment, hostel conditions and academic spaces. They will also evaluate the clinical workload, including functioning of in-patient wards, operating theatres, diagnostics and emergency services. Staffing gaps, both teaching and non-teaching, will be mapped and recommendations made for recruitment through Medical and Health Services Recruitment Board, Telangana State Public Service Commission or local contractual appointments overseen by district administrations.

The committees have also been asked to assess hostel safety, sanitation, food quality and the presence of support systems like anti-ragging mechanisms, grievance redressal cells and counselling services. Operational issues such as supply of essential drugs, food provisions, infection control and utility expenses are also under review. The functioning of systems such as the electronic Health Management Information System, biometric and facial recognition attendance, and CCTV surveillance — both academic and clinical — will be audited. The committees are expected to submit detailed field reports by June 30. Whether these committees will spark lasting reform or simply become another bureaucratic ritual remains to be seen. For now, thousands of young doctors continue to study, serve and survive in conditions far removed from the promises once made to them. In Telangana's grand medical expansion, it is not the buildings but the people inside them who are being tested the most.

Telangana to levy 1-2 per cent cess on gig services to fund workers' welfare board

Hyderabad: The State government is proposing a cess of one to two per cent on bills generated by gig platforms to mobilise revenue for the Gig Workers Welfare Board. This additional charge, to be borne by consumers, is part of the proposed Gig Workers Act, which is expected to be introduced shortly. A draft of the Act has already been prepared, and the Labour Department held discussions with aggregators and workers in Hyderabad on Friday. Briefing mediapersons, Labour Minister Vivek Venkat Swamy said the nominal cess was intended to generate funds for the board. "One to two per cent cess is nominal. It should not be a big burden on the consumers," he said. There are nearly 4.5 lakh gig workers in the State. The draft Bill has been placed in the public domain for feedback. So far, 66 suggestions have been received from aggregators and workers' unions. This marks the first step towards introducing the Gig Workers Act. The initial phase would involve registration of workers, constitution of the board, and related measures, the Minister added.

Salman Khan is angry, and showing it through late-nights posts: No strategy, no filter, no apologies



Salman Khan has always had a very specific relationship with social media — not a polished one or a strategic one. It's just a very, very him one.Go back to his old tweets, the ones that keep resurfacing every few months, and you'll understand immediately what I mean — short sentences, random capitalisation and thoughts that feel like they were typed mid-walk and posted before a second reading. Spelling that a PR team would have nightmares about. And yet, screenshots of those tweets were taken, and are shared and quoted years later, not because they were crafted well, but because they felt like an actual person wrote them. Which, on the internet, is rarer than it sounds.

In an era where every Bollywood superstar's Instagram looks like a meticulously curated luxury magazine, Salman Khan is out here posting like your dad just discovered the internet. And we mean that as a compliment.When Salman Khan started showing up on Instagram more regularly this May people noticed. And then Tuesday night, things got serious.Salman had gone to see someone at a hospital. The paparazzi followed him. When he came out, they were shouting the name of his upcoming film. He confronted them on the spot, visibly angry, asking them how they would feel if a member of their own family were in the hospital.He was right to be angry. The media's behaviour was indefensible. You don't chase a film promotion angle outside a hospital. That is a very basic line, and it was crossed.But what happened after is where it gets interesting. A media-trained star would have had their PR team put out a polished statement on a grey background. Not Salman. He went home, posted smiling selfies, and alongside them fired off captions that reads exactly like an enraged father who has just come inside after a neighbourhood dispute. The reminder that he is 60 years old but hasn't forgotten how to fight is the ultimate "Maine duniye dekhi hai" fatherly warning.

This is not a one-off. The hospital post was just the most visible moment of something that had been happening all along.A few days earlier, he had put up a shirtless photo, very standard Salman Khan content, with a caption that read: "By I me myself, 2 ways to be by yr self, Alone and Lonely, Alone is by choice n lonely when nobody wants to be with u..... Ab iske aage you Figure out what you need to do."No setup. No context. Just a thought,

Why the Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai trailer launch was abruptly called off



The teaser of Varun Dhawan, Mrunal Thakur, and Pooja Hegde starrer Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai generated significant buzz on social media. Riding on the response, the makers had planned a grand trailer launch on Thursday. However, the event was abruptly called off after fans and members of the media had already arrived at the venue.

What actually happened at Hai Jawani Toh Ishq

dropped on 72 million followers.The internet immediately decided something was terribly wrong. Fans were worried and tabloids ran it as a crisis.

So he came back and clarified. In the most Salman Khan way possible. "Arre yaar, mai apne bare mai nahi baat kar raha tha. How can I be alone when I have such a large amazing family and friends? I would be the biggest na shukra ever." Then he explained that he sometimes just needs to be by himself because — and this is the line — "Kabhi kabhi logon ke saath reh kar pak jaata hun. Buss."He also noted that his photo had been turned into breaking news, and that his mummy was now asking, "Kya hua beta?" He told the internet: 'Chill maro yaar'.His mother had to call and he had to explain. He told 72 million people to chill. This is, beat for beat, a family WhatsApp situation.Here is what makes Salman Khan's social media genuinely different from almost every other celebrity of his stature.There is no layer between the thought and the post. Most stars at his level have teams, people who review captions, approve images, make sure nothing can be misread or turned into a headline. The whole machinery exists to keep things controlled. Salman's posts feel like none of that happened. The capitalisation is inconsistent. The sentences run on. The photos are sometimes slightly blurry, sometimes just him at the farm. There is no caption strategy whatsoever.

This is, in the most affectionate reading, exactly how our parents use social media. They post a photo the moment they take it — no retakes, no golden hour, no editing the brightness. The caption is whatever they were thinking at that exact moment, typed quickly, punctuated loosely. They share things because they felt like sharing. No agenda, no performance. Completely, almost disarmingly, innocent.That is Salman Khan on Instagram.He shares motivational thoughts that read like something your father would forward on the family group, except your father forwarded it from somewhere and Salman is just saying it directly because he thought of it. He goes quiet for weeks and then suddenly appears three times in a day because something is on his mind.There is also something genuinely innocent about the way he seems to have no concern, about how a post might land before he posts it. A media-trained person would have thought about the ten ways the "alone and lonely" caption could be interpreted. Salman just wrote the thought — the way you share something with a person sitting next to you. The fact that 72 million people were sitting next to him apparently did not change the calculation at all.That complete lack of second-guessing, is what makes it so recognisable. Our parents post the same way. With full trust that the people who see it will understand what they meant. With the simple assumption that social media is just a place where you share things that are on your mind.Most celebrities stopped believing that the moment they got famous. Bhai, somehow, never got the memo.In a feed full of perfect lighting and carefully worded statements, his posts land differently. You stop scrolling. You read it. Sometimes twice as you are not entirely sure what just happened. Because in a world of performed authenticity, the real thing, messy spelling, run-on captions

Hona Hai trailer launch?

Even as the red carpet was laid out and fans queued up outside PVR ICON in Andheri, the trailer launch event was called off at the last minute. Producer Ramesh Taurani arrived at the venue and informed attendees that the trailer could not be screened due to a "technical glitch." He added that the media and fans would be invited again for a special screening in the next two to three days.The sudden cancellation left both fans and the media disappointed as they exited the venue.A few days ago, Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai was reportedly caught in a legal dispute with Pooja Entertainment over the use of a remixed version of "Chunari Chunari" from Biwi No.1. Amid growing speculation, music and film production company Tips Industries issued a public notice that stated: "Tips Music Limited (Tips) has become aware of a suit filed by Puja Entertainment (India) Ltd. (PEIL) before the Civil Judge (Senior Division), Katihar, Bihar.While formal copies of the order are awaited, Tips clarifies that it is the lawful owner of the music rights in question, supported by valid and binding agreements between the parties. Tips has openly and legitimately exploited these rights for nearly three decades in full compliance with applicable laws.



Reality show star Divyaa Agarwal has been mired in controversies ever since The 50. A few months ago, she made headlines over her remarks against Prince Narula. Now, Divyaa has landed in another controversy after a clothing brand accused her of failing to return an outfit sourced for The 50. On Wednesday, the brand shared allegations of misconduct by Divyaa's team on social media.A clothing brand called Midweek alleged on Instagram that Divya Agarwal's stylist Ipsa Arora had sourced two outfits from them, but only one was returned. The Instagram post read, "Two outfits sourced from us, after four months of follow-ups, excuses, lies, and solu-

tions, one outfit lost and one used and returned. Rs 7500 in loss. Small brands are expected to stay silent, but we chose not to. Behind every sourced outfit is a small business trying to survive. What may be just clothes for celebrities and large teams is inventory, money, and months of effort for independent brands."

The post further read, "When bigger people in the industry casually lose pieces, ignore agreements, or refuse accountability, it doesn't just hurt a business financially, it tells small brands, 'your work doesn't matter enough'. Too many small businesses stay silent because we are afraid of being labelled difficult for simply asking for basic professionalism and respect. To every small business, women-led label, artist, stylist, or founder who has been dismissed, ignored, underpaid, or taken for granted, you are not alone."In the caption, the brand tagged Divyaa Agarwal and wrote, "We value everybody's time and work. But when situations like this happen, it raises serious questions about the system we are working with. This is not just about our brand — it's about the people who put their hard work, effort, and trust into building it. So @ssk.bils, offering us another reshoot as a solution only puts us back into the same exhausting loop again. And as the manager of influencer @divyaagarwal_official, it should absolutely be your responsibility to ensure that the brands you source from, or the people you hire to handle these collaborations, are delivering things correctly and profes-

‘I wanted to escape personal life’: Zeenat Aman relives ‘cracks in marriage’ with Mazhar Khan



Veteran star Zeenat Aman often shares interesting anecdotes about her past films on social media. This time, the actor opened up about her second marriage struggles with late actor-director Mazhar Khan. She recalled having cracks in her relationship during the shoot of her 1985 film Gawaahi. Zeenat also reflected on how she wanted to escape her personal life, to become more than just a 'mother' or 'wife'.

Taking to her Instagram handle, she posted a BTS video from the shoot of Anant Bilani's Gawaahi in 1998. Along with the clip, the actor wrote in the caption, "How many comebacks can a gal have? When it comes to me, apparently the answer is unlimited! Gawaahi was shot in 1988, two years after the birth of my first son Azaan and just before the conception of my second born Zahaan. At this point in my life, the rosy picture of domestic bliss that I had conjured up while at the peak of my career was beginning to fade. Marriage and motherhood had both arrived, but the former was starting to show cracks. I was back living with my own mother (with little Azaan in tow) in her flat in south Bombay when an unexpected script arrived at my doorstep. It was a low budget courtroom drama based on Ayn Rand's play The Night of January 16th, and it was terrifically pitched to me by producer Vivek Vaswani and debut director Anant Balani."

While facing difficulties in her marriage, Zeenat moved to her mother's house in South Bombay for support. "Having once wanted to escape my professional life, I now wanted to escape my personal life and remember

Kangana Ranaut endorses Anandiben Patel's remarks: ‘A mother should learn how to cook’

Kangana Ranaut on Sunday endorsed a contentious post on X, which contained a video of Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel saying in a speech that a mother should first learn how to cook for her family, irrespective of the profession she belongs to. The actor and Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) member added that it's a woman's "duty to nurture humanity".In her controversial tweet on Sunday, Kangana wrote, "When we were small, my brother played football and cricket, but I carefully built doll houses, stitched their clothes, and cooked their food, much to everyone's amusement in the house. I made small chulhas (stoves) and pretended to be doll mom," recalled Kangana, implying that she, being a girl, always harboured that nurturing quality within herself since a very young age, as opposed to her brother, who kept himself engaged in outdoor sports.

"It is not something that we need to learn. God has bestowed up on us the duty of nurturing humanity, it is our true nature, that's why women are called Devi, Shakti, Annapurna, Mata, and many more such forms, but beyond all that, it is such a joy to love, to feed, to dance and to nurture (red heart emoji)," added Kangana, underlining the stereotypical gender roles prescribed to women for centuries.Kangana's response to Anandiben's speech

Kangana was responding to a viral video clip of Patel, where the UP governor is addressing a crowd in Kanpur. "Women today should learn how to cook for their families, whether you become a teacher or an IAS officer. You should first become an expert mother," said the politician, much to the applause of the audience listening to her."What is a mother's duty? To train her daughter in every way. She should not face any difficulties at her in-laws'. And if she does, she should deal with them on her own merit. We need to give that strength to her daughters," added Patel. She also quoted recent "unfathom-



able" instances of women even killing their prospective husbands to avoid getting married as per their parents' wishes. When we were small my brother played football and cricket but I carefully build doll houses , stitched their clothes and cooked their food , much to everyone's amusement in the house I made small chulahs and pretended to be doll mom.Patel might be referring to the incident in Pune last month, when Siya Goyal allegedly killed her fiancé Ketan Agarwal along with her boyfriend Chetan Chaudhary. Kangana endorsed Patel's rather contentious remarks as not only a fellow BJP member, but also a woman. Kangana is currently serving as a Member of Parliament from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh since winning the Lok Sabha Elections in 2014.Last month, Kangana also weighed in on the Ketan Agarwal murder as more details of the case surfaced. "Passion without a goal or a purpose will find many such random self-destructive expressions. That's why obsession is important, but with your career or some skill. To the young and the restless, I want to say: channelize your energies into a constructive path, think with an open mind, but live a conservative life; that way, you can avoid jail, boredom, negativity, depression."

Divyaa Agarwal reacts after clothing brand accuses her of misconduct: ‘Stance was changed later’

sionally from the start."Divyaa Agarwal reacts to the accusationsSCREEN reached out to Divyaa Agarwal for a comment on the matter. She said, "I have been reading this, but I have no idea because I was on the show, The 50. My stylist and manager were talking, and there is some confusion. I have had no personal chats or talks. I have been seeing that they have been sharing the post everywhere, so I chose to ignore it and stay quiet. I have no idea what promises were made or what things were done."Divyaa also issued a statement which read, "I was honestly not planning to address this matter publicly, but since the discussion and the ruckus around it has escalated and reached my team, my close associates, and people who genuinely support me, I felt it was important to clarify a few things from my side. Over the years, I have always supported and celebrated homegrown brands and designers. Throughout my journey including my recent stint on The 50 alongside many other projects and appearances, I have consciously made efforts to credit, promote, and encourage brands that collaborate with me. Anyone who has worked with me and my team knows the amount of respect and visibility we try to offer to upcoming labels and creative talent. With a show involving nearly 50 contestants, multiple fittings, back-and-forth logistics, and constant movement of outfits and styling pieces, there is always a possibility of an unfortunate one-off misplacement. In this particular situation, when my team realised that a piece associated with the brand could not be lo-

cated immediately, we still made every effort to ensure the brand received the visibility and credit they were asking for. In fact, as discussed in the chats, another outfit was to be arranged and a separate shoot was to be aligned purely so the brand could get the due credit and exposure they had requested. Additionally, the particular outfit being referred to was visible only as a part of the promo shoot and could not eventually be accommodated into a reel, frame footage, or final content integration. In reality shows with multiple contestants and extensive styling changes, it is extremely common that not every look gets featured in the final edit. That is precisely why my team proactively reached out to the brand again and requested another outfit so we could specially shoot and ensure they received the due credits and visibility they were seeking."

The statement further read, "What is disappointing is that even after multiple conversations and confirmations, the stance was changed later. The chats being circulated by the brand themselves clearly reflect that the concern initially raised was about credits and visibility; something my team was actively working towards resolving with complete sincerity. Had this truly been about money from the very beginning, the conversation would have been different from day one. Despite the matter not directly requiring so much involvement from our end, my team still continued to coordinate in good faith because we value relationships and respect creative work."