

Congress Govt ditches job aspirants again

Hyderabad: In a bitter disappointment to lakhs of unemployed youth and government job aspirants in the State, the Congress government appears to have once again failed to deliver on its assurance. The much-anticipated Group – I services notification, along with other job announcements, in the month of October as assured by the government in its job calendar, is unlikely to see the light of the day anytime soon.

During the assembly elections, the Congress party had assured filling up of 2 lakh vacancies within a year into the government, a promise that several unemployed youth now feel as hollow. Citing the implementation of the sub categorization of the Scheduled Castes in accordance with the Supreme Court's recent verdict, the government appears to have effectively sidelined its job calendar. The newly constituted one-man commission for implementation of the SC sub-categorization has been given a 60-day deadline for coming up with a report. The new job notifications will be issued based on the report submitted by the commission. This means, there will not be any fresh job notifications for a minimum of 60-days. Considering delay in submission of reports by Commissions appointed by the government to probe Kaleshwaram project and power purchases, the unemployed youth are apprehensive about issuance of the fresh recruitment notifications as assured in the job calendar.

Further, the government instructed officials concerned to commence the Backward Classes caste survey in the State and submit a report in 60-days. Following this,



elections to panchayats are expected. If the government notifies elections, the issuance of new recruitment notifications will further be delayed. The government, aiming to entice the unemployed youth with prospect of 2 lakh jobs as assured in the State Assembly elections, announced a job calendar on the Legislative Assembly floor in August this year. Engineer and other posts

in TG TRANSCO, TG NPDCL and TG SPDCL, gazetted category engineering services, and Group – I notification with 19 categories posts have been scheduled for October release in the calendar. So far, only 11,062 teacher vacancies, 563 Group – I posts and 272 staff nurse posts have been notified by the government. In fact, out of 11,062 teacher vacancies and 563 Group

– I posts, 5,089 vacancies and 503 posts respectively have already been notified by the previous BRS government. Further, in its election manifesto, the Congress party assured unemployment allowance of Rs. 4,000 to every unemployed youth till they secure employment or livelihood opportunities. However, the assurance just remained on the paper, so far.

Malkajgiri railway station redevelopment underway, set for completion in six months



Hyderabad: The redevelopment of Malkajgiri railway station which was taken up as part of the Amrit Bharat Station

Scheme (ABSS) is going on at a brisk pace and is expected to be completed in next six months. As many as 1,275 stations have

been shortlisted across India for renovation and redevelopment by the Indian Railway. Among them, Malkajgiri railway station was selected and a budget of Rs 27 crore was allocated for developing work.

According to the South Central Railway (SCR) authorities, the works were under process, including the foundation of a 12-metre wide Foot over Bridge, lifts and centering works on the ground floor for the AC waiting hall and RPF office. The construction of a highlevel water tank is also completed and a shelter on platform number 1 and 2 is in the completion stage. Apart from this, construction of VIP lounge, toilets and bathrooms on platform 1 and 2 side walls is in progress.

The approach road from the old parking shed to LC Gate Road on the east side of Terminal-1 has also been formed and a cement concrete road will be laid, using which passengers can directly reach the station from Anutex Circle. Also, an elevation on both sides with porticos is being

planned with arches and a park and water fountains and a 'I Love Malkajgiri' selfie point is also on cards. "As the footfall at Malkajgiri has increased, it will be better if one more platform on the east side adjacent to the booking counter to LC Gate No 255 Gouthamnagar- Malkajgiri-Medchal is provided," said Praveen Kumar, a local resident. Currently, around 62 trains are passing through the station on a daily basis, with around 600 general ticket holders and 500 reserved ticket holders' travelling every day. Meanwhile, along with the facelift of the station, the locals requested the SCR authorities to construct a platform and upgrade a few facilities for the benefit of passengers. "The construction began last year and is expected to take around six months to complete. It will be better if three tracks for stabling and three tracks for pit lines near Lallaguda station get constructed so as to avoid sending trains from Kacheguda to Bolarum," said Noor Mohammed Ali, member of Suburban Train Travellers Association.

All the President's men: Rashtrapati Bhavan's elite force

At 4.30 am, a sliver of the 330-acre presidential estate starts coming to life. By 6 am — day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, come rain or shine — 200-odd men in white polo necks and riding boots thunder out of the stables with their steeds. On the grassy, muddy trails of their dedicated training ground in the nearby Ridge Forest area, the towering men and 100 tall horses ride, gallop, jump over obstacles like rails and cross water bodies to perfect their riding and sporting skills for an hour each day.

Their ceremonial escort duties as the President's Bodyguard (PBG) means they operate with zero margin for error. Considered the personal troops of the President, the PBG take precedence in protocol over all other regiments and corps of the Army. The elite PBG has served all 15 Presidents so far since Independence. On the sidelines of the vigorous morning training, PBG Commandant Colonel Amit Berwal tells *The Indian Express* that this most senior regiment of the Army traces its history to over 250 years — Benaras of September 30, 1773, to be exact. The regiment was first raised in Benaras when Raja Chet Singh sent 50 horses and 50 troops to then Governor Warren Hastings. Having started out as the personal bodyguard of the Governor, the regiment was christened as Governor-General's Bodyguard in 1774. In 1857, with the advent of the Viceroy, its name was changed to the Viceroy's Bodyguard, says Colonel Berwal. After Independence, the regiment reverted to the name of Governor-General's Bodyguard. "Half the troops, horses and equipment went to Pakistan following Partition. In 1950, after India became a Republic, the regiment was given its current name," he says. The PBG has close to 100 horses with bay, dark bay and grey coats. (Express photo by Gajendra Yadav)

Seen leading the ceremonial escort during the Republic Day parade this year and riding to the right side of the President's buggy, the PBG troops are trained to be the "best" cavalrymen, Colonel Berwal says. By origin, the PBG are a cavalry troop — that is, they are trained to fight on horseback. In 1942, during the Second World War, the regiment was equipped with armoured fighting vehicles and in 1944, they were trained as paratroopers, he says. "These military skills are still retained in the PBG. There is no other unit in the world in this format," he says. Though the regiment is now exclusively employed for ceremonial escort duties at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, PBG has served during war time and in military operations, including the 1962 India-China war and the 1965 Indo-Pak War. Since 1994, a detachment of the PBG has been deployed at Siachen, the highest and coldest battlefield, as part of Operation Meghdoot. Besides a fitness centre, sporting arena, houses, office spaces and stables, the PBG campus, spread across a few kilometres, also has a temple and a gurdwara.

Life on the President's Estate Permanently stationed at the



Rashtrapati Bhavan — they live with their families on the President's Estate — the PBG rises at 4 am, says Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) Naib Risaldar Kumbha Ram, who has been at the centre of many high-profile ceremonies. Stating that he is at the stables at 5 am daily and out by 5.45 am, Naib Risaldar Ram says, "After training the horse for about an hour, we groom, massage and feed them. That takes up a lot of our time. Even the saddles and ceremonial equipment has to be maintained." The most important part of the PBG's day, he says, is to keep themselves fit so they can ride horses — "a strenuous exercise since the animals are at least five feet tall" — and to continue to be combat paratroopers. Naib Risaldar Ram says all PBG troops are required to clear periodic fitness tests. "You will not find a single PBG with a paunch," he says with a laugh. Seen leading the ceremonial escort during the Republic Day parade this year and riding to the right side of the President's buggy, the PBG troops are trained to be the "best" cavalrymen, Colonel Berwal says. (Express photo by Gajendra Yadav) While many PBG troops are the third or fourth generation in their families to serve the President, joining these elite ranks is easier said than done — an aspirant should be at least 6 feet tall to make the cut since "they ride equally tall horses". In fact, the PBG rides the tallest horses in the Army — ones that are at least 5 feet tall. Bred by the Army's Remount and Veterinary Corps, these tall geldings are allotted to the PBG, say officials, adding that uniformity in appearance is a must for both the troops and horses. The PBG has close to 100 horses with bay, dark bay and grey

coats. Traditionally, being the most senior regiment, the mane and tails of the PBG horses are not trimmed. Recruitments to the PBG are held every year. Young jawans join as "Sowars". There are six ranks in the unit, the most senior being that of "Risaldar Major". While it takes about two-three years for a young bodyguard to become proficient enough for a basic dismounted ceremonial parade, it can take five-six years to be employed in a mounted escort parade, astride one of the 100-odd horses. On the grassy, muddy trails of their dedicated training ground in the nearby Ridge Forest area, the towering men and 100 tall horses ride, gallop, jump over obstacles like rails and cross water bodies to perfect their riding and sporting skills for an hour each day. (Express photo by Gajendra Yadav) Endless hours of training enable these troops to undertake ceremonial escort duties, which include standing still in their ornate uniforms — safas (turbans) with a straight turla on top and shoulder flashes saying President's Bodyguard — while holding 9.9-foot-long lances. (Express photo by Gajendra Yadav) Though the regiment is now exclusively employed for ceremonial escort duties at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, PBG has served during war time and in military operations, including the 1962 India-China war and the 1965 Indo-Pak War. (Express photo by Gajendra Yadav)

Endless hours of training enable these troops to undertake ceremonial escort duties, which include standing still in their ornate uniforms — safas (turbans) with a straight turla on top and shoulder flashes saying President's Bodyguard — while holding 9.9-foot-long lances. "The

time spent in the saddle never gets wasted," says Risaldar Major Vijay Singh.

Horses have a relatively faster career trajectory — a horse that comes to the PBG at the age of about five years can be presented in a ceremonial escort of the President after at least two-three years of training. Once inducted, the horses remain with the PBG for 15-16 years, says Colonel Berwal. "Horses and troops cannot be changed frequently because ceremonial training and temperament are built with repetitive training. It takes a horse a few years of training to become proficient for high-prestige events like the Republic Day parade," he says, adding that their horses — the other half of the PBG — have never disappointed during formal ceremonies. The service duration of PBG troopers is in accordance with Army norms. For a Risaldar Major, that term is about 32 years of service. When he retires, he does so on horseback. "Last year, five JCOs who retired on January 31 accompanied the President for the joint address to both Houses of Parliament. By the time the regiment escorted the President back, it was about 1.30 pm — and it was time for the JCOs to retire," recalls Colonel Berwal.

Rehearsing for the parade Annually, the PBG undertakes an average of 140 ceremonial events at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, including the weekly change of ceremonial guard, beating the retreat ceremony, administering the oath of office by the President, and presentation of credentials by ambassadors and high commissioners, among others. Nearly 70 of these annual events require the participation of horse-mounted troops

JSW MG Motor India Launches a New Campaign for MG Windsor - 'Live Business Class'

Hyderabad:JSW MG Motor India has unveiled a new exciting campaign for India's first Intelligent CUV, MG Windsor, in partnership with Cheil X. The campaign, titled 'Live Business Class', redefines what luxury and comfort in travel should entail. It draws a parallel between the experience of driving the MG Windsor and traveling in business class on an airplane, emphasising comfort, premiumness, and elegance.

The campaign film introduces MG Windsor as an aspirational business-class experience brought to the road and within reach of Indian consumers. The campaign will roll out across various digital platforms with a series of eight feature-led films. These films centre around a family of four, a mother, father, their 8-year-old daughter, and a grandfather, who embark on enriching journeys enhanced by the vehicle's innovative features, such as the Infinity View™ Glass Roof, Aero-lounge™ seats with 135-degree recline, and the 15.6-inch GrandView™ infotainment screen.

The launch follows a two-month teaser phase across digital and social media, building anticipation through influencer content, engagement strategies, and teaser videos hinting at the arrival of a new class of comfort in the automotive industry.

Commenting on the campaign, Udit Malhotra, Head of Marketing, JSW MG Motor India, said, "The 'Live Business Class' campaign is all about redefining premium travel. Our goal is to create a connection with consumers who aspire to elevate their driving experience, much like traveling business class on an airplane. Similarly, with the MG Windsor, we aim to bring a world-class experience to Indian roads, one that combines luxury, innovation, and sustainability. MG Windsor is not just a car, it's a lifestyle choice for those who appreciate indulgence in every aspect of their travel. This campaign reflects how we envision the future of travel, where comfort, premiumness and technology come together seamlessly."

Amit Nandwani, National Creative Director, Cheil X - Delhi, said, "The concept of 'Live Business Class' is powerful and clear, delivering the promise of unparalleled luxury on the road. The campaign's visual narrative effortlessly transitions from an airplane cabin to the inside of the MG Windsor EV, evoking a sense of superior comfort. This idea, with its elegant simplicity, has been crafted to resonate across multiple campaign touchpoints and reshape automotive advertising in India."

The MG Windsor is packed with a host

of industry-first features, designed to enhance both comfort and technology for drivers and passengers alike. Its first-in-segment Aero Lounge seats offer unmatched relaxation with their 135° recline capability, while the expansive 604-liter boot space provides ample room for luggage. The Windsor also features an IP67-certified 38kWh battery, ensuring durability and safety, coupled with four driving modes, Eco+, Eco, Normal, and Sport to cater to different driving preferences. Additionally,

its Infinity View Glass Roof and best-in-class wheelbase of 2700 mm create a sense of openness and luxury, redefining what customers can expect from a CUV.

Ex-Showroom prices of the MG Windsor

Variant	Price (INR)
Excite	13,49,800
Exclusive	14,49,800
Essence	15,49,800



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PhonePe launches new insurance coverage for firecracker accidents



PhonePe today announced the launch of a new insurance plan, offering comprehensive protection against firecracker-related accidents and providing users with affordable insurance coverage during the upcoming festive season of Diwali. The coverage plan, available at just ₹9 (inclusive of GST), provides PhonePe users up to ₹25,000 comprehensive coverage for 10 days during the festival period to safeguard against any firecracker-related accidents. With this launch, users nationwide can celebrate the festival with security and peace of mind, knowing that in the event of an accident, they are financially protected against hospitalization and accidental death expenses.

Due to firecracker-related injuries during the festive season across the country, PhonePe has introduced this product to combat any potential financial burden against such unexpected events. The Firecracker insurance plan offers 10 days of

coverage beginning from October 25th, 2024, at an affordable price of just ₹9. The plan, which can be purchased under a minute on the PhonePe app, also provides comprehensive family coverage by insuring up to 4 family members, including the user, their spouse, and up to 2 children. If a user makes the purchase after October 25th, then the policy cover will start from the purchase date. This short-term coverage is tailored specifically to the festive season, offering affordable and timely protection to users. Commenting on the launch, Vishal Gupta, CEO at PhonePe Insurance Broking Services, said, "We are excited to introduce PhonePe's Firecracker Insurance just in time for the festive season. This coverage offers essential protection for families, ensuring they can celebrate with peace of mind, free from concerns about accidents or unexpected financial strain. Our goal is to make insurance both affordable and accessible, allowing everyone to enjoy the festivities safely."

Here's how users can avail the insurance cover on the PhonePe app: Step 1: First, go to the Insurance section on the PhonePe app & select Firecracker Insurance from the homepage. Step 2: You'll now be able to view your plan details, which include a sum insured of ₹25,000 and a

fixed premium of ₹9 along with your plan benefits. Step 3: Next, you will be able to view the insurer's information and get a detailed breakdown of the plan benefits. Step 4: Lastly, fill in the policyholder's details, then tap 'Proceed to Pay' to complete the process.

Alert RPF personnel save woman's life at Lingampalli Railway Station

Hyderabad: In a remarkable display of bravery and quick response, RPF constable Vishwajeet Kumar and P Rajeshkar, Head Constable, RPF, Lingampalli, averted a potential tragedy at Lingampalli railway station on Sunday.

On Sunday, at 9.28 am, Train No. 17647 (HYB-Purna Express) arrived at platform number one of Lingampalli railway station for its two-minute halt. During the halt, a woman passenger, while attempting to board the moving train, accidentally lost her footing and got trapped in between the train and the platform.

The alert RPF personnel reacted swiftly and managed to rescue the passenger. Their prompt and courageous action saved the woman's life and in the process, Constable Vishwajeet Kumar suffered minor injuries. Under the Operation Jeevan Raksha initiative, RPF Secunderabad Di-



vision saved 4 lives in 2024, preventing potential accidents involving individuals at risk of being run over by trains and 6 lives in the year 2023, preventing potential accidents involving individuals at risk of being run over by trains.

Congratulating the two RPF personnel for their bravery, Senior Divisional Security Commissioner, Secunderabad, Debashmita Chattopadhyay Banerjee made an appeal to passengers not to board or de-board running trains.

HERO MOTOSPORTS SCRIPTS HISTORY – ROSS BRANCH IS THE NEW FIM WORLD RALLY-RAID CHAMPION!

Hero MotoSports Team Rally, the motorsport team of the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - Hero MotoCorp, today crossed the last finish line of Rallye Du Maroc 2024, and with it, Ross Branch was crowned the new FIM World Rally-Raid Champion. This race was the 5th and final round of the FIM World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC) 2024. Finishing strong with the highest Championship points, Hero rider Ross - fondly known as the 'Kalahari Ferrari' - has showcased some of his career-best performances, since the beginning of the 2024 season.

In January, he delivered Hero MotoSports their first-ever Dakar podium, by finishing 2nd overall at Dakar 2024 - which was also the first round of the W2RC. A month later, the Botswanan finished 2nd in the Championship at Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, and moved up to the #1 spot in the Championship rankings. He went on to finish 5th overall at both Rally Raid Portugal (April), and Desafio Ruta 40, Argentina (June). This remarkable streak helped Ross maintain the lead position until the end of Round 5 in Morocco this week - eventually rewarding him with the coveted crown. The rally World Championship for motorbikes dates back to 2003, and since then 10 riders have etched their names into the FIM history books. Ross Branch joins this prestigious list, as the eleventh rider - also becoming the first African rider to win the World Championship.

Making their indelible mark in history, team Hero MotoSports has reached the peak of racing glory in their 8th year of racing. This is the first FIM World title for the team, which also reached very close to winning the Dakar this year. Today's victory cements the Indian manufacturer's place in the history of the sport, making it the sixth manufacturer to earn a FIM World title - joining the big league of larger and



older teams. Hero also becomes the first team to break the World Championship streak of the KTM group (comprising of KTM, GasGas, & Husqvarna), which they held since 2014. At the 25th edition of the Rallye Du Maroc, team Hero was represented by three riders: Ross Branch, Nacho Cornejo, and Sebastian Buhler. After a straightforward prologue at Marakkech, the rally took an adventurous turn with unexpected challenges from rains and floods. The washed out terrain became

all the more treacherous, resulting in several competitors retiring midway owing to accidents and injury. Hero rider Sebastian Buhler exited in Stage 2 after a crash, leaving Branch and Cornejo to continue the fight. Covering almost 2500 kms across the grand Sahara, the 6-day Rally has culminated at Mengoub-Bouârfa, near the Algerian border.

The week also saw a heart-warming display of true team spirit and brotherhood at the Hero camp. After Ross' closest com-

petitor in the championship exited the race due to injury, it was understood that he only needed to finish the Rally to win the World Championship.

With the entire team aligned towards ensuring a safe finish for the leading star, Nacho Cornejo opted to perform wingman duties for Ross. Ignoring his own race performance, the Chilean stayed by Ross' side throughout the week - ready to jump in at a moment's notice, in case Ross were to run into any trouble.

JSW MG Motor India accelerates 7 startups focused on AI in Electric Mobility under MG Developer Program and Grant Season 5.0

JSW MG Motor India today announced the acceleration of seven startups focused on AI in Electric Mobility, as part of the MG Developer Program (MGDP) Season 5.0. The MGDP initiative, supported by ecosystem partners, promotes innovation in the evolving AI space within electric mobility. The selected seven startups are Anuvega Powertronics, Aselector Technologies, Emerging Technologies, Gudlyf Mobility, Power Jet (EV Urjaa), Ravity, Vocbot AI. The theme for MGDP Season 5.0, AI in Electric Mobility, encourages tech startups to explore the transformative potential of AI in reshaping both business operations and everyday life. The seven startups will be involved in developing pilot programs and ongoing projects in the coming months, paving the way for practical applications and innovations that integrate AI with electric mobility. For this season, which began in early 2024, JSW MG Motor India partnered with Startup India

and Manthan (Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India), significantly enhancing the program's impact. A consortium, comprising AWS, Exicom, Lohum, and DRIIV (Delhi Research Implementation and Innovation), provided crucial support, fostering collaboration and innovation within the startup fraternity. Gaurav Gupta, Chief Growth Officer, JSW MG Motor India, said, "Our commitment to innovation and collaboration in electric mobility sector is steadfast. The MG Developer Program and Grant serve as a catalyst, empowering startups to develop AI solutions that address the challenges and opportunities presented by this rapidly evolving mobility landscape. By providing a supportive environment, mentorship, and access to resources, we're nurturing a new generation of innovators who are poised to shape India's electric mobility future by leveraging AI. As JSW MG Motor India continues to invest in tech-



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nological advancement and creating opportunities in AI space, we look forward to witness growth of these startups and their positive impact on the Indian automotive

landscape. "The MGDP received over 100 applications from 52 cities across India, with 7 emerging as winners, highlighting an unprecedented nationwide impact.

Procure each grain of paddy and lift it within 72 hours or be ready to face an agitation – SAD warns AAP govt



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), October 13 – The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Sunday warned the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government to procure each and every grain of paddy and lift it from the Mandis in the State within 72 hours or be ready to face a sustained agitation to ensure justice to the farmers.

This decision was taken at a meeting of the core committee which was presided over by party Working President Balwinder Singh Bhundar, states a party release. The core committee noted that farmers were suffering due to the utter failure of the government to either procure paddy coming into the Mandis or get the same lifted in coordination with the central government. It noted that this state of affairs had not been ever witnessed in the history of the State and asked chief minister Bhagwant Mann to wake up from his slumber and ensure farmers did not suffer or else resign from his chair.

Briefing newsmen about the decisions of the core committee, senior leader Dr Daljit Singh Cheema said the core committee expressed concern at the manner in which the AAP government had murdered democracy in the ongoing Panchayat elections. He said there were hundreds of instances where opposition candidates were not allowed to file nomination papers by turning them away, snatching their papers or even using violence to keep them away from offices of Returning Officers. He said with the State Election Commission (SEC) also succumbing to pressure from the government and not adjudicating on complaints filed before it, it was left to the high court to ensure justice was done. He thanked the high court for restoring nomination papers with regard to 321 petitions filed before it. Dr Cheema said following this the SEC was also forced to cancel elections in 24 villages in Gidderbaha where papers of opposition candidates were rejected illegally. The core committee also took umbrage to the man-

ner in which the Advocate General's office in Punjab was working against the interests of Punjabis by opposing the petitions of highhandedness filed by them. "This makes it clear that the AG Office is being used to crush the democratic rights of the people instead of safeguarding them. The chief minister must clarify if he gave these instructions", the committee asked.

Meanwhile in an important development, Dr Cheema disclosed that an eleven-member committee led by party Working President Balwinder Singh Bhundar would

approach the Sri Akal Takht Jathedar and apprise him of important developments vis a vis the complaint filed against the SAD president and other leaders before the Takht. "The SAD president and the concerned leaders have already submitted their clarifications with regard to the complaints filed against them to the Takht with utmost humility. Now we are in the process of seeking an appointment with the Jathedar in this regard. We will make an important appeal to him based upon certain information with us", Dr Cheema

added. The core committee also condemned the murderous attack on journalist Ramesh Behal in Batala which the latter claimed was done at the behest of Batala legislator Sharry Kalsi. It demanded a case be registered against the MLA and other guilty persons even as it appealed to civil society to stand up for freedom of the press. The committee also paid glowing obituaries to former Takht Patna Sahib President Mahinder Singh Romana and Tata group Chairman Ratan Tata on the occasion.

Ambani's Reliance lobbies India on satellite spectrum in new face-off with Musk

Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance has argued that the telecom regulator incorrectly concluded that home satellite broadband spectrum should be allocated and not auctioned, a letter seen by Reuters shows, intensifying a face-off with Elon Musk's Starlink. The methodology of giving out spectrum for satellite services in India - a market set to grow 36% a year to reach \$1.9 billion by 2030 according to Deloitte - has been a contentious issue since last year. Musk's Starlink and global peers like Amazon's Project Kuiper back an administrative allocation, while Ambani - Asia's wealthiest man who runs India's Reliance Jio - is arguing for an auction process. The current dispute is over an interpretation of Indian law that some in the industry say paved the way for the allocation of spectrum last year as Musk wanted.

But Reliance is arguing no provisions are in place for satellite broadband services for individual or home users, industry sources said on Sunday. The telecom regulator, TRAI, is holding a public consultation, but Reliance in a private Oct. 10 letter seen by Reuters asked for the process



to be started afresh as the watchdog has "pre-emptively interpreted" that allocation is the way forward. "TRAI seems to have concluded, without any basis, that spectrum assignment should be administrative," Reliance's senior regulatory affairs official Kapoor Singh Guliani wrote in the letter to India's telecoms minister Jyotiraditya

Scindia. Level playing field TRAI has in its consultation paper indicated Indian laws mandate allocation of spectrum for such services without conducting any studies, Reliance added in its letter. "We have requested (the) TRAI to amend the consultation paper" to ensure a level playing field, Reliance Jio said in a statement to Reuters on Sunday.

Cowboys, treasure hunters, supermen in video parlours: How a Toronto premiere has turned lens back on Malegaon film industry

As nearly 2,000 persons rose to applaud Superboys of Malegaon at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 13, film-maker Nasir Shaikh, 50, reduced to a blubbing mess, had to be consoled by producer Zoya Akhtar. Nearly a month after this "surreal" experience, Nasir is poised to make a remarkable comeback despite his "disenchantment with the entertainment industry" in 2015. Standing on the terrace of his new house on Kusumba Road, located a stone's throw from the Malegaon bus stand, Nasir tells The Indian Express, "The standing ovation (at the Toronto festival) was an affirmation of the hard work that I, along with countless other artists from Malegaon, have dedicated to this art form... It was a humbling experience." Superboys of Malegaon Film-maker Nasir Shaikh, the inspiration behind Superboys of Malegaon that premiered at the Toronto film festival in September, at his Malegaon house. (Express photo by Deepak Joshi) Directed by Reema Kagti and set to be released early next year, Superboys of Malegaon chronicles the inspiring life of the homebrewed auteur who, along with his friends, struggles to create low-budget, community-sourced films.

While Nasir has emerged as the face of the film industry in Malegaon, located 280 km north of Mumbai, he stands on the shoulders of giants like the late Ghulam Mohammed Zaidi, the film-maker credited with making the town's first film, Qatil Khazana, in 1972. As Qatil Khazana's treasure hunters, cowboys, marauding tribes and harem dancers flickered to life in countless makeshift video parlours dotting the town, Zaidi's adventure film, made on 16 mm, paved the way for future film-makers in Malegaon. While attempting to make a film in a conservative Malegaon, Zaidi encountered significant challenges, including scepticism and questions regarding his intentions from his own father. Despite these obstacles, his singular film, completed before his untimely death in the early 1980s, laid the foundation for future film-makers of Malegaon. A city with a population of 4.8 lakh, of which 79% are Muslims, Malegaon is a bustling hub of textile activity due its large number of powerlooms. Its Muslim quarters have often been described as the epitome of underdevelopment. Thousands of its workers still spend 12-14 hours amidst the cacophony of clattering powerlooms in poorly ventilated environs. Exhausted from their labour, these men would seek outlets for relaxation and entertainment. In a city where the clergy significantly influences cultural values and residents are closely connected to Islamic traditions that prohibit drinking, many turned to cinema. This cultural shift spurred the proliferation of theatres and video parlours throughout Malegaon, providing a much-needed respite and entertainment for the community.

Of rickety chairs and video cassettes One such video parlour was a 200-seater establishment in the bustling neighbourhood of Qidwai Nagar. In this parlour, owned by Nyaju Seth, as Nasir's father was popularly known, labourers would pay Rs 3 a head to sit on rickety

chairs and watch video cassettes of latest hits projected on a white screen. An avid photographer and film aficionado, Nyaju was pivotal in nurturing his youngest son Nasir's love for films. This love for cinema only deepened after Nasir took over the video parlour's operations after Class 10. "I would travel to Mumbai to bring back the latest Hollywood films. Rambo 3 was the first movie I screened after taking charge. It was a massive hit," he recalls. Eventually, he started handling video cameras and even running a successful wedding video business. All of 24 in 1998, a chance encounter with Siraj Dular, a prominent figure in Malegaon's art-theatre scene and his neighbour, set off a series of events that plunged Nasir into the world of film-making.

Superboys of Malegaon Siraj Dular stands in front of an epitaph in Malegaon's Christian Cemetery that features in the opening shot of the first film made in town. (Express Photo by Deepak Joshi) Working on his film Dahshatgard that year, Dular, now 76 and the president of the Malegaon Drama, Art & Culture Association, was in need of a cameraperson. The film is the story of a Kashmiri militant who comes to Malegaon and undergoes a profound transformation after staying with a Hindu family. Dular, who became the first Malegaon resident to appear on celluloid by played the lead as treasure hunter John in 1972's Qatil Khazana, recalls, "Besides handling the camera, Nasir also made changes to the script, and directed and edited the film remarkably well given the equipment available and the lack of film education."

A "fun" film is made Since most films made in Malegaon then focussed primarily on social issues and lacked a captive audience, Nasir decided to change this approach to film-making. Inspired by the humour and joy he found in the works of cine stars like Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin, and Jackie Chan, he decided to make a "fun" film. "In our world, cheap imitations often sell better than original products. I was already fascinated by Bollywood duplicates. So I thought, why not recreate Sholay in the context of Malegaon," he says. Superboys of Malegaon Siraj played the lead in Malegaon's first film, Qatil Khazana (1972), becoming the town's first resident to appear on celluloid. (Express Photo Deepak Joshi) And that's how Nasir ended up making Malegaon Ke Sholay. Starring budding local artists Akram Khan and Farogh Jafri, the spoof was made on a shoestring budget of Rs 50,000. The humorous reimagining of the classic saw bicycles replace Sholay's ubiquitous horses, and local dialects, cultural references and social issues relevant to Malegaon pepper the cult film's iconic dialogue. "Unlike other places, where moviegoers often check the lead actor before watching a film, locals in Malegaon, particularly the working class, ask just one question: 'Aidva ke hai (who is the comedian)?'. Comedy plays a crucial role in alleviating the struggles they face," says Dular. Malegaon Ke Sholay, which reaped four times its production cost, led to Nasir producing more



The subject of Zoya Akhtar's latest film, Nasir Shaikh of 'Supermen of Malegaon' fame walks the path paved by the pioneers of the town's film industry, starting with Ghulam Mohammed Zaidi, who is credited with making Malegaon's first film in 1972 .

films, including Malegaon Ki Shaan and Malegaon Ka Don. Others too started creating spoofs of popular films like Lagaan and Karan Arjun. The economics of these films was straightforward: a portion of the revenue would come from screenings in Malegaon's video parlours and the rest from the rights sold to Mumbai-based distributors who would market DVDs across India. While some film-makers made money, the economic condition of most budding artists remained largely unchanged.

Then, on September 8, 2006, three explosions in town branded it as a hotbed of "radical" activities, besides calling it a symbol of Muslim anger and alienation. The blasts were followed by the detention and arrest of several young men. As the media descended on Malegaon in search of stories, its homemade film industry gained traction — as an interesting side story. A few international documentaries, including Supermen of Malegaon (2008), which followed Nasir's journey as he produced Malegaon Ka Superman, catapulted the local film industry into national prominence. Nasir spent the next three years directing a comedy series, Malegaon ka Chintu, for a television channel, travelling to over a dozen Western countries and connecting with Bollywood elite, including director-screenwriter Zoya Akhtar. "I met Zoya at the screening of Supermen of Malegaon in 2012. She told me she wanted to make a film on my life. Though we kept in touch, the project only took off in 2020," Nasir recalls. Having grown disenchanted

with the glitter of Bollywood, Nasir decided to quit film-making in 2015 and opened a restaurant near the bustling Malegaon bus stand. "The entertainment industry is a different world. You have to change your character to fit in. Once you enter that realm, you can no longer be a part of the normal film world. I couldn't live with the demands it made on me as a person, so I decided to quit," Nasir had told The Indian Express in 2016. Zoya's film has since cast Nasir back into the spotlight. And while he is eager to promote the project, he remains one of the few original filmmakers from Malegaon basking in the limelight. Many others, including the late Farogh Jaffrey, have found themselves relegated to obscurity. Jaffrey passed away, bitter and unrecognised, on September 13, 2020, exactly four years before Superboys of Malegaon premiered in Toronto.

While most pioneers of Malegaon's film industry ceased production after 2016, early trendsetters, including actors Akram Khan and Rafeeq Johnny, set up their own YouTube channels, where their 10-minute humorous clips have gained a considerable following. Though these clips boast a superior technical quality compared to the films made by Nasir and his peers, they lack the earthy humour unique to the earlier Malegaon films. Though Nasir claims he doesn't watch the new content emerging out of Malegaon, he admits to contemplating returning to film-making since Superboys of Malegaon. "Maybe it's time to reconsider my decision to not make films," he says.

Culinary delights of Amsterdam, a fusion of Dutch and Indonesian flavours

Walk, eat, and pray it doesn't rain so you can keep walking and then eating. That's usually my mantra when I go to Europe. Last week, I decided to give my taste buds and my finer senses a little treat by finally going on a much-awaited—although very short—trip to Amsterdam and Paris. Suffice it to say, I have had a gourmet holiday. Here are my tips on where and what to eat if you're in Amsterdam for a couple of days, because good food should always be shared. Now, Amsterdam and the Netherlands aren't known for their cuisine. The food is usually a little bland and doesn't have much range, but the produce they use is as fresh as it gets. My focus in Amsterdam wasn't the food. It was the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum, but food cannot be far behind. After my long day at the Rijksmuseum, where you can see Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* being restored on site, I found a small local restaurant called The Pantry, barely a 15-minute walk from both museums.

Run by a couple, the cosy restaurant was chock-a-block on a weekday and had people waiting outside. It served me proper Dutch comfort food: Bitterballen, the Dutch version of what we call mince chops – just with less spice and more cheese – and the most delicious salmon in a lobster sauce with mashed potatoes. Greens are a foreign concept in both Paris and Amsterdam, as I found out. Another discovery I wasn't aware of was the large number of Indonesian restaurants in Amsterdam. This isn't really surprising, given that between 1800 and 1949, Indonesia was a Dutch colony. In fact, few know that it was called Dutch East Indies till it gained independence. The Dutch colonised Indonesia for the same reason the British colonised India – for the spices. Coming to the Dutch influence on



Indonesian food and vice versa, only in the Netherlands will you find the Rijsttafel, made of two Dutch words: "rijst," meaning rice, and "tafel," meaning table. This is a Dutch creation which doesn't exist in Indonesia. The rijsttafel can include up to 30 dishes! I tried Rijsttafel at Mama Makan restaurant at the Hyatt Regency Amsterdam and went back a second day. It's similar to how we eat food in India – bowls of various

dishes are served with two types of rice, all of which you're meant to share.

From lamb and chicken satays, to a tofu and bean stew, pickled cucumbers, Sambal Goreng Telor (boiled eggs in sambal), to Gado Gado, Ikan Kecap (cod with lemongrass), and Udang Asem Pade (a spicy prawn dish), many sambals – it was a feast. For those who miss Indian food while traveling abroad, I'd recommend giv-

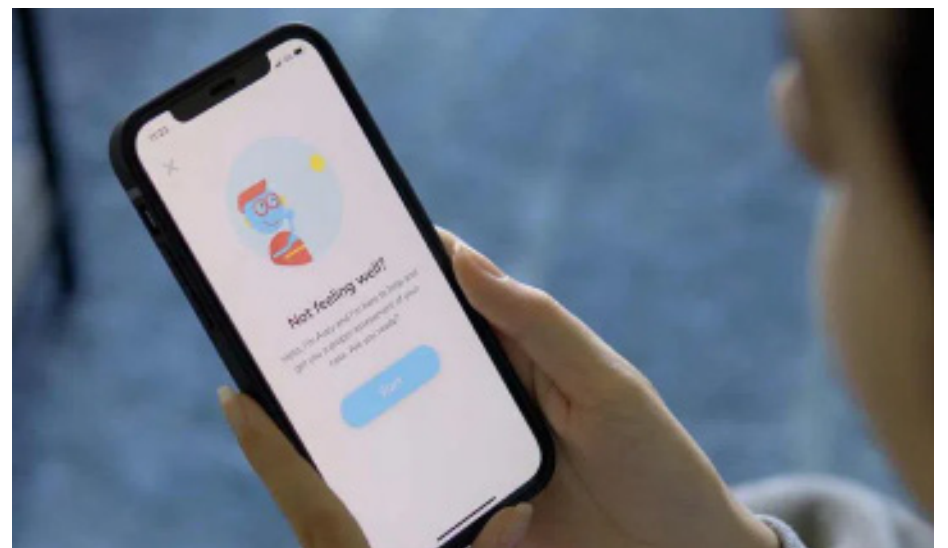
ing Rijsttafel and Indonesian fare a shot in Amsterdam.

It's spicy, not watered down, and some of the finest Indonesian food I've tasted. Amsterdam's food, while not its star attraction, is a pleasant surprise. Whether indulging in traditional Dutch comfort food or exploring the rich flavors of Indonesian cuisine, the city offers a culinary experience worth savouring. And don't forget to try the cheeses.

Study warns AI chatbots, search engines may provide unsafe drug information

New Delhi: Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered search engines and chatbots may not always provide accurate and safe information on drugs, and patients shouldn't rely on these, warned a study on Friday. Researchers from Belgium and Germany conducted the study after finding many answers were wrong or potentially harmful. In the paper, published in the journal *BMJ Quality and Safety*, they said that the complexity of the answers provided by the AI chatbot may be difficult to understand and might require degree-level education. With the introduction of AI-powered chatbots search engines in 2023 underwent a significant shift thanks. The renewed versions offered enhanced search results, comprehensive answers, and a new type of interactive experience. While the chatbots — trained on extensive datasets from the entire internet — can answer any healthcare-related queries, they are also capable of generating disinformation and nonsensical or harmful

content, said the team from the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg in Germany. "In this cross-sectional study, we observed that search engines with an AI-powered chatbot produced overall complete and accurate answers to patient questions," they write. "However, chatbot answers were largely difficult to read and answers repeatedly lacked information or showed inaccuracies, possibly threatening patient and medication safety," they add. For the study, the researchers explored the readability, completeness, and accuracy of chatbot answers for queries on the top 50 most frequently prescribed drugs in the US in 2020. They used Bing Copilot, a search engine with AI-powered chatbot features. Just half of the 10 questions were answered with the highest completeness. Further, chatbot statements didn't match the reference data in 26 per cent of answers and were fully inconsistent in over 3 per cent of cases. About 42 per cent of these chatbot answers were



considered to lead to moderate or mild harm, and 22 per cent to death or severe harm. The team noted that a major draw-

back was the chatbot's inability to understand the underlying intent of a patient question.

Dasara Melavas and Maharashtra politics: How Shiv Sena, RSS rallies set poll campaign's tone

Story so far: Maharashtra awaits a new Assembly with State elections expected to be held in the coming few weeks. With seat-sharing talks in its final stages between both coalitions – Mahayuti (BJP, NCP, Shiv Sena) and Maha Vikas Aghadi [Congress, NCP-SP, Sena (UBT)], the people await the annual agenda-setting rally: the Dasara/Dussehra Melava (rally).

On the tenth day of the Navaratri festival, Dussehra (Vijay Dashami), both factions of the Shiv Sena, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Maratha quota activist Jarange Patil and BJP leader Pankaja Munde will be holding their annual events. While the two Senas' events will be held in Mumbai's Shivaji Park and Azad Maidan respectively, RSS' event will be held in its headquarters at Nagpur. While Beed will host Mr. Patil's and Ms. Munde's rallies. Held annually, the Dussehra rally sets the agenda for the Senas and RSS respectively. This year, being a poll year, will showcase the election preparedness, the line of attack, the leadership, potential government policies, and the respective claims to Bal Thackeray's legacy of the two Shiv Senas. On the other hand, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat usually does not discuss election strategies during these rallies, rather he advises the cadets (and the BJP at large) on the Sangh's stance on national, religious and socio-economic issues and its plans for Indian society at large. Since this is a poll year, Mr. Bhagwat's address may also have nuggets on governance and politics. In 1966, Bal Thackeray announced the arrival of his Shiv Sena at a massive Dussehra rally on October 30 at Mumbai's iconic Shivaji Park, roaring at Marathi youth to "reclaim their identities and their place in society." The rally helped shape the Sena's identity as a 'protector of the Marathi Manos'. Addressing the gathered supporters, surprisingly large in number for a brand new party, Mr. Thackeray urged Marathi-speaking citizens to 'question why sons of the soil were being sidelined' for jobs in the city and to rectify this.

Since then, the Dussehra rally has been used by Mr. Thackeray to announce Sena's political agenda, fire up its cadres, issue 'threats' or missives to his rivals, assert Sena's Marathi and later Hindutva identity and announce his/Sena's stance on issues. Through the years, Mr. Thackeray has gradually changed the Sena's Maharashtra-centric ideology to a broader Hindutva one via his famous speeches at Shivaji Park. In election years, Sena, which was first voted to power in 1995 along with the BJP, has used Dussehra rallies to make poll promises to voters. In 1980s, when textile workers were striking against the Congress government, Mr. Thackeray shared the stage with then-Congress rebel Sharad Pawar and Janata Party leader George Fernandes at the Dussehra rally, signalling the Shiv Sena's soured ties with Congress. Through the 1990s, Mr. Thackeray advocated for the building of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, even boasting about the Sena's role in the Babri Masjid demolition.

Apart from Sena politics, Mr. Thackeray used the Dussehra rally to launch his grandson Aaditya (Uddhav Thackeray's elder son) as the president of



the the newly-created Yuva Sena (Sena's youth wing). In 2013, Mr. Thackeray's chosen successor – his son Uddhav— took over the reins of the Sena after his father's demise and has been addressing the Dussehra rally since then. In 2014, when Sena and BJP first parted ways ahead of the State elections, Mr. Uddhav Thackeray accused the BJP's Maharashtra unit of 'back-stabbing the Sena', ending their 25-year alliance. He asserted, "BJP has severed ties with Hindutva. If it can betray an old friend, how can it do good to people." While the duo made up and eventually ruled the State for five years, in 2019, Sena was once again up in arms against the BJP, staking claim to the CM post and equal distribution of cabinet portfolios. In the 2019 Dussehra rally, Sena projected Aaditya Thackeray (who was making his poll debut) as the CM candidate. Defending Sena's decision to ally with BJP again, Uddhav Thackeray had asserted, "Sena can never bow down in front of anyone except God. And had we not allied with the BJP, whom should we support? Congress?" Ironically, after the election results, Uddhav Thackeray parted ways with BJP and formed the MVA with Congress and NCP to usher in his maiden CM term. In 2022, the Dussehra rally became the biggest flash point for the Sena. With Eknath Shinde rebelling against Uddhav Thackeray and ultimately bringing down the MVA government, two Sena rallies were held in Mumbai. Mr. Shinde relented in his bid to hold his faction's rally at Shivaji Park, opting for the MMRDA grounds at Bandra Kurla Complex, leaving Mr. Thackeray to hold his rally in front of his father's memorial. Terming Mr. Shinde and his MLAs as parasites leeching onto the roots of Shiv Sena, Mr. Thackeray said, "Ministers are for time being, but the scars of traitor will remain with you forever." In retaliation, Mr. Shinde accused Mr. Thackeray of compromising Sena's principles and the people's mandate by allying with NCP and Congress, saying, "Go

and kneel down at Balasaheb's memorial and apologise for betraying the people of Maharashtra". The next year, Maratha reservation became the focus for the two rival Sena rallies – both accusing each other for the failure to implement an 18% reservation for the community. By this time, the Election Commission had deemed Shinde's faction as the real Shiv Sena, allowing it to use the party's iconic bow and arrow symbol, while the Thackeray faction was named as Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) and chose the fire torch as its symbol. This year's rally will mostly likely see the coalitions (Mahayuti and MVA) announce their seat-sharing formula. The BJP is likely to contest on 150 seats, Sena on 80-90 seats and NCP on the remaining seats. On the MVA side, the split seems to be more even with 50-60 seats still in contention. Neither coalition has decided to project a CM face. Through the years, the rally has been cancelled thrice – in 2006 due to heavy rains, in 2009 due to the state elections and in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Sena rally has always been held at Shivaji Park except in 2021, when Mr. Thackeray opted for Shanmukhananda Hall due to COVID-19 restrictions. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

Dussehra is the most important of the six festivals celebrated by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) as it coincides with its foundation day. The RSS was founded in Nagpur by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar on September 27, 1925, which fell on Dussehra that year. Every year, the festival is marked by a symbolic Shastra Puja (a ritual worshipping weapons) performed by RSS volunteers and an address by the RSS Sarsanghchalak (chief) to thousands of RSS volunteers from Nagpur's Reshimbagh grounds. RSS, which is the ideological parent of the BJP, helps the saffron party gain ground support among voters in elections and gives feedback to the party regarding its schemes – hits and

misses alike. Notably, as the chief's address falls in October-November every year, it falls neatly before the Maharashtra elections and months after the Lok Sabha elections in poll years. The chief's address generally gives an insight into the Sangh Parivar's takeaways from the Lok Sabha results and sets goals to be achieved in the future, i.e., chalking out the BJP's to-do list of policies. Before the BJP was voted to power, the RSS chief's address raised national issues, often criticising the Congress-led government's inability to tackle security threats (internal and external), and its economic failures. However, the chief also commented on the need to reject westernisation and promote small Indian businesses and agriculture, and on Hindutva. Since 2014, the Narendra Modi government began broadcasting the current Sarasanaghachalak Dr. Mohan Bhagwat's annual speech on Doordarshan, the government news broadcaster, earning the Opposition's ire. In 2014, Mr. Bhagwat listed the BJP-led government's achievements, lauding the Centre for taking steps to make India a 'Vishwa Guru'. Targetting Opposition-ruled areas like Kerala, Assam, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, he claimed that 'jihadi' activities and illegal migrants were on the rise. Highlighting the historic change ushered in by the 2014 mandate, Dr. Bhagwat urged people to help Mr. Modi promote India on the global stage. BJP Leader Lalkrishna Advani, Nitin Gadkari and Devendra Fadnavis are the RSS Vijaya Dashami celebration at Nagpur on Saturday. RSS supreme Mohan Bhagwat addressed the nation at RSS Vijaya Dashami celebrations at Reshimbagh Maidan in Nagpur on Saturday morning. Vijaya Dashami celebrations held at Reshimbagh Maidan, Nagpur on September 30, 2017. BJP Leader Lalkrishna Advani, Nitin Gadkari and Devendra Fadnavis are the RSS Vijaya Dashami celebration at Nagpur of Saturday.