

Aarogyasri, EHS, JHS services halted in Telangana over Rs 1,200 cr pending bills

Hyderabad: Aarogyasri healthcare services, Employee Health Scheme (EHS) and Journalists Health Scheme (JHS) in mid-sized private hospitals in Telangana State were suspended on Friday due to pending medical bills mounting to Rs 1, 200 crore. The members of Telangana Aarogyasri Network Hospitals Association (TANHA), consisting of hospitals with 100 to 400 beds and serving Arogyasri patients across districts, appealed to the State Health Minister, Damodar Raja Narsimha to intervene and clear the pending medical bills. "Despite performing the majority of Arogyasri work, the TANHA hospitals are not a priority for policy makers. All hospitals in districts are facing these problems. It is ironic that Aarogyasri was started under a Congress government but the same party is not addressing our concerns," says president for TANHA, Dr V Rakesh. The average monthly medical bills for Aarogyasri, EHS and JHS patients from all TANHA hos-

pitals in Telangana is close to Rs 100 crore, which works out to Rs 1200 to Rs 1300 crore annually. The inordinate delay in clearing the medical bills by the State government has forced TANHA to withdraw Arogyasri, EHS and JHS services. On Thursday, a token amount of Rs 100 crore, covering medical bills for a month, was offered to TANHA members by the State government in a meeting between Arogyasri CEO, Shiv Shankar and network hospitals on Thursday. However, it was rejected by members of TANHA. "Whenever there is inordinate delay in release of medical bills, it has become a habit to release a token amount of Rs 100 crore and expect the private hospitals to fall in line. However, this is not reassuring for us.

The State government must look to resolve the issue of frequent delays in payment of medical bills permanently," the members of TANHA said. The health care facilities un-



GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA EMPLOYEES AND JOURNALISTS HEALTH SCHEME

der Arogyasri, EHS and JHS however, have continued uninterrupted in specialty hospitals, NIMS and Government hospitals in Hyderabad.

Sankranti vacations in schools, colleges from Jan 11 in Telangana



Hyderabad: With Sankranti round the corner, students and teachers of all educational institutions are now gearing up for their much-awaited short-term vacation. Starting January 11, all the educational institutions will remain closed for the festive break.

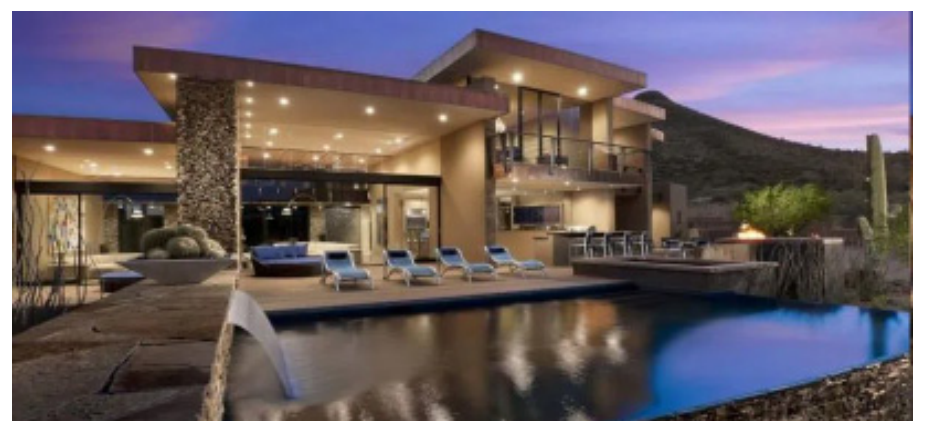
School students can enjoy a seven-day festival vacation from January 11 to 17 with reopening scheduled for January 18. As for the junior colleges, the Telangana Board of Intermediate Education (TG BIE) announced

Sankranti holidays from January 11 to 16, inclusive of both days. The junior colleges will reopen on January 17. All junior colleges' principals have been instructed to strictly adhere to the holiday schedule and not to hold any classes during the vacation. The Board warned that violation of instructions will be viewed seriously and action, including disaffiliation, will be initiated against the erring management. The degree and professional colleges have short-term vacation from January 11 to 15.

Only two ultra-luxury homes sold in 2024, says report

Hyderabad: Only two ultra-luxury homes, priced over Rs.40 crore, were sold in Hyderabad as against 52 units sold in Mumbai during the year 2024. Across the country, last year saw the sale of at least 59 ultra-luxury properties and Mumbai walking away with the lion's share of 88 per cent (52 units) followed by three units sold in Delhi NCR and two deals each in Bengaluru and Hyderabad. According to Anarock data released on Friday, of the 59 ultra-luxury homes sold in 2024, at least 17 were priced above Rs 100 crore each with the total value of these 17 homes sold alone being Rs 2,344 crore. Also, apartments clearly remained the preferred property type with 53 of the 59 deals

being for apartments and the remaining six bungalows. The report pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic generated a substantial demand surge for luxury and ultra-luxury housing. In 2022, 13 deals worth approximately Rs 1,170 crore were closed with Mumbai accounting for 11 deals and two in Delhi-NCR. In 2023, 58 ultra-luxury homes were sold across the top seven cities with a cumulative sales value of approximately Rs 4,063 crore and Mumbai alone selling 53 units. Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Group, says the High Net worth Individuals (HNIs) and ultra-HNIs were purchasing these trophy residences for personal use, investment, or both. "



The 1999 riots that took a heavy toll in Tamil Nadu's largest prison

The morning of November 17, 1999, was normal for inmates of Chennai Central Prison near the Park railway station. Until one of them climbed a tree during the roll call and screamed, "The jail superintendent has tortured and beaten a prisoner to death." All of a sudden, the prisoners started attacking the 40-odd prison employees. A few weeks earlier, 'Boxer' Vadivelu, 33, of Kasimedu was brought to the prison after he was arrested in a theft case booked by the Royapuram police. Vadivelu, a fisherman, was also involved in drug-peddling. He faced several other cases of theft and a case of murder. He was detained under the Goondas Act and lodged in the penitentiary block. Tamil Nadu's largest prison had 2,177 inmates against the limit of 1,427. Half of them were remand prisoners and 776 were booked under the Goondas Act. Some of them were hardcore criminals: 'Vellai' Ravi, 'Sera', and LTTE militants. Ganja thrown in from train A former prison officer recalled that Vadivelu expanded his criminal network and drug-peddling at the prison, tapping into most of his associates lodged there. Ganja came in a novel way. He and his associates had asked their men to tie ganja bags with stones and throw them onto a tree near the compound wall of the prison while travelling in suburban trains. The prison inmates would collect the consignment hanging on the tree and distribute the contraband to the others. "We decided to shut all the routes for ganja to be brought in. We succeeded to some extent. We have also conducted de-addiction programmes. However, it was not well received by all inmates, who asked us to identify the peddlers. Then we segregated the inmates, like Vadivelu, and lodged them in a high security cell. His men were angry with us," said the officer. Vadivelu fell ill with diarrhoea. He was treated at the prison hospital first. He suddenly developed chest pain. At 2.30 a.m. that day, he was rushed to the Government General Hospital where he was declared dead. Doctors attributed the death to cardiac arrest. The news triggered anger among the inmates, many of whom were his followers. The gang leaders joined the stir. Deputy jailor dumped on fire

An unruly group approached the warders and accused them of being responsible for Vadivelu's death. Deputy jailor Jayakumar tried in vain to pacify them. The inmates then fanned out to different parts of the complex, attacked officials, and damaged the property. Two inmates pushed Jayakumar into the Remission Record Office, even as two others stabbed him, set fire to the records, and dumped a bleeding Jayakumar on the fire. Some of the warders escaped, while a few took off their uniforms and became silent spectators. The efforts by the jail superintendent to rescue Jayakumar failed as the inmates threw stones and other missiles from different directions. The superintendent's repeated warnings to clear out and allow the staff to rescue Jayakumar failed to move the rioters, who instead damaged more property. Then, the superintendent opened fire with his pistol. G. Ramachandran, then jail superintendent and former DIG, Prisons, said that as the prisoners did not relent, a message was sent to the police control room and the city police rushed a battalion of 100 men. People gathered on Ayya Mudali Bridge at Chintadripet to watch the drama, The Hindu reported. The



unruly prisoners who climbed the terrace attacked the police with bricks, wooden logs, stones, and aluminium plates. Had the police delayed opening fire, the kitchen where gas cylinders and boilers were kept would have been blasted by the rioters, leading perhaps to the death of hundreds of persons, a prison official said. The prisoners who stood atop the terrace kept the policemen at bay for two hours. Hence, the police attacked the prisoners from all sides. This strategy had an immediate effect. Several prisoners were injured as they fell from the terrace while trying to jump from one building to another to escape the bullets. Police marksmen took aim from various points outside the prison, including the roofs of the Park station. Only after the police action could the fire tenders enter the prison and put out the flames which had gutted the record room. Scores of persons with bleeding injuries and the bodies of the victims were rushed out of the prison gates on stretchers and taken to hospitals in ambulances.

The police had a tough time preventing the relatives of the prisoners from entering the casualty ward of the Kilpauk Medical College and Hospital. Many broke through the cordon. Nearly 91 prisoners, 36 police personnel, and 10 jail workers were admitted to the hospitals. Jayakumar, warden Natarajan, and 11 prisoners died in the riot. Speaking in the Assembly, Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi denied that several inmates had escaped by taking advantage of the melee. The Chintadripet police registered a case against over 40 inmates for allegedly "forming themselves into an unlawful assembly, causing riot, and murdering the deputy jailor". The accused were identified as Vijji alias Tiruvottiyur Vijji, Vellai Ravi, Subramani, Seenu, Nandagopal, Vicky alias Adaikalaraj, Anandan, Nathan, and Vijaykumar. The police said Vijji, the prime accused, and Vellai Ravi were detained under the Goondas Act

and were accused in many other cases of murder, attempt-to-murder, and rioting.

'Singled out for devotion to duty' V. Kannadasan, former counsel for the prisons department, was part of the Justice David Christian Commission that probed the incident. He said the commission concluded that Vadivelu died of natural causes and the

rumours about his death were spread by a few prisoners to incite a revolt. Jayakumar was beaten to death by 10-15 prisoners who had spread the rumours. The commission said Jayakumar was singled out for his "devotion to duty and enforcement of discipline", and the jail staff had failed to protect him. The trial is still pending before the Fourth Additional Sessions Court.

Districts with excess nitrates in groundwater at seven-year high

There are 440 districts with excessive nitrates in their groundwater as of 2023, an increase from 359 such districts in 2017, according to a report by the Central Groundwater Board (CGWB) on Wednesday (January 1, 2025). This is a health hazard, particularly for young children, and a source of environmental toxicity. The data suggests that about 56% of India's districts have excessive nitrates — defined as more than 45 mg per litre — in their groundwater, largely due to the use of subsidised, nitrogenous, synthetic fertilizer, a key input for farming.

Of the 15,239 groundwater samples collected from across the country for testing, 19.8% had nitrates or nitrogen compounds above safe limits, according to the report by the CGWB, which comes under the ambit of the Jal Shakti Ministry. This proportion has not shifted much since 2017. In the 13,028 samples analysed in 2017, 21.6% had excessive nitrates. Concerns in south, central India Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu reported the maximum nitrate contamination problem, with 49%, 48%, and 37% of their tested samples respectively reporting numbers beyond the safe limit. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat have a longstanding nitrate problem with relative levels

fairly constant since 2017, the report says. However, regions in central and southern India are reporting an increasing trend, provoking worry. "Maharashtra (35.74%), Telangana (27.48%), Andhra Pradesh (23.5%) and Madhya Pradesh (22.58%) also show notable levels of nitrate contamination, pointing towards growing concern in central and southern regions of India," the report notes. Monsoon rainfall tends to increase nitrate levels, with 30.77% of samples contaminated in the pre-monsoon period compared to 32.66% after the rainy season. Uranium contamination Other major chemical contaminants affecting groundwater quality are fluoride and uranium. Fluoride concentrations exceeding the permissible limit are "a major concern" in Rajasthan, Haryana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. Rajasthan and Punjab reported the highest number of samples with uranium concentration exceeding 100 ppb (parts per billion). Anything over 30 ppb of uranium is considered unsafe and several of these samples were predominant in regions of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, where more groundwater is being over-exploited, with more water is being drawn out than is being replenished by rains or other means. "

MLC AVN Reddy hands over CMRF CHEQUES MLC AVN Reddy handed over CMRF cheque to the beneficiary on friday.



Hyderabad: Cheque worth Rs 42,000 and 29,000 has been handed over to JYOTHI husband shiva, and manasa father RAJU resident of Ramanthapur sai Krishnanagar venkatsainagar welfare association & balakrishna nagar in his office. On this occasion MLC AVN Reddy said that the Telangana government is implementing several reforms for the betterment of the people in the State. The government provides financial assistance through CMRF funds to the poor and needy people. So they have proper

opportunities. The beneficiaries expressed their heartfelt gratitude towards the MLC AVN Reddy, for the support extended to them. This initiative reflects the government's efforts to alleviate the financial burden on families seeking medical care in this programme. The local leaders POREDDY MAHESHWARREDDY, senior JOURNALIST A. VIJAYENDERREDDY, AIELESHYADAV, RAMESH, R. GOVIND, CH. SRINIVAS GOUD, ASHOK, NAVEEN Where participated



Indian Institute of Management and Commerce Degree College (IIMC) concluded the two-day Multi-Disciplinary Conference on Digital Innovations in Arts, Social Sciences, Research, and Technology, which was held on January 9, 2025.

The conference, conducted in an offline mode, brought together renowned academicians, researchers, and students from various disciplines to explore the transformative impact of digital technologies on education, research, and society. The Convener, Ms. N. Karuna Sree, welcomed the delegates and mentioned that "Digital innovations have become an integral part of our lives, reshaping how we think, learn, and interact. The integration of technology across various academic disciplines has opened up new possibilities for research, collaboration, and problem-solving".

The event was inaugurated by Prof. V. Viswanatham, Chairman, IIMC, who delivered an inspiring keynote address on the role of digital innovations in reshaping academic practices. In his speech, the Speaker emphasized the need for educational insti-

tutions to adopt digital tools and technologies to remain relevant in a rapidly evolving world.

The Guest of Honour, Sri P. Purna Chander Rao, Former Principal, IIMC, remarked that this event is a testament to our commitment to fostering meaningful academic dialogues. During this 36 papers were presented by the scholars through online mode. The jury members were Dr. K. Sreehari, Sri T. Srinivas, Sri K. Prasanth Kumar, Sri K. Ravi Kiran, Sri U. Thirupathi Swamy, Smt. C. R. L. Kalyani, Sri E. Rama Krishna, Sri C. R. V. S. S. Deepak, Smt. G. Sushma and Smt. G. Rama Devi.

The Best Paper Presenters were awarded with cash prizes. In her closing remarks, Ms. N. Karuna Sree, Convener of the Conference, expressed gratitude to the delegates, participants and emphasized the need for ongoing dialogue on the integration of digital innovations in research and education. She noted that the conference provided a valuable opportunity for academics to engage in meaningful discussions on how digital technologies are reshaping various disciplines.

CCMB's Young Innovators Program concludes



Hyderabad: The 12th edition of the annual Young Innovators Program, which provides an opportunity to students from Classes VIII to X to interact with genetic researchers for nearly a week, concluded at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB).

A total of 24 students from different schools were selected through a test that was taken by nearly 326 students and they spent a week in different labs and research facilities of CCMB.

The students were shown how DNA is used to detect genetic diseases, infectious

diseases are understood better through the biology of pathogens and how state-of-the-art cryo-electron microscope shows details of biomolecules even up to atomic levels, among others. "This programme was strategically designed for high school students upto Class X because that is the point where they need to make their choice of studying biology," said Dr Somdatta Karak, head of Science Communication and Public Outreach, CCMB. Dr Vinay K Nandicoori, director of CCMB, said, "Through this programme, every year, we connect brilliant young people.

Continental Hospitals Performs First Trans Oral Robotic Surgery in South India

Hyderabad: Continental Hospitals, Gachibowli, Hyderabad has performed the first Trans Oral Robotic Surgery (TORS) in South India using the SSI Mantra Robotic Surgical System. A 62-year-old, male patient, suffering from Oropharyngeal Cancer underwent a robotic surgical procedure which involved, partially resecting base of tongue and avoiding salvage total glossectomy (total tongue removal), doing a wide local excision with 1 cm margins and complete neck dissection. Robotic TORS has helped to avoid major morbidity of the patient. And the entire surgical procedure was completed in less than 3 hours. The patient had earlier undergone chemotherapy & radiation for the same cancer but unfortunately after three months had a residual cancer that required surgical intervention and was performed by an expert team of surgeons led by Sr Consultant for Head & Neck Surgery Dr Kranti Kumar. Continental Hospitals Founder & Chairman Dr Guru N Reddy congratulated the team of surgeons for this stupendous achievement and underlined the vital role played by the SSI Mantra Robotic System in the success of the procedure.

"We have thus far performed over 150 Robotic Surgeries at Continental. And these include procedures for a wide range of specialties such as gastroenterology, urology, gynecology, and surgical oncology amongst



others," added Dr Reddy. Highlighting Continental Hospital's commitment to advanced surgical practices that aid patient-centric care,

Continental Cancer Centre Director Dr P Jaganadh underlined the hospital's excellent team of surgeons and their collaborative ap-

proach to perform complex surgeries with precision, especially for regions that are difficult to access via normal surgical methods.

The Scrappage Policy Driving India Towards a Safer and more Sustainable Future

Hyderabad: India is the world's fifth-largest economy with a GDP of \$3.89 trillion. According to S&P, we're on track to become number three by 2030. The automotive industry is one of India's largest sectors and the growth of the CV segment has been instrumental in achieving this. According to a 2022 analysis by NITI Aayog and RMI, India currently transports around 4.6 billion tonnes of freight annually. This demand is driven by factors like urbanization, population growth, the expansion of e-commerce and rising income levels. As these trends continue, road freight movement is expected to rise to 9.6 trillion tonnes by 2050. Currently, around 70% of road freight is transported by India's 4 million trucks, mostly medium and heavy-duty vehicles. As the amount of road freight continues to grow, the number of trucks is expected to more than quadruple to approximately 17 million by 2050. But what does this economic growth mean for the environment? Even today, trucks are already responsible for about half of the well-to-wheel CO2 emissions from on-road transport. Most of the trucks on the road are older vehicles which do not conform to the latest emission standard, Bharat Stage VI ("BSVI", equivalent to EURO6). The government has therefore introduced a Vehicle Scrappage Policy which aims to phase out unfit commercial vehicles over 15 years old. Under this policy, vehicles must pass fitness and emission tests; if they fail, they are classified as End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs) and must be scrapped. The aim is to reduce pollution, improve road safety, and stimulate

the automobile industry by encouraging the purchase of newer, cleaner vehicles. According to a report by ICRA, more than 1.1 million medium and heavy-duty commercial vehicles have already surpassed the 15-year mark, with an additional 570,000 expected to do so by FY2026. Given this, it is imperative that these outdated vehicles are replaced with safer, cleaner alternatives. In short, the vehicle scrapping policy is nothing short of a lifeline for the sector and for society. Safety, at the Core India's roads have long been burdened with older trucks and buses that are not only inefficient but also dangerous. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has repeatedly highlighted the risks posed by older vehicles. According to their reports, commercial vehicles over 15 years old are significantly more prone to being involved in road accidents. Mechanical failures, particularly in brake systems and steering mechanisms, often lead to severe consequences. This is a critical issue we need to address as we move toward modernizing the sector. This is where the Vehicle Scrappage Policy steps in - it directly addresses this issue by steadily phasing out these unsafe vehicles. But this policy is not just about replacing old metal; it is about saving lives and transforming the nation's environmental footprint. In many ways, it marks the beginning of a new era - one where safety, sustainability and economic growth go hand-in-hand. It is a transformative step forward and its impact will be felt for years to come. Reducing Carbon Footprint

When it comes to pollution, the differ-



ence between old and new vehicles is staggering. A BSIII-compliant vehicle emits nearly 40 times more particulate matter than a BSVI vehicle. Just imagine the strain that puts on India's already polluted cities! The Scrappage Policy is absolutely pivotal in

tackling vehicular emissions because it pushes for the removal of older, more polluting vehicles from our roads. This is the need of the hour, especially in urban areas like Delhi NCR and Mumbai, where air quality is already a critical issue.

Bahut hua intezaar, ab hoga shuru dhoke ka vaar.

The Ultimate Adventure of MTV Roadies Double Cross Begins!

Hyderabad: Celebrating 20 iconic years, the adventure reality juggernaut MTV Roadies is all set to bring to fans its boldest and most unpredictable season yet— MTV Roadies Double Cross! The landmark season of the legacy show raises stakes higher, in a world where betrayal lurks around the corner, trust is rare, and every move is a double-edged sword. This season, fans will be treated to an adrenaline-fueled journey. Hero Karizma MTV Roadies Double Cross co powered by Avvatar Sports Nutrition and POCO, premieres on 11th January, every Saturday and Sunday at 7 PM on JioCinema.

Hosting this electrifying odyssey is Rannvijay Singha, the OG Roadie, whose return as the host cements the legacy of the show as it embarks on its boldest season. Joining him are the formidable Gang Leaders, each bringing unique strengths and their distinct style to the Journey. Gang Leader Prince Narula, celebrating a remarkable 10-year journey with MTV Roadies, solidifies his legacy as a master tactician and fearless competitor. Neha Dhupia returns with a fiery comeback, bringing her trademark blend of wisdom and firepower. Reigning champion Rhea Chakraborty is set to defend her title, while youth icon Elvish Yadav makes his debut as a Gang Leader, injecting fresh energy with his unfiltered persona.

With grueling twists and intense chal-

lenges, contestants must navigate a high-stakes play where every decision could seal their fate. Both contestants and Gang Leaders are drawn into a web of fragile alliances and game-changing moves, keeping viewers on the edge of their seats. Adding an exciting new dimension to the experience is the debut of the GD (Group Discussion) live raw experience exclusively available only on JioCinema. For the first time ever in the history of the genre-defining show, fans will be treated to an exclusive, unfiltered look at the chaotic madness and drama of making it to the biggest adventure reality show of the country. Speaking about this milestone season, Rannvijay Singha shared his excitement saying, "MTV Roadies has always felt like home to me and being part of this milestone season is truly special. With the Double Cross theme, fans are in for the most intense and unpredictable MTV Roadies journey yet. I am excited to reunite with Prince and Neha. And of course, I am all excited to work alongside Rhea and Elvish for the first time"

Gang Leader Prince Narula expressed his pride in completing a decade with MTV Roadies and promised to bring his signature strategy and intensity to the table once again, saying "After a decade with MTV Roadies, it still gives me goosebumps. Double Cross is going to test everyone and I'm ready to lead my gang through every twist and turn."



Ahead of a first-ever show in Delhi, a peek into Salvador Dali's surreal mind

Christine was perhaps not as impressed as the noisy crowd gathered outside the hotel for a glimpse of the Catalan, or the journalists waiting impatiently in the foyer. But she was observant. The phone rang and Dali's secretary answered. "Someone has come to meet Mr Dali," the hotel concierge told the secretary. Dali, who was talking to some people, gestured that he was busy. But the visitor was quite insistent. "She wants Mr Dali to sign a petition," the concierge called again. Dali, who was a good man, allowed the visitor to come to the room," Argillet, 70, recalls. "A few minutes later, an old woman stooped with age walked in. She wore golden-rimmed glasses, and a wide hat with a long feather sticking out to one side. She looked very angry. Waving a paper in her hand, said, 'Mr Dali, you need to sign this petition against torture right now!'" After several seconds Dali said, "But madame, I'm very sorry, but I love torture!" "The lady glowered at him and left," Argillet recounts. "The next day, most Parisian papers carried a story on their front pages: Dali admits he loves torture. My father, who had just opened a gallery in Paris, even received death threats." This incident is symptomatic of how easy it was to misunderstand Dali, Argillet says. "He would say things to shock people out of their bourgeois complacency or entitlement and he would state things very seriously. Even if he was saying them only to be humorous, he wouldn't let on," she adds. Born in 1904 in Catalonia, Spain, Salvador Dali is one of the best-known artists of

the 20th century, achieving fame for works that went beyond the canvas too. He contributed articles and illustrations to magazines, wrote two autobiographies (The Secret Life of Salvador Dali, 1942, and Diary of a Genius, 1963), a novel (Hidden Faces, a love story that ends with a hallucination in which Hitler awaits his death), and a seminal work on surrealism, 50 Secrets of Magic Craftsmanship.

He co-wrote the screenplay for a silent film (Un Chien Andalou or An Andalusian Dog; 1929), designed four covers for Vogue and a number for other magazines, and created commercial art for brands ranging from Bryans hosiery to Datsun cars. In the 1930s, he collaborated with fashion designers Elsa Schiaparelli and Coco Chanel. The former collaboration resulted in a suit meant to mimic a bureau, complete with semi-rigid drawers for pockets; and an iconic "lobster dress" (white, with the crustacean sprawled down the middle). In the latter, he designed the set and wrote the libretto for the ballet Bacchanale, performed by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Still, it would be disingenuous to speak of Dali as though he were unique in the early 20th century. European cities of the time were filled with eccentric greats whose influence extended outside the walls of the white cube and whose collaborations bridged the worlds of art, theatre, fashion and popular culture. Artists revolted against some ideas, and coalesced around others; they influenced people's tastes in a way that seems surreal today. Dadaists in Zurich were

sickened by the ways in which logic, reason and science were extolled to justify World War 1. Cubists imposed geometrical severity to underscore a fractured reality. Fauvists rebelled against the conventional utilisation of three-dimensional form, and used colour and brush stroke to delineate and attack the implied rigidity of the canvas. Futurists lionised the machine, and saw the restlessness of modern life as a kind of vitality. Dali, who trained at Madrid's School of Fine Arts, was influenced by these avant-garde movements. He burst onto the scene in a range of different ways, in what would be a turning point year for him: 1929. He was 25 when he met the poet Andre Breton, who headed a group of surrealists; showcased his silent film; met his future wife, the writer Gala (then married to the surrealist French poet Paul Eluard); and held his first exhibition in Paris.

He would soon outstrip them all, with art that distilled his approach to the world down to a single, dramatic idea: Reality wasn't real; it was a construct of the psyche. Surrealists wanted to bring the unconscious and the irrational of the psyche to light, no matter the artistic medium. Dali would become its most famous proponent. One of his best-known works, The Persistence of Memory (1931), remains a universal metaphor for the experience of living in our world. Yet, it is essential to place Dali in the context of his time. He painted at a time when fascism was on the rise in Italy and Germany. His canvases made fellow surre-

alists — many of whom were opposed to Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini — denounce his politics. He would eventually be shunned by other surrealists, who were using their voices and their art to speak against the rise of fascism, and were shocked that his only response seemed to be an interest in how the new fascist leaders had come to be. In February 1934, Breton and other Paris surrealists asked Dali to rework a painting that depicted, among other things, a slumped nurse propped by a wooden crutch (The Weaning of Furniture-Nutrition). In a previous version, she wore an armband bearing the reverse swastika, which Breton and his cohort took exception to. In a terse exchange of letters, Breton denounced Dali's "counter-revolutionary acts tending toward the glorification of Hitlerian fascism". Dali eventually reworked the painting, but wrote back to Breton, "I am Hitlerian neither in fact nor in intention". He argued that the Nazis would certainly burn his paintings, and probably him as well. He was nonetheless expelled from the group. The surrealists weren't the only ones who denounced Dali. In 1944, George Orwell wrote an essay calling him a "disgusting human being", after reading the autobiography Dali had published two years earlier. He was referring to the artist's stated acts of violence as a child and as an adult, as well as his fascination for corpses and excrement. Though Orwell knew that Dali's utterances were often intended to be outrageous and fantastical, he found them disturbing. Orwell added, however: "

Why was the no-detention policy rolled back?: Explained

The story so far: The Union government amended the Rules of the Right to Education Act, 2009 in December 2024 to allow schools to detain students in Classes 5 and 8 if they are unable to meet the promotion criteria after a year-end examination. Students will be given a second chance re-examination after two months of extra teaching. This rollback of the RTE Act's vision of a no-detention policy was initially brought through an amendment of the law in 2019, following which 18 States and UTs have reinstated the option to detain students; the 2024 amendment now extends the option to Central government-run schools too.

What was the rationale behind the original no-detention policy?

When the RTE Act was passed in 2009, it included Section 16, which stipulated that "No child admitted in a school shall be held back in any class or expelled from school till the completion of elementary education [Classes 1 to 8]". "The spirit of a no-detention policy was to ensure that children can learn without unnecessary pressure. Detention is demoralising to children. There was also an understanding that a single final year-end examination is not the best way to assess learning and decide on their progress," said Vimala Ramachandran, a former professor at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. "But it was implemented very shoddily. No detention became no testing, and in many schools, no teaching. It was a slippery slope." She noted that government schools in many States simply stopped testing in any form until Class 5, automatically promoting children without bothering to find out if they had acquired grade-specific skills and knowledge. Monitoring systems focussed on inputs or maybe indicators, rarely on outcomes.

Efforts to introduce a Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) programme instead, in coordination with UNICEF, were largely stymied by a lack of resources and training, and teacher apathy. In many schools, NCERT's CCE forms were simply filled en masse by teachers without an assessment of individual children's skills. A number of boards abandoned the model of multiple formative and summative assessments, retreating to the familiarity of a final year-end examination.

Why has it been rolled back?

Surveys conducted by both government and private entities in recent years have documented an alarming learning gap in India's schools. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), a respected survey spearheaded by the NGO Pratham, found that only 42.8% of Class 5 students could read a Class 2-level text in 2022, a fall from 50.5% in 2018. Only 25.6% of them could do basic arithmetic problems in 2022, a slight drop from 27.9% in 2018. Even more worryingly, ASER 2023 tested foundational skills in youth aged 14 to 18 years and found that a quarter of them still cannot read a Class 2 level text fluently in their regional language. More than half struggle with division (3-digit by 1-digit) problems, a skill taught in Class 3 and 4. The Department of School Education's National Achievement Survey



2021 also showed clear declines as students moved up the school ladder. Out of a maximum 500, Class 3 students scored an average of 323 in language and 306 in Mathematics. By Class 5, the scores dropped to 309 and 284 respectively, and to 302 and 255 by Class 8. A government analysis of Classes 10 and 12 results across 59 State and national boards in 2023 showed that more than 65 lakh students had failed to clear their examinations, with a failure rate ranging from 12% in national boards to 18% in State boards.

"In the name of promoting all students in the younger classes, we are adversely affecting them in later life," said Joseph Emmanuel, who was academic director of the Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) till a few months ago, when he took charge of the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE). "There is a clear learning gap that was exacerbated by the COVID disruptions. This [rollback of the no-detention policy] is a good example of evidence-based decision making." Dr. Ramachandran said the amendment represents a regression, and instead called for better mechanisms to assess children's learning and hold teachers accountable.

What is the way forward?

"Timely remedial action is needed at every stage. There must be regular assessment done at the school level in every class, not at the board level. Who is the best judge of a child's learning? It is their own teachers. We must trust teachers and equip them," said Dr. Emmanuel. He noted that the Rules require the class teacher to "provide specialised inputs after identifying the learning gaps at various stages of assessment" and stipulate that the school Head personally monitor the progress of the children who are held back. "More accountability is being brought in," he said. Dr. Ramachandran said

the focus of accountability must change. "Instead of detaining and punishing the child for not doing well, we need a way to hold the teacher responsible and accountable," she said. Too many teachers only focus on the children in the front rows of their classroom, often discriminating against those from lower

socio-economic backgrounds who may struggle more and are more likely to be detained. "Rigorous teacher appraisal is needed to ensure inclusive teaching. There must be some consequences for the teacher, not just the student, as well as incentives to ensure this," she urged.

Hygiene violations noticed at restaurants in Kompally

The Task Force teams of Telangana's Commissioner of Food Safety carried out inspections at popular restaurants in Kompally area of Medchal-Malkajgiri district on December 30, uncovering numerous hygiene violations. At Malnadu Kitchen, raw meat, including chicken and mutton, was found dumped in refrigerators in an unhygienic manner, posing risk of contamination. Prepared food items such as mutton curry and fried chicken wings were stored in a cold room without proper labelling and were subsequently discarded. Synthetic food colors were seized on suspicion of their use in prepared dishes. The inspectors discovered rodent excreta in various storage areas, poorly maintained refrigerators, patchy flooring, and littered food waste. Additionally, walls were oily, and tiles were broken in some spots. Dustbins were left open, and a paintbrush was found being used to apply butter. Raw and semi-cooked food, as well as vegetarian and non-vegetarian items, were stored together, violating basic safety standards, as per a release. The task force teams of Telangana's Commissioner of Food Safety inspected restaurants in Kompally on December 30. At Platform-65 Train Theme Restaurant, inspectors found patchy and slippery flooring littered with food waste. Drains were clogged with stagnant water and

food residue, and refrigerators were unhygienic, with uncovered and unlabelled food items. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food articles were stored together, and some food items were placed directly on the floor in the storage area. There were also instances of food and non-food articles being stored together. The task force teams of Telangana's Commissioner of Food Safety inspected restaurants in Kompally on December 30. At Ulavacharu, officials seized expired food items, including 139 bottles of misbranded and expired goli soda. Rotten vegetables, such as tomatoes, were found in the kitchen, along with synthetic food colours suspected of being used in prepared dishes. The walls and ceiling of the restaurant were flaky, shedding particles into the environment, and the flooring was patchy and slippery with food waste. Raw meat, including chicken and mutton, was stored in refrigerators in an unhygienic condition, posing risk of contamination. The drains lacked proper insect traps and were clogged, while the grinding and washing areas were found to be extremely unhygienic. Additionally, the exhaust system was greasy and unclean, and paintbrushes were being used to apply butter.

Guidelines on playing national anthem

The Story So Far: On Monday (January 6, 2025), Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi left the Legislative Assembly without delivering the customary address on the opening day of the first session of the year, complaining that national anthem was not played before his scheduled address. Last year too, he had refused to read out his address citing similar reasons.

What did the Tamil Nadu Raj Bhavan say?

The Raj Bhavan has alleged "the Constitution of Bharat and the National Anthem were once again insulted in the Tamil Nadu Assembly." It said respecting the national anthem is among the first fundamental duties enshrined in our Constitution. It is sung in all the State legislatures at the beginning and the end of Governor's address. Not singing the anthem is a matter of grave concern. Not to be a party to such "brazen disrespect to the Constitution and the National Anthem," the Governor in deep anguish left the House.

What is the defence of the Tamil Nadu government?

As per convention, the State anthem — Tamil Thai Vazhthu — is played at the beginning of the Governor's address, and the national anthem is played at the end of the address. The practice of playing the State anthem at the commencement of the Governor's address and the national anthem at the end in Tamil Nadu Assembly was introduced in July 1991 when the AIADMK government, led by Jayalalithaa, was in power. At that time, Bhishma Narain Singh was Governor. Prior to that, the Governor would enter the House, deliver the address, and leave. More on this from the archives here.

How is the national anthem played during Governor's address in other Legislative Assemblies?

Each House follows its own convention. For instance, in Nagaland, the national anthem was not played at all for several decades. It was played for the first time in February 2021 when R.N. Ravi was the Governor of the northeastern State. Likewise, in March 2018, the national anthem was played for the first time in the Tripura Assembly.

What is the practice in Parliament when the President's address is delivered?

When the President reaches his seat on the dais, a band, installed in the lobby of the Central Hall to the right of the President, plays the national anthem. Thereafter, as the President sits down, the Presiding Officers, members, and visitors in the galleries resume their seats. The President then reads the printed address, in Hindi or English, followed by a reading of the address in the other version if necessary by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha. After the conclusion of the address, the President rises in his/her seat, followed by the members and visitors in the galleries when the national anthem is played again. The President, thereafter, leaves the Central Hall in a procession, which is formed in the same manner as that at the time of his arrival.

What does the Constitution say?

Section 51(A)(a) of the Constitution of India, dealing with fundamental duties, says: It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the national flag and the national anthem.

What does the order issued by the Min-

istry of Home Affairs say?

The full version of the national anthem shall be played on the following occasions:

- i) Civil and Military investitures
- ii) When national salute (which means the Command "Rashtriya Salute – Salami Shastri" to the accompaniment of the national anthem is given on ceremonial occasions to the President or to the Governor/Lieutenant Governor within their respective States/ Union Territories
- iii) During parades – irrespective of whether any of the dignitaries referred to in (ii) above is present or not
- iv) On arrival of the President at formal State functions and other functions organised by the Government and mass functions and on his departure from such functions
- v) Immediately before and after the President addresses the nation over All India Radio

vi) On arrival of the Governor/Lieutenant Governor at formal State functions within his State/Union Territory and on his departure from such functions

vii) When the national flag is brought on parade

viii) When the regimental colours are presented ix) For hoisting of colours in the Navy

When is mass singing of the national anthem required?

The full version of the anthem shall be



played accompanied by mass singing on the following occasions: On the unfurling of the national flag, on cultural occasions or ceremonial functions other than parades. On arrival of the President at any government or public function (but excluding formal State functions and mess functions) and also immediately before his departure from such functions.

Can punishment be imposed for not playing national anthem at official functions?

On January 29, 2019, the Prime Minister, Tamil Nadu Governor, and Chief Minister had participated at a function in Madurai for laying the foundation stone for an AIIMS building. The national anthem, as well as

Tamil Thai Vazhthu, were not played at this function. Objecting to this, a woman named Vembu had moved the Madras High Court seeking a direction to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to frame the rules, for imposing punishment and also to take action against the Chief Secretary for disobedience, in not playing national anthem. The court pointed out that a bare reading of her representation made it abundantly clear that when the petitioner herself has stated that there is no mandate for national anthem being sung, as a thumb rule, but only a customary practice, mandamus sought for against the respondents, cannot be issued. The court dismissed her petition.

What is the 'vomiting bug' norovirus? Explained

Even as India comes to term with the human metapneumovirus (HMPV) and doctors urge calm among citizens, the United States is grappling with outbreaks of another viral illness -- norovirus. Media reports indicate that cases of this highly-contagious 'vomiting bug' have spiked this winter. Here's quick guide as to what this virus is and how to safeguard against it.

What is norovirus?

Norovirus is a common group of viruses that cause vomiting and diarrhoea. It belongs to the Caliciviridae family of viruses that cause inflammation of your stomach and intestines. There are many different strains of norovirus. The virus was first identified in stool samples collected after a gastroenteritis outbreak at a school in Norwalk, Ohio in 1968. It is, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the leading cause of vomiting and diarrhea, and food-borne illness in the United States.

What are the signs and symptoms of norovirus?

Stomach pain, nausea, diarrhoea and vomiting are the most common symptoms. Symptoms usually set in within 12 to 48 hours of exposure to the virus and usually last one to three days. Some people may also have muscle pain, headaches and fever. Several bouts of vomiting or diarrhoea could also lead to dehydration, the symptoms of which include, dry mouth and throat, decreased urination and feeling dizzy when getting up.



According to the CDC anyone who consumes raw shellfish is at risk of contracting norovirus. Children younger than five, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to develop severe infections.

How is norovirus spread?

Norovirus is extremely contagious. It can spread through contaminated food or water, contaminated surfaces or close contact with someone who has the virus. A person is most contagious when they have symptoms of norovirus, especially vomiting, but continues to remain contagious for a few days after they get better. The infection oc-

curs most frequently in closed and crowded environments.

How is norovirus treated?

Norovirus can usually be treated at home with rest and taking a lot of fluids. There are no specific medicines to treat norovirus. Patients must ensure they do not get dehydrated. Oral rehydration fluids can help with dehydration.

What are the preventive measures that people can take?

Washing your hands with soap and water frequently and thoroughly is one of the best preventive measures.

Ahead of Delhi election, Kejriwal shuns roadshows for padayatras to reclaim his aam aadmi image

On October 16 last year, nearly a month after walking out of jail, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal announced a public outreach drive to tell Delhi residents about the “truth” behind the BJP-led Centre’s “ploy” to imprison AAP leaders. Other than Mr. Kejriwal, two other senior leaders from his party — Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh — went to jail (and were later granted bail) in connection with probes into the excise policy case. AAP, which was born out of the India Against Corruption movement, was finding itself cornered by the Delhi units of the BJP and the Congress over allegations of liquor “scam”. It was in this context that Mr. Kejriwal asked party workers to go door to door with his letter explaining the “motive” behind the Centre’s bid to “finish off AAP”. Later that day, addressing an audience in east Delhi’s Khichripur, the AAP chief spoke for about eight minutes and, in an unexpected move, stepped down from the stage and started a padayatra (foot march) through the area’s crowded streets.

Direct connect Over the next 40 minutes, Mr. Kejriwal walked around with folded hands, stopping every 30 seconds or so to hug someone, click selfies, and strike up conversations while disregarding the security cordon set up around him by the Delhi police — the AAP chief is accorded Z-plus security. This was the beginning of a series of at least 15 padayatras that Mr. Kejriwal held across the national capital for the next two months. He is expected to embark on many more such foot marches in the city over the coming days in the run-up to the Delhi Assembly election due in February this year as part of a calculated strategy to connect with voters, party sources told The Hindu. His decision to connect with the public on foot stands out because it is a departure from how he campaigned in the 2020 poll when he held roadshows atop vehicles and waved at people while being encircled by rows of security personnel. ‘Aam aadmi image’ In the run-up to the upcoming election, Mr. Kejriwal has gone back to reinforcing his pre-2015 image, where he was seen as an aam aadmi (common man) roaming around the streets in a half-sleeved shirt and a pair of sandals. “As the BJP put Kejriwalji and Manishji in jail, there was an absence of top leadership at the ground level. We felt that we needed to connect more closely with people and that they needed to see more of Kejriwalji. That is the reason why we decided to go back to the idea of the padayatra,” said another party insider. The source added that the party is planning many more foot marches and much fewer roadshows compared to its campaign in 2020. “Brand AAP is directly proportional to brand Arvind Kejriwal. If he goes away from the public eye, the party’s popularity dips sharply,” explained a top AAP strategist. AAP insiders say they are expecting a tougher battle in the upcoming election than what they saw in 2015, when AAP won 67 out of 70 seats, or in 2020, when it won 62 seats. “This is the reason behind the padayatras and the early announcement of candidates — we’re trying to steal a march on the BJP and the Congress.” Since his release from Tihar Jail on September 13 on the Supreme Court’s orders, Mr. Kejriwal has been racing against time to cover the distance — from address-



ing small gatherings, attending wrestling matches, addressing press conferences,

and appearing for interviews. “This has made a difference and our surveys show that we

are in a better position now than in October or November,” said a party source.

ICMR detects two cases of HMPV in babies in Karnataka through routine surveillance

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has detected two cases of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in Karnataka. Both cases were identified through routine surveillance for multiple respiratory viral pathogens, as part of ICMR’s ongoing efforts to monitor respiratory illnesses across the country. The two cases that tested positive for HMPV are babies, who had a history of bronchopneumonia, and were admitted at Baptist Hospital in Bengaluru. These are the first cases of HMPV detected in the country after China reported a surge in HMPV cases.

While one of them — a three-month-old female baby — has recovered and has been discharged, another eight-month-old male infant, who tested positive for HMPV on January 3, after being admitted to the same hospital, is now recovering. Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao speaks about HMPV cases in Bengaluru

According to officials from the Union Health Ministry, it is important to note that neither of the affected patients have any history of international travel. The Union Health Ministry is monitoring the situation through all available surveillance channels, said a statement. “It is emphasised that HMPV is already in circulation globally, including in India, and cases of respiratory illnesses associated with HMPV have been reported in various countries. Furthermore, based on current data from ICMR and the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP)



The two cases that tested positive for HMPV, the first to be detected in the country after China reported a surge in the virus, are babies who had a history of bronchopneumonia

network, there has been no unusual surge in Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) or Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) cases in the country,” the statement said. No cause for panic, says Karnataka Health Minister Harsh Gupta, Karnataka’s Principal Secretary (Health and Family Welfare), said HMPV is usually detected in children under the age of 11 and about 1% of all samples tested for respiratory illnesses are HMPV. “This may not be the first case as monitoring was not being done earlier. However, there is no need to panic as HMPV is like any other respira-

tory virus, which causes a common cold and flu-like symptoms during winter, especially among the younger and older age groups,” he said. Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the strain of virus detected in the babies is not yet known as there is no data available so far on the strain detected in China. “It is an existing virus and there is no need to panic. I am reviewing the situation and have called a meeting in the afternoon. We have to discuss if this is really a public health concern that can lead to a pandemic-like situation,” he said.