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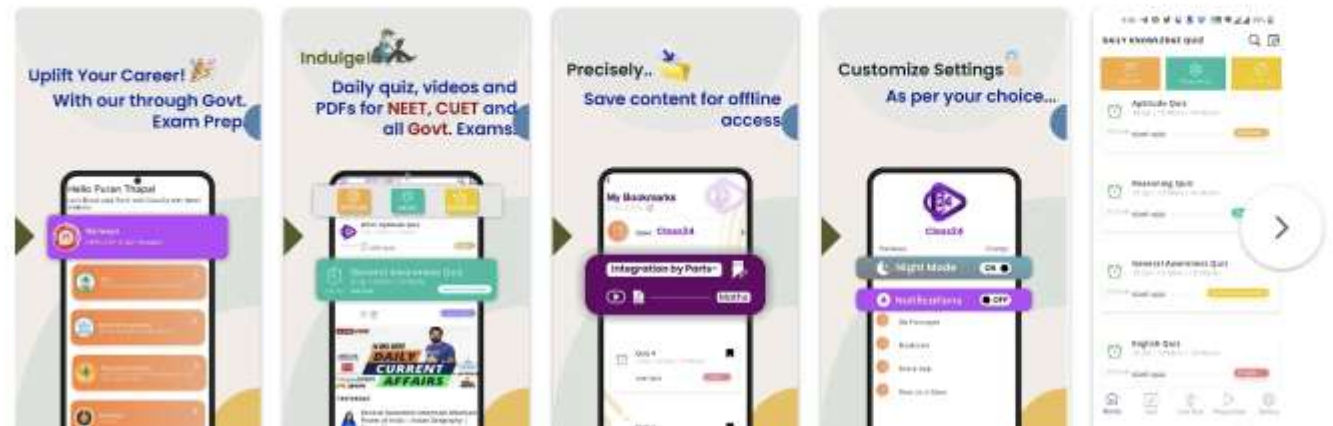
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SC refuses DMICs petition seeking a gag on the TVK

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that imposing a judicial ban on Tamil Nadu's ruling TVK leaders from making public statements listing political rivals with the Karur stampede may amount to an injunction on "free speech".



Le Pen cleared to run for President, but to wear tag

PARIS
French far-right chief Marine Le Pen's political future remained uncertain on Tuesday after a court cleared her to run but wearing an identification tag, potentially hampering a campaign for next year's presidential elections when her party has its strongest chance of winning power.



Minimum age for marriage applies to all faiths: HC

NEW DELHI
The national High Court has held that the minimum age of marriage prescribed under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act applies to all citizens irrespective of religion, adding that Muslim personal law cannot override provisions of the Central law.

3 killed in debris slip at tunnel site in Wayanad

Heap of excavated mud at a tunnel construction site in Kerala gives way amid rainy CM announces investigation; Minister says private construction firm ignored warnings by district administration



Close call: A CCTV screenshot shows people who narrowly escaped the mud deluge that swept away construction workers, passers-by, and local vehicles, and even schoolbuses, in Wayanad on Tuesday.

The Hindu Bureau WAYANAD

At least three people were killed and five injured, including a school bus driver, when a massive heap of excavated mud slipped from the portal of an under-construction tunnel road in Wayanad district of Kerala on Tuesday. Emergency responders have rescued 10 people from the accident site so far.

The deceased have been identified as Chandra Babu from Madhya Pradesh, Bhabu Kumar from Bihar, and Asmit from Jharkhand, workers of the tunnel project.

Security cameras captured the moment when a sea of mud deluged the area around 11 a.m., sweeping away construction workers, passers-by, parked cars/buses, and a multi-axle tanker lorry. Officials said a total of 18 people were caught in the incident. Of these, 10 were admitted to WIMS Hospital, Meppadi, with injuries and five were later discharged.

Local people told prosecutors they heard a

crash, followed by a fast-moving wave of debris that seemed to swallow everything in its path. The mishap occurred near the Meenakshi bridge entrance of the ambitious subterranean road project. Chief Minister V.D. Sarthawan and Agriculture Minister T. Siddique said heavy rain had hindered the "professionally planned" heap of earth at the Anakkampuzha-Kalladi-Meppadi tunnel's entrance, ultimately causing it to come crashing down with a deafening sound.

They termed the incident a disaster caused by human error, abandonment of safety precautions, and sheer negligence, noting that government warnings had been ignored. The rescue operation included the Disaster Response Force units, the Fire and Rescue Department, the police, the State Disaster Response Force, and local volunteers. Rescue workers cross-referenced duty logs to determine the identity of the people who may still be trapped under the mud.

Mr. Siddique, the Minister in charge of Wayanad and Kozhikode MLAs, said the district administration had repeatedly raised red flags, warning the private construction firm of an impending accident. The firm has been contracted by Konkani Railway Corporation Limited to construct the twin-tube tunnels connecting Kozhikode and Wayanad districts.

Mr. Siddique and his Cabinet colleague A.P. Anil Kumar visited the disaster site and held a review meeting at WIMS Hospital. Mr. Siddique said the casualties would have been still higher if the construction operations, which were partially suspended due to heavy rain, had been in full swing. The debris pile that collapsed in the rain included rocks blasted for the construction of the approach roads and bridges in the tunnel, he said.

Mr. Sarthawan announced an investigation involving multiple agencies to its accountability. He said the district authorities had issued an ultimatum on June 20 to the builders

to remove the accumulated mud from the locality, noting that Public Works Department Minister P.K. Babu had called a meeting of stakeholders and flagged the precarious nature of the heap of mired mud.

Bridge safety review
The government has shifted 10 residential areas to safer locations, halted traffic on the Meenakshi bridge, and ordered the PWD to review its structural safety.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Wayanad MP and Congress general secretary, said offets were under way to rescue those trapped. The Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly, Pinarayi Vijayan, demanded a thorough investigation to determine any lapse or criminal negligence that had led to the tragedy. He expressed support and extended aid to the rescue workers.

CONTRACTOR'S FAILURE
PAGE 9

Modi highlights need for two-state solution to end Israel-Palestine conflict

Highlighting the role of dialogue and diplomacy has become more important than ever before. On the issue of Palestine, we continue to support a two-state solution on the basis of the 1947 UN Partition Plan for Palestine.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto on Tuesday.

Highlighting the role of dialogue and diplomacy has become more important than ever before. On the issue of Palestine, we continue to support a two-state solution on the basis of the 1947 UN Partition Plan for Palestine. There is strong synergy in our respective outlooks on our respective outlooks on the Indo-Pacific. "They welcomed the memorandum of understanding signed on 17 June 2020, mentioned the joint statement in reference to the agreement signed between the U.S. and Iran to end the war in West Asia, while adding that "transit passage through the Strait of Hormuz" has to be in accordance with international law including the provisions of UNCLOS".

It further mentioned that the Indonesian President welcomed "India's interest in partnering on the challenges that will allow India to deliver the Brah-

'LNG tanker on fire in Hormuz'

Associated Press
A tanker travelling off the coast of Oman in the Strait of Hormuz was struck by a fire on Tuesday, the British military said. The attack targeted a vessel moving through the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf. Iranian state television said the largest natural gas tanker came under attack after ignoring warnings. The tanker did not directly claim the assault. According to the U.K. Maritime Trade Organisation (UMTMO), three tankers were hit in the Strait of Hormuz in the past 24 hours.

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Gujarat HC upholds death sentence for 38 convicts in Ahmedabad blasts case

the special court, of whom 40 were convicted.

The Bench also accepted the State government's plea seeking confirmation of the death sentences. The High Court directed the State government to pay compensation of ₹10 lakhs to the next of kin of each person killed. The State and ₹5 lakh to those who sustained grievous injuries. The compensation is to be disbursed before March 30, 2022.

Hospitals targeted
On July 26, 2008, a serial bomb blasts ripped through different parts of Ahmedabad in a case of 70 minutes, killing 80 people and injuring more than 200 others. Explosions also occurred at hos-



Charred vehicles at a hospital in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, after serial blasts on July 26, 2008, left 80 people dead.

in Ahmedabad in connection with the explosion and 18 cases from Surat. The first known instance of hospitals being targeted in a terror attack in Ahmedabad in India. The investigation culminated in a joint trial after 35 cases were clubbed together - 20 FIRs registered

from Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and other States. Special Public Prosecutor Anil Patel said the State had placed evidence against the accused before the High Court. He said the court heard the matter extensively for nearly two months and 11 days, with day-to-day hearings being conducted non-adjacently this year before reserving its verdict.

The February 2022 verdict remains the first occasion where several representations were awarded the death penalty in a single judgment. "Justice delivered" Today, the Gujarat High Court delivered one of in-

of the people of Gujarat for their efforts in securing the convictions. He said the investigation team had worked tirelessly over the years without any lapses or compromise, making "the verdict possible". "Justice had finally been delivered to the victims, their families and the people of Gujarat after years of mourning," he said. Referring to the High Court's direction to compensate the victims, he said the Gujarat government would immediately implement the order by providing ₹10 lakh to the families of those killed in the blasts and ₹5 lakh to those who sustained grievous injuries.

Justice delivered
Today, the Gujarat High Court delivered one of in-

CJP's original X handle is back online after HC order

The original X handle of the Cuckoo's Nest Party has become online after the Delhi High Court on Tuesday directed its restoration.

The Centre founded the Bench that it no longer had any objection to the restoration of the account. Justice Swarasa Kaula has also passed the order while hearing a petition filed by CJP founder Abhishek Dikter challenging the government's decision.

CJP's X account back online after High Court order

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The original X handle of the CJP has become active after the Delhi High Court on Tuesday allowed its restoration. The Centre informed the Bench that it no longer had any objection to unblocking the account.

Justice Swaraj Kant Sharma passed the order while hearing a petition filed by CJP founder Abhishek Dipka challenging the government's decision to withhold the account in India. Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta told the court that the account had been blocked as a precautionary measure before the June 21 NREIT (IG) re-vest. Now that the exam was over, he said, the Centre had "no difficulty" if the account was unblocked.

The Solicitor General said the precautionary measure was taken over the argument that certain posts on the account had the potential to create confusion and panic among the lakhs of candidates and parents. The posts would have created chaos among the students and their parents, of course.



Abhishek Dipka

Now the examination is over, Mr. Mehta said. "Since NREIT is already over, the primary concern is no longer of any relevance. In these circumstances, the order is revoked. The petition is allowed." Justice Sharma ordered.

During earlier proceedings, senior advocate Abhishek Dipka, appearing for Mr. Dipka, argued that the CJP's content was "pure satire", and contended that if the authorities found any individual post objectionable, only those specific posts should have been restricted.

The CJP emerged on social media in May as a satirical digital movement following the controversy surrounding remarks made by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant.

Four States reach a pact on Narmada project payments

Union Home Minister says that issue of pending payments had remained unresolved for a long time and it had been settled amicably water and electricity have reached all four States, he adds

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh reached an agreement on Tuesday on the settlements of pending payment issues among the Narmada Award beneficiary States.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Minister of Jal Shakti C. B. Puri. Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnis (Maharashtra), Bhupendra Patel (Gujarat), Bhajan Lal Sharma (Rajasthan) and Mohan Vasav (Madhya Pradesh) signed the agreement, which relates to the cost-sharing arrangements for the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Project.

Under the agreement, the payments to be made towards the final settlement of pending dues have been resolved through a one-time settlement. Mr. Shah said that the issue of pending payments under the Narmada Award had remained unresolved among the four States for a long time, but it had been resolved



Common platform: Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Minister of Jal Shakti C. B. Puri with the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan. (I)

amicably on Tuesday. He said that with the completion of the dam, water and electricity have reached every part of the four States. He added that while the benefits accruing to Rajasthan may appear modest at first glance, the areas that have received Narmada waters have witnessed a transformation in both the fortune of the farmers.

The Union Home Minister said that let it be Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana or Maharashtra, the water ultimately served the people. He said that the cost-sharing arrangements for the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Project, which was a three-decade-old issue, has also been resolved. He said that the issue of pending payments under the Narmada Award had remained unresolved among the four States for a long time, but it had been resolved

Plea claims 'silent compulsion' in E20 petrol roll-out

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court claiming an element of "silent compulsion" in the E20 petrol roll-out, while seeking full disclosure on chemical composition and safety aspects that may be in place in the case of legacy vehicles.

The petition, filed by Supreme Court advocate and petitioner in person - Narendra Kumar Goswami, demands invoking the fundamental freedoms of equal treatment by the law, and the right to own a livelihood and lead a dignified life, raised Article 103(A) rights to property and the Consumer Protection Act of 2008 to contend that the right to know the composition, quality, standard, and compatibility consequences of a product was not a "decorative consumer slogan but a constitutional requirement when the state itself creates a nationwide compulsory market".

Mr. Goswami said ethanol was not an inert additive. "Ethanol is hydrocarbon, may affect certain fuel system materials, has lower energy density than petrol, and may have implications for fuel efficiency, engine performance, maintenance, warranty and long-term vehicle health," the petitioner contended.

Right to know the composition, quality, and compatibility effects of a product a constitutional requirement, petition

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) issued a separate E20 specification, and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways had created a staged compatibility schedule, showing that E20 compatibility was "not universal but vehicle-specific", the lawyer said.

The petition does not seek to roll back India's ethanol blending policy. The constitution in the petition is that a welfare policy cannot be implemented by keeping citizens in the dark about what they are buying, whether their vehicles can safely use it, and whether they have any meaningful alternatives.

The petition has sought the constitution of an independent expert committee to examine "real-world E20 compatibility".

SC turns down DMK plea for judicial bar on TVK remarks

Krishnakumar Rajasekhar NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said imposing a judicial bar on Tamil Nadu's ruling Tamil Vada Kaashigam (TVK) leaders from making public statements linking political events with the Karur stampede will amount to an injunction on free speech.

The court advised the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) to make its own counter speeches, and file the "free speech" with "more speech", rather than try for a judicial gag.

The remarks by a bench headed by Justice K.V. Viswanathan came during the hearing of a plea alleging that TVK Ministers were

making false accusations and "threats" against political opponents in connection with the stampede.

The Karur tragedy had left 41 dead and 142 injured in the TVK rally on September 27 and 28 last year. The top court had ordered a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the stampede on October 13, 2020.

Senior advocate Bhanu Kumar, appearing for the DMK's organising secretary B.S. Bharathi, said TVK Ministers like Mr. Ar. Arundhanji, who is also among TVK leaders, have been treated from making any such public statements during the pendency of the investigation.

"This may amount to an injunction on free speech, making false accusations and 'threats' against political opponents in connection with the stampede. The Karur tragedy had left 41 dead and 142 injured in the TVK rally on September 27 and 28 last year. The top court had ordered a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the stampede on October 13, 2020.

Mr. Kumar, which law sections 87 also make your free speech with more speech", Justice Viswanathan remarked.

The Bench questioned the propriety of entitling a DMK plea for an injunction in a case in which it had ordered a CBI investigation and was monitoring progress. The court referred to Mr. Bharathi's submission in the application that he would be filing a concept petition against the public statement allegedly made by TVK leaders, but Viswanathan said the court could not be convinced into a political forum.

Mr. Kumar, acting on instructions, finally chose to withdraw the application.

IIM-B to establish its first overseas campus in Indonesia: Modi

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced that the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIM-B) will establish its first campus in Indonesia, describing the initiative as a major step towards strengthening educational ties and benefiting students across the ASEAN region.

The announcement was made during Mr. Modi's visit to Indonesia in a joint press statement with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto. The proposed campus will be set up in the economic growth zone (SEZ) in

long and is aimed at advancing the internationalisation of India's higher education system.

The campus will offer programmes focused on areas such as global supply chains, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, climate and sustainability, and healthcare management. The curriculum will also include interactions with industry leaders and eminent academics.

The initiative will be implemented through a memorandum of understanding between IIM Bangalore and PT Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS), the managing agency of the SEZ, in the

HC upholds marriage age for all religions

Lalita Mishra NEW DELHI

The Allahabad High Court has held that the minimum age of marriage prescribed under the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act (SMPSA), 1975, applies to all citizens irrespective of religion, observing that the Muslim personal law principle recognising puberty as the age of marriage cannot override the provisions of the Central Law.

The observations were made in a judgment pronounced on July 1 by a Division Bench of Justices J.J. Mani and Justice Asmita Sachdev while hearing a writ petition seeking to quash an FIR registered against people in connection with the alleged at-

tempt to solemnise the marriage of a 16-year-old girl in Bahadurganj district of Uttar Pradesh in February.

The petitioners argued that under the Muslim Personal Law, a girl who has attained puberty is competent to marry, and that the PCMA does not override the provisions of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1975.

The Bench acknowledged that High Courts across the country have taken divergent views on whether marriages involving Muslim minors are governed by Muslim personal law or by the PCMA, and the Protection of Children

from Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act, 2012. However, it agreed with the reasoning adopted by the Kerala High Court in *Mohdoyy Anis v. Sub Inspector, Bahadurganj Police Station*, which held that personal law cannot override the statutory prohibition on child marriage or abuse of operation of the POCSO Act.

The age of marriage, in our considered opinion, for every citizen of the country, irrespective of religion, is that which is set out by the PCMA, the court said. It added that permitting the marriage of a person below 18 years would be inconsistent with the POCSO Act, which enforces sexual relations with a child.

WhatsApp username debate brings informational privacy to the fore

NEWS ANALYSIS Krishnakumar Rajasekhar NEW DELHI

What is perhaps not generally known about the WhatsApp "username" debate is that both the instant messaging platform and the Centre, in different ways, ultimately seek the same objective: protecting the informational privacy of users.

The Supreme Court, in its August 2017 judgment delivered by a nine-judge Bench, held that "informational privacy" is a facet of the fundamental right to privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution. The court recognised that threats to privacy in the information age could arise not only from the state but also from non-state actors.

WhatsApp claims that its optional "username" feature, publicly announced on June 29 but yet to be rolled out in In-



WhatsApp says the optional feature enhances privacy, but the Centre is wary of cyber risks.

dia, enhances user privacy. A username would prevent a user's phone number from being accessed by someone who does not already have it. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), however, has contended that the feature could lead to an increase in cyberstalking. In its communication to WhatsApp, the Ministry listed an array of online crimes that could compromise informational privacy.

These included online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, impersonation and identity spoofing, including impersonation of individuals, public authorities, financial institutions and government agencies, by permitting the adoption of usernames closely resembling those of genuine persons or institutions.

Critics argue that the government cannot interfere in a company's launch of a lawful feature without a clear statutory basis. The government, however, may contend that its communication seeks to protect national security and safe-guard public welfare.

The 2017 judgment in the Justice K.S. Puttaswamy case observed that while the "web is a source of lawful activity", concerns of national security also arise because "the seamless structure of the web can be exploited by terrorists to wreak havoc on societies. Cyber attacks can threaten financial systems". However, the Constitution Bench also held that any encroachment on privacy must be justified by a fair law, backed by a legitimate aim, and must satisfy the test of proportionality. While observing that "law and technology do not exist like oil and water", the top court, in the *Anuradha Bhaskar* case, posed a pertinent question: "What do we need more liberty or security for everyone and they have a legitimate purpose, we need to check ourselves from the platitudes of rhetoric and provide a meaningful answer so that everyone has a reasonable security and sufficient liberty. The prohibition of the 'web is a source of lawful activity', concerns of national security also arise because 'the seamless structure of the

Amarnath yatra sees uptick in pilgrims; record 1.3 lakh visit shrine in first five days

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The ongoing Amarnath yatra in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday registered a record uptick in pilgrims, with a fair law, backed by a legitimate aim, and must satisfy the test of proportionality. While observing that "law and technology do not exist like oil and water", the top court, in the *Anuradha Bhaskar* case, posed a pertinent question: "What do we need more liberty or security for everyone and they have a legitimate purpose, we need to check ourselves from the platitudes of rhetoric and provide a meaningful answer so that everyone has a reasonable security and sufficient liberty. The prohibition of the 'web is a source of lawful activity', concerns of national security also arise because 'the seamless structure of the

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CBI files first chargesheet in ₹4,097 cr. RCFL case

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Tuesday filed the first chargesheet against seven accused in the Reliance Commercial Finance Limited (RCFL) case.

Reliance Information Ltd., Reliance Home Finance Ltd. (RHFL) and five former senior executives of RCFL - then director Devraj Prasad Mehta, directors Ravindra Srinivasan and Dhyanraj Bhagwanrao Thakur, executive risk officer Rajesh Krishnaiah, and former chief risk officer Lav Chaturvedi - have been named. They have been accused of conspiring and cheating with intent to cause huge losses to public sector banks. The total loss was estimated at ₹4,097 crore. The CBI has so far arrested three accused persons in the case.

Pilgrims headed towards the holy cow shrine of Amarnath during the ongoing Amarnath yatra in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday. The number of devotees visiting the shrine in 2020, which is a record. The numbers are above the record set last year after militants attacked the shrine on the first day of the yatra. The attack negatively impacted the turnout of pilgrims nationwide, said Mr. Sinha.

Mr. Sinha urged all stakeholders to work together to ensure a safe and secure yatra. He said that the government will take all necessary steps to ensure the safety and security of pilgrims. He also said that the government will provide all necessary facilities to pilgrims, including food, shelter, and medical aid. He said that the government will also provide all necessary security to pilgrims, including the presence of security forces and police personnel. He said that the government will also provide all necessary information to pilgrims, including the route, timings, and other details of the yatra. He said that the government will also provide all necessary support to pilgrims, including the provision of transport, food, and shelter. He said that the government will also provide all necessary assistance to pilgrims, including the provision of medical aid, first aid, and other services. He said that the government will also provide all necessary facilities to pilgrims, including the provision of food, shelter, and medical aid. He said that the government will also provide all necessary support to pilgrims, including the provision of transport, food, and shelter. He said that the government will also provide all necessary assistance to pilgrims, including the provision of medical aid, first aid, and other services. He said that the government will also provide all necessary facilities to pilgrims, including the provision of food, shelter, and medical aid. He said that the government will also provide all necessary support to pilgrims, including the provision of transport, food, and shelter. He said that the government will also provide all necessary assistance to pilgrims, including the provision of medical aid, first aid, and other services.

IIM-B to establish its first overseas campus in Indonesia: Modi

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced that the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIM-B) would establish its first campus in Indonesia, describing the initiative as a major step towards strengthening educational ties and benefiting students across the ASEAN region.

The announcement was made during Mr. Modi's visit to Indonesia in a joint press statement with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto. The proposed campus will be set up at the Singhasari Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Ma-

lang and is aimed at advancing the internationalisation of India's higher education ecosystem.

The campus will offer programmes focused on areas such as global supply chains, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, climate and sustainability, and healthcare management. The curriculum will also include interactions with industry leaders and eminent academicians.

The initiative will be implemented through a memorandum of understanding between IIM Bangalore and PT Intelegensia Grahatama, the managing and development entity of the Singhasari SEZ.



India and Indonesia



Which Country Colonized Indonesia?

Indonesia was a colony of Dutch for many years. They attained freedom with the invasion of Japan in the year 1945 during World War 2. However, Dutch recognized the independence of Indonesia in the year 1949, in the face of international pressure.

Which are the Neighboring Countries of Indonesia?

Indonesia is the largest Southeast Asian nation. It shares land boundaries with the following nations.

1. Papua New Guinea
2. East Timor
3. Malaysia.

It share maritime boundaries with

1. Singapore
2. Philippines
3. Vietnam
4. Palau
5. Australia

Aspect	Details
Institution	Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM-B)
Major Development	IIM-B will establish its first overseas campus
Host Country	Indonesia
Proposed Location	Singhasari Special Economic Zone (SEZ), Malang
Announcement	Made by PM Narendra Modi during his Indonesia visit
Partner Institution	PT Intelegensia Grahatama, the managing and development entity of Singhasari SEZ
Implementation Mechanism	Through an MoU between IIM Bangalore and the Indonesian partner
Regional Focus	Indonesia as well as students from the wider ASEAN region
Broad Objective	Internationalisation of Indian higher education and stronger India–ASEAN educational links

Programme Area

Global Supply Chains

Digital Transformation

Artificial Intelligence

Climate & Sustainability

Healthcare Management

Industry Interaction

Strategic Relevance

Indonesia is strategically located along major Indo-Pacific trade routes and is deeply connected with Asian production networks

Southeast Asia has a rapidly expanding digital economy and large young consumer base

Supports emerging demand for AI-led business and public-sector transformation

Highly relevant because Indonesia faces deforestation, energy-transition and climate-vulnerability challenges

Addresses the need for efficient healthcare delivery and management in large, geographically dispersed populations

Curriculum is expected to include engagement with industry leaders and eminent academics

Dimension

Significance

Geography

Indonesia lies between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and controls access to important maritime passages

ASEAN Role

Indonesia is the largest country and economy in ASEAN

Indo-Pacific Strategy

Stronger ties support India's strategic engagement with Southeast Asia

Act East Policy

The campus gives an institutional and educational dimension to India's Act East Policy

People-to-People Relations

Student and faculty mobility can create long-term societal connections

Soft Power

Indian institutions can expand India's influence through education rather than purely economic or military instruments

Economic Cooperation

Management education in supply chains, digitalisation and sustainability aligns with emerging areas of India–Indonesia cooperation

Indian Institution

IIT Madras

IIT Delhi

IIM Bangalore

Overseas Initiative

Zanzibar, Tanzania

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Indonesia — announced as its first
overseas campus

IN BRIEF

Eight wildlife sanctuaries, 281 forests encroached in Assam

Eight wildlife sanctuaries and 281 reserve forests are under encroachment in Assam, the State's Forest and Environment Minister, Jayanta Malhabartsh, told the 126-member Assembly on Tuesday. Presenting data on encroachment and human-elephant conflict in the House, he said 3,18,096.125 hectares of land in these protected areas and reserve forests was under illegal occupation on February 12, 2016. The State government has so far evicted squatters from 3,48,97.6 hectares, including 16,937.2466 hectares during the past five years. The BJP-led NDA formed the government in Assam in 2016, ending the Congress's 15-year rule.

NCERT releases revised Class 8 textbook after row

Months after it stoked a controversy for allegedly defaming the judiciary, the NCERT has released a revised Class 8 social science textbook dropping the disputed portions. The "Big Questions" section at the start of the chapter has seen a change. Instead of asking students why an independent judiciary is necessary, it asks why justice is important for a "just and harmonious society". Gone entirely is the section on "Challenges faced by the judicial system", which had detailed the "massive backlog" of cases and blamed it on a shortage of judges, cumbersome procedures and weak law enforcement.

Contact lost with Drishti, world's first OptoSAR satellite

The Bengaluru-based space start-up GalaxKey has lost contact with Mission Drishti, the world's first OptoSAR satellite, as it encountered an anomaly following a geomagnetic solar storm, the company said on Tuesday. Mission Drishti, which was launched in May, is also India's largest privately developed Earth observation satellite. The satellite became intermittent and was eventually lost. "While recovery efforts are ongoing, the likelihood of recovery currently appears low," it added. Mission Drishti was launched on May 3 aboard a Falcon 9 by SpaceX from Vandenberg, California. The satellite integrated electric drive system and synthetic aperture radar (SAR) sensors into a single operational platform. It said "subsequently, communication with the

School dropout rate falls across key stages: report

More schools get Internet; learner progression across stages grows stronger; teacher strength up by 8.3% compared with 2022-23; 55% women teachers bring gender balance in sector, says govt.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Education Ministry on Tuesday released the comprehensive report on the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) for the academic year 2022-23, which reflected a downward trend in dropout.

The preparatory level (Classes 3 to 5) dropout rate fell from 2.3% (2022-23) to 1.9% this year. More notably, secondary level (Classes 9 to 12) dropouts dipped from 6.2% to 7.0%. The consistent decrease across all levels suggests that schools are becoming more supportive and responsive to students' needs," the Ministry said.

Women now form the majority of the nation's teaching force, accounting for 54.9% of total teachers, up from 54.2% in 2022-23. The government said this "means a positive shift towards gender balance in the education sector".



Enrolment of girls across the country grew marginally to 48.4% from 48.3% last year. S. A. KOSHY

The Gross Enrolment Level Ratio at the secondary level soared to 73.7% from last year's 69.5%

across the country has seen a marginal increase to 48.4% from 48.3% last year. Student retention at the middle level (Classes 6 to 8) climbed to 83.7% (from 82.7%), while secondary level retention increased to 81.9%, up from 81.2% last year. Student retention is an educational metric that measures the percentage of students who continue their education at the same school or within the school system from one academic year to the next.

The Gross Enrolment Level Ratio (GERL) at the secondary level surged to 73.7% from last year's 69.5%. GERL is a measure of the percentage of students who are enrolled in a specific level of education, such as primary, middle, or secondary school, regardless of their age, relative to the total population of official school-age children for that same level. Learner progression across transition stages

grew stronger, the report noted. Notably, the transition from middle to secondary school jumped from 80.6% to 86.2%. Also, the total number of teachers in India has risen by 8.3% compared with 2022-23. Additionally, the Ministry's strategic rationalisation of teacher placement has resulted in a 3% reduction in single-teacher schools and a 25% drop in schools reporting zero enrolment, the Ministry said.

One of the most notable improvements is the increase in the number of schools with computer access, increasing from 64.7% (2022-23) to 65.9% in 2023-24. Access to Internet facilities in schools has seen a considerable increase in the academic year 2023-24. The percentage of schools with Internet connectivity increased to 67.5% (2023-24) to 67.4% in 2023-24. The report said that 98% of schools are powered with electricity, 98.5% have girls' toilets, and 97.2% have boys' toilets - ensuring dignity and hygiene for all students.

Houses, shops hit by mudslides in Doda after cloudburst

Poozanda Ashin
SRINAGAR

Threatening rain triggered flash floods and mudslides in the Chenab Valley's Doda district on Tuesday morning, damaging houses and shops.

An official said the flash floods and mudslides hit Thathri town following a cloudburst. Scores of homes, shops, and vehicles were damaged and many were buried under the debris.

Officials said civil infrastructure was also damaged due to landslides and mudslides. Vehicles were washed away. Vehicular traffic was also hit because of the closure of the Doda-Kidwar National Highway at a number of locations.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha reviewed the situation following the cloudburst. A Lok Sabha spokesman said Mr. Sinha had directed the district administration to provide immediate relief to the affected families and speed up restoration work. Mr. Sinha also spoke to the Doda Deputy Commissioner and assessed the situation. "Several houses and shops have suffered damage. Fortunately, no casualties or injuries have been reported," he said. "I have directed the DC to ensure immediate relief and assistance to the affected families and expedite restoration work, including the clearance of NH-244," he added.

Taking efforts to curb child sexual abuse content: Meta

Felix Trant of India
NEW DELHI

Meta on Tuesday published a blog detailing its efforts to curb child sexual abuse content across its apps, criticising AI-based detection and large-scale enforcement actions, days after the government issued a notice over reports of such content being promoted via Instagram ads. Calling child exploitation a "global crisis", Meta said it works aggressively to fight this kind of abuse on and off its platform. "We're aware of recent reports about Instagram ads in India that violated our policies against child exploitation. And we want to be clear: we take these concerns seriously, we review this content on our platform, and we're committed to improving our efforts to combat it," it noted.

BRICS nations call for timely exchange of information on drugs

The Hindu Bureau
SUWAIHATI

The BRICS nations on Tuesday adopted the Suwaihati Declaration, reaffirming their commitment to strengthen cooperation to prevent and combat illicit drug trafficking and related organised transnational crime. BRICS, an intergovernmental organisation of major emerging markets and developing countries, are an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. It expanded to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Indonesia. The joint declaration by the heads of anti-drug agencies of the participating nations brought the curtains down on a two-day meeting at a resort on the outskirts of Suwaihati. "The BRICS nations introduced the need to

boost the timely exchange of information, intelligence and best practices consistent with national laws and international obligations. They expressed concern over the evolving nature of drug trafficking, the proliferation of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, the diversion of precursor chemicals and the misuse of emerging technologies and virtual markets. Anand Garg, Director-General of the Narcotics Control Bureau, said India has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against drugs, and a three-year road map (2020-23) based on a network-centric approach. "The strategy focuses on dismantling entire criminal networks, bringing drug abuse through mass surveillance, and strengthening treatment, de-addiction, and rehabilitation measures," he said.

Independence of the Bar is crucial for preservation of rule of law: Supreme Court

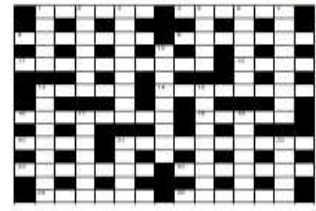
Krishnakumar Nairasopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said independence of lawyers is just as important as independence of the judiciary. In fact, the court said the legal profession's independence from the Executive and Legislature forms the foundation of the rule of law and democracy in the country. "The court's observation is significant as appointments to the Bench is made from the legal profession. Independence of the Bar constitutes an indispensable condition for preservation of the rule of law," a bench headed by Justice P.S. Narasimha observed in a judgment. "The significance of self-regulation has historically been regarded as the defining feature of Independ-

ence of the legal profession. The idea Narasimha pressed such autonomy is that lawyers, as officers of the court and participants in the administration of justice, must remain insulated from external pressures," Justice Narasimha wrote. The court said independence mounting up across courts was one of the greatest challenges to the justice delivery system, but the judgment clarified why backing continued to be seen almost exclusively as a judicial responsibility. "Despite frequent references to the Bar and Bench as the 'two wheels of the chariot of justice', the Bar is seldom called upon to share responsibility for reducing delays and improving efficiency. A parallel is necessary to tackle pendency must become a collaborative mission of the Bench and

the Bar," the top court said. Justice Narasimha proposed the establishment of a full-time "National Legal Academy" along the lines of the National Judicial Academy. He highlighted the need for the "continuing legal education" of advocates, noting that there was a glaring dearth in institutionalised learning for advocates after enrolment. The court directed the Bar Council of India to undertake an almost exclusive as a judicial responsibility. "Despite frequent references to the Bar and Bench as the 'two wheels of the chariot of justice', the Bar is seldom called upon to share responsibility for reducing delays and improving efficiency. A parallel is necessary to tackle pendency must become a collaborative mission of the Bench and

THE CROSSWORD 14840
(Solve by Vikram)



- Across**
- 1 Followed off mark (sawed leader of Yemen) (5)
 - 4 Frequent user (young ones - small vehicles appearing on streets) (3-3)
 - 6 Hit used from Africa to Southern Italy, crossing miles over a Saharan state (7)
 - 8 Allow to join agents to study on a top US university (7)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://thehindu.com/crosswords>

- 11 Indian governments restricted a (damage for Shia leaders) (10)
 - 14 Anonymous private ceremony (6)
 - 16 Substitute for, replaces English to make sense (3,2)
 - 18 Galileo and Newton's leader undone by runner about First Lady (5,4)
 - 19 Women are covering cold (border violations by army men) (3,4)
 - 20 Colour copies, having original impressions (paired) (3)
 - 26 Time to perish or run (6)
 - 28 A viceroy took (formed with potential future unity) (10)
 - 29 Walk to (avoiding foot) and (bought) point (7)
 - 34 Secret (didn't) (last) (contaminated) (7)
 - 35 Fuel with some secret ingredients (8)
 - 36 Still (hope) (ambush) (8)
- Down**
- 1 Common folk in Los Angeles city (sawing) (sawing) (3)
 - 2 Taken into team (mission, possibly for decompositions) (2-4)
 - 3 Best of both (best, typical trees in regions) (6)
 - 5 W-W signs (3)
 - 7 High ground, with bit of (critical) stand (7)
 - 9 Feet - (can't) (play) (3)
 - 10 Position of a (bright in new) (cybermission) (6)
 - 13 A form of carbon that is not (meeting) (organ) to (wait) (3)
 - 15 (suits) (her), (struggles) to find a (cleaning) fabric (6)
 - 17 Cabal's (saw) (saw) (energy) (7)
 - 19 Priest (passed on) (gold) at (table) (7)
 - 24 Unintended (weak) (saw), (saw) for (beams) (3)
 - 28 Screen (church) (parable) (10)

SUDOKU

3	9	2	1	8	4			
1	7							
3	1	7	3	2	7	2		
3	1	6	5	2				
2	4	7						
2	6		4	8	1	2		
			1		5	1		

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

FAITH

Causes of mental unrest

Vidura is regarded as the very embodiment of dharma. He constantly contemplated righteousness, sought only the good, and walked unwaveringly on the path of virtue. Among all the elders in the Kurava court, Vidura alone dared to speak out for justice when Duryodhan was publicly humiliated. In contrast, even great scholars and revered elders such as Bhishma and Drona remained silent. Tharamanthee D. Venkatesh said in a discourse that Vidura possessed absolute devotion to Lord Krishna and explained that at the conclusion of Krishna's earthly incarnation, He thought were filled with affection for Vidura. From this, we can understand that Vidura had a special place in Lord Krishna's heart. On one occasion in Hastinapura, King Dhritrashtra was unable to sleep due to deep anxiety. Realising that only the wisdom of Vidura could bring him peace, he immediately summoned him. Vidura explained that sleeplessness and mental unrest arise from four causes: fear, worry, excessive attachment, and the burden of sin accumulated. Vidura further revealed the true causes of the king's distress: his silent approval of the deceitful game being played against Yudhishtira and the Pandavas, his failure to condemn the humiliation of Draupathi in the royal assembly, and his refusal to restore the kingdom to rightful possessors of the Pandavas even after they had completed their 13 years of exile. These acts of adharma weighed heavily upon Dhritrashtra's conscience, robbing him of peace and sleep. Vidura advised him to surround himself with wise and virtuous advisers so that he could regain inner peace.

School dropout rate falls across key stages: report

More schools get Internet; learner progression across stages grows stronger; teacher strength up by 8.3% compared with 2022-23; 55% women teachers bring 'gender balance' in sector, says govt.

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Union Education Ministry on Tuesday released the comprehensive report on the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) for the academic year 2025-26, which reflected a downward trend in dropouts.

The preparatory level (Classes 3 to 5) dropout rate fell from 2.3% (2024-25) to 1.8% this year. More notably, secondary level (Classes 9 to 12) dropouts dipped from 8.2% to 7.0%. Dropout rate tracks the rate at which students quit school. "The consistent decrease across all levels suggests that schools are becoming more supportive and responsive to students' needs," the Ministry said.

Women now form the majority of the nation's teaching force, accounting for 54.9% of total teachers, up from 54.2% in 2024-25. The government said this "marks a positive shift towards gender balance in the education sector".

Enrolment of girls



Enrolment of girls across the country grew marginally to 48.4% from 48.3% last year. S. S. KUMAR

The Gross Enrolment Level Ratio at the secondary level surged to 71.7% from last year's 68.5%

across the country has seen a marginal increase to 48.4%, from 48.3% last year.

Student retention at the middle level (Classes 6 to 8) climbed to 83.7% (from 82.8%), while secondary level retention increased to 51.9%, up from 47.2% last year. Student retention is an educational metric that measures the percentage of students who continue

their education at the same school or within the school system from one academic year to the next.

The Gross Enrolment Level Ratio (GER) at the secondary level surged to 71.7% from last year's 68.5%. GER is a statistical measure used in education to determine the percentage of students enrolled in a specific level of education (such as primary, middle, or secondary school), regardless of their age, relative to the total population of official school-age children for that same level.

Learner progression across transitional stages

grew stronger, the report noted. Notably, the transition from middle to secondary school jumped from 86.6% to 88.3%.

Also, the total number of teachers in India has risen by 8.3% compared with 2022-23. Additionally, the Ministry's strategic rationalisation of teacher placement has resulted in a 3% reduction in single-teacher schools and a 29% drop in schools reporting zero enrolment, the Ministry said.

One of the most notable improvements is the increase in the number of schools with computer access, increasing from 64.7% in 2024-25 to 69.9% in 2025-26. Access to Internet facilities in schools has seen a considerable increase in the academic year 2025-26. The percentage of schools with internet connectivity increased from 63.5% in 2024-25 to 67.4% in 2025-26.

The report said that 95% of schools are powered with electricity, 98.5% have girls' toilets, and 97.2% have boys' toilets - ensuring dignity and hygiene for all students.

Indicator	Earlier figure	2025–26 figure	Trend
Preparatory dropout rate, Classes 3–5	2.3%	1.8%	↓ 0.5 percentage point
Secondary dropout rate, Classes 9–12	8.2%	7.0%	↓ 1.2 percentage points
Secondary Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)	68.5%	71.7%	↑ 3.2 percentage points
Middle-level retention, Classes 6–8	82.8%	83.7%	↑ 0.9 percentage point
Secondary-level retention	47.2%	51.9%	↑ 4.7 percentage points
Middle → Secondary transition rate	86.6%	88.3%	↑ 1.7 percentage points
Girls' share in enrolment	48.3%	48.4%	Marginal improvement
Schools with boys' toilets	—	97.2%	Very high coverage

Women among teachers	54.2%	54.9%	Majority of workforce
Teacher strength vs 2022–23	Base year	+8.3%	Significant rise
Schools with computer access	64.7%	69.9%	↑ 5.2 percentage points
Schools with Internet	63.5%	67.4%	↑ 3.9 percentage points
Schools with electricity	—	95%	Near-universal
Schools with girls' toilets	—	98.5%	Very high coverage

Indicator	Meaning	Simple Example	Why Important?
Dropout Rate	Percentage of students who leave school before completing a particular educational stage	Out of 1,000 students, if 70 leave, dropout rate = 7%	Shows educational exclusion
Retention Rate	Percentage of students who remain within the education system and continue through a stage	Secondary retention increased to 51.9%	Measures the system's ability to keep children in school
Transition Rate	Percentage of students who successfully move from one educational stage to the next	Middle → Secondary = 88.3%	Shows continuity between school stages
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)	Total enrolment at a particular level, regardless of age, as a percentage of the official age-group population	Secondary GER = 71.7%	Measures overall participation in education

4. Secondary Education: Strong Improvement, but the Biggest Policy Challenge

One of the most significant findings is the improvement in **secondary retention**.

Indicator	Previous	Current	Change
Secondary GER	68.5%	71.7%	+3.2 pp
Secondary retention	47.2%	51.9%	+4.7 pp
Middle → Secondary transition	86.6%	88.3%	+1.7 pp
Secondary dropout	8.2%	7.0%	-1.2 pp

Analytical interpretation

The data suggests that India is improving at **bringing students into secondary education and enabling transition into it**. However, the secondary retention rate of **51.9%** indicates that long-term continuation through the school cycle remains an important challenge.

This distinction is crucial:

Access has improved faster than sustained retention.

Period/Policy

Major contribution

Constitution, 1950

Directive principle for free and compulsory education

Kothari Commission, 1964–66

Recommended common school system and higher public expenditure on education

National Policy on Education, 1968

First comprehensive national education policy

National Policy on Education, 1986

Focus on universal elementary education and equality

District Primary Education Programme, 1994

District-based expansion of primary education

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2001

Universalisation of elementary education

86th Constitutional Amendment, 2002

Inserted Article 21A

Right to Education Act, 2009

Free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14

Samagra Shiksha, 2018

Integrated school education from pre-primary to Class XII

National Education Policy, 2020

Focus on universal access, foundational literacy and the 5+3+3+4 structure

Article

Provision

Article 21A

Free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14

Article 45

Early childhood care and education for children below six years

Article 46

Promotion of educational and economic interests of SCs, STs and weaker sections

Article 15(3)

Special provisions for women and children

Article 15(4)

Special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes, SCs and STs

Article 51A(k)

Fundamental duty of parent/guardian to provide educational opportunities to children aged 6–14

NEP 2020 Goal

Universal access to school education

100% GER in school education by 2030

Reduction in dropout

Digital education

Gender inclusion

Teacher reform

Vocational integration

Connection with UDISE+ Findings

Falling dropout rates

Secondary GER has reached 71.7%, but a substantial gap remains

Improvement visible across stages

Computer and Internet access improving

Women form 54.9% of teachers; girls' enrolment share is 48.4%

Teacher strength and rationalisation improving

Important for improving secondary retention

Contact lost with Drishti, world's first OptoSAR satellite

Hemanth C.S.

BENGALURU

The Bengaluru-based space start-up GalaxEye has lost contact with Mission Drishti, the world's first OptoSAR satellite, as it encountered an anomaly following a geomagnetic solar storm, the company said on Tuesday.

Mission Drishti, which was launched in May, is also India's largest privately developed earth observation satellite.

"In the final stage of LEOP (Launch and Early Orbit Phase), the maiden spacecraft encountered an anomaly following a geomagnetic solar storm. Initial root cause analysis indicates that radiation effects associated with the event likely impacted a critical onboard system," the company said.

It said subsequently, communication with the



Mission Drishti is also India's largest privately developed Earth observation satellite.

spacecraft became intermittent and was eventually lost. "While recovery efforts are ongoing, the likelihood of recovery currently appears low," it added.

Mission Drishti was launched on May 3 aboard a Falcon 9 by SpaceX from Vandenberg, California. The satellite integrated electro-optical (EO) and synthetic aperture radar (SAR) sensors into a single operational platform.

Aspect

Mission name

Developed by

Type

Major innovation

Why unique?

Indian significance

Launch date

Launch vehicle

Launch location

Mission phase affected

Reported trigger

Initial assessment

Present situation in article

Details

Mission Drishti

GalaxEye, a Bengaluru-based space start-up

Earth Observation (EO) satellite

Integration of **Electro-Optical (EO) + Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** sensors on one operational platform

Described as the world's first **OptoSAR** satellite

Described as India's largest privately developed Earth-observation satellite

May 3

Falcon 9

Vandenberg Space Force Base

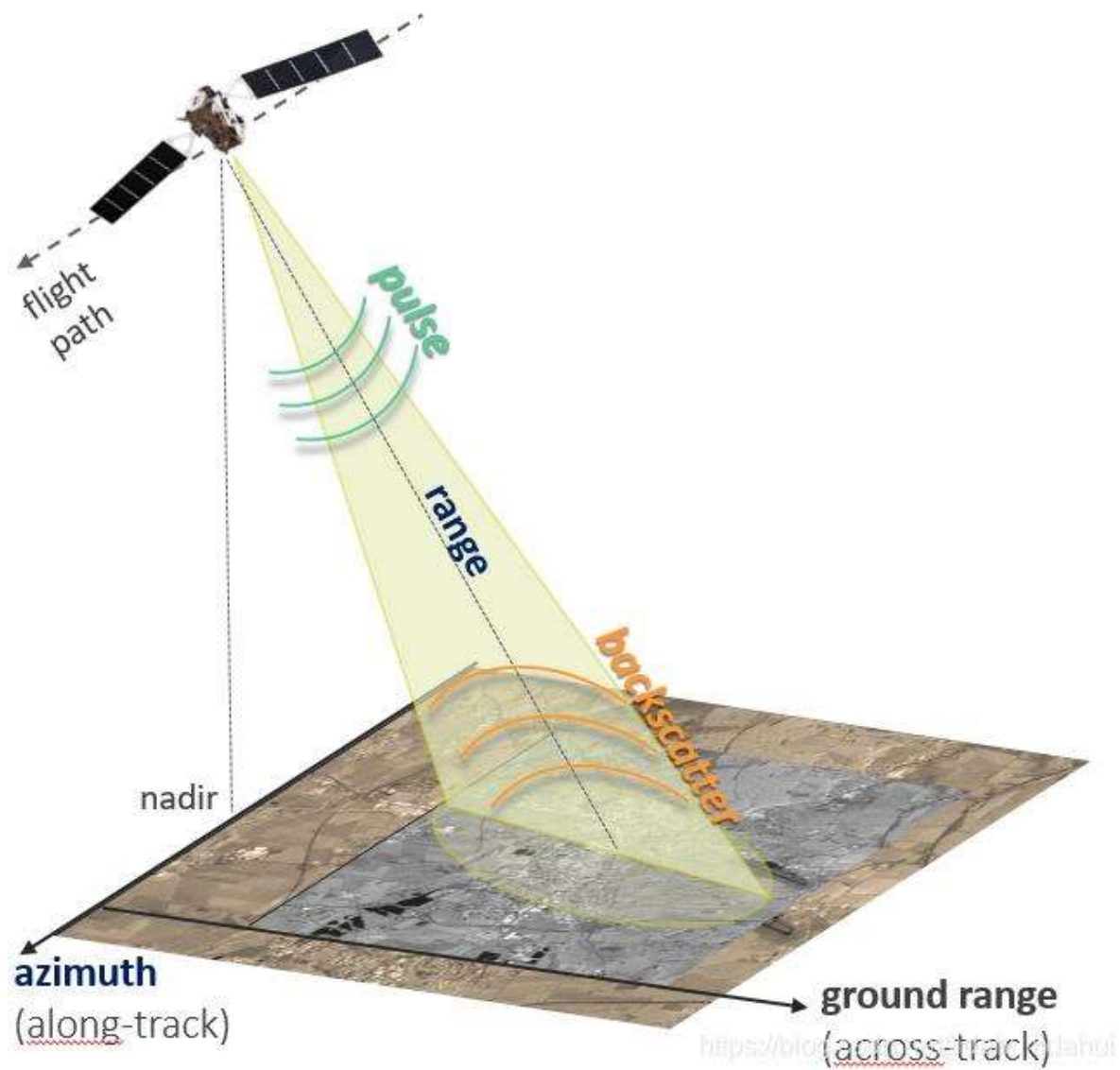
LEOP — Launch and Early Orbit Phase

Anomaly following a geomagnetic solar storm

Radiation effects associated with the solar event may have affected a critical onboard system

Communication became intermittent and was eventually lost; recovery efforts were continuing, but recovery prospects were described as low

Feature	Optical EO Satellite	SAR Satellite	OptoSAR System
Sensor type	Passive	Active radar	Optical + active radar
Needs sunlight?	Generally yes	No	Can combine both modes
Works at night?	Limited	Yes	Yes
Can see through clouds?	Poorly	Yes	SAR provides cloud penetration capability
Image appearance	Natural and easy to interpret	Radar-based and technically complex	Complementary datasets
Strength	Colour and spectral information	Structural and surface information	Broader intelligence picture
Main limitation	Clouds, fog and darkness	Complex processing and interpretation	Greater integration and operational complexity



Application	Optical Contribution	SAR Contribution	Combined Advantage
Agriculture	Crop colour and vegetation health	Soil moisture and structural data	Better crop monitoring
Disaster management	Visual damage assessment	Imaging during clouds and heavy rain	Faster emergency response
Flood monitoring	Visible extent where skies are clear	Can detect inundation through cloud cover	More reliable flood maps
Defence	Visual identification	Night and all-weather surveillance	Stronger situational awareness
Maritime surveillance	Visual vessel identification	Ship detection in darkness/cloud	Improved maritime domain awareness
Forest monitoring	Vegetation and spectral analysis	Structural and moisture information	Better deforestation monitoring
Urban planning	Land-use classification	Surface deformation and infrastructure monitoring	Improved planning and risk assessment

Phenomenon	Meaning	Main Impact
Solar Flare	Sudden electromagnetic radiation eruption from the Sun	Radio blackouts and communication disruption
Coronal Mass Ejection (CME)	Large expulsion of magnetised plasma from the Sun	Can cause geomagnetic storms when Earth-directed
Solar Energetic Particles	High-energy charged particles	Radiation risk to spacecraft electronics and astronauts
Geomagnetic Storm	Disturbance of Earth's magnetosphere caused by solar activity	Satellite anomalies, GPS errors, communication disruption and grid effects

Lab-grown placenta to help study how drugs, nutrients pass down from mother to baby

Purnima Sah

Mumbai, July 7

FOR DECADES, doctors have had to prescribe medicines during pregnancy with little evidence on whether many of them reach the developing foetus via the placenta or not. Or if it is indeed an effective barrier against microbes and toxins. Now, researchers from Mumbai's ICMR-National Institute for Research on Women's Health (ICMR-NIR-WoH) and the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) have developed a placenta-on-chip that closely mimics the human placenta.

This offers scientists a new way to study how drugs, nutrients, pollutants and infectious agents pass from mother to baby. Although it remains a laboratory research tool that requires further validation, researchers

E. EXPLAINED

Why is a placenta model significant?

The placenta is one of the most critical organs in pregnancy. Yet, it is one of the least understood. How well the placenta functions influences foetal growth, pregnancy outcomes and the safety of medicines prescribed during pregnancy.

believe it could accelerate the development of pregnancy-safe therapeutics and provide new insights into conditions such as gestational diabetes, foetal growth restriction and pre-eclampsia (high blood pressure

that damages organs).

The human-cell-based platform recreates several key structural and functional features of the placenta and could reduce dependence on animal models, which often fail to accurately replicate human pregnancy. The study was led by researchers Anshul Bhide and Sourav Mukherjee under the supervision of Professor Deepak Modi (ICMR-NIRWoH) and Professor Abhijit Majumder (IIT Bombay).

The placenta-on-chip is a transparent plastic device containing a porous membrane on which researchers grow human placental cells alongside human endothelial cells, which line blood vessels. Together, these recreate the interface through which nutrients, hormones and other molecules are exchanged between mother and foetus.

Unlike many existing pla-

centa-on-chip systems that require sophisticated microfluidic equipment, the Mumbai team's model is a static two-chamber platform that can be used in a standard laboratory, making it simpler, reproducible and more accessible.

Bhide said: "We tried to recreate the placenta to provide researchers a more humanised platform to better understand pregnancy and improve maternal and foetal health." The project that began during the Covid-19 pandemic took more than three-and-a-half years to complete, and has been built entirely using human cells. He said the team demonstrated how the device reproduces the placenta's cellular architecture, produces the pregnancy hormone beta-human chorionic gonadotropin (β -hCG), mimics glucose transport from mother to foetus.

Aspect

Innovation

Developed by

Basic technology

Main objective

Cell types used

Physical structure

Major advantage

Design advantage

Development period

Project origin

Current stage

Potential areas

Details

Lab-grown placenta / placenta-on-chip

ICMR-NIRRH and IIT Bombay researchers

Human-cell-based Organ-on-Chip platform

Study transfer of drugs, nutrients and other substances across the placental barrier

Human placental cells + human endothelial cells

Transparent plastic device with a porous membrane

More human-relevant than many animal models

Static two-chamber system usable in a standard laboratory

More than 3.5 years

Work began during the COVID-19 pandemic

Laboratory research tool requiring further validation

Drug safety, gestational diabetes, foetal growth restriction and pre-eclampsia

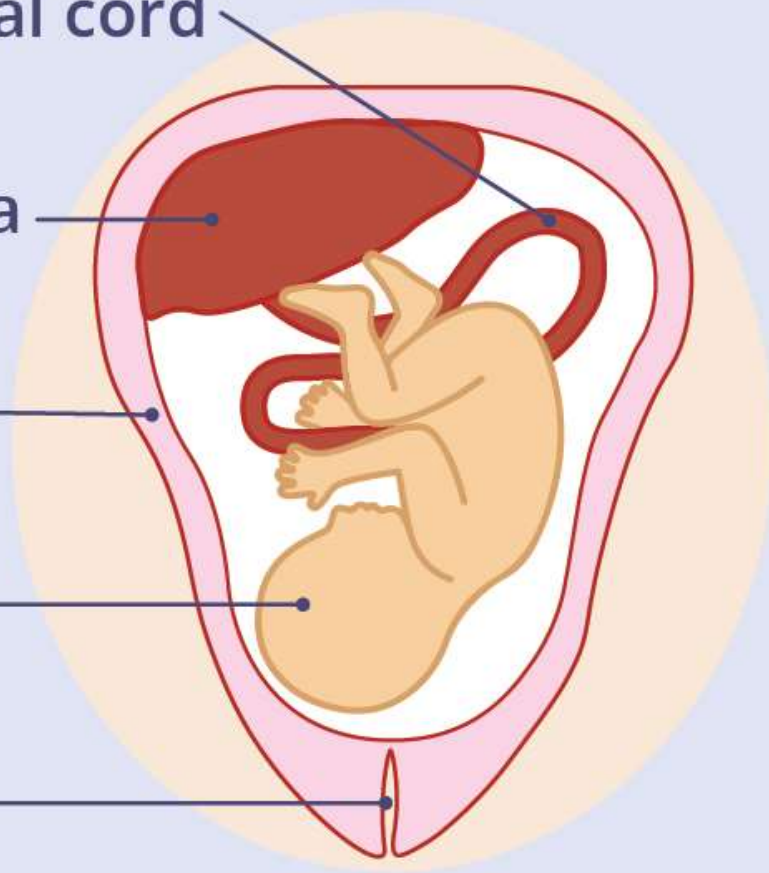
Umbilical cord

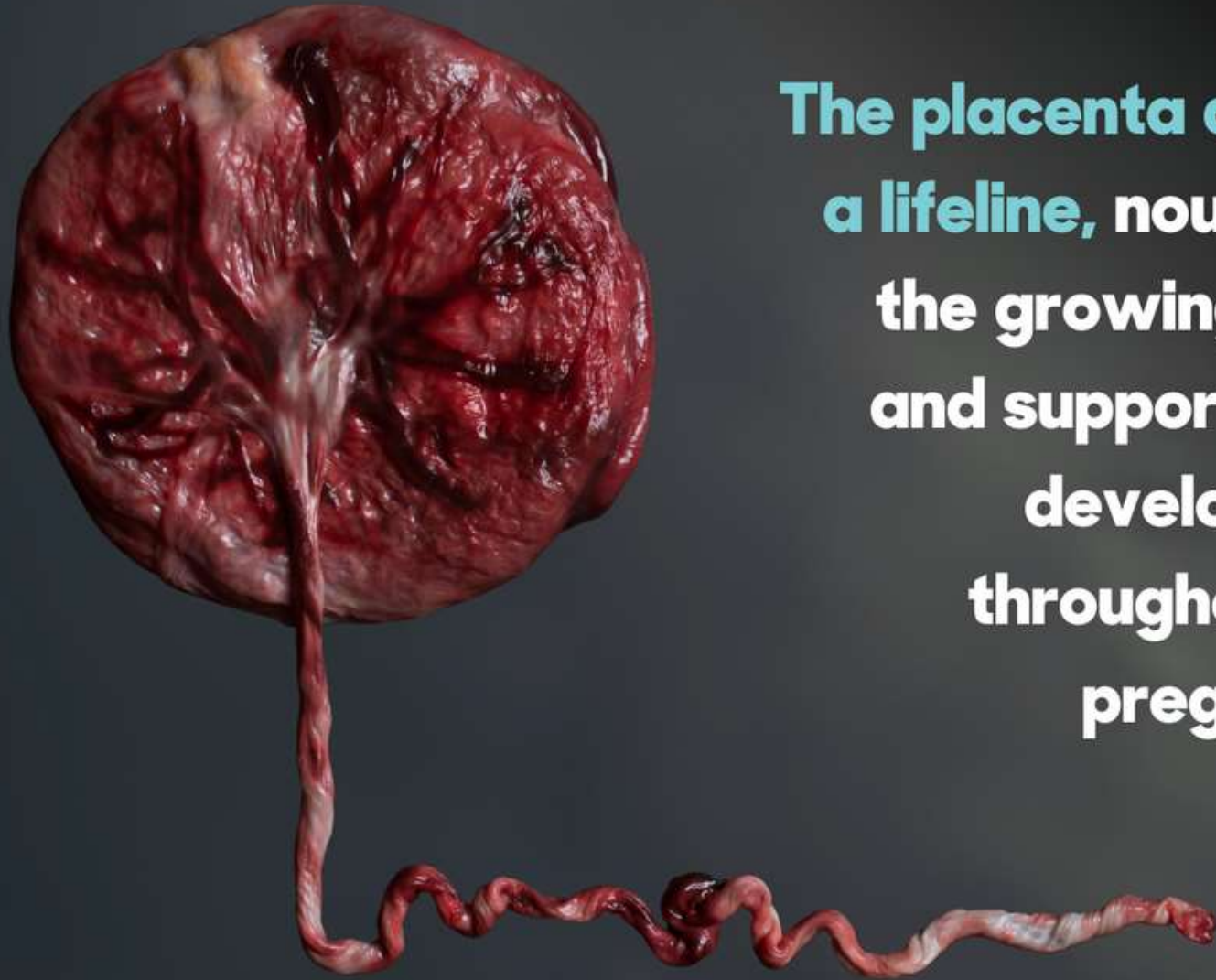
Placenta

Uterus

Fetus

Cervix





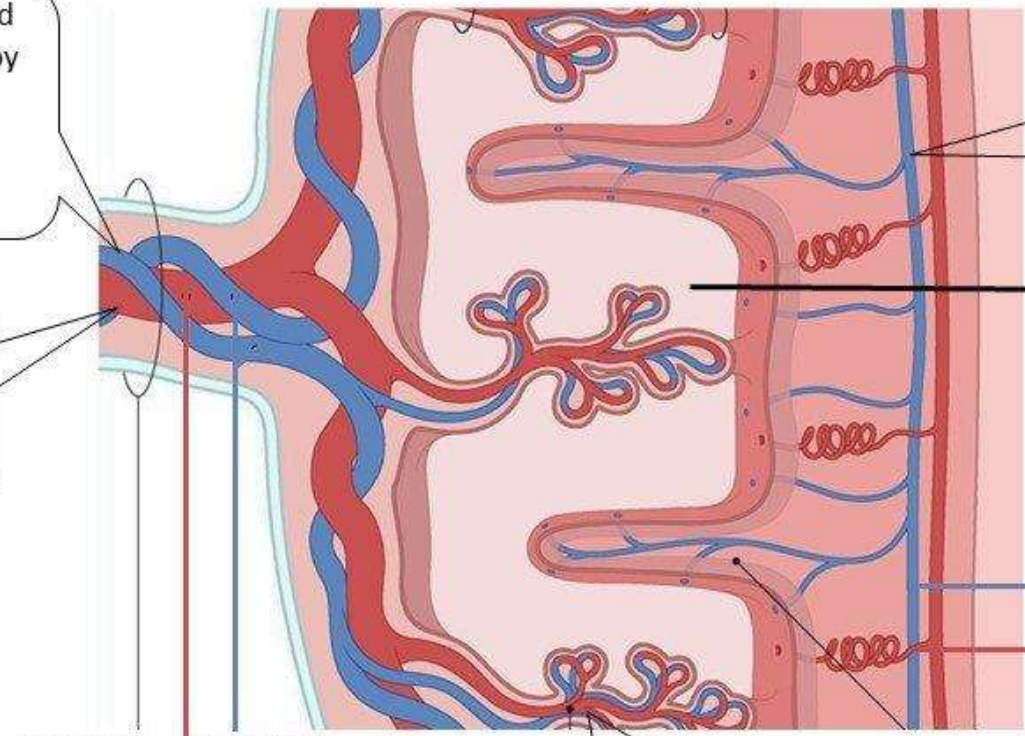
**The placenta acts as
a lifeline, nourishing
the growing fetus
and supporting its
development
throughout the
pregnancy.**

Chorionic Plate Intervillous Space Basal Plate

4. Waste products and CO2 are transported by the umbilical arteries into the villus and released into the intervillous space

3. Nutrients and oxygen are transported by the umbilical vein away from the placenta

5. Maternal veins remove waste and CO2 from the intervillous space



Maternal blood

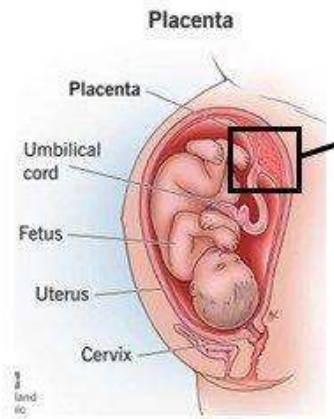
Maternal vein

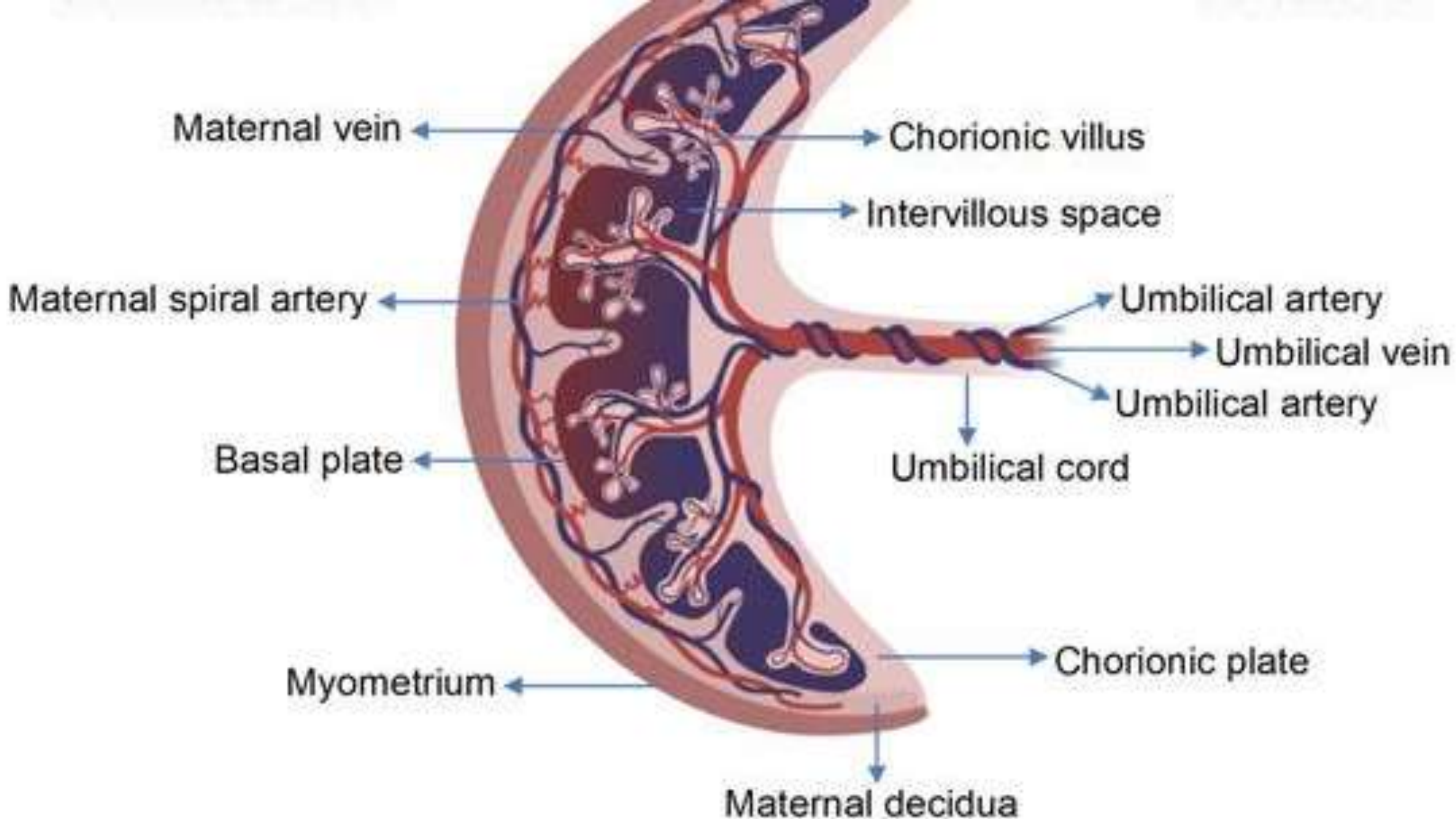
Maternal spiral arteries

2. Nutrients pass through or are absorbed by the absorptive cells lining the villus

1. Spiral arteries squirt nutrient and oxygen-rich blood into the intervillous space

Umbilical cord
Umbilical arteries
Umbilical vein





Mother

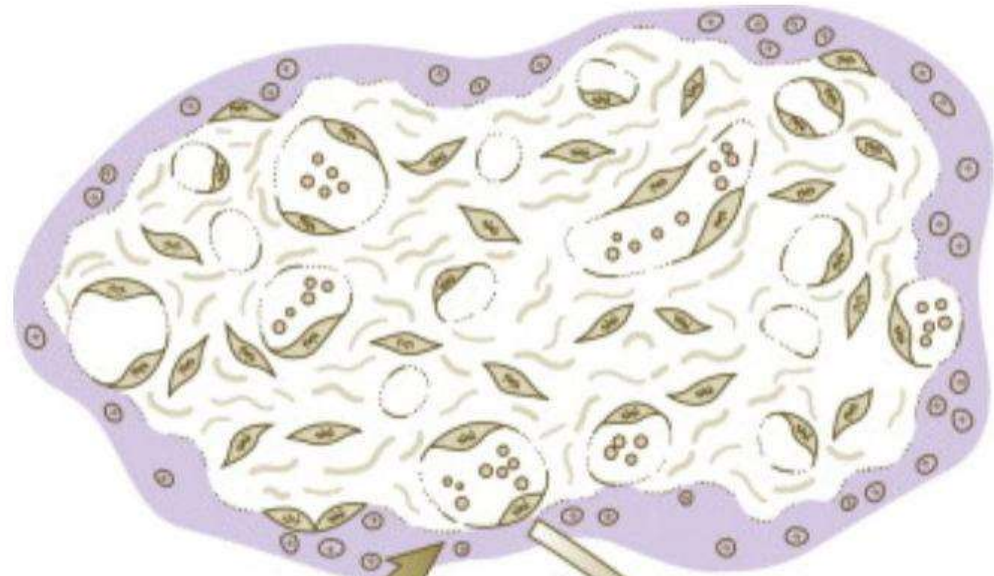
Placenta

Fetus

Oxygen, Nutrients, Hormones



Carbon Dioxide, Wastes, Hormones



**From mother
to fetus**

O₂
Water, electrolytes
Nutrients
 Carbohydrates
 Amino acids
 Lipids
Hormones
Antibodies
Vitamins
Iron, trace elements
Drugs
Toxic substances
 Alcohol
 Some viruses

**From fetus
to mother**

CO₂
Water, electrolytes
Urea, uric acid
Creatinine
Bilirubin
Hormones
Red blood cell antigens

{ GIRISH BHARADWAJ • 1950-2026 }

Man who built hundreds of low-cost hanging bridges, connecting remotest parts of India

Kiran Parashar
Bengaluru, July 7

PADMA SHRI awardee Girish Bharadwaj — popularly known as the ‘Bridge Man of India’ for constructing hundreds of low-cost hanging bridges, connecting the remotest parts of India — passed away on Tuesday in Karnataka. He was 76 years old.

Bharadwaj was admitted to a private hospital in Sullia in Karnataka’s Dakshina Kannada district due to a cardiac condition, after which he died Tuesday.

A graduate in mechanical engineering, Bharadwaj chose to stay in rural parts of the country. His work brought hundreds of isolated villages to the mainstream — connecting the rest of the nation with places



Girish Bharadwaj was known as the ‘Bridge Man of India’

where people otherwise had no way to cross rivers or canals except by swimming or boats. Bharadwaj devised his own solutions to suit the remote terrain — he built suspension footbridges which offered a simple and practical causeway for

many isolated communities.

After his low-cost small bridges became a hit in rural areas, the government was eager to utilise Bharadwaj’s design to construct hanging bridges.

Upon completing his mechanical engineering degree in 1973, Bharadwaj set up a workshop in Sullia but started engaging beyond regular metal works. The Dakshina Kannada district usually receives heavy rainfall due to its geography. A young Girish then saw the plight of the villagers who would be deprived of all modes of road transportation during rain, instead relying on making life-threatening attempts to walk across swollen rivers. Facing issues with connectivity, some children also had to drop

out of schools.

Bharadwaj decided to find a cost-efficient solution for this.

In 1989, he built his first hanging footbridge over the Payaswini River at Aramburu in Sullia — a modest, budget-friendly structure that would go on to define his life’s work.

That single bridge marked only the start; over the following decades, Bharadwaj constructed more than 300 such bridges across Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, gaining him the reputation of the ‘Bridge Man of India’.

As Bharadwaj continued his work, the Government of India honoured him with the country’s fourth-highest civilian award, the Padma Shri, in 2017.

Aspect

Name

Popular title

Profession

Primary contribution

First bridge

First bridge location

Number of bridges

Major States covered

Major beneficiaries

Major national honour

Core philosophy

Age at death

Details

Girish Bharadwaj

Bridge Man of India

Mechanical engineer and social innovator

Construction of low-cost hanging/suspension footbridges

Built in **1989**

Across the Payaswini River at Aramburu, Sullia

More than 300

Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha

Remote rural and geographically isolated communities

Padma Shri, 2017

Low-cost engineering for real social problems

76 years, according to the article



Rural Problem	Impact on People	Bharadwaj's Solution
Rivers and canals separating settlements	Villages remained isolated	Low-cost suspension footbridges
Heavy monsoon rainfall	Roads and crossings became unusable	Elevated bridge crossings
Swollen rivers	Dangerous crossing attempts	Safe pedestrian connectivity
Lack of road infrastructure	Poor market and service access	Local connectivity bridges
Difficulty reaching schools	Children could miss classes or drop out	Reliable school access
Difficulty accessing healthcare	Delayed emergency treatment	Faster village connectivity
High cost of conventional bridges	Projects became difficult for small communities	Budget-friendly engineering design

Year/Phase	Development
1973	Completed mechanical engineering degree
After graduation	Established a workshop in Sullia
Early career	Worked beyond conventional metal fabrication and became interested in local infrastructure problems
Rural observation	Saw villagers struggling to cross rivers during heavy rainfall
Social impact observed	Connectivity problems affected transport and children's access to schools
1989	Built his first low-cost hanging footbridge over the Payaswini River
Following decades	Model expanded to several States
Lifetime contribution	Constructed more than 300 bridges
2017	Awarded the Padma Shri

Conventional Approach

Large infrastructure project

High capital requirement

Standardised model

Long project cycle

Technology-first thinking

Centralised execution

Frugal Innovation Approach

Need-specific infrastructure

Cost-efficient design

Adaptation to local geography

Practical local solution

Problem-first thinking

Greater potential for local participation

FSSAI Issues Notices Over Misleading Paneer and Labelling Claims



1. Why in News?


Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) reportedly issued notices on **6 July 2026** to food and nutraceutical companies over allegedly misleading advertising, branding and labelling claims.

The key issue is the use of attractive terms such as **"Fresh," "Healthy," "All Natural," "100% Organic," "Vegan," "FSSAI Approved,"** and similar health-related claims without satisfying the prescribed regulatory conditions.

Company	Product mentioned	Claims questioned	Core regulatory issue
Heritage Foods Limited	Heritage Fresh Paneer	"Fresh Paneer"; "Healthy Happiness"	Conditions governing "fresh" and potentially misleading use of "healthy"
Dia Foods	La Casa Vegan Hazelnut Chocolate Spread	"All Natural", "100% Organic", "Vegan"	Compliance and certification/endorsement requirements
Cipzer Nutraceuticals	Juice Capsules	"FSSAI Approved" and health-related claims	FSSAI licensing should not be portrayed as product endorsement; health claims require substantiation

2. The Most Important Concept: FSSAI Licence ≠ Product Approval

This is an important exam and consumer-awareness distinction.

Term	Meaning	
FSSAI Licensed	Food business is registered/licensed under the regulatory framework	
FSSAI-compliant product	Product is expected to meet applicable safety, composition and labelling standards	
"FSSAI Approved" marketing claim	Can be misleading if it creates an impression that FSSAI endorses the product or guarantees its claimed benefits	
Health claim	Must satisfy applicable regulatory conditions and be scientifically supportable	

Teaching example: A licence to operate a food business does not automatically mean that the regulator has endorsed claims such as "boosts immunity," "prevents disease," or "100% healthy."

Law/Regulation

Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006

Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018

Labelling and Display Regulations

Organic Food Regulations

Consumer Protection Act, 2019

Main purpose

Umbrella legislation for food safety regulation

Regulates claims made through advertisements, labels and branding

Governs mandatory information and presentation on packaged foods

Provides regulatory framework for organic food claims

Protects consumers against unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements

Claim	Consumer perception	Regulatory concern
Fresh	Recently produced, minimally processed	Must not create a false impression about processing or preservation
Natural	Minimal artificial intervention	Vague use may mislead consumers
Organic	Produced under recognised organic standards	Requires compliance with the applicable certification system
Vegan	No animal-derived ingredients	Claim must meet applicable standards and requirements
Healthy	Beneficial to health	Broad or unsupported claim may mislead consumers
Immunity booster	Improves immune function	Requires adequate scientific substantiation
FSSAI Approved	Regulator endorses product	Potentially misleading representation of regulatory status

5. Broader Issue: The Health Halo Effect

A **health halo effect** occurs when one positive-looking claim makes consumers assume that the entire product is healthy.

For example, a product labelled **“organic”** may still contain high amounts of sugar, fat or calories. Similarly, the words **“natural”** or **“vegan”** do not automatically make a product nutritionally superior.

Classroom Example

- Vegan ≠ automatically healthy
- Organic ≠ automatically low-calorie
- Natural ≠ automatically safe
- FSSAI licence ≠ regulator endorsement

6. FSSAI vs Other Major Regulators

Regulator	Sector regulated
FSSAI	Food safety and standards
<u>Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation</u>	Drugs, cosmetics and specified medical products
<u>Bureau of Indian Standards</u>	Product standards and certification
<u>Central Consumer Protection Authority</u>	Consumer rights and misleading advertisements
<u>Advertising Standards Council of India</u>	Advertising self-regulation

Word of the day

Debonair:

having a sophisticated charm

Synonym: suave

Usage: *The actor's debonair manner won over the audience.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/debonair

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /dɛbə'neə(r)/



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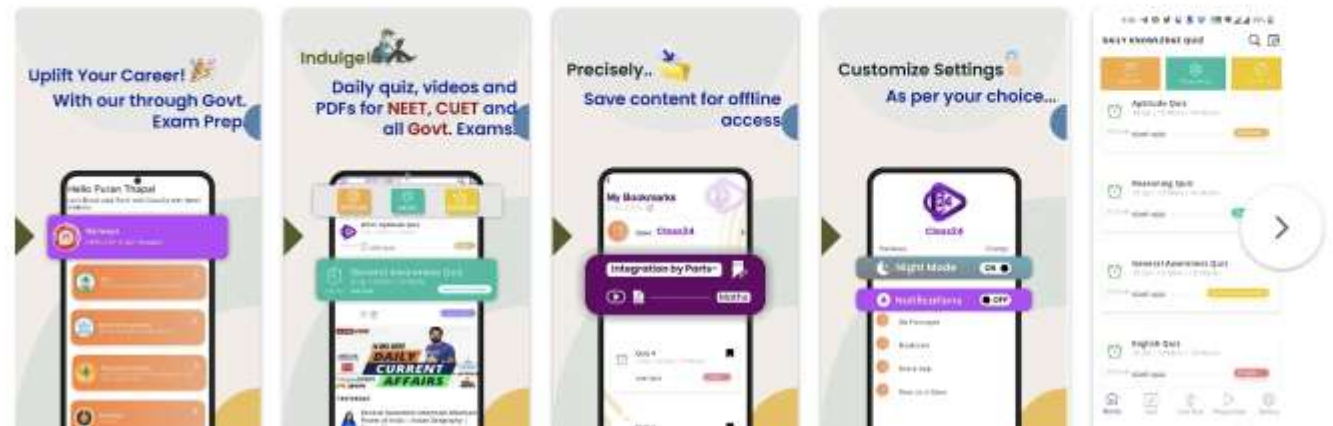
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