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Sabarimala Reopens for Karkidakam

Thiruvananthapuram, July 16: The Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple reopened on Thursday evening for the monthly Karkidakam pujas, with thousands of devotees thronging the hill shrine on the very first day. The sanctum sanctorum was opened at 5 p.m. by the head priest in the presence of the chief priest, followed by the lighting of the ceremonial lamp. No special rituals or pujas were held on the opening day. Temple authorities reported a heavy inflow of pilgrims, including a large number of devotees from neighbouring states, at the Sannidhanam. Regular rituals and special Karkidakam pujas will begin at 5 a.m. on Friday, the first day of the Malayalam month of Karkidakam, and will continue until the temple closes on July 21.



Rath Yatra Begins Amid Devotion

Stampede Claims Two Lives

Puri, July 16: The world-famous Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath commenced in Odisha's Puri on Thursday with lakhs of devotees joining the grand chariot procession amid chants of "Jai Jagannath." The ceremonial pulling of the three chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra began after the completion of the traditional Pahandi Bije and Chhera Pahanra rituals. Despite intermittent rain, devotees thronged the Bada Danda (Grand Road) as the chariots made their way towards the Sri Gundicha Temple, regarded as the maternal aunt's abode of the sibling deities. Authorities put in place elaborate security, traffic management, crowd-control and emergency response measures to ensure the smooth conduct of the annual festival. However, a stampede during the procession claimed the life of one devotee, while several others were injured. Rescue teams rushed the injured to nearby hospitals for treatment. Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed grief over the incident and directed officials to provide the best possible medical care to those injured.



Youth Protest for 20,000 Police Jobs

Hyderabad, July 16: Hundreds of job aspirants staged a protest in Dilsukhnagar on Thursday, demanding that the Telangana government issue 20,000 police recruitment notifications instead of the reported proposal to fill only 5,000 posts. Carrying placards and raising slogans, the protesters said a limited recruitment drive would disappoint thousands of candidates who have been preparing for police jobs for several years. They also urged the government to enhance the upper age limit for recruitment to 36 years, citing delays in the notification process that have pushed many aspirants beyond the existing eligibility criteria. Police later detained several protesters and shifted them in police vehicles after they marched through the area. The issue has gained political attention, with BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao recently urging the state government to notify 20,000 vacancies, arguing that many unemployed youth from rural areas have been spending years preparing for police recruitment. According to the Telangana Police Recruitment Board, 7,437 vacancies currently exist across the Police Department, Fire Services, Prisons and Special Protection Force. However, recruitment notifications for these posts are yet to be issued.

Congress Bans Milk Ablutions, JCB Garlands

Hyderabad, July 16: The Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) has banned the practice of milk and water ablations and the use of JCBs or bulldozers to garland party leaders during Congress programmes across the state. State Congress President Mahesh Kumar Goud directed party workers not to perform 'Palabhishekam' (milk ablations) or 'Jalabhishekam' (water ablations) at any party event, warning that violators would face disciplinary action. A circular issued by TPCC Vice-President T. Kumar Rao, following the directions of AICC Telangana In-charge Meenakshi Nataraajan, stated that such practices are against the Congress ideology as they lead to the wastage of food items at a time when many people face malnutrition.

SC Suggests Earlier Third Language

New Delhi, July 16: The Supreme Court has suggested that the CBSE introduce the third language from Class 5 or Class 6, instead of Class 9, saying it would reduce academic pressure on students. A Bench comprising Justices B.V. Nagarathna and R. Mahadevan orally observed that introducing a third language at the secondary school level could increase students' stress and advised the Centre to consider implementing it at an earlier stage. The observations came during the hearing of the Tamil Nadu government's plea challenging a Madras High Court direction to facilitate the establishment of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) in every district of the state. Tamil Nadu has consistently opposed the setting up of JNVs, citing concerns over the three-language policy followed in these schools.



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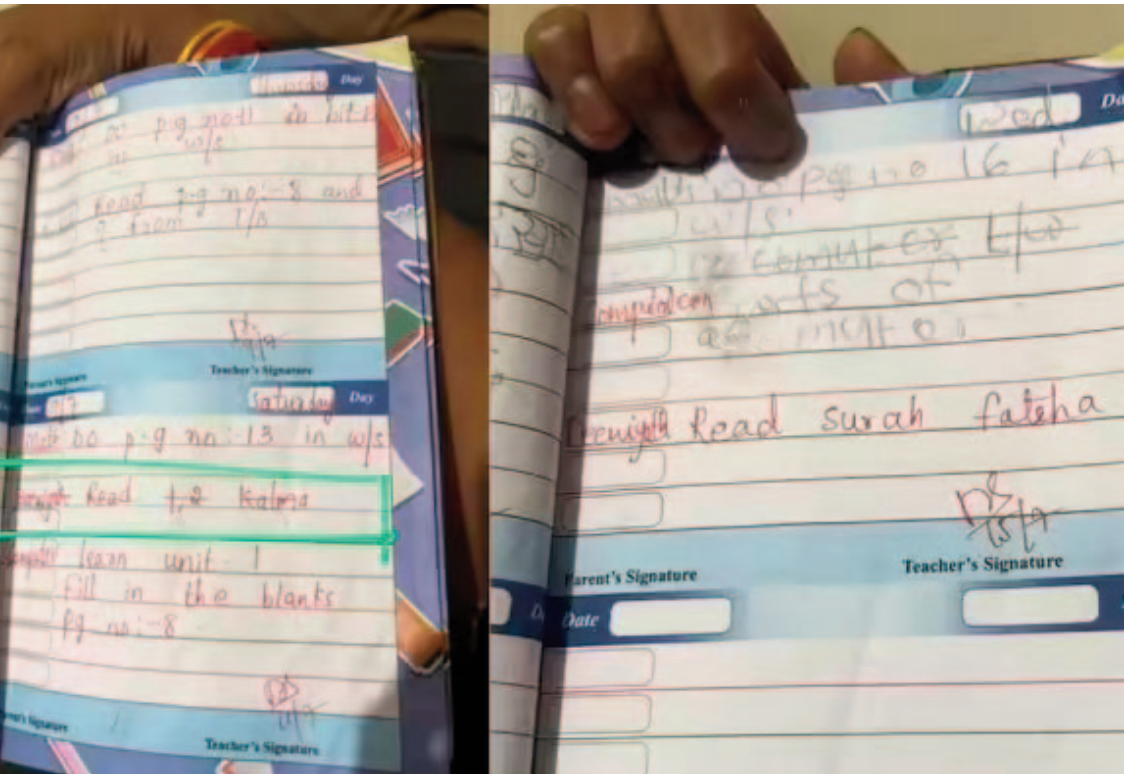
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Teacher Sacked Over 'Kalma' Homework Row

Hyderabad, July 16: A teacher at a private school in Hyderabad was dismissed after assigning 'Kalma' and 'Surah Fateha' as homework to a Class 2 section that included one Hindu student, triggering controversy and protests. According to Charminar Zone DCP Khare Kiran Prabhakar, the class had 25 students, of whom 24 were Muslims and one was Hindu. He said assigning religious homework in such circumstances was a violation of education policy and the school's own guidelines. The incident occurred at Success School in Sayeedabad. After the student's parents approached the school and police, the management terminated the teacher, Shaik Aisha Parveen, and permanently barred her from future employment in institutions under the Success Group. Police said the student's parents expressed satisfaction with the action taken and did not file a formal complaint against the school management. As a result, no FIR has been registered so far, though officials said legal action would be considered if a complaint is received. Meanwhile, BJP leaders and workers staged a protest outside the school, demanding registration of an FIR and action against the principal. Police detained over 30 protesters as a precaution and maintained that the situation remained peaceful, urging the public not to spread rumours or communal hatred.



EDITORIAL

Chips for India's Future

Semiconductors are the backbone of the modern digital economy. From smartphones and computers to electric vehicles, medical equipment, satellites, and defence systems, almost every advanced technology depends on semiconductor chips. Recognising their strategic importance, India has launched an ambitious vision to establish itself as a major player in the global semiconductor ecosystem by 2030. The success of this mission will determine not only the country's technological future but also its economic and strategic resilience. The global chip shortage during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the risks of overdependence on a handful of manufacturing nations. Supply chain disruptions affected industries worldwide, slowing automobile production, electronics manufacturing, and consumer markets. For India, which imports a significant share of its semiconductor requirements, the crisis underscored the need to develop domestic capabilities. The India Semiconductor Mission aims to build a comprehensive ecosystem that includes chip design, fabrication, assembly, testing, packaging, and research. The government has introduced financial incentives, encouraged global partnerships, and invested in semiconductor manufacturing facilities. These initiatives are expected to reduce import dependence, strengthen national security, and attract billions of dollars in investment. Beyond manufacturing, semiconductors present enormous economic opportunities. The industry can generate high-skilled employment in engineering, research, artificial intelligence, electronics, and advanced manufacturing. With India's large pool of technology professionals and rapidly expanding electronics market, the country is well positioned to become a global hub for semiconductor innovation.

However, achieving the Vision 2030 goals will require sustained commitment. Semiconductor fabrication plants demand massive capital investment, uninterrupted power supply, ultra-pure water, advanced infrastructure, and highly skilled manpower. Strengthening research institutions, expanding engineering education, and promoting industry-academia collaboration will be essential for building a globally competitive ecosystem. Environmental sustainability must also remain a priority. Chip manufacturing consumes significant quantities of water and energy, making renewable power, efficient resource management, and responsible waste disposal critical to long-term success. India's semiconductor ambitions extend beyond economic growth. In an era defined by AI, 5G, quantum computing, electric mobility, and defence technologies, semiconductor self-reliance has become a matter of strategic importance. A robust domestic chip industry will enhance tech sovereignty and reduce vulnerability to global supply chain disruptions. Vision-2030 is not merely about producing semiconductor chips-it is about positioning India at the forefront of the global tech revolution. If supported by consistent policy, the semiconductor mission can transform India into a trusted global manufacturing and design powerhouse.

The Hidden Cost of AI

Artificial Intelligence is driving the next industrial revolution. From healthcare and education to finance, agriculture, and governance, AI promises greater efficiency, innovation, and economic growth. India, with its thriving digital economy and ambitious AI mission, is rapidly becoming a preferred destination for data centres that power AI applications. While these facilities are essential for the country's digital future, they also raise an important question: Can India become an AI powerhouse without compromising its climate and natural resources?



AI data centres are the backbone of modern artificial intelligence. They house thousands of high-performance servers that process enormous volumes of data around the clock. However, this computational power comes at a significant environmental cost. Data centres consume vast amounts of electricity, require massive quantities of water for cooling, and occupy large tracts of land. As AI models become increasingly complex, their energy requirements continue to rise. India's AI ambitions are expanding rapidly. The government has launched the IndiaAI Mission, while global technology companies are investing billions of dollars in cloud infrastructure and AI-ready data centres. These investments promise employment, digital innovation, and economic growth. Yet, without sustainable planning, they could also increase carbon emissions and place additional pressure on already stressed natural resources. The biggest challenge is energy consumption. AI data centres operate 24 hours a day and require uninterrupted electricity. Although India is rapidly expanding renewable energy, coal still accounts for a significant share of power generation. If AI infrastructure relies heavily on fossil fuel-based electricity, the country's carbon emissions could increase substantially, making climate goals more difficult to achieve. Water consumption presents another serious concern. Servers generate enormous heat and require continuous cooling. Many large data

centres consume millions of litres of water every year. In a country where several states already face groundwater depletion and seasonal water shortages, expanding water-intensive AI infrastructure without careful planning could intensify local water stress. Communities struggling for drinking water may find themselves competing with industrial cooling systems. Land use also deserves attention. Large-scale data centres require extensive infrastructure, including transmission lines, substations, roads, and backup facilities. Poorly planned expansion can lead to loss of agricultural land, green spaces, or ecologically sensitive areas. Sustainable site selection must therefore become a key component of India's AI strategy. Electronic waste is another emerging challenge. AI hardware, including servers, processors, batteries, and cooling equipment, requires periodic replacement. Unless recycling systems are strengthened, discarded electronic equipment could contribute to hazardous waste and environmental pollution. Despite these concerns, AI and environmental sustainability need not be opposing goals. In fact, AI itself can become a powerful tool for climate action. Artificial intelligence can improve renewable energy forecasting, optimize electricity grids, monitor forests, detect illegal mining, improve water management, predict extreme weather events, reduce industrial emissions, and support precision agriculture. Properly

deployed, AI can help solve many environmental problems while driving economic growth. The solution lies in building green data centres. Future facilities should operate primarily on renewable energy such as solar and wind power, adopt energy-efficient processors, use advanced cooling technologies that minimize water consumption, and recycle wastewater wherever possible. Waste heat generated by servers can also be recovered for industrial or urban applications instead of being released into the atmosphere. India's policymakers must develop a comprehensive regulatory framework that balances technological expansion with environmental responsibility. Environmental impact assessments should become mandatory for large AI infrastructure projects. Clear standards on energy efficiency, water use, carbon emissions, and electronic waste management should accompany every new investment. Research and innovation will also play a crucial role. Indian engineers and startups have an opportunity to develop energy-efficient AI chips, sustainable cooling systems, low-power computing architectures, and indigenous green technologies that reduce environmental impact while strengthening technological self-reliance. The private sector must equally recognize that sustainability is good business. Global investors increasingly favour companies with strong environmental commitments. Building carbon-neutral data centres powered

by renewable energy can improve competitiveness while reducing long-term operational costs. India stands at a defining moment. It has the opportunity to become one of the world's leading AI economies while simultaneously demonstrating global leadership in sustainable digital infrastructure. However, technological progress should never come at the expense of forests, water resources, biodiversity, or climate commitments. The future belongs not simply to countries with the most powerful AI systems, but to those that build them responsibly. India's AI revolution should therefore be guided by a simple principle: innovation must advance alongside sustainability. By investing in green energy, water conservation, efficient technologies, and environmentally responsible policies, India can ensure that artificial intelligence becomes a driver of both economic prosperity and ecological resilience. The real measure of AI's success will not be the number of data centres built, but whether they power India's digital future without exhausting the natural resources on which that future ultimately depends.



- B. Vinod Kumar, Tech Engineer, Hyderabad.

JAAC Pauses PoK March, Warns Pakistan



Islamabad, July 16: The Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) has temporarily suspended its long march in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) until July 21, giving the Pakistani government what it called a final opportunity to address its demands. The decision followed talks between JAAC leaders and Pakistani authorities, reportedly involving Army Chief Asim Munir. However, the organisation warned that if no concrete action is taken, the march towards Muzaffarabad will resume on July 22, while protest sit-ins across PoK will continue. The agitation has intensified over the past six weeks, with the death toll rising to more than 30 people following clashes between protesters and Pakistani security forces. JAAC has accused the authorities of imposing road blockades, internet shutdowns and supply restrictions to suppress the movement. The protests, which initially focused on governance and economic issues, have evolved into a broader challenge to Pakistan's control over the region. Addressing a massive gathering in Rawalakot, JAAC leader Sardar Amman Khan described PoK as a "forcibly occupied territory" and rejected Pakistan's long-standing claim that it is merely a disputed region. Meanwhile, demonstrations by members of the Kashmiri diaspora were also held outside Pakistani diplomatic missions abroad, demanding international attention to the alleged human rights violations in PoK. Pakistan has deployed thousands of Rangers and security personnel across the region as tensions continue to escalate.

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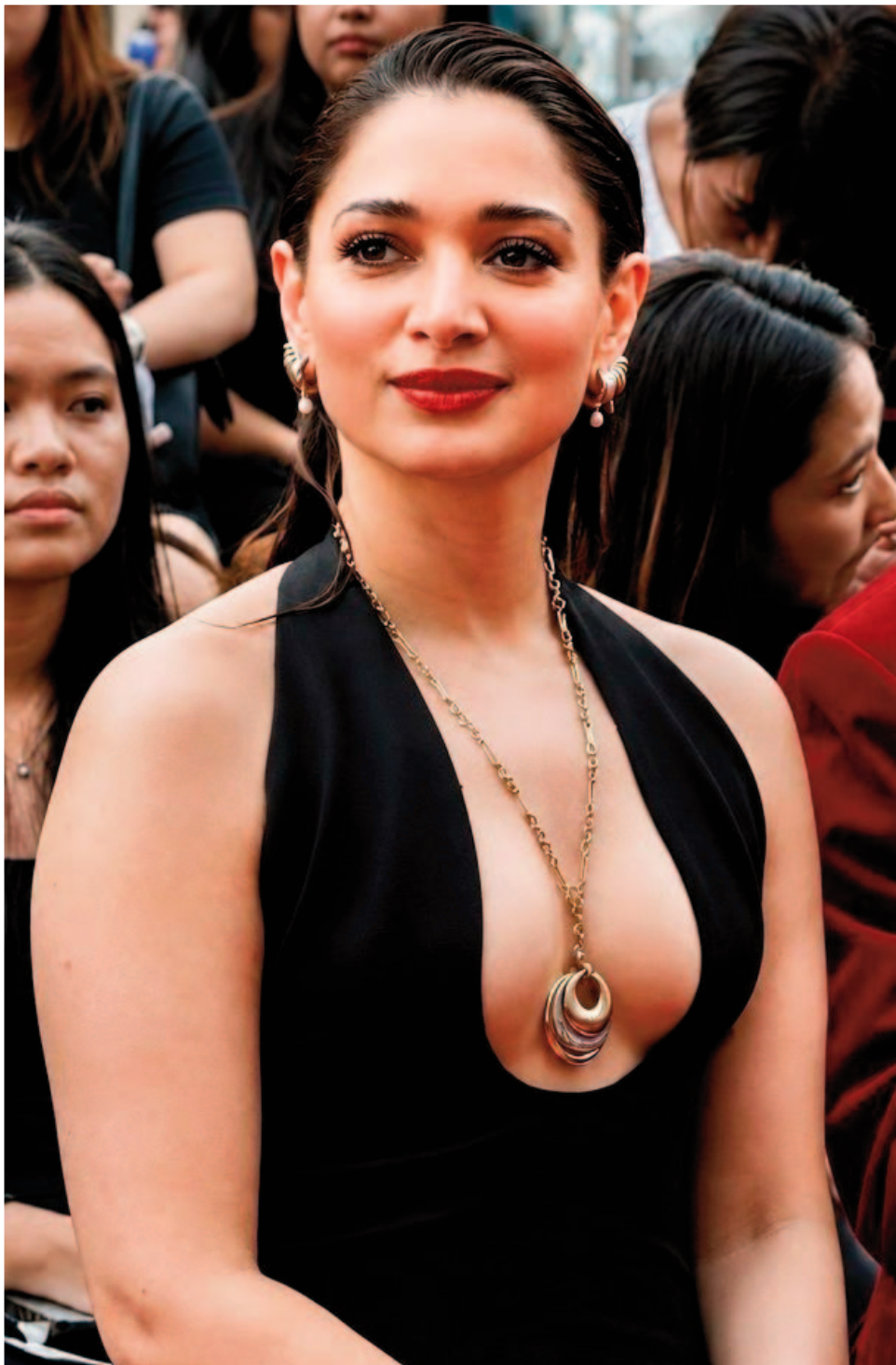
Prabhas' 'Fauzi' Set for Dec 3 Release

Hyderabad, July 16: The makers of Prabhas-starrer Fauzi have announced that the much-awaited historical action drama will release in theatres worldwide on December 3, 2026. Director Hanu Raghavapudi confirmed the release date on social media, calling the film a

story of "courage, honour and freedom." Set in the 1940s during British rule, Fauzi is a fictional historical drama inspired by the philosophical essence of the Bhagavad Gita, though the makers have clarified that it is not a mythological film. The film stars Prabhas in a

complex role, alongside debutante Imanvi. The supporting cast includes Anupam Kher, Mithun Chakraborty, Jayapradha, and Bhanu Chander. Music is composed by Vishal Chandrasekhar, while Sudeep Chatterjee handles cinematography. Earlier this year, the makers appealed to

fans not to circulate leaked images from the film's sets, warning of legal action against those sharing unauthorised content. Fauzi marks Prabhas' return to a large-scale period drama after the Baahubali franchise and will be released in multiple languages.



Tamannaah Begins Shooting for Ragini 3

Tamannaah Bhatia has begun shooting for her upcoming horror entertainer Ragini 3, with the first schedule currently underway in London. The actress shared a picture from the film's sets holding the clapboard, confirming that production has officially commenced. Directed by Shashanka Ghosh and produced by Ekta Kapoor's Balaji Motion Pictures, Ragini 3 marks the latest instalment in the popular Ragini MMS horror franchise. The film is slated for a theatrical release in 2027. The Ragini MMS series began in 2012 with a found-footage horror film starring Rajkumar Rao and Kainaz Motivala, followed by Ragini MMS 2 (2014) featuring Sunny Leone. Tamannaah, known for films such as Baahubali, Happy Days and 100% Love, was recently seen in the song "Gafoor" from the OTT series The Bads of Bollywood. More details about the cast and storyline of Ragini 3 are expected to be announced in coming months.

Sindhu Upsets World No. 5, Enters Japan Open QFs

Tokyo, July 16: Two-time Olympic medalist P.V. Sindhu produced a dominant display to defeat world No. 5 Han Yue of China 21-16, 21-14 and advance to the quarterfinals of the Japan Open Super 750 badminton tournament on Thursday. The world No. 10 Indian took just 35 minutes to register the straight-game victory, improving her head-to-head record against Han Yue to 8-1. After a slow start, Sindhu seized control midway through the opening game before racing to an 8-0 lead in the second game to wrap up one of her best performances of the season. She will next face Japan's Nozomi Okuhara, who advanced after top seed An Se-young of South Korea withdrew from the tournament. Sindhu is now India's only remaining contender after the mixed doubles pair of Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila exited in the pre-quarterfinals, losing 20-22, 17-21 to China's top seeds Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping.



Mouni Tells Paps to Stop

Mouni Roy has requested paparazzi to stop photographing her after a video of her confronting photographers during a Mumbai outing went viral. In a now-deleted Instagram Story, Mouni clarified that she had not been calling photographers for her appearances and urged them to stop covering her altogether. "Don't pap me ever... I have not called you guys for long enough. Please never come for me ever... I don't want you to pap me ever at all. Just stop please," she wrote, adding that her request came with "love and respect." The post was deleted within hours, but it sparked widespread discussion on social media, with some users backing her right to privacy while others debated celebrities' relationship with paparazzi. Meanwhile, Mouni shared a heartfelt post for close friend and Bengali actress Subhashree Ganguly, thanking her for travelling at short notice to be with her. Subhashree responded with, "I love you my Mon." Mouni has also been in the spotlight following her recent announcement of separation from husband Suraj Nambiar, with the couple confirming their split through a joint statement in May.

