



Actress Yami Gautam and producer Aditya Dhar celebrate the success of 'Article 370', which bagged three honours at the 72nd National Film Awards, including Best Actress, Best Film and Best Music Director awards.

The 72nd National Film Awards honoured the best of Indian cinema for films certified in 2024, recognising excellence in feature films, non-feature films and cinema literature.



Good morning

If you can see the positive sides of everything, you'll be able to live a much richer life than others.

BRIEFS

Ex-CJI Appeals to Save Wangchuk's Life

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Delhi**
Former Chief Justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan on Saturday appealed for activist Sonam Wangchuk's life to be saved after he was admitted to a hospital on the 21st day of his indefinite hunger strike in Delhi.

Speaking on the sidelines of an event, Justice Balakrishnan briefly remarked, "Let his life be saved." Wangchuk and three other activists have been on a hunger strike at Jantar Mantar since June 28, supporting protests over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination and reported student deaths linked to the controversy.

The former CJI's appeal came amid growing concerns over Wangchuk's health as the prolonged fast entered its third week.

Supporters and civil society groups have urged authorities to address the issues raised by the protesters and ensure necessary medical care for those on hunger strike.

Authorities are closely monitoring the health condition of Wangchuk and other protesters as demands for a resolution continue to grow. Calls grow for urgent medical care and resolution.

Ahmedabad Firecracker Blast Kills Eight

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Ahmedabad**

At least eight people were killed and several others injured after a powerful explosion triggered a massive fire at an alleged illegal firecracker manufacturing unit in Ahmedabad's Vastral area on Saturday.

The blast occurred at a factory near Mehmodpura on Ramol-Gatrad Road, leading to a major rescue operation by the Rapid Action Force (RAF), firefighters and emergency teams. Several workers trapped inside the damaged unit were rescued, while eight bodies were recovered from the debris.

More than five fire tenders and ambulances were deployed to control the blaze and carry out rescue operations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the tragedy and announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh for the families of the deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

Police said the factory was allegedly operating without a valid licence, as its earlier licence had reportedly been cancelled. A detailed investigation has been launched to determine the cause of the explosion and identify violations of safety norms.

Senior police and civic officials inspected the site, while forensic teams are examining evidence to ascertain responsibility for the incident.



India's Private Space Era Begins

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Sriharikota**
India achieved a major milestone in the space sector with Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1, the country's first privately developed orbital rocket, successfully launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

Named after the father of India's space programme, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, the rocket marks a new beginning for private participation in India's space industry and opens opportunities in the global small satellite launch market.

Advanced Three-Stage Rocket
Vikram-1 is a three-stage rocket designed to carry small commercial satellites weighing up to 300 kg into

Low Earth Orbit (LEO). Standing around 23 metres tall with a diameter of 1.7 metres, the rocket uses advanced technology for precise satellite deployment.

Built by Former ISRO Scientists
Skyroot Aerospace was founded in 2018 by former ISRO scientists Pawan Chandana and Naga Bharath Daka.

The company has developed the rocket with support from ISRO, which provided launch facilities, technical assistance and testing infrastructure.

Skyroot had earlier successfully tested its sub-orbital rocket Vikram-S in November 2022, paving the way for the Vikram-1 mission.

Boost to India's Space Economy

The launch strengthens India's position in the growing small satellite market, where demand is rising for affordable and quick satellite deployment for communication, agriculture and weather monitoring. With private rockets offering cost-effective solutions, India aims to compete in the global commercial space sector.

Future Goals
Skyroot plans to develop reusable rocket technology and work towards advanced human spaceflight capabilities in the future.

The growing private space ecosystem is also expected to create new opportunities and jobs for young engineers and space innovators.

➤ **More information - PG4**

CHENNAMMA PASSES AWAY AT 89

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**
Chennamma, wife of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, passed away on Saturday following a massive cardiac arrest at a private hospital in Bengaluru. She was 89.

According to a statement from Manipal Hospital, Chennamma suffered a cardiac arrest around 4 pm despite showing signs of recovery earlier in the day. She had been admitted on Wednesday night with breathing difficulties, chest congestion and other age-related health complications.

A largely private figure, Chennamma remained a strong pillar of support for Deve Gowda throughout his long political journey. She stayed away from active politics but was widely



Silent Force Behind a PM's Journey

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**
Chennamma, wife of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, passed away on Saturday at the age of 89, ending a 72-year-long journey of companionship and support that stood behind one of India's significant political careers.

A native of Mutteghirehalli village in Hassan district, Chennamma married Deve Gowda in 1954 at the age of 17. She remained a constant source of strength as he rose from grassroots politics in Karnataka to become the 11th Prime Minister of India.



Known for her simplicity, religious values and warm hospitality, Chennamma stayed away from electoral politics but was regarded as the moral anchor of the Gowda family and the JD(S). She managed the family responsibilities while Deve Gowda focused on public life and

raised six children, including Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy.

Deve Gowda, who arrived at the hospital in a wheelchair, broke down while paying his last respects to his lifelong companion.

Her mortal remains will be kept at the JD(S) headquarters, JP Bhavan, for public homage before the final rites at Haradanahalli in Hassan district on Sunday evening.

Chennamma's legacy remains that of a woman who shaped a historic political journey quietly from behind the scenes.

respected for her simplicity and dedication to the family.

Leaders across the political spectrum are expected to pay their

tributes. Details regarding her last rites will be announced soon.

Shira vs Tumakuru: Airport Face-Off

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**
A political tussle has intensified over the location of Karnataka's proposed second international airport, with Union Minister V. Somanna backing Shira in Tumakuru district, while Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara continued to favour Tumakuru city.

Somanna has written to Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu seeking the airport at Shira, arguing that the project should promote balanced development across Central and North Karnataka instead of further concentrating infrastructure around Bengaluru.

He said Shira's location along major industrial corridors, availability of land, connectivity and proximity to key institutions make it suitable for the project.

He added that the airport would boost investment, cargo movement, employment and industrial growth in the region. **PG3**



Op Sindoor Showcases India's Defence Might

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday described Operation Sindoor as a landmark demonstration of India's modern military capability, saying it reflected the country's transformed defence preparedness built over the past 12 years under the government's "Nation First" and "Forces First" approach.

Addressing a public event in New Delhi, Singh said the operation not only showcased the operational excellence of the Indian Armed Forces but also highlighted the growing strength of indigenous defence manufacturing and technological self-reliance.

'Zero Tolerance Is Action, Not Just a Statement'
Calling Operation Sindoor a symbol of India's uncompromising stand against terrorism, the Defence Minister said the mission proved the country's ability to strike terrorists both along the borders and at their bases.

He said the operation reflected the government's policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism, adding that the bravery and professionalism displayed by the armed forces reaffirmed India's military readiness.

Indigenous Defence Systems in Action



Singh said several indigenously developed defence systems played a crucial role during Operation Sindoor. These included the Akash Teer air defence control system, the Akash missile system, and the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, which were deployed alongside other advanced military platforms.

He said the successful use of these systems demonstrated the increasing capability of India's domestic defence industry and the effectiveness of investments made in indigenous technology.

Push for Self-Reliance

Highlighting the government's defence reforms, Singh said self-reliance had become one of the most significant achievements of the Narendra

India's Defence Strength on Display

- * Operation Sindoor showcased India's modern military capability and strong anti-terror response, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said.
- * The operation reflected the government's "Zero Tolerance" policy against terrorism and the strength of the armed forces.
- * Indigenous defence systems like Akash Teer, Akash missile and BrahMos played a key role in the mission.
- * Singh highlighted India's shift from a defence importer to a defence producer

through self-reliance initiatives.

- * Five Positive Indigenisation Lists covering 509 defence items have been issued to promote domestic manufacturing.
- * DRDO, startups, private firms and over 17,000 MSMEs are driving defence innovation.
- * India is emerging as a trusted global security partner through expanding defence cooperation.
- * Defence self-reliance will remain a major pillar of the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.

Modi government.

He noted that the armed forces have issued five Positive Indigenisation Lists covering 509 defence items, while Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) have notified 5,012 additional items for domestic procurement. Another indigenisation list, he said, would be released soon to further strengthen local manufacturing.

The Defence Minister said India had successfully

shifted from dependence on imports to indigenous production, transforming itself from a defence consumer into a defence producer.

Strategic Autonomy Through Indigenous Capability

Singh stressed that true strategic autonomy can only be achieved when a nation develops its own capabilities in critical defence sectors, including weapons, ammunition, missiles, drones, radars and navigation systems. **PG3**

A GENUINE KANNADA TALENT GLEAMING IN SPACE

A young Kannada talent who is rising in space. His hometown is Aldur in Chikkamagaluru taluk. A true coffee boy. Awais Ahmed is the founder and CEO of PIXXEL, a private company that has won a contract worth 476 million dollars from NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) of America for the first time.

Having spent his childhood in a dense forest in a time when there was no internet, he would not have even dreamed of one day launching a satellite into space. Is it a small achievement to build a satellite company called Pixel and get a NASA contract? Uhm... You have to apply knowledge. It takes a lot of effort to achieve success. Awais Ahmed has applied such effort!

The world of a few years ago was not like the world of today. Of course, there was no human life. It was a time when villages were not so open to modernity. I know very well that Awais spent his childhood in a time when human relations were alive.

I think it is not an exaggeration to say that the boy Awais was not like other boys during his school days. He was a disciplined son of his mother. But his father's love was not visible to the outside world.

He behaved with respect and dignity with teachers and classmates during his school days. If you look at him like that, he had a moderate speech. Excessive reading. Immersion. Identity towards the destination.

It is not surprising that all these have brought him to this point today. Childhood tendencies shape us. There must be a longing for this journey of life.

There must be a dream. There must be a boundless enthusiasm. No one can achieve anything without the constant curiosity of the essence of ideological and intellectual existence. When all these are present, extraordinary things can be achieved.

This is what Awais did! Awais is now a household name, having founded India's largest private space company, Pixel, in his early twenties, and signed a deal with America's top space agency, NASA.



From building India's first Hyperloop pod to developing advanced satellites, missiles, lunar landers and rovers, Pixel, a private space tech startup founded by Awais Ahmed in 2019, is constantly pushing the boundaries of exploration. It brings together deep expertise across engineering, research, design, project management, brand and business.

It works collaboratively to make space technology practical, purposeful and accessible. State-of-the-art Bridging the gap between innovation and real-world impact.

The company believes that space exploration is not just about reaching new frontiers, but also about transforming our understanding of the Earth and our place within it.



Pixel is founded and operates by Awais Ahmed, founder and CEO. He is joined by founder and CTO Kshitij Khandelchal, Eji Yapuso, chief scientific officer, Manas Gupta, vice president, electronics, Tejasvi Harish, VP, and mechanics, Ryan McKinney, chief revenue officer, Ravi Suhag, SVP, engineering, Srushti Bajpai, SVP, finance, Tanya Pallavi, head of people practices, Allison Jenkins, VP, public sector, Abhilash Bhatt, chief of staff, Neerja Shah, director, brand and communications, and Jeremy Kravitz, VP, analytics. Preston Dunlop, Jordan Noon, Goddard, Ryan Johnson- working as consultants.

BITS Pilani and SpaceX competition: Awais Ahmed joined BITS Pilani, a prestigious Indian educational institution, for higher studies. Awais Ahmed chose to study mathematics and his dream of space was born while he was studying. He joined Team Anant, a BITS Pilani student satellite program run in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). It was there that Awais learned the practical knowledge of how satellites are made.

At the same time, Awais participated in the most difficult Hyperloop Pod competition organized by Elon Musk's SpaceX on a global scale. Due to his efficiency and luck, Awais was selected as the engineering leader of the Hyperloop India team.

Awais was very inspired by Elon Musk's space projects. Instead of taking the traditional job path that was common at that age, he took the tough decision to set up a business that would amaze the scientific world along with his classmate Kshitij. Therefore, growing in this field is no small matter. Truly great.

Here is the background: In 2018, he participated in the IBM Watson AI Challenge with his classmate Kshitij. There, both of them noticed that there was a lack of high-quality satellite data required for many sectors, including agriculture.

Realizing the need for technology to accurately detect issues such as crop health, methane gas leakage, illegal mining, etc., they decided to set up their own company.

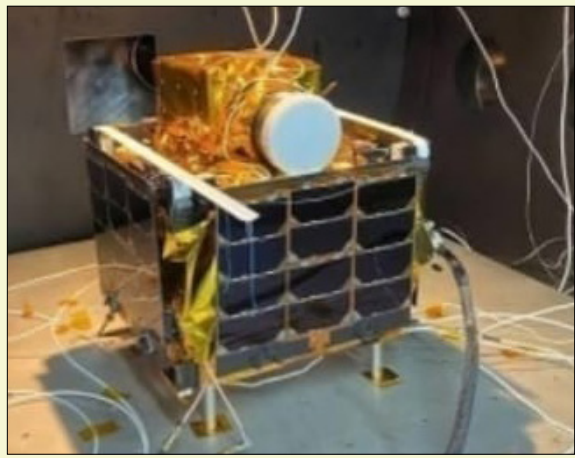
Awais's father runs a small medical shop on the main road of Aldur, Chikkamagaluru. If you look at it that way, he is not a wealthy person. Financially, he is a middle-class family. Therefore, Awais's father does not have any capital that can be called large. However, his father, who believed in his son's confidence, dream, and goal, provided him with financial assistance of Rs. 10,000 at the initial stage.

With this, Awais Ahmed and his friend Kshitij

Khandelchal started working and lived in a small rented room in Bangalore, living on a very minimal cost of just Rs. 10,000 per month, and finally launched 'Pixel' on February 27, 2019.

Pixel has built a proud Indian private satellite startup called. Pixel will set up its first official office in Indira Nagar, Bengaluru. Pixel has also set up a branch office in El Sagunto, California, USA.

Furthermore, in 2025, the company has launched six Firefly satellites, which it built itself. The 'hyper-spectral imaging' technology developed by Pixel is so powerful that



it can capture the Earth's surface with 50 times more precision and in more than 250 spectral bands compared to conventional satellites.

These hyperspectral satellites will redefine Earth observation. They are providing unparalleled precision to detect change early, monitor in extraordinary detail and make future-proof decisions.

Pixel has successfully launched six operational commercial satellites belonging to its Firefly hyperspectral imaging constellation.

The first three satellites were launched on January 14, 2025, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

Three additional Firefly satellites were launched on August 26, 2025. These six commercial satellites are part of Pixel's first-stage constellation, following two previous technology demonstration satellites, Anand and Shakuntala.

Google investment and NASA contract mark historic milestone: Awais and Kshitij are hard workers.

The student startup they built at the age of just 20 has



SHAKUNTALA, Pixel's first full-scale commercial satellite, successfully launched aboard Elon Musk's SpaceX Falcon-9 rocket. It is the world's highest-resolution hyperspectral satellite.

caught the attention of global space giants in just five years. Recognizing its potential, global giants like Google, Radical Ventures, and Lightspeed invested \$95 million (about Rs. 900 crore) in Pixel, making Pixel the world's most funded hyperspectral imaging company.

Building this private company has brought Awais personal recognition, including being recognized by Forbes 30 Under 30, MIT Innovators Under 35, and Fortune India's 40 Under 40. Awais' passion for space, curiosity, and his inquisitive nature in a time when there were no technologies, have made this Kannadigas boy look up to not only India, but the world as a whole.

it is significant that awais ahmed has been named among the 100 most influential AI shaping individuals identified by AIM 2026.

Power politics, reel madness, cinema addiction, cricket fanaticism - there is no need to envy the fact that Awais is the leader of today's generation, which has largely gone astray due to these.

There are so many children who are curious about knowledge, science, and technology and are studying in schools and colleges. Leaving aside dirty politics, schools, colleges, and the education department need to identify such children and provide them with opportunities and guidance.

The education system needs to be structured to find such talents. With strong support, proper direction, and appropriate guidance, India can cultivate many talents like Awais.

Growing up in a small town in rural Karnataka, Awais Ahmed was fascinated by space from a young age. That childhood curiosity inspired him to found a satellite imaging startup called Pixel. It is now valued at around ₹900 million. Today, with a NASA contract and global customers, his journey is proving that world-class innovation can start anywhere.

Awais Ahmed's achievement is indeed a matter of great pride and admiration for me personally. Because I felt a sense of accomplishment in the fact that I was his Kannada teacher during his high school years. His father is still in touch with me. Needless to say, his role in his son's path to success has been immeasurable.

May Pixel take India's technological power to even greater heights on a global scale.

➤ **T. Devidas**



NEWS

HEALTH & Lifestyle

SCIENCE & Technology

BJP has no issues on the dates announced by JDS for Padayatra - Ravi Kumar

➤ **Bengaluru**

"BJP has no issues with the JDS on the issue of taking out padayatra and the dates announced by them," Chief Whip of the Opposition in Legislative Council N. Ravi Kumar maintained here on Saturday.

"The JDS has announced the dates for the padayatra from July 30 to August 1. BJP has no issues over this," Ravi Kumar said, while speaking to reporters at 'Jagannath Bhavan', the party's state headquarters.

He explained that the objective, goal and target of both the BJP and JDS are one and the same - that the anti-farmer Bidadi Township project must be scrapped once and for all in the interest of the farmers. "In this background, BJP has no reason to have any issue with the JDS either on the issue padayatra or on the issue of dates," Ravi Kumar added.

Ravi Kumar said he has noticed in the media the reports whether there will be two separate padayatras but he asserted, "There will be only one padayatra from Bidadi to Bangalore. Our President B. Y. Vijayendra will discuss with the JDS leaders about the modalities and logistical arrangements to be done for the Padayatra. We will bring in clarity on this issue. We will not make any issue about the dates."

"On one hand, the chief minister says lands will not be forcibly acquired. On the other hand the state government has issued final notification for acquisition of lands. This is not acceptable. Let the government lands be used for the township project. BJP will not allow farmers land to be usurped for what is essentially the real-

estate project," Ravi Kumar explained.

He also accused the Chief Minister of having two different approach towards the farmers of Kanakapura and farmers of Bidadi.

"The Chief Minister has asked the farmers of Kanakapura not to give up their lands while he has asked the farmers of Bidadi to give up their lands. In fact, the government is all set to confiscate lands in Bidadi by foisting cases on farmers. This double-standard is reprehensible," Ravi Kumar explained.

According to Ravi Kumar both Yeddyurappa and Kumaraswamy had dropped the Bidadi Township project and had also returned Rs 400 crores to DLF.

"Why then Shivakumar is insisting on this project. What vested interest he has in this project," Ravi Kumar asked.

In response to a question, Ravi Kumar said there is no coordination in the ruling party on the issue of cabinet expansion as they have not been able to arrive at consensus.

Ravi Kumar also alleged that the proposed Bidadi Township project would adversely affect the livelihood of hundreds of farming families who depend on the acquired land for agriculture. He said the BJP would continue to stand with the farmers and intensify its agitation if the State Government failed to withdraw the land acquisition notification. He urged the government to hold discussions with farmers and explore alternative land for the township instead of acquiring fertile agricultural land.



Beat Gas & Acidity with Mint

Mint, a common herb found in most kitchens, is valued not only for adding flavour to dishes like biryani and chutneys but also for its potential health benefits.

Traditionally used in Ayurveda, mint may support digestion, improve oral hygiene and provide important nutrients when included as part of a balanced diet. However, it is not a cure for any disease and should not replace medical treatment.

Supports Healthy Digestion

Modern lifestyles marked by irregular eating habits, junk food, stress and lack of physical activity often lead to gas, acidity, bloating and indigestion.

Mint contains menthol and other plant compounds that may help relax the digestive tract muscles, providing relief from mild digestive discomfort. Drinking warm mint tea or mint-infused water after meals may help improve digestion for some people.

Helpful for Gas, But Not for Everyone

Mint may reduce stomach discomfort in some individuals. However, people suffering from Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) or severe acid reflux should be cautious, as mint can sometimes worsen heartburn. Such individuals should consult a doctor before consuming mint regularly.

Promotes Fresh Breath

Mint possesses natural antibacterial properties that may help reduce bacteria responsible for bad breath. Cheewing a few fresh mint leaves after meals or using a mint-based mouth rinse can help maintain oral freshness.

Boosts Nutritional Intake

Mint contains vitamins A and C, iron, manganese and antioxidants that help protect the body's cells from oxidative stress. Regularly including mint in a balanced diet may contribute



to overall immune health.

Benefits for Skin

The herb's anti-inflammatory properties may help reduce acne, minor skin irritation and excess oil production. Some people use mint paste or face packs for skincare, though those with sensitive skin are advised to perform a patch test before use.

May Support Weight Management

Mint does not directly promote weight loss. However, replacing sugary beverages with mint-infused water and improving digestion may indirectly support weight management by helping reduce overall calorie intake.

Simple Ways to Include Mint in Daily Diet

Drink warm water infused with 5-6 fresh mint leaves in the morning.

- * Prepare mint and ginger herbal tea.
- * Add mint to chutneys, salads, sandwiches and soups.
- * Mix mint with lemon water for a refreshing drink.
- * Add chopped mint and cumin powder to buttermilk to aid digestion.

Use in Moderation

Mint should be consumed in moderation. People with severe acid reflux, stomach ulcers or chronic digestive disorders should seek medical advice before regular use.

Pregnant women and those taking certain medications are also advised to consult a healthcare professional before consuming large quantities of mint.

Persistent symptoms such as severe stomach pain, blood in stools or ongoing indigestion require medical evaluation rather than relying solely on home remedies.

WhatsApp Unveils Fresh Apple-Inspired Features

➤ **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

WhatsApp is testing a new feature that will allow iPhone users to switch between Apple's microphone modes directly during voice and video calls, while also rolling out Apple's new Liquid Glass design for its Mac application.

According to reports, the feature has been spotted in the latest WhatsApp for iOS beta version 26.27.74. Users will be able to access microphone settings through the three-dot menu during calls without opening the Control Center.

The new shortcut offers three audio options—Standard, Voice Isolation and Wide Spectrum. Standard uses Apple's default microphone settings, Voice Isolation reduces background noise to improve voice clarity, and Wide Spectrum captures both the user's voice and surrounding sounds. Users can switch between these modes without interrupting an ongoing call.

The feature will be introduced gradually and will be available only on supported iPhones running compatible versions of iOS. Meanwhile, WhatsApp has also started rolling out Apple's Liquid Glass design for its Mac application with version 26.27.73. The update introduces a redesigned translucent sidebar, new sections for Locked Chats and Communities, along with an updated chat bar and attachment menu, offering a more modern and consistent user experience across Apple devices.





Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar meets AICC President and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge at his Sada shivanagar residence in Bengaluru on Saturday. Deputy Chief Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara was also present during the meeting.

RING OF FIRE RATTLED BY 22 QUAKES

A series of 22 earthquakes in the Pacific Ring of Fire, including a powerful 7.3-magnitude quake off Mexico, has renewed concerns over tsunami threats and heightened seismic activity across the region.



► **Vikrama Vahini | Mexico**
The Pacific Ring of Fire, the world's most seismically active region, has recorded 22 earthquakes over the past 30 days, with the strongest measuring 7.3 magnitude striking off Mexico's southern Chiapas coast on Friday.

According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), the earthquake's epicentre was located near Puerto Madero at a shallow depth of 10 kilometres, resulting in strong ground shaking.

The quake prompted the US Tsunami Warning System to issue a tsunami alert for parts of the Pacific coastline, warning of possible high waves, dangerous sea currents and coastal flooding.

The latest tremor follows a series of significant earthquakes across the Pacific this week, including a 6.3-magnitude quake near the Loyalty Islands, a 6.2-magnitude earthquake off the Philippines and a 5.8-magnitude tremor near Tonga.

Together, these events account for 22 earthquakes recorded in the region during the past month.

Stretching about 40,000 kilometres around the Pacific Ocean, the Ring of Fire is responsible for nearly 90 per cent of the world's earthquakes and contains around 75 per cent of all active and dormant volcanoes.

The region experiences frequent seismic activity due to the continuous movement of tectonic plates beneath the Earth's surface.

Seismologists continue to monitor the region closely as the recent series of earthquakes highlights the ongoing risk of powerful tremors and related hazards across the Pacific basin.

Authorities across several Pacific nations have strengthened disaster preparedness measures and urged coastal residents to remain alert for official advisories as seismic activity in the region continues.

BJP Eyes United NCP Before NDA Push

► **Vikrama Vahini | Mumbai**
The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is reportedly exploring a political strategy in Maharashtra that favours the reunification of the two Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) factions before considering any formal expansion of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).



According to party sources, the BJP believes the rival factions led by Ajit Pawar and Sharad Pawar should first resolve their differences and reunite before any future political

arrangement within the NDA. However, leaders from both factions have denied that merger talks or alliance negotiations are currently underway.

The NCP split in July 2023 after Ajit Pawar joined the BJP-Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra. The Election Commission later recognised his faction as the official NCP, while Sharad Pawar's group has since functioned separately as the Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) or NCP (SP). Sources said the BJP is not in

favour of inducting Sharad Pawar or his supporters into the NDA individually and would prefer to deal with a united NCP. The ruling NCP, already part of the NDA in Maharashtra, has also sought representation in the Union Cabinet whenever Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertakes a cabinet expansion.

The renewed political buzz comes ahead of the Centre's proposed Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, which seeks to increase the Lok Sabha strength to 850 seats and initiate a



fresh delimitation exercise. The NCP (SP), with eight Lok Sabha MPs and one Rajya Sabha member, could play a significant role if the government seeks wider political support.

Recent meetings between leaders of both NCP factions and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis have further fuelled speculation.

However, party leaders maintained that the discussions were purely administrative and denied any political negotiations or merger plans.

Shira vs Tumakuru: Airport Face-Off

► **From PG1**
Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara reiterated that Tumakuru city remains his preferred choice for the state's second international airport. He said the final decision would be based on technical assessments and recommendations from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The state government has already examined multiple proposed locations, including areas along Kunigal Road and the Bidadi-Nelamangala corridor. Officials are evaluating factors such as land availability, connectivity, environmental impact and future growth potential before finalising the site.

The proposed greenfield airport is expected to reduce pressure on Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, while improving air connectivity and supporting industrial development across Karnataka. The location decision is likely to be made after completing all technical and regulatory clearances.

Meanwhile, Parameshwara said he had supported Tumakuru as the preferred location from the beginning. He stated that technical evaluations of proposed sites, including Kunigal Road and Bidadi-Nelamangala regions, have been completed and the final decision will be based on the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) assessment.

The airport project has emerged as a key development issue, with leaders stressing the need for regional balance and long-term economic growth. The final site selection is expected to involve detailed consultations between the state and central governments.

The Karnataka government is currently reviewing multiple proposals, with the final site expected to be selected after technical and regulatory approvals.

Op Sindoor Showcases India's Defence Might

► **From PG1**

He said reducing dependence on foreign suppliers remains a key priority for the government to ensure national security during times of crisis.

Youth Driving Defence Innovation

Describing India's youth as "technological partners" in national security, Singh said the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has evolved

into a national innovation platform by bringing together scientists, startups, academic institutions, private companies, defence public sector units and over 17,000 MSMEs. He said this collaborative ecosystem is accelerating innovation and strengthening India's defence manufacturing capabilities.

India Emerging as a Global Security Partner

The Defence Minister said India is

increasingly being recognised as a trusted global security partner, expanding its strategic engagement from the Indian Ocean to the Indo-Pacific region.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent international visits, Singh said India's global partnerships have deepened across defence manufacturing, the BrahMos missile programme, trade, uranium supplies and cultural cooperation.

SRI SUBUDHENDRA THEERTHA CALLS FOR HARMONY

► **Vikrama Vahini | Haveri**

Sri Subudhendra Theertha, the Peethadhipathi of Mantralaya, has called for maintaining harmony among the three major Hindu philosophical traditions and urged people not to make statements that could disturb the foundation of the Vedic tradition.

Addressing devotees at Hosaritti in Haveri district during the golden covering ceremony of the Brindavana of Sri Sushilendra Theertha, he said the teachings of Sri Adi Shankaracharya, Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Madhwacharya have guided humanity and should be respected by all.

Respect All Acharyas, Avoid Personal Criticism

Sri Subudhendra Theertha said Sri Shankaracharya revived and strengthened Vedic philosophy through his works and extensive travels across the country. He also highlighted the contributions of Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Madhwacharya in establishing and explaining their respective philosophical traditions.

He stressed that ideological discussions and debates may continue, but personal criticism of revered acharyas should be avoided. "Criticism of

individuals and attempts to create divisions among followers will not benefit society," he said.

Call for Social Harmony

The seer condemned recent incidents and media discussions that, according to him, hurt religious sentiments and disturb social harmony. He appealed to scholars, youth and followers of different traditions not to encourage divisive statements.

He said followers should focus on the values, teachings and human principles taught by the acharyas rather than engaging in disputes.

Protect Cultural Values

Sri Subudhendra Theertha also expressed concern over disrespectful remarks against Sri Shankaracharya and said efforts were made earlier to correct references in Karnataka government textbooks through discussions with officials.

Calling for unity among communities, he said protecting Hindu traditions and maintaining social harmony was the responsibility of everyone. He urged followers of different schools of thought to remain united and work towards the welfare of society.

ENTERTAINMENT

72nd National Film Awards Winners Revealed

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

The winners of the 72nd National Film Awards were announced on Saturday, recognising the finest achievements in Indian cinema for films certified by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) between January 1 and December 31, 2024. The prestigious awards honour excellence across feature films, non-feature films and cinema literature.

The announcement, which came after a delay of nearly two weeks, was made in New Delhi. An 11-member jury, headed by acclaimed filmmaker Jayaraj, selected the winners after evaluating entries from across the country.

The top honour for Best Feature Film went to Srikanth, while Kartik Aaryan and veteran Malayalam superstar Mammootty shared the Best Actor award for their outstanding performances.

Actress Yami Gautam received the Best Actress award for her powerful role in Article 370, while Rajkumar Periasamy was named Best Director for Amaran.

Among the supporting categories, Sanjay Mishra won Best Supporting Actor, while Ropashree Varkady and Sachana Namidass jointly received the Best Supporting Actress award.

Science-fiction epic Kalki 2898 AD was recognised as the Best Feature Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment and also won the Best Production Design award.

Captain Miller received the award for Best Film Promoting National and Social Values, besides earning a Special Mention for actor Dhanush.

The Best Screenplay award went to Sukumar for Pushpa 2, while Venky Atluri won Best Dialogue Writer for Lucky Baskhar. Shashwat Sachdev received the

Best Music Direction (Songs) award for Article 370, while Amaran won Best Background Score and Best Editing.

The Best Cinematography award went to Shehnad Jalaal for Bramayugam.

Playback singing honours went to Abhay Jodhpurkar for the Marathi song Gharat Ganpati from Navasachi Gauri Mazi, and Vaikom Vijayalakshmi for the Tamil song Angu Vaana Konilu from ARM. Stree 2 won Best

Choreography, while Bhool Bhulaiya 3 received the award for Best Sound Design.

Regional Cinema Honoured

Regional cinema continued to receive strong recognition, reflecting the diversity of Indian filmmaking. Mithya was adjudged Best Kannada Film, while

Feminichi Fathima won Best Malayalam Film. Raayan emerged as the Best Tamil Film, Committee Kurrullu won Best Telugu Film, and Chalchitra Ekhon received the Best Bengali Film award.

Other regional winners included Mukkam Post Bombilwadi (Marathi), Lahari (Odia), Maaran (Gujarati), Sunita (Manipuri) and Mog Asum (Konkani).

Non-Feature Film Awards

In the non-feature section, Bhangaar (Obsolete) won the Best Non-Feature Film award. Ravi Raj Murmu was honoured with the Best Debut Film of a Director award, while Kakori won the award for Best Biographical/Historical Reconstruction Film.

Main Nida was recognised as the Best Art and Culture Film, while Piplantri: A Tale of Eco Feminism won Best Film Promoting Social and Environmental Values. Touched as Water received the Best Animation Film award and Hamsafar was named Best Short Film.

Other major winners included Statue

of Unity: Ekta Ka Prateek for Best Direction, Life in Loom for Best Cinematography, Blue for Best Sound Design, NDA for Best Editing, Parat 41' chya Magavar (On the Trail of 41') for Best Music Direction, Little Planet: A Tale of Frogs for Best Narrator, and Obur (Clouds) for Best Script. Special Mentions were awarded to Chola Dora aur Sui and Bhadra-Kali Natakam.

Cinema Literature Also Recognised

The Best Film Critic award was presented to Sanjeev Shrivastava for his contribution to Hindi cinema criticism.

The award for Best Book on Cinema went to Naaniruvude Nimagaagi Naadiruvude Nanagaagi: Kannada Cinemada Thathva Matthu Rajakeeya, authored by Kenchanuru Pradeep Kumar Shetty.

Strong Competition Across Categories

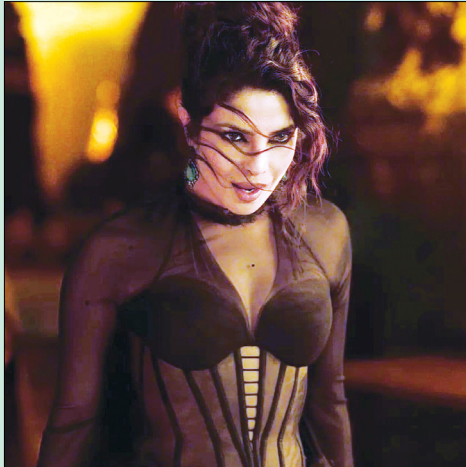
This year's awards witnessed stiff competition, with several critically acclaimed and commercially successful films, including All We Imagine As Light, Laapataa Ladies, Pushpa 2: The Rule, Stree 2, Hanu Man, Manjummel Boys, and Premalu, among the prominent contenders.

In the non-feature category alone, 161 films representing 24 Indian languages competed across 16 award categories, highlighting the growing diversity and creative excellence of Indian cinema.

The 72nd National Film Awards once again celebrated outstanding storytelling, technical brilliance and artistic achievement across India's vibrant film industry, recognising excellence from both mainstream and regional cinema.

The award winners will receive the prestigious National Film Award medal, a citation and cash prize from the President of India at a special ceremony to be held in New Delhi. The awards continue to serve as the country's highest recognition for excellence in filmmaking, celebrating creativity and cinematic achievement across diverse languages and genres.

Rajamouli Unveils Priyanka's 'Varanasi' Look



► **Vikrama Vahini | Bengaluru**

Director S.S. Rajamouli has unveiled the first look of Priyanka Chopra's character from his much-awaited film 'Varanasi' on the occasion of the actress's birthday.

Priyanka, who plays the character 'Mandakini' in the film, was introduced with a striking poster featuring her in a dark warrior-like outfit, showcasing an intense and powerful avatar. Rajamouli described her character as a strong, fierce and unforgettable figure who travels across the world.

The filmmaker shared two contrasting looks of Priyanka — one portraying a fierce and intense side, while the other showing her graceful and vibrant appearance. The posters have sparked speculation among fans about the character having multiple shades.

Earlier, Priyanka's look in a yellow saree with a gun had created excitement among audiences. However, the latest reveal presents a completely different and more powerful side of her role.

'Varanasi' marks Priyanka Chopra's return to Indian cinema after nearly seven years following her 2019 film 'The Sky Is Pink'. The film has generated significant buzz as it brings together Rajamouli's direction and Priyanka's comeback to Bollywood.

BUSINESS

Forex Reserves Cross \$675 Billion

► **Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi**

India's foreign exchange reserves registered a second consecutive weekly increase, rising by \$964 million to \$675.16 billion for the week ended July 10, 2026, according to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The increase follows a sharp \$7.26 billion rise recorded in the previous week, signalling improved external stability despite global economic uncertainties and elevated crude oil prices.

The steady rise in reserves is being viewed as a positive indicator for the Indian economy, strengthening the country's ability to manage external financial pressures and support the value of the rupee.

Foreign Currency Assets Lead the Growth

The largest component of India's forex reserves, Foreign Currency Assets (FCA), recorded the biggest increase during the reporting week. FCA rose by \$930 million to \$546.51 billion. These assets comprise holdings in major global currencies, including the US dollar, euro, pound sterling and Japanese yen, and form the backbone of the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Gold Holdings Edge Higher

India's gold reserves also witnessed a modest increase, rising by \$24 million to \$105.23 billion during the week.

Meanwhile, the country's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increased by \$3 million to \$18.626 billion. India's reserve tranche position with the IMF also improved by \$7 million, reaching \$4.793 billion.

Below Record High but Showing Recovery

India's forex reserves had touched an all-time high of \$728.494 billion in the week ending February 27, 2026. However, reserves declined in the following months due to volatility in global financial markets triggered by rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, which also exerted pressure on the Indian rupee.

Foreign exchange reserves are considered one of the key indicators of a country's economic strength. Robust reserves enable a nation to comfortably finance imports, meet external debt obligations, stabilise the domestic currency during periods of volatility and withstand global economic shocks.

SPORTS

IND vs ENG: Final ODI Showdown

> Vikrama Vahini | London

India and England will clash in the third and final ODI of the three-match series at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground on Sunday, with both teams aiming to secure a series victory.

The high-voltage encounter will begin at 3:30 pm IST and will be broadcast live on Sony Sports channels, while digital streaming will be available on Disney+ Hotstar.

After an evenly contested series, the decider at Lord's is expected to be a thrilling battle between two strong sides. Both teams have named experienced squads featuring top players.

India Squad

Captain Shubman Gill will lead the Indian side, which includes Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Jasprit Bumrah, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel and Arshdeep Singh.

England Squad

England's squad features Harry Brook, Joe Root, Jos Buttler, Jofra Archer, Ben Duckett, Sam Curran, Adil Rashid and other key players. With the series on the line, the Lord's contest promises an exciting finish between two cricketing giants.

The match holds special significance as both teams have displayed strong performances in the opening two games, making the final ODI a must-watch contest. India will look to rely on its experienced batting lineup and strong bowling attack, while England will aim to use home conditions and its aggressive style of play to claim the series.

The historic Lord's ground is expected to witness a packed crowd as cricket fans await a thrilling finish to the closely fought ODI series.

Rohit-Kohli Set for Historic Milestone

> Vikrama Vahini | London

Indian cricket stars Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are set to script history when they take the field together in the third and final ODI against England at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground on Sunday.

The experienced duo will become the first Indian pair to play 400 international matches together, marking a rare milestone in Indian cricket history.

The series decider has added significance as India and England are locked at 1-1 after two closely fought ODIs. India will look to win the final match and end the England tour on a high after losing the T20I series.

Rohit and Kohli have already surpassed several legendary Indian partnerships in terms of matches played together. They have moved ahead of the Sachin Tendulkar-Rahul Dravid pair, who featured together in 391 international matches. The upcoming milestone adds another memorable chapter to the careers of the two modern-day batting greats. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene hold the world record for most matches played together, with 550 appearances as a pair.

The Lord's clash is expected to be a special occasion for Indian fans as Rohit and Kohli aim to combine their experience and guide the team to an ODI series victory.

GULF TENSIONS SOAR AS IRAN WARNS US

> Vikrama Vahini | Washington

The conflict between the United States and Iran intensified on Saturday as the US carried out its seventh consecutive night of military strikes on Iranian targets, while Tehran launched fresh attacks on US-linked military facilities in the Gulf and warned countries hosting American forces of possible retaliation.

Iran Targets US-Linked Bases

According to reports, Iran targeted military installations linked to the US in Kuwait and Bahrain. Missile and drone threats disrupted operations at Kuwait International Airport, while Iran's Revolutionary Guards claimed to have struck Camp Arifjan, a US military support facility, and a radar installation at Ali Al Salem Air Base.

In Bahrain, Iran reportedly



targeted a site near Sheikh Isa Air Base and an intelligence facility. The Revolutionary Guards also warned Gulf nations hosting US troops to activate civil defence measures and protect civilians from potential military action.

'Zero Hour' Warning

The Iranian Revolutionary Guards Navy said it was closely monitoring US military movements in the region and warned that American forces were approaching the "zero hour" of an Iranian military operation against US naval units in regional waters.

The US and Iran sharply escalated hostilities as both sides launched fresh military strikes, raising fears of a wider Middle East conflict, with Gulf nations, Israel and global powers on high alert.

US Continues Military Operations

The US Central Command (CENTCOM) said American forces used fighter aircraft, drones and warships to strike Iranian surveillance sites, military logistics infrastructure, underground weapons storage facilities and maritime assets during the latest round of operations.

The strikes marked the seventh straight night of US military action against Iran following the collapse of a fragile ceasefire.

Trump Reviews Expansion Plans

Reports indicate that US President Donald Trump has

reviewed options to expand military operations against Iran. The proposals reportedly include targeting additional military infrastructure, power facilities and nuclear-related sites, although no final decision has been taken.

The US is also said to be reinforcing military support in the region by deploying additional aerial refuelling aircraft to Israel.

Israel Issues Fresh Warning

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Iran against attacking Israel, saying any future assault would trigger a much stronger response than previous military operations.

Cops Use Bedsheets to Shift Wangchuk

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Delhi Police on Saturday ended activist Sonam Wangchuk's 20-day indefinite hunger strike at Jantar Mantar by shifting him to Safdarjung Hospital in a swift early morning operation, citing his deteriorating health and directions from the Delhi High Court.

The operation, carried out shortly after 7 a.m., involved around 30 to 35 personnel from the New Delhi district's Special Staff and local police, including officers in plain clothes.

Security personnel formed a human chain around the protest stage while large white bedsheets were used to shield Wangchuk from public view before he was carried to a waiting ambulance.

CRPF and RAF personnel maintained an outer security cordon to prevent any confrontation as senior police officers monitored the operation from a nearby control point.

A brief scuffle broke out when some protesters attempted to



stop the police action, but officers completed the exercise within minutes.

Delhi Police said the decision to shift Wangchuk was taken on the advice of medical experts and in compliance with the Delhi High Court's directions to ensure he received treatment whenever necessary.

Hospital sources said Wangchuk was admitted to the emergency ward at Safdarjung Hospital. He was reported to be conscious and in stable condition after being brought from the protest site.

Medical bulletins issued in recent days had indicated that Wangchuk had lost more than 9 kg during his 20-day fast, raising serious concerns over his health.

Study Links Air Pollution to Kidney Risk

> Vikrama Vahini | New Delhi

Long-term exposure to fine particulate air pollution (PM_{2.5}) may significantly impair kidney function, even among young adults and people without diabetes or high blood pressure, according to a new Indian study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Kidney International* Reports.

The findings showed that every 5 micrograms per cubic metre increase in long-term PM_{2.5} exposure was associated with a measurable decline in kidney function. The decline was greater in Delhi, where pollution levels are significantly higher, than in Chennai.

Researchers said the association remained significant even after accounting for major risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, age and lifestyle, indicating that air pollution itself may directly damage the kidneys.

Medical experts explained that



PM_{2.5} particles are small enough to enter the bloodstream through the lungs, triggering chronic inflammation, oxidative stress and damage to blood vessels, which can reduce blood flow to the kidneys and gradually impair their ability to filter waste.

The study noted that annual PM_{2.5} levels in Delhi during the study period ranged between 118 and 130 µg/m³, more than three times higher than Chennai's 30 to 37 µg/m³ and far above the World Health Organization's recommended limits.

Tewari Quashes BJP Switch Buzz

> Vikrama Vahini | Chandigarh

Senior Congress leader and MP Manish Tewari has dismissed speculation about joining the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), clarifying that his cordial interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a recent public event should not be viewed through a political lens.

Responding to reports linking his handshake and conversation with the Prime Minister to possible political realignment, Tewari said he believes in maintaining basic courtesies and protocol while keeping development above partisan politics.

In a post on social media, Tewari recalled welcoming Prime Minister Modi during the inauguration of the Dr Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre in New Chandigarh in 2022, stating that he attended the event in his capacity as the Member of Parliament from Sri Anandpur Sahib.



Congress MP Manish Tewari has dismissed speculation of joining the BJP, saying his interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi was purely a matter of courtesy and protocol, while reaffirming his commitment to the Congress amid ongoing political buzz.

He said political discourse had become increasingly toxic over the years but stressed that he remained 'old school' in believing that political rivals should not be treated as enemies and that development should take precedence over political differences.

The clarification comes amid growing internal dissent within the Punjab Congress ahead of the Assembly elections. Several senior leaders have raised objections to the party's election committee, while former Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and

his supporters have sought the removal of state Congress president Amrinder Raja Warring.

Tewari had also expressed disappointment over not being assigned any responsibility in the election process. However, he recently attended the Congress high-level meeting ahead of the Monsoon Session, which was seen as an effort by the party leadership to address internal differences. With his statement, Tewari has firmly denied reports suggesting he is considering a move to the BJP.

Gujarat Rounds Up 31 Lions

> Vikrama Vahini | Junagadh

Following a series of lion attacks that claimed six lives in the past month, the Gujarat Forest Department has sought the assistance of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) to investigate whether Asiatic lions are exhibiting behavioural changes.

At least nine lion attacks have been reported across the state since last month, prompting authorities to capture 31 lions and relocate them to different facilities. Seven of the captured lions have been declared "maneaters" and will remain in permanent captivity instead of being released back into the wild.

Forest officials said the WII study will examine the reasons behind the recent attacks and recommend measures to minimise human-lion conflict.

One of the most widely discussed incidents involved 45-year-old cowherd Kalubhai Parmar from Bhavnagar district, who survived a lion attack on July 6 while feeding his cattle. Parmar reportedly managed to escape by placing one hand inside the lion's mouth and gently stroking its neck with the other. Despite suffering two fractured fingers and a neck injury, he later said he did not blame the animal, adding that lions generally attack only when they are disturbed.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden Jaipal Singh said



the attacks appeared to have occurred under different circumstances, with several incidents linked to lions being harassed by people. He said confirmed maneaters would not be released back into the wild and expressed hope that the WII study would provide scientific guidance on the animals' changing behaviour and measures needed to prevent future attacks.

Former Gujarat State Board for Wildlife member Bhushan Pandya questioned the decision to label multiple lions as maneaters after isolated incidents, arguing that attacks following provocation should be assessed carefully before such a classification is made.

According to the latest state wildlife census, Gujarat's Asiatic lion population has risen from 674 in 2020 to 891 in 2025. Nearly 500 lions now live outside the Gir forest's core area, increasing the likelihood of encounters with human settlements.

UN Seeks Probe Into PoK Protest Deaths

> Vikrama Vahini | Geneva

The United Nations Human Rights Office has expressed concern over escalating unrest in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) ahead of the July 27 Assembly elections and called for an impartial investigation into the deaths of protesters and security personnel.

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk urged Pakistani authorities to conduct prompt and independent probes into all protest-related deaths, restore internet services, and ensure legal rights for detained leaders of the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC). The UN also warned against restrictions on peaceful protests and civil society groups.

India blamed Pakistan for the unrest, alleging that decades of denial of rights and administrative oppression had triggered public anger, and urged the international community to hold Islamabad accountable for human rights violations in the region.

The UN Human Rights Office also stressed the importance of ensuring that the upcoming Assembly elections are conducted in a peaceful, transparent and inclusive environment. It urged all stake holders to exercise restraint, respect democratic freedoms and engage in meaningful dialogue to address public grievances and restore stability in the region.

VIKRAM-1 HERALDS A NEW ERA IN INDIA'S SPACE JOURNEY

> Vikrama Vahini | Sriharikota

India marked a historic milestone in its space journey on Saturday as Skyroot Aerospace successfully launched Vikram-1, the country's first privately developed orbital launch vehicle, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota. The landmark mission, named Mission Aagaman (Arrival), successfully placed the rocket into a 450-km Low Earth Orbit (LEO), signalling a new era for India's private space industry.

The launch, originally scheduled earlier in the day, was delayed by 35 minutes due to a minor technical issue. The rocket eventually lifted off from the First Launch Pad at 12.05 pm and completed its orbital mission in about 15 minutes, successfully reaching its intended orbit.

Vikram-1 is the first privately designed, developed and launched orbital rocket in India. The successful mission demonstrates the growing capabilities of India's private space sector and reflects the country's expanding role in the global commercial space industry.

The mission represents a significant step forward following the government's

reforms that opened India's space sector to private companies, enabling startups such as Skyroot Aerospace to build and launch orbital-class rockets.

The Vikram-1 mission introduced several technological breakthroughs, many of them being the first of their kind in India.

The rocket is India's first all-carbon composite orbital launch vehicle, making it significantly lighter and stronger than conventional steel-based rocket structures. The advanced composite material improves performance while reducing overall launch weight. Another major achievement is the use of India's first 100 per cent 3D-printed rocket engine on an orbital launch vehicle. The innovative manufacturing process reduces production time, lowers costs and allows for more efficient engine design.

The vehicle also features ultra-low-shock pneumatic separation systems, allowing smooth and reliable separation of rocket stages and payload fairings. These modular and testable systems improve mission reliability while minimising mechanical stress on onboard payloads.

