



World news in brief



Indian space startup Skyroot Aerospace launches its Vikram-1 rocket (*Reuters*)

India launches first private orbital rocket

India has successfully launched its first privately developed orbital rocket, marking a milestone for the country's commercial space industry and its ambitions to expand its presence in the global space market.

The Vikram-1 launch vehicle lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre on Sriharikota, a barrier island off India's south-eastern coast, at 12.05pm local time yesterday.

About 15 minutes later, the rocket successfully placed six payloads – including satellites, scientific instruments, and other cargo carried into space – into a 450km low Earth orbit,

completing its maiden orbital mission, dubbed Mission Aagaman, which means “arrival” in Sanskrit.

Developer Skyroot Aerospace says its longer-term goal is to offer dedicated launches for small satellite operators, rather than requiring them to share space on larger rockets. The company has described the model as a “cab service to space”, allowing customers to choose when and where they launch instead of waiting for larger missions involving multiple payload providers.

Cockroach Party hunger striker taken to hospital

Police forcibly transferred a prominent Indian activist to a hospital in New Delhi yesterday after his health deteriorated during a 20-day hunger strike tied to the viral Cockroach Janta Party movement for education reform.

Authorities tightened security around New Delhi’s Jantar Mantar, a designated public protest ground enclosed by police barricades, where activist Sonam Wangchuk has been camped along with students and Cockroach Party activists who demand the resignation of education minister Dharmendra Pradhan, after allegations that exam papers were leaked in advance.

The movement also seeks sweeping reforms to the examination system and compensation for families of students who died by suicide over the leaks or exam results.

The 59-year-old engineer and education reformer’s hunger strike has become a rallying point for the party, which began in May after a judge compared some unemployed young people to “cockroaches” during a hearing on another issue. Supporters embraced the insult as a badge of resilience, turning it into a satirical political campaign that amassed more than 21 million Instagram followers in a few days. *AP*
