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NDA set for clean sweep in elections to four RS seats from AP

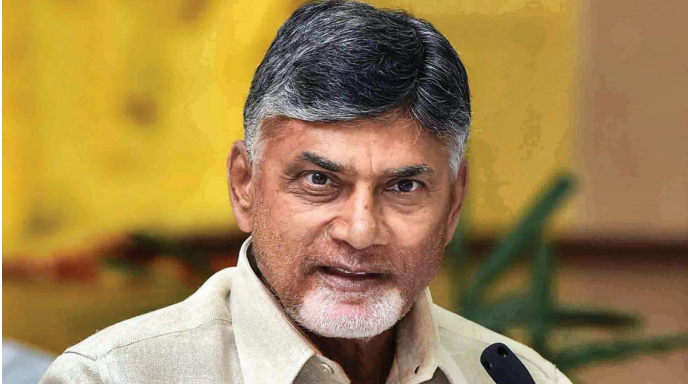
AMARAVATI (TSIT):

The TDP-led ruling NDA in Andhra Pradesh is sure to win all four Rajya Sabha seats going to polls on June 18, going by its overwhelming majority in the state legislative Assembly. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is likely to keep two seats and give one seat each to its allies – Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Jana Sena Party (JSP).

The Election Commission of India on Friday announced the schedule for elections to 24 seats from 10 states including Andhra Pradesh.

The notification will be issued on June 1 while the last date for filing nominations is June 8. Polling, if necessary, will be held on June 18.

The vacancies from Andhra



Pradesh are arising as the term of four members is set to end on June 21. The members who are retiring are Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy, Nathwani Parimal, Pilli Subhaschandra Bose (all belonging to YSR Congress Party) and Sana Satish Babu

of TDP.

The NDA is likely to secure a unanimous victory due to its strength in the 175-member Assembly. The TDP holds 135 seats, while its allies, Jana Sena and BJP, have 21 and 8 seats respectively, compared to the YSRCP's 11 seats.

Businessman-turned-politician Satish Babu was one of the three candidates of the NDA who was elected unanimously in December 2024 to fill the vacancies caused by the resignation of Mopidevi Venkataramana Rao, B. Masthan Rao, and Krishnaiah, all belonging to the YSRCP.

While Mopidevi and Masthan Rao joined the TDP, Krishnaiah announced his intention to focus on strengthening the backward class movement. This followed the landslide victory of the NDA in the May 2024 elections.

In the bye-elections, TDP had fielded Satish Babu and Masthan Rao while BJP fielded Krishnaiah. All the three were elected unopposed.

While the BJP had opened

its account in Rajya Sabha from Andhra Pradesh, the TDP had also returned to the Upper House of Parliament after a brief absence. The TDP had participated in the Rajya Sabha elections held in February 2024 due to insufficient numbers in the Assembly, resulting in no TDP representation in the Rajya Sabha for the first time in its four-decade history.

This time, the TDP is likely to retain Satish Babu, who is considered close to party Working President Nara Lokesh. There are many aspirants in the TDP for the second seat. Chief Minister and TDP President, N. Chandrababu Naidu, is understood to have already taken a decision to leave one seat each for his allies.

Two Indian climbers die descending Mount Everest

KATHMANDU:

Two Indian mountaineers, Arun Kumar Tiwari and Sandeep Are, died while descending from Mount Everest, a senior official at Nepal's Department of Tourism said on Friday.

Himal Gautam, Director of the Department of Tourism, told IANS that the climbers died as they were descending after conquering the peak of the world's tallest mountain as per the reports received from the Everest Base Camp.

"The exact cause of their deaths is not yet known," Gautam said. Both climbers summited Everest on May 21 and fell ill during their descent, according to the local media



reports. Tiwari died near the Hillary Step, just below the summit, while being assisted by four Sherpa climbers during the descent. Nivesh Karki, Director of Pioneer Adventures, which organised their expedition, told local news portal The Himalayan Times. Are suffered snow blindness immediately after reaching the summit and was rescued from the South Summit.

NIMS achieves major milestone in kidney transplants

CM Revanth congratulates doctors

HYDERABAD TSIT BUREAU:

Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Hyderabad, has achieved a major milestone in the field of organ transplantation by successfully completing 2,000 kidney transplant surgeries, emerging as one of the leading institutions in the country for renal transplant procedures.

Honourable Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy congratulated the doctors, medical staff and the entire NIMS team for the remarkable achievement and their dedicated service towards patients suffering from kidney-related ailments.

According to officials, the Department of Urology at NIMS has now been ranked as the number one institution in South India for kidney transplantation. Nationally, the Institute of Kidney Diseases and Research Centre (IKDRC), Gujarat, holds the top position, followed by Christian



Medical College, Ludhiana, while NIMS has secured the third position in the country.

Chief Minister praised the institution for providing affordable and accessible healthcare to thousands of economically weaker patients. Of the 2,000 kidney transplant surgeries performed, nearly 1,900 patients — around 95 percent — underwent the procedure free of cost under the Rajiv Aarogyasri Health Care Trust scheme and the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

NIMS has also created another significant record by performing 500 kidney transplant surgeries within just three years and four months since January 2023, reflecting the institution's growing expertise, infrastructure and commitment in advanced healthcare services.

The achievement is being hailed as a landmark moment in Telangana's public healthcare sector and a major boost to organ transplant services in the state.

India successfully test-launches 'Agni-1' Short Range Ballistic Missile

NEW DELHI (TSIT)

Short Range Ballistic Missile 'Agni-1' was successfully test-launched from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, Odisha, on Friday, said the Ministry of Defence.

The launch validated all operational and technical parameters. The test was carried out under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command, said an official statement.

On September 24, 2025, the Defence Research and Development Organisation, in collaboration with the Strategic Forces Command (SFC), carried out the successful launch of the Intermediate Range Agni-Prime Missile from a rail-based mobile launcher system, under a full operational scenario.

This next-generation missile is designed to cover a range of up to 2,000 km and is equipped with various advanced features. The first-of-its-kind launch was carried out from a specially designed rail-based mobile



launcher having the capability to move on the rail network without any pre-conditions, said an official

statement. It provides for cross-country mobility and has the capability to launch within a short reaction

time with reduced visibility. It is self-sustained and is equipped with all independent launch capability features, including the state-of-the-art communication systems and protection mechanisms.

The Missile trajectory was tracked by various ground stations, and it was a textbook launch meeting all mission objectives. This successful launch would enable futuristic rail-based systems induction into services. The launch was witnessed by senior scientists of DRDO and Officers of the Strategic Forces Command.

The Road Mobile Agni-P has already been inducted into service after a series of successful flight trials. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO, SFC and the Armed Forces on the successful test of the Intermediate Range Agni-Prime missile and stated that this flight test has put India in the group of select nations which have developed a canisterised launch system from the rail network.

Conspiracy to remove votes of poor through SIR: Shivakumar

Nothing wrong in withdrawing cases against activists

BENGALURU (TSIT):

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said that a conspiracy was being hatched to remove votes of the poor through SIR (Special Intensive Revision).

Speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence, the DCM, who is also the KPCC President, said, "I have told our party workers that we must be very vigilant. We are working to create awareness among MLAs and BLAs (Booth Level Agents) about SIR. Meetings are being called and the dates have already been announced. That is why we have come forward to raise awareness. Everyone needs to submit an application. Otherwise, citizens will lose their votes."

"We have seen this happen in other states. If the right to vote is lost, citizens will be deprived of many benefits including pension and the Gruha Lakshmi scheme. That is why we are working to spread awareness," he said. When asked about the decision to withdraw cases against Muslims, he said, "Politically motivated cases



I have told our party workers that we must be very vigilant. We are working to create awareness among MLAs and BLAs (Booth Level Agents) about SIR.

have been withdrawn. Along with that, cases against farmers and Kannada movement activists have also been withdrawn — there is nothing wrong in this."

Revanth, Bandi conspired to shield POCSO case accused: KTR

HYDERABAD (TSIT):

Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) working president K. T. Rama Rao on Friday alleged that Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy conspired with Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay to save the latter's son Bandi Bhageerath in the POCSO case.

Addressing a press conference, he said that the crime of shielding a POCSO accused for nine days squarely lies with Revanth Reddy, who is also the home minister. Rama Rao hit back at the Chief Minister for the remarks made by him at a press conference on Thursday over the case involving Bandi Bhageerath.

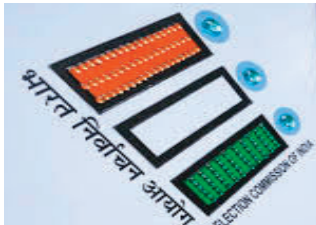
KTR, as the BRS leader is popularly known, also blamed the Chief Minister for intimidating the victim's family, filing a counter-case against them, and shielding the accused for nine days.

ECI announces RS polls for 24 seats across 10 states on June 18

NEW DELHI (TSIT)

The Election Commission of India on Friday announced the schedule for biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha, to fill 24 seats falling vacant across 10 states following the retirement of members in June and July 2026. According to a press note issued by the Commission, polling for all 24 seats will be held on June 18, 2026, with counting of votes scheduled later the same day at 5 pm. The election process will conclude before June 20. "The term of office of 24 members of the Council of States elected from 10 States is due to expire in June-July 2026," the Commission said in the statement while releasing the detailed poll schedule. As per the notification, the election process will begin with the issuance of notifications on June 1, while the last date for filing nominations has been fixed for June 8. Scrutiny of nominations will take place on June 9, and candidates will be allowed to withdraw their nominations till June 11.

Polling, where required,



will take place between 9 am and 4 pm on June 18. The Commission also issued specific instructions regarding the voting procedure. "Only integrated violet colour sketch pen(s) of pre-fixed specification, provided by the Returning Officer, shall be used for the purpose of marking preference(s) on the ballot paper. No other pen shall be used," the press note said.

It added that adequate arrangements would be made to ensure free and fair elections through close monitoring by appointed observers. The vacancies arise due to the retirement of sitting Rajya Sabha members from Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Mizoram.

EBOLA ALERT:

Surveillance, health screening measures intensified at Kochi airport

NEW DELHI (TSIT)

Health authorities have intensified surveillance and precautionary measures against the Ebola virus at Cochin International Airport, in Kerala's Kochi, following an emergency preparedness meeting jointly convened by Cochin International Airport Limited



(CIAL) and the Airport Health Organisation (APHO).

The move comes amid heightened global concern over Ebola outbreaks in parts of Africa and aims to strengthen early detection and public health response systems at the airport. According to the official media release issued on Friday, "Health surveillance and precautionary protocols against the Ebola virus have been intensified at Kochi

airport." The release further stated that the meeting decided to strengthen passenger monitoring systems and reinforce coordinated public health response measures to prevent the possible spread of infection.

As part of the enhanced surveillance mechanism, airport authorities have activated a 24x7 monitoring system for international passengers. Thermal screening, verification of 21-day travel history and mandatory submission of self-declaration forms have also been introduced for passengers arriving from abroad.

Officials said special monitoring would be carried out for travellers arriving from countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and South Sudan, where concerns related to Ebola outbreaks remain significant. The preparedness meeting was attended by CIAL Airport Director Manu G, Airport Health Officer Dr Raphael Teddy, Senior Medical Officer Dr Aysha Manika K.A., along with representatives from CISF, immigration authorities.

EDITORIAL

On Memes, Wars, And Meme-Wars

Professor Albert Einstein once famously said in a 1949 interview, "I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones" I know what World War III will be fought with - Memes. The answer sounds ridiculous until you spend five minutes online during any major political event. Before any context develops, or any facts emerge, the memes arrive, and once they do, they begin shaping perception almost immediately. Today, wars are not just fought through military strength, they are also fought through narratives. And right now, no tool spreads narrative faster than the meme. For the longest time, memes were dismissed as harmless internet humour, labelled as unserious, juvenile even. Something that was culturally disposable. But somewhere along the way, they evolved into something much bigger, they became political weapons.

However, the strange thing about memes is that they rarely feel like propaganda even when they are functioning as propaganda. Unlike traditional propaganda, which announces itself, memes slip past people because they arrive as 'entertainment'. Traditional messaging comes through official statements, speeches, advertisements, newspaper campaigns. But memes come as a joke, a viral clip that you have to share with your friends because it is just too damn funny. It becomes something meant to be shared without too much thought. Perhaps that is exactly what makes them powerful. Memes have increasingly emerged as effective tools for ideological messaging. Through its emotional content, memes become highly shareable, and they spread faster than most other political tools could. People engage with memes almost instinctively in today's day and age. Critical thinking comes later, if it comes at all.

A meme can reduce an extremely complicated political situation into one emotionally satisfying frame: hero versus villain, patriot versus traitor, victim versus oppressor. It allows people the feeling of understanding something without requiring them to sit with it, and decode its complexity. The reasoning is often "who has the time?"

The average person today is overwhelmed with information. It is also not realistically possible for most people to read lengthy reports or policy papers. It is much easier for them to consume politics through Instagram reels, WhatsApp forwards, tweets and memes. The most viral content satiates one's need for 'instant' understanding, making politics more of an emotional reaction, than informed engagement.

Political parties across the world have built massive digital ecosystems focused entirely on controlling the online narrative. Elections today are not just fought on the ground, but increasingly on our phone screens as well. They are no longer just determined by speeches, manifestos, campaign promises, but also through hashtags, meme accounts, influencer networks and troll campaigns targeting the Opposition to shape public perception, often in real time. In India, especially, it seems meme culture has become almost inseparable from politics. Every event, big or small, becomes content, and every controversy becomes a meme war within minutes, if not seconds. And, unsurprisingly, this culture rewards engagement through participation. Supporters and critics alike participate in this ecosystem, perhaps not even realising how they amplify political messaging and help make parties and their paid influencers a quick buck.

THREE SHIELDS AGAINST THE GLOBAL STORM:

How PM Modi Strengthened India's Energy, Economy And Defence

The headlines last week read like dispatches from a war room. Oil tankers rerouting around the Strait of Hormuz. Brent crude climbing by the hour. Fertiliser and diesel prices twitching in sympathy across continents. The war in Europe digging in for another summer with no armistice in sight. Into the middle of this frightened, churning world walked an Indian Prime Minister, boarding a flight to Abu Dhabi with the calm of a man who knew exactly what he had gone to fetch. Six days later, after Abu Dhabi, The Hague, Gothenburg, Oslo and Rome, PM Modi flew home. He brought back no souvenirs. He brought back three shields, raised around a billion and a half people. Energy. Economy. Defence. The three things no nation can improvise once the world is already ablaze.

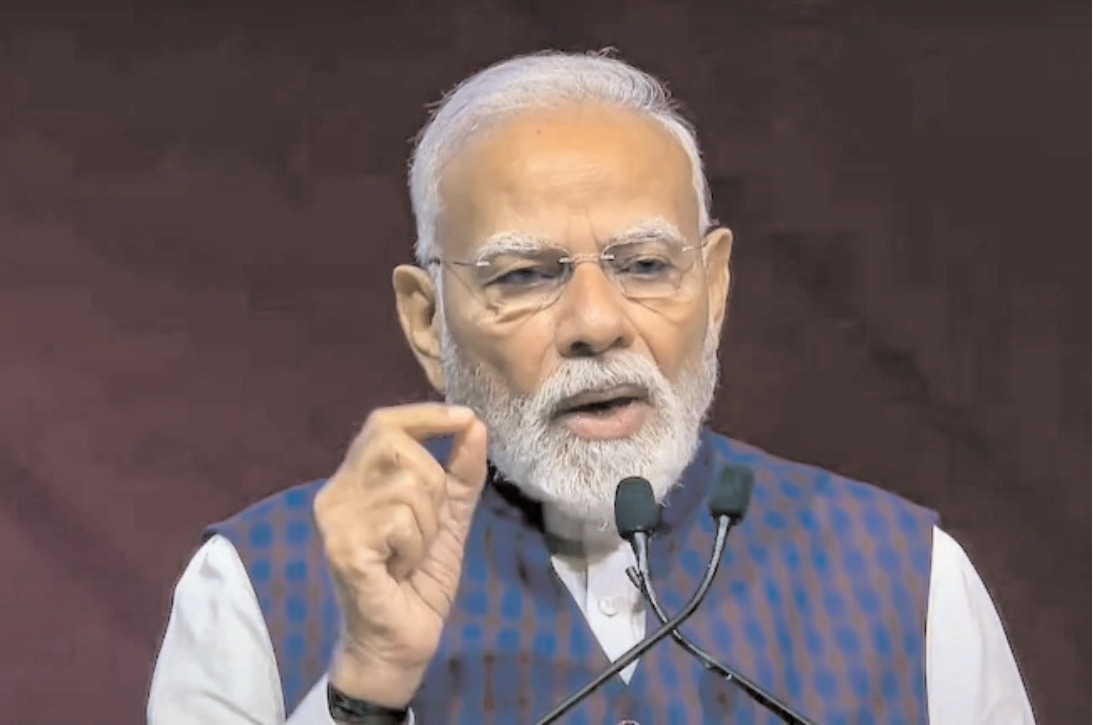
The storm, and the strategy

Understand first what kind of crisis this is. Not a single shock but a convergence of them. A war in West Asia threatening the arteries of global oil. A war in Europe that has scrambled the continent's energy and its grain, sending frightened capital racing back to whatever it imagines safe. In such a moment, lesser governments freeze, issue statements and wait for the weather to change. PM Modi did the opposite. He read the map of India's vulnerabilities, picked five countries that each held a piece of the answer, and went to collect.

The First Shield: Energy

Roughly a fifth of the world's oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, and a large share of India's crude comes from precisely that neighbourhood. When PM Modi recently urged citizens to go easy on petrol and to think twice before buying gold, the Prime Minister was not preaching austerity, he was getting the nation a little time while he went out to secure its fuel supplies.

Abu Dhabi as the first stop was no accident. The Emirates, even



while absorbing attacks on their own soil, committed 5 billion dollars in fresh investment to India and reaffirmed to keep our refineries humming. Then in Oslo, where no Indian PM had set foot in more than four decades, PM Modi went looking not for yesterday's oil but for tomorrow's fuel. Norway is among Europe's largest gas suppliers and a serious force in green hydrogen and offshore wind. The two nations sealed a Green Strategic Partnership, and the wider India-Nordic summit produced a Green Tech and Strategic Partnership across all Nordic states. The message is simple. India will neither be held hostage by a single strait nor left behind in the energy transition.

The Second Shield: Economy

If energy keeps the lights on, the economy decides whether a country grows in the dark or shrinks in it. In The Hague, before PM Modi, Tata Electronics signed with ASML, the one Dutch firm on earth holding a monopoly on the extreme ultraviolet lithography machines without which no

advanced chip can be made. This move provides Rs 91,000 crore semiconductor Fab at Dholera and quietly admits India into the most exclusive industrial club in the world. Sweden holds some of Europe's richest deposits of critical minerals, the raw material of tomorrow's batteries and chips, and a new corridor will weave 6G, artificial intelligence and quantum computing into the partnership. Rome supplied the grand connective tissue. India and Italy elevated their ties to a Special Strategic Partnership and set a trade target of Euro 20 billion by 2029, while pushing forward the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor, a route that will one day carry Indian goods to Europe in days rather than weeks, sidestepping the very chokepoints now under threat

The Third Shield: Defence

A nation that cannot defend itself is finished. This third shield was the quietest of the three, and the most far-reaching. In Abu Dhabi, India and the UAE advanced a framework defence cooperation

agreement of a breadth that would have seemed fanciful a decade ago. In Sweden, the defence major Saab is now building its first military equipment plant anywhere outside its home country, at Jhajjar, India's first 100 per cent foreign-funded defence manufacturing project. The Netherlands committed to a defence industrial roadmap linking manufacturers and research centres on both sides. The thread is unmistakable. India no longer wishes to remain the world's largest importer of arms. It means to make them at home, with the finest partners, on its own soil. Aatmanirbharta has stopped being a slogan. It has become a supply chain.

And the world rose to honour

There was a quieter dimension too. In Sweden, PM Modi was conferred the Royal Order of the Polar Star, that nation's highest honour. In Oslo, King Harald V invested him with the Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit. And in a fitting coda, the UN Food and

Agriculture Organisation handed him the Agricola Medal, for a food security net feeding some 800 million Indians and supporting over 110 million farmers. PM Modi accepted each in the name of the people of India. A generation ago this country went out into the world asking to be understood. Today, the oldest monarchies of Europe rise to honour her. That shift, even more than any joint statement, is the truest measure of New India's strength.

The Opposition's hypocrisy

The Opposition Congress sees none of this. Not the chip. Not the Saab line at Jhajjar. Not a Norwegian king's Grand Cross. It sees only an occasion to carp and rant. The hypocrisy is breathtaking. In November 1948, with Independence barely 15 months old, Bapu's assassination nine months past and Partition's refugees still sleeping on railway platforms, the then PM Jawaharlal Nehru took a full month to tour Europe. He returned and wrote, that what wearied him at home was the "pettiness and narrow-mindedness" of his own countrymen. Nehru went to Europe for a full month and came home complaining about Indians. PM Modi goes to the world for Indians and comes home with what India needs, which is called statecraft.

The thread that binds them

Step away from the itinerary and the design stands clear. Energy from the Gulf and the Arctic. Economic muscle from chips, minerals and trade corridors. Defence built at home alongside the world's best. Three shields, raised in six days, against a storm that has paralysed several nations. The leaders of five capitals did not host PM Modi out of mere protocol. They hosted him because, in a world running scared, India has become the rare safe harbour where the prudent still place their longest bets. That standing was not gifted to us. It was earned, capital by capital.

FROM COCKROACHES TO REVOLUTION

A NEW VOICE OF DEMOCRATIC DISSENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE



In Indian democracy, the methods of expressing dissent have evolved over time. During the freedom movement, satyagraha and sit-ins were the primary means of political resistance, while at other times, literature, theatre, and journalism served to question power. As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, this landscape appears to be changing once again. Today, social media, memes, satire, and digital campaigns have created new platforms for political expression. The younger generation is no longer limited to meetings, rallies, and memorandums; they are expressing their views through new symbols and new language on the internet. The "Cockroach Janata Party," which suddenly came into the limelight in May 2026, is a significant example of this changing political and social reality. At first glance, it seems like a ridiculous name. Naming a political party or movement "Cockroach" wouldn't be considered normal. But symbols have always been important in politics. Often, words used to insult become symbols of

resistance and identity. History offers numerous examples of a segment of society turning negative epithets into strength. The rise of the Cockroach Janata Party reflects this trend. It's not just a name, but a sarcastic response to a mindset that young people perceive as dismissive of them. This entire incident began with a controversy surrounding a judicial comment. The notion quickly spread on social media that unemployed youth were being compared to cockroaches. Although clarifications regarding the context of the comment were later made, the situation had changed. A large segment of youth took the term as a symbol of humiliation and then transformed it into a symbol of resistance. This process is what modern political theory calls "reclaiming the narrative"—that is, turning a word or identity used to weaken you into a strength. In the age of social media, it no longer takes months or years for an idea to become a mass movement. A few hours and a few viral posts are all it takes. The rise of the Cockroach Janata Party is a product of this digital age. After its announcement by former political activist Abhijeet Dipke, millions of people joined it in no time. A large number of posts, memes, and videos in support of it were shared on Instagram, X, and other platforms. This was a clear indication that this was not just a joke, but an expression of a

deep-seated restlessness and discontent within the youth. India today has one of the youngest populations in the world. This demographic situation presents both an opportunity and a challenge for the country. An opportunity because youthful energy can accelerate the pace of development, and a challenge because, if not channeled properly, it can lead to increased dissatisfaction and frustration. Over the past few years, the issue of employment has emerged as one of the biggest challenges facing Indian youth. Millions of students spend years preparing for competitive exams, but their future remains uncertain due to recruitment delays, paper leaks, limited positions, and administrative complexities. Even in the private sector, there are many questions about the quality and stability of employment. Consequently, it is natural for dissatisfaction among youth towards the system to grow. The popularity of the Cockroach Janata Party must be understood in this context. This movement isn't simply a reaction to a single comment. It's the result of a broader sentiment that has been building for a long time. Unemployment, inflation, rising competition, mental stress, social expectations, and uncertainty about the future—all these factors have created a disquiet among the youth that traditional politics has failed to adequately address. So when they found

a platform where they could express themselves through satire and humor, they readily embraced it. The most interesting feature of this movement is its satirical tone. Its tagline, "Voice of the Lazy and Unemployed," may sound humorous, but it carries a profound political message. It directly attacks the mindset that often considers unemployment a result of individual failure or laziness. The reality is that the issue of employment is not just a matter of individual effort, but also of economic policies, the education system, industrial development, and administrative efficiency. When millions of qualified youth are struggling to find jobs, it is unfair to blame them for the entire problem. The manifesto released by the Cockroach Janata Party also underscores the seriousness of this movement. The first demand relates to employment and unemployment, indicating that this issue is a primary concern for the youth. The second demand questions the competitive culture of modern life through the sarcastic expression "right to laziness." Today's youth lives under constant pressure to perform, succeed, and achieve. Social media has further exacerbated this pressure, where everyone constantly compares themselves to others. In such an environment, this demand truly raises questions about mental health, quality of life, and human dignity.

DEGREES, SUVs, GOLD:

Why India's Most 'Qualified' Men Often Demand The Steepest Dowries

A high-end SUV. A Royal Enfield motorcycle. Nearly 500 grams of gold. Cash. None of it was enough. The list of "gifts" handed over to the family of Nikki Bhati's husband after her marriage read less like a customary exchange and more like a negotiated transaction. Yet, after all that, her husband's family allegedly wanted another Rs 36 lakh. When they didn't get it, their persistent demands turned to torture, detailed in videos and her sister's accounts. Ultimately, she died in front of her young child, allegedly set on fire. Vipin Bhati, who described himself as an advocate on his Instagram page but was unemployed, showed no remorse. The country remained hooked to updates on the case, seethed with anger, and finally saw Vipin go to jail. That is how the story of a woman, who was married in a traditional arranged set-up into an abusive family but ran a beauty salon and made content to have a sliver of independence, saw the light, and then faded out. A year has gone by, and four alleged dowry deaths within a week have again brought a prehistoric practice, criminalised 65 years ago, to our attention. Greater Noida's Deepika Nagar allegedly fell from her matrimonial home's terrace, 17 months after her marriage. In Bhopal, Noida's Twisha Sharma was found dead in her husband's home, and Palak Rajak died an hour after she made a distress call to her father. In Karnataka's



Ballari district, Aishwarya allegedly died by suicide. These are not isolated tragedies. They are part of a national emergency disguised as "family matters". The numbers alone should have shattered any complacency long ago. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, India recorded 5,737 dowry deaths in 2024, averaging to about 16 deaths a day. The same report also pegged "cruelty by husband or his relatives" as the single largest category of crimes against women across the country. What's common between Nikki, Twisha, and Deepika is that their husbands were in the legal profession and they resided in - or at least belonged to - metropolitan cities. This should shatter any misconceptions that urban India is beyond such societal evils. In fact, the

NCRB data for 2024 stated that among metro cities, Delhi was at the top in this infamous list, recording 109 such deaths. Education, ironically, is more of an enabler of the practice than a hindrance, per a 2023 study quoted by the BBC. Higher dowries are demanded by "higher quality grooms", who are better-educated or have high-quality jobs. "Strong economic factors perpetuate dowry. On the bride's side, families who refuse to pay dowry for their daughters are left with 'lower quality' grooms. Grooms have a strong economic incentive to accept dowry, particularly if their family has to pay dowry for its own female children or wants to recoup investments in the groom's education," BBC quoted the study as saying. That normalisation is what makes the violence so dangerous. Another would be

that most of the aforementioned women or their families never reported the harassment to the police. Nikki took the panchayat route. Before the panchayat, Vipin would apologise and vow to never hit her again, but would soon revert to his abusive habits. What is more enraging is the panchayat's direction to Nikki to stop making social media content, as if reinforcing the Bhati family's ask, ultimately robbing the woman of her fair shot at financial independence, and more importantly, of her autonomy. Deepika was taken home by her parents, but later returned after assurances that the torture would stop. And Twisha's chats with her mother showed her clearly communicating feeling unhappy and lonely, adding, "Mujhe bhaut zaada ghutan ho rahi hai, maa (I feel terribly suffocated, Mother)."

How Trump's IRS settlement could block tax audits of him, his family and their businesses

The US Department of Justice has announced that this week's unprecedented settlement of President Donald Trump's lawsuit over the leaking of his tax returns blocks the IRS from reviewing tax filings that Trump, his family and his businesses made in the past. Some lawmakers and legal experts say the department has violated federal law with its addendum to the agreement that shuts down current possible tax audits and investigations. The justice department, however, says the addendum is simply a customary waiver used in legal settlements. In January, Trump and his two eldest sons sued the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] for \$10bn over leaks of their business and personal tax returns. It was the first time a president had sued the US government. On Monday, the justice department announced the suit was settled and the government had agreed to create an almost \$1.8bn (£1.3bn) fund to compensate people who believe it unfairly investigated them. It has already inspired one lawsuit, as well as resistance from within Trump's own Republican party. Here's what we know. What does the addendum do? On Tuesday, a day after



announcing the settlement agreement with Trump, the justice department released the addendum ending any possible pending audits. The one-page addendum states that the United States is "FOREVER BARRED AND PRECLUDED" from a long list of actions that the IRS normally carries out to determine if a person or company has paid proper taxes and to seek recourse when they have not. "That list includes filing claims, conducting examinations or similar reviews, and seeking injunctive relief related to taxes filed by Trump, his

family members, and their trusts, companies or subsidiaries. Key in the addendum is that the taxes must have been filed before 19 May, 2026. The justice department issued a statement clarifying that the addendum "is only with respect to existing audits, not future". Listen: Trump gets "forever" immunity on his past tax affairs The IRS does not announce its investigations, and so we do not know what - if anything - it was reviewing related to the president, his family and their enterprises. Is it legal? In its statement, the department

describes the addendum as "customary", and also a necessary part of settling lawsuits in a way that ends them for good. "There would be little point in settling several significant claims if either party could simply turn around and seek to initiative more adverse claims that could have been pursued previously," the department said. As news of the addendum spread, though, lawmakers and legal experts raised alarms. The top Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, Ron Wyden, said in a statement it is "clearly a violation of the

law that prohibits interference by executive branch officials in IRS audits". "Democrats are going to fight every element of this self-dealing settlement, but regardless of the outcome of those efforts, future administrations and IRS leadership should consider this illegal directive completely invalid," said Wyden, who graduated from University of Oregon's law school. Under US law, the president, vice-president and most other high-ranking members of the executive branch cannot directly or indirectly ask the IRS to terminate an investigation.

Rethinking Village Development NMDC Launches Summer Camp for 1700 Children in Dakshin Bastar

Hyderabad, 22 May 2026: In a unique grassroots initiative designed to nurture children from the tribal communities, NMDC has launched Summer Camps across 17 villages in Dantewada district from 20 May to 15 June 2026. This initiative is expected to engage around 1700 children during their summer vacations in experiential learning, creativity and sports. While activities have commenced in most villages, mobilisation efforts to enhance batch strength are underway. At present, daily attendance at the NMDC Summer Camp ranges from 30 to 40 children in each village. These children spend three to four enriching hours engaged in reading, craftwork, and music workshops, followed by spirited games of frisbee, kabaddi, and kho-kho, and conclude the day by sharing healthy refreshments. Executed in partnership with WOSCA, an organisation working in the field of education and community development, the Summer Camps are creating a safe and encouraging environment for the next genera-



tion in Bastar to thrive. In rural communities where access to structured creative learning opportunities remains limited, NMDC's intervention is bridging this gap by investing in the potential and aspirations at the grassroots level. As part of its broader commitment to village development, the initiative nurtures social and lateral skills among children from underserved communities, helping

them grow into confident, self-assured youth. Community participation is steadily growing in the villages where the Summer Camps have been launched, with keen response from children, parents and local stakeholders. As the initiative expands in the coming weeks, NMDC encourages families and community members to take an active part in making this a vibrant summer for Dantewada.

ANDHRA PRADESH HOLDS ~30% OF INDIA'S RARE EARTH MINERAL DEPOSITS WITH STRONG STATE GOVT. BACKING: B2K ANALYTICS

May, 2026: According to a report by B2K Analytics, India holds the world's third-largest reserves of rare earth elements, accounting for around 8% of global reserves. Yet, between 2022 and 2025, it imported 60-80% by value and 85-90% by quantity of its REE requirements from China, highlighting a major dependence despite abundant reserves. The Atomic Minerals Directorate estimates India has 13.15 million tonnes (T) of monazite containing 7.23 million T of rare earth oxides, placing it among the top five global resource holders. However, India lacks sufficient processing and downstream manufacturing capacity, forcing reliance on imports.

What is monazite and where it is found
Monazite, a mineral found in coastal regions of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, contains light REEs like cerium, lanthanum and neodymium,

used in semiconductors, LEDs, microprocessors, solar cells, lasers, etc. Among the states, Andhra Pradesh holds nearly 30% of the national monazite stock—approximately 3.8 million tons. During the Union Budget 2026, the Government even announced plans to support mineral-rich coastal states — Odisha, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu — in establishing dedicated rare earth corridors. Specifically, a senior state government official said that Andhra Pradesh—with continuous mineral deposits along its coastline—is planning investments of more than 50,000 crore over the next 10 years to promote mining, processing, R&D of REEs and creating demand for rare earth magnets. The policy is expected to be approved by the cabinet and notified latest by June 2026. However, Monazite contains thorium, a radioactive element vital to India's nuclear programme. Its

thorium content places it under the Atomic Energy Act, restricting mining and processing largely to state-run IREL (India) and limiting private participation. In contrast, most countries regulate and mine mildly radioactive mineral residues such as monazite under routine TENORM frameworks (Technologically Enhanced Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials).

Imports signal rising demand
India's imports of mineral substances, including monazite, rose 11.7 times from USD 7 million in 2015 to USD 86 million in 2024, making it the world's fifth-largest importer. Exports rose 3.4 times over the same period from USD 7 million to USD 31 million, leaving India a net importer. Rising imports reflect growing industrial demand across cement, refractories and lithium projects. India also spent USD 221 million on magnet-related

imports in 2025. The Government estimates annual consumption of 4,000T of rare earth permanent magnets (REPM), expected to double by 2030 due to demand from EVs, renewables, defense and electronics. Even the 7,280 crore REPM manufacturing scheme targeting 6,000T annually may fall short of domestic demand.

Policy shift and the resource gap
To address demand, India has launched the National Critical Minerals Mission, targeting 1,000 patents across the critical minerals value chain by FY2031 and overseas mineral acquisitions. The Geological Survey of India will undertake 1,200 exploration projects by FY2031 to identify and assess critical mineral deposits within India, while rare earth corridors in four states and MoUs with countries such as Australia, Japan and the United States aim to improve technology access and supply security.

Telangana SLBC Launches Rs. 9.72 Lakh Crore Annual Credit Plan for FY27

State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), Telangana has convened its 49 th Quarterly Review Meeting for the quarter ended March 2026 to review the performance of Banks Launched Annual Credit Plan for FY 2026-27 today i.e., on 22.05.2026, at Praja Bhavan, Hyderabad. The meeting was attended by: 1. Shri Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu garu, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Minister for Finance, Planning Energy, Telangana State 2. Shri Tummala Nageshwara Rao garu, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Marketing, Co-operation, and Handlooms Textiles, Telangana State 3. Shri M Dana Kishore, IAS, Spl. Chief Secretary, Panchayat Raj Rural Development, Govt. of Telangana 4. Shri Sandeep Kumar Sultania, IAS, Principal Secretary (Finance), Govt. of Telangana 5. Dr. Gaurav Uppal, IAS, Secretary (Finance Planning), Govt. of Telangana 6. Shri. Chinmoy Kumar, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India,



Hyderabad 7. Shri. R Ganapathy, GM, NABARD 8. Sri Neelesh Dwivedi, CGM, SBI, Hyderabad Circle. 9. Sri Satish Kumar, GM, SBI Convenor, SLBC, Telangana Senior Officials from the line departments of Govt of Telangana, Government of India, executives from Public Sector Banks, Private Sector Banks, RRBs, SFBs, Payment Banks, representatives of various Federations of Agriculture and MSME etc., Sri Neelesh Dwivedi, CGM, SBI, Hyderabad Circle presented the performance of the banks in Telangana

during the Financial Year 2025-26 as under: Total Deposits of the banks grew by Rs.1,02,995 crores during the FY 2025-26 and the total deposits were at Rs.9,43,425 crores. Total Advances with Banks grew by Rs.1,52,497 crores during the FY 2025-26 and the advances of all banks were at Rs.12,33,858 Crores. 2 CD ratio continues to be above 100% and it has increased from 128.67 % to 130.78% during the FY 2025-26. During the financial year, Banks have disbursed Short Term Production Loans amounting to Rs. 75,486

crores achieving 84.34% of the ACP targets. Banks have disbursed Rs. 92,915 crores as Investment Credit to Agri. Allied, Agri. Infra and Agri. Ancillary activities achieving 122.58% of the annual targets. Banks have disbursed educational loans amounting to Rs. 547 Crores and Housing loans amounting to Rs. 6,002 Crores under Priority Sector during the FY 2025-26. Banks have disbursed Rs.1,57,268 crores to Micro, Small Medium enterprises (MSME) segment achieving 77.26% of the targets.

Equity shows resilience, but bond yields up amid risk of inflation and growth slowdown: Bajaj Finserv AMC

May 2026: In its latest outlook, Bajaj Finserv AMC believes global markets are entering a more challenging phase marked by moderating growth, elevated inflation, and heightened geopolitical uncertainty. According to the latest IMF projections, global growth is expected to slow to 3.1% in 2026 from 3.4% last year, while inflation is projected to rise to 4.4%, largely due to elevated energy prices and supply-side disruptions. Slowing global trade and tighter financial conditions are also expected to weigh on external demand and liquidity flows across emerging markets.

Equity: Domestic markets show resilience, global risk appetite improves
Against this backdrop, Indian equities have displayed resilience despite heightened volatility driven by crude oil prices and geopolitical developments. The Nifty 50 delivered returns of 7.5% over the past month, although markets witnessed sharp swings depending on movements in oil prices and geopolitical sentiment. Midcap and small-cap indices outperformed, gaining 14% and 20% respectively. Foreign port-



folio investor (FPI) outflows moderated in April 2026 to ₹70,000 crore from nearly ₹1.2 lakh crore in March, reflecting improving global risk appetite following easing geopolitical tensions and stronger domestic macroeconomic indicators. "Large caps have continued to act as a stabilising anchor amid volatility, while mid and small caps have seen sharper corrections and stronger rebounds. Valuations in large caps are now below long-term averages after the recent correction," says Sorbh Gupta, Head of



Equity, Bajaj Finserv AMC. The asset management company continue to favour domestic consumption and financials, while selectively preferring capital goods companies benefiting from global power capex trends. "We remain underweight on IT services due to potential AI-led revenue deflation risks. Large-cap and flexi-cap funds are expected to remain attractive for long-term investors, while small-cap funds are better suited for disciplined SIP investing. Multi-

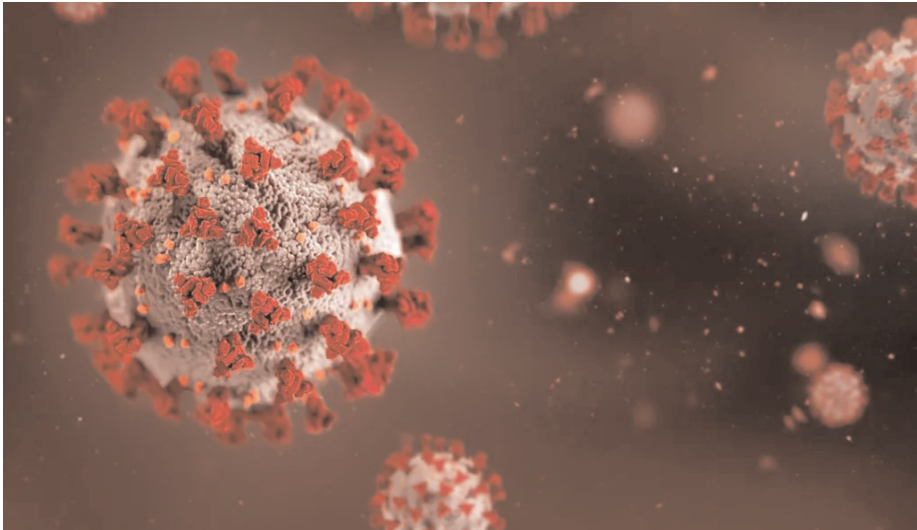
asset, balanced advantage, and arbitrage strategies continue to offer diversification benefits in volatile conditions," adds Gupta.

Fixed Income: Macros intact but oil prices remain key
In fixed income markets, oil prices remain the key macro variable influencing inflation, growth, and policy expectations. While India's headline inflation remains contained for now, elevated crude prices continue to pose risks to consumption, input costs, and external balances. Growth momentum has also shown signs of moderation, with softer PMI readings, weaker core sector growth, and slowing consumer confidence. The external sector remains under pressure amid widening trade deficits, weaker capital flows, and rupee depreciation. However, domestic liquidity conditions remain comfortable due to government spending and RBI liquidity management measures. While yields have eased from recent highs, they remain elevated compared to pre-West Asia crisis levels, particularly at the longer end of the curve.

NORTHERN ARC CAPITAL LIMITED	
NORTHERN ARC	Regd. Office: 10 th Floor, Phase-I, IIT-Madras Research Park, Kanaganallur, Taramani, Chennai - 600113, Tamil Nadu.
RULE - 8(i) - POSSESSION NOTICE	
Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Northern Arc Capital Ltd., under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 28 th November 2026 calling upon the Borrower (1) John Michael Anandhi (Borrower) Address No. 35 Rangappa Naidu Nagar Mosur Road, Arakkonam, Ranipet, Tamil Nadu - 631001 and MSP Enterprises Prop. John Michael Anandhi: No. 9F Daily Market Gandhi Road Arakkonam, Ranipet, Tamilnadu (2) Usan John Michael (Co-Borrower) Address No. 35 Rangappa Naidu Nagar Mosur Road, Arakkonam, Ranipet, Tamil Nadu - 631001 to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 2005714.02/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Five Thousand Seven Hundred Fourteen Rupees and Two Paise only) as on 13 th November 2025 along with interest from 14 th November 2025 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.	
The Borrower/Guarantor/Co Borrower and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Northern Arc Capital Ltd. for an amount of Rs. 2005714.02/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Five Thousand Seven Hundred Fourteen Rupees and Two Paise only) as on 13 th November 2025 along with interest from 14 th November 2025, costs, etc. thereon.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY	
All that piece and parcel of land measuring 1687½ Sq. Ft. or 156.83 Sq. Mtrs. along with the building thereon, bearing Plot No. 15, situate at Kaaliyaari Kandigai 4 th Street, Arakkonam, comprised in Survey No. 32/6, comprised in T.S. No. 2/2A, Block No. 3, Ward No. C situated at Arakkonam Town and Taluk, Ranipet District. And Land Bounded On: Within following Boundaries; North: Property Belongs To Cable Company South: 20 Feet Wide Kalivari Kandigai 4 th Street East: Property Belongs To Cable Company West: Vacant Plot No. 14	
Place: Ambattur Dated: 22/05/2026	Sd/- Authorised Officer, NORTHERN ARC CAPITAL LIMITED

Africa summit in India postponed over Ebola outbreak fears

Next week's India-Africa Forum Summit has been cancelled due to the Ebola crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. The fourth edition of the summit, which fosters diplomatic interactions between India and countries of the African continent, was set to be held in Delhi from 28-31 May after more than a decade. On Thursday, India and the African Union said in a joint statement that the summit was being postponed due to the "emerging public health situation in the continent" and that a new date would be announced later. The move comes days after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the latest Ebola outbreak a public health emergency of international concern. According to WHO, there have been 600 suspected cases of Ebola so far and 139 suspected deaths. The cases have been confined to



the African continent so far, but experts say the latest outbreak is challenging because it involves a rare species of Ebola for which there is no vaccine, and the epicentre is in an area affected by conflict. Ebola is a rare but deadly disease caused by a virus. Ebola viruses normally infect animals, typi-

cally fruit bats, but outbreaks among humans can sometimes start when people eat or handle infected animals. It takes two to 21 days for symptoms to appear. They come on suddenly and start like the flu or malaria, with fever, headache and tiredness. As the disease progresses, vom-

iting and diarrhoea develop and it can lead to organ failure. Some, but not all, patients develop internal and external bleeding. The virus spreads from one person to another by contact with infected bodily fluids such as blood or vomit. Ebola outbreaks used to be small and contained to

remote rural areas. However, urbanisation is pushing larger populations closer to these natural reservoirs of Ebola and increasing the risk of transmission. Though no Ebola cases have been reported from India, on Thursday, the Directorate General of Health Services issued a health advisory for passengers arriving from or transitioning to Ebola-affected countries. Travellers were advised to immediately report to airport health authorities and seek medical care within 21 days if they show symptoms such as fever, vomiting, diarrhoea or bleeding or if they had direct contact with infected persons. The new case was 'in a rural area near the provincial capital of Bukavu, which fell into M23 hands in February 2025. It marks an expansion of an outbreak that experts suspect circulated for about two months in Ituri province,

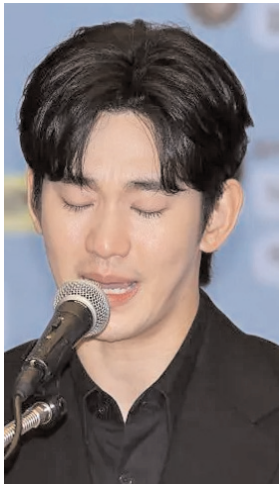
several hundred kilometres to the north, before being detected last week. According to the M23 spokesman, the Bukavu case involved a "person coming from Kisangani", a major city in the eastern Tshopo province where no Ebola infections from the current outbreak have so far been recorded. "The person concerned, a compatriot aged 28, unfortunately succumbed to the disease before the diagnosis was confirmed," the spokesman added. The Congolese authorities are yet to comment on the reported case.

Ugandan concerns

The new case in South Kivu was reported as residents in Rwampara, a town at the centre of the outbreak in Ituri, set fire to an Ebola treatment facility on Thursday, after being prevented from taking the body of a local man.

AI USED TO FAKE EVIDENCE THAT ENDED KOREAN ACTOR'S CAREER, SAY POLICE

South Korean police are seeking an arrest warrant for a YouTuber who allegedly faked evidence that defamed actor Kim Soo-hyun and fuelled a scandal which ended his career. Authorities say the YouTuber had manipulated screenshots of text messages and shared an audio file made with AI to give the impression that the actor had dated actress Kim Sae-ron when she was still a minor. The allegations surfaced last year, shortly after Kim Sae-ron killed herself at the age of 24. The scandal shook the country and upended the career of Kim Soo-hyun, who is a household name in South Korea. The actor has consistently denied the allegations. The YouTuber, Kim Se-ui, has since posted a video claiming the authorities' allegations were a "subterfuge meant to disrupt his investigation". Months after Kim Sae-ron's death, the YouTuber had posted online a voice recording in which the actress could be heard saying she had been



dating Kim Soo-hyun since she was in middle school. The YouTuber Kim Se-ui, who has nearly a million followers on his channel, had also presented screenshots of text messages purportedly sent between the actor and the actress. Authorities now say that the voice recording was generated by AI. They also allege that the YouTuber had manipulated screenshots of text messages sent from the actress's phone to make it look like she had been texting Kim Soo-hyun.

Turkish opposition fights court ousting of leaders in ruling boosting Erdogan



Turkish opposition leader Özgür Özel has vowed to fight a court ruling removing him and fellow party leaders, in the latest legal move that helps cement President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's grip on power. The appeal court declared the 2023 leadership election in Özel's Republican People's Party (CHP) null and void, prompting thousands of demonstrators to gather outside party headquarters in Ankara. "We are experiencing a dark day for Turkish democracy," said Özel, who vowed to challenge the ruling in the courts and with Turkey's supreme election council (YSK). Justice Minister Akin Gürlük insisted the ruling "reinforces our citizens' trust in democracy". Until Gürlük was appointed justice minister by President Erdogan earlier this year, he was the chief prosecutor in Istanbul who spearheaded investigations targeting the opposition, and the city's highly popular mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, who is still considered Erdogan's biggest political rival, has been in jail for over a year and it was Gürlük who

accused him of corruption offences which command more than 2,000 years behind bars. The supreme election council was meeting on Friday to hear the opposition party's objection to the court's decision. In its ruling on Thursday, the appeals court in Ankara overturned a 2025 ruling by a lower court that threw out allegations of vote buying during the CHP primary which made Özgür Özel opposition leader. The appeals court decided that Özel should be replaced by Kemal Kilicdaroglu, a 77-year-old party veteran who was defeated by Erdogan in the 2023 presidential election and then voted out as party leader. The ruling also means the party's entire executive is replaced and it is thought the decisions it has made are no longer recognised. BBC Turkish correspondent Ayse Sayin said the ruling came as a shock at CHP headquarters, with some members moved to tears. She described tense moments when some party members removed a photo of Kilicdaroglu from the wall, while others chanted the former leader was a "traitor".

ALBERTA TO HOLD REFERENDUM ON WHETHER TO REMAIN IN CANADA

Alberta will hold a referendum on whether the province should remain in Canada or move ahead with a second binding vote on separation, marking the first significant test of the country's unity in decades. A restive independence movement has been growing in the oil-rich province, built on a long-held sense that Alberta is overlooked by decision-makers in Ottawa. Still, opinion polls suggest that the majority of Albertans would vote against separating. Smith, in a televised address, said the question being put to Albertans this coming autumn will be: "Should Alberta remain a province of Canada or should the Government of Alberta commence the legal process



required under the Canadian Constitution to hold a binding provincial referendum on whether or not Alberta should separate from Canada?" The premier said she herself will vote in favour of Alberta remaining a part of Canada. "That is how I would vote on separation in a provincial referendum," she said, adding that "it is also the position of my government and my caucus."

RUBIO TRIES TO REASSURE NATO ALLIES OVER US TROOP DEPLOYMENTS

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has tried to reassure allies over US decisions on troop deployments in Europe. Rubio's intervention at the end of a Nato foreign ministers' meeting in Sweden came after President Donald Trump said the US would send an extra 5,000 troops to Poland. That decision was a week after a planned deployment of 4,000 troops to the country was cancelled and days after an announcement that US troops would be pulled out of Germany. The announcements have caused confusion among the allies of the trans-Atlantic defence organisation. However, at a news conference after the Nato meeting on Friday, Rubio said the US was constantly reevaluating its troop presence in view of its global commitments, but that the



goal was "a stronger Nato". Some US troops are currently involved in the Middle East, following the US and Israeli conflict with Iran. Trump made the announcement about the new Polish deployment as Nato ministers were in Sweden for talks. Writing on his Truth Social platform on Thursday, Trump said the decision was based on the US's relationship with Polish President Karol Nawrocki,

whom he backed during presidential elections last year and who is a long-time supporter of his. The US leader did not elaborate on whether the additional troops were part of the previous planned deployment or a different operation. The US defence department abruptly said last week it was cancelling the deployment of 4,000 troops to Poland, but US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth later

said it was "a temporary delay" and Washington would continue to ensure it "retains a strong military presence" in the country. "It is confusing indeed, and not always easy to navigate," Swedish Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard said as she hosted her Nato colleagues in Helsingborg. But Latvia's Baiba Bra e was more upbeat, saying ministers knew US troop "posture was being reconsidered, and now there is no change of posture". German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul has also welcomed the US decision to deploy additional troops to Poland, telling reporters: "It serves not only for Poland's security, but for the security of the whole alliance and so also for us. So, this is absolutely in our interest."

UK scientists developing Ebola vaccine that could be ready for trials in months

Scientists at Oxford University are developing a new vaccine that could be ready for clinical trials within two to three months to help tackle the Ebola emergency. The outbreak, centred on the Democratic Republic of Congo, has resulted in 750 suspected cases and 177 deaths. The rare species of Ebola, known as Bundibugyo, for which there is no proven vaccine, kills around a third of those infected. There are no guarantees the vaccine will prove effective and it will take animal research and trials on people to know if it will be. But scientists say they are working urgently in case the outbreak spirals and their experimen-



tal vaccine is needed. The risk from the current Ebola outbreak has now been upgraded from "high" to "very high" in the Democratic Republic of Congo, by the World Health Organization (WHO). In the wider region the risk is also now considered to be high

but it remains low internationally, it added. This comes after the WHO declared a public health emergency of international concern on Sunday, when it stressed that the outbreak was not a pandemic. Another separate experimental Bundibugyo vaccine is also in develop-

ment, but it is expected to take six to nine months for any dose of that to be ready for testing. The vaccine being developed by UK scientists uses the same technology the team developed during the Covid pandemic. It is a highly adjustable technology - known as ChAdOx1 - that can be quickly tweaked so it works against different infections. During the pandemic it was loaded with genetic code from the Covid-virus. This time it has been prepared with genetic code from the Bundibugyo species of Ebola. It uses a common cold virus that normally infects chimpanzees but has been genetically engineered to make it safe for people.

Cubans grapple with fuel shortages and blackouts as US steps up pressure



The incident at the centre of a murder charge against Cuba's former president, Raúl Castro, is burned into the collective memory of both Havana and Miami. The US case, unveiled on Wednesday, accuses Castro and five others in the shooting down of two planes belonging to Cuban-American group Brothers to the Rescue in 1966 - killing four people, including three Americans. Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel has called this and other charges levelled at Castro "a political manoeuvre, devoid of any legal foundation". US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has since said Cuba poses a "national security threat" and the likelihood of a peaceful agreement between the two countries is "not high". As the charges against Raúl Castro were announced, many Cubans were unaware and incommunicado due to the 20-hour blackouts continuing to grip the island. The US has imposed a near-total fuel blockade that has affected almost every facet of daily life. US President Donald

Trump has repeatedly sought to exert pressure on Cuba and has openly discussed toppling its communist regime. The US has demanded political and economic reforms but the specifics are unclear beyond a leadership change. They could include a pledge to open up the economy to more foreign investment and a commitment to end the presence of Russian or Chinese intelligence agencies on the island. Ana Rosa Romero lives on the 11th floor of the Granma Dos building, an imposing modernist social housing block in the Cuban capital, Havana. A widow in her 70s, she said that when her husband died recently, a blackout in her neighbourhood meant she had to sit with his body for hours before it could be moved. These days, with the lift so often not working, she says she barely leaves her apartment. "You can hardly go out," said the former philosophy teacher, a framed picture of Fidel Castro on her wall. "If you do venture out, it's with the uncertainty of not knowing what's coming next."



Angry crowd sets Ebola hospital tents on fire in DR Congo

US NAVY CHIEF SAYS \$14BN ARMS SALE TO TAIWAN PAUSED DUE TO IRAN WAR



The US is pausing a \$14bn (£10.4bn) arms sale to Taiwan to ensure it has enough weapons for the Iran war, acting Navy secretary Hung Cao has said. Cao confirmed this at a Senate hearing, days after President Donald Trump appeared non-committal about the sale following his meetings with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. A spokesperson for Taiwan's

presidential office told reporters on Friday that they had not received any information about "US adjustments to the arms sale". The sale of US arms to Taiwan has long irked Beijing, which claims the self-governed island as its territory and has not ruled out taking it by force. "Right now we're doing a pause in order to make sure we have the munitions we need for Epic Fury - which we have plenty," Cao said at the hearing on Thursday, using the code name for the US-Israel joint military operation in Iran. "We're just making sure we have everything, but then the foreign military sales will continue when the administration deems necessary."

IPL 2026: SUNRISERS HYDERABAD SETS A TARGET OF 255/4 FOR ROYAL CHALLENGERS BENGALURU



How Can RCB Hold No. 1 Spot In IPL 2026 As They Face In-Form SRH - Exact Margin, Scenarios Explained

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) play Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in Hyderabad on Friday. RCB, SRH and Gujarat Titans are already in the playoffs. RCB have 18 points from 13 games (NRR +1.065), GT have 18 points from 14 games (NRR +0.695), while SRH have 16 points from 13 games (NRR +0.350). The RCB vs SRH match is a fight to secure the top spot. RCB have the best run rate and are in a prime position to finish in the top two. Even if they lose by 87 runs (supposing SRH score 200), they will finish in the top two. If SRH chase, they will need to surpass the massive target within 11 overs. Ahead of the 'Southern Derby' between Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) and Royal



Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), former Indian cricketer Aakash Chopra has said that the Men in Orange will have to pull off something extraordinary in order to seal a top-two finish, which will have them play the Qualifier 1 clash. SRH, currently in third

place with eight wins and five losses and 16 points, will be aiming to surpass Gujarat Titans (GT) in net run rate when they take on defending champions RCB in Hyderabad on Friday. Speaking on JioHotstar during 'Match Centre Live',

JioStar expert Aakash said that either SRH will have to win by 85 runs or more or chase down a massive target within 11 overs. "For Sunrisers Hyderabad to move ahead in the top-two race, it would require something extremely extraordinary.

Coach Oscar Bruzon Hints At Reversal Of Decision, Says May Not Leave East Bengal After Historic ISL Triumph

After guiding East Bengal to their first national league title in 22 years, coach Oscar Bruzon has hinted that he may not leave the club and hold discussions with the management next month about clarity of the future of the Indian Super League. East Bengal came from behind to defeat Inter Kashi 2-1 in a dramatic ISL finale here on Thursday, with the victory helping them finish top of the table with 26 points from 13 matches, ahead of Mohun Bagan on superior goal difference (19-14). "Regarding my future, I will say the same thing that I've been saying throughout the season - I will not make any move till June," Bruzon said at the post-match media interaction. ISL's future is still uncertain amid a fresh deadlock between clubs and the AIFF



over commercial and broadcast structures. Several franchises have pushed for a club-led operational and commercial model, while uncertainty over the roadmap has stalled player contracts and renewals across teams. Bruzon had earlier publicly stated that he may not continue with East Bengal if there was no clarity over the next ISL season and had said

the last round match (Friday's against Inter Kashi) would be his "last" at the club with lack of clarity about the next season. But after scripting history with East Bengal, the Spaniard hinted he is open for further discussions. "If by June 1 the club has a proper plan, then I will be very happy to sit and talk," he said. "But if the club itself does not have

clarity or planning after June, then it's not only difficult for me but for the whole group of players and coaches. Without planning, there cannot be discussions." Reflecting on the title-winning campaign, Bruzon credited the club management and support staff for backing his vision through uncertain times. "We were working quietly behind the scenes. I am very happy and proud to leave as champions," he said. "On behalf of the coaching staff, I want to thank Emami for their support and belief in the project." East Bengal had fallen behind in the final after Alfred Planas struck early for Inter Kashi, but Youssef Ezzejjari equalised soon after halftime before Mohammed Rashid scored the decisive winner in the 72nd minute.

NASCAR CHAMPION KYLE BUSCH DIES AGED 41



Eleven All Stars France vs England Full Lineup Revealed: KSI, Deji, AngryGinge, Skepta, And More

The internet football scene is getting ready for another massive creator showdown because the full squads for Eleven All Stars France vs England are finally out. The influencer football event, hosted by French streamer Mohamed "AmineMaTue," is returning for its second edition on May 24, 2026, and this time the hype feels even bigger. The match will take place at the famous Parc des Princes in Paris, which already has fans calling this one of the biggest creator football games of the year. A lot of attention is going toward Team England after the Sidemen officially revealed the squad on X. The lineup is stacked with massive internet personalities, football creators, streamers, rappers, and YouTubers. From KSI and AngryGinge to Skepta and ChrisMD, the England side



honestly looks like a crossover episode of UK internet culture. Meanwhile, Team France is bringing some of the biggest French-speaking creators online, including Squeezie, Inoxtag, Michou, Kameto, and Domingo. Team England lineup brings together Sidemen stars, creators, and music names. The England squad is packed with familiar faces from YouTube and stream-

ing. Fans instantly noticed how many Sidemen members made the list, with KSI, Miniminter, Zerkaa, TBJZL, Behzinga, Vikkstar123, and W2S all confirmed for the game. But it's not just Sidemen involved. AngryGinge, Theo Baker, Niko Omilana, ChrisMD, SV2, and John Nellis are also joining the squad. UK rapper Skepta and his brother JME were among the biggest sur-

prise inclusions and got a lot of reactions online after the announcement dropped. France is also coming in with a very strong creator lineup. Since the event is being hosted in Paris, many fans are expecting the home crowd to heavily back the French team during the match. The squad includes major French internet names like Squeezie, Michou, Inoxtag, Kameto, Domingo, Zack Nani, and Djilsi. Creator duo Victor and Thibault from Pitch Addict are also confirmed for the event. Alongside the player reveal, Sidemen also announced that Stephen Tries and Spencer FC will handle English commentary for the event. Both are already familiar faces for creator football fans because they also commented during the Sidemen Charity Match 2026 at Wembley Stadium earlier this year.

Jannik Sinner, Novak Djokovic Kept Apart In French Open Draw



Jannik Sinner and Novak Djokovic will not be able to meet until the French Open final after the pair were placed in opposite halves of the men's draw on Thursday, while Coco Gauff could face Aryna Sabalenka in the women's semis. Sinner, the red-hot men's title favourite in the absence of injured rival Carlos Alcaraz, will start his bid for a maiden Roland Garros crown against French wildcard Clement Tabur, the world number 165. Women's world number one Sabalenka faces a tough potential road to the final, with Naomi Osaka, Victoria Mboko and reigning champion Gauff all potential hurdles for the Belarusian. The build-up to the event, which gets under way on Sunday, has been overshadowed by threats from players to boycott some of their media duties over a pay dispute with Grand Slam tournament organisers. "We are not going to budge," tournament director Amelie Mauresmo told reporters at the draw in Paris, adding she was a "little saddened" by the situation. "We have

prize money that has (...) doubled in 10 years, and has also increased significantly recently." World number one Sinner is slated to meet big-hitting American fifth seed Ben Shelton in the quarter-finals. Daniil Medvedev is a possible semi-final opponent for the Italian. The Russian gave Sinner a rare scare in the Italian Open semis earlier this month before eventually succumbing in three sets. Sinner won his sixth consecutive Masters 1000 trophy by beating Casper Ruud in the Rome final. That made the four-time Grand Slam champion only the second man to complete the set of all nine Masters 1000 titles, after Novak Djokovic. Third seed Djokovic will kick off his latest tilt at a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title against home player Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard. Second seed Alexander Zverev is a potential semi-final opponent for Djokovic, who turns 39 on Friday. The German has played Djokovic twice before at Roland Garros, suffering quarter-final defeats against the Serb in 2019 and last year.

Tour to feature first joint men's and women's event

Australia's Tour Down Under will become the first World Tour race to host men's and women's stages on the same course and day, over the same distance. The 2027 season opener will feature a six-stage men's race from 19 January, while the three-stage women's event will open on 22 January. The Adelaide-area event, which in 2018 became the first in the world to offer equal prize money for both sexes, previously held its women's race prior to its men's event. "It's a great platform to highlight the strength of our women's peloton and the fact that we're even able to



do this reflects the growth and progression of women's cycling," said Tour Down Under assistant race director Carlee Taylor. In

Europe, major races including Paris-Roubaix, the Tour of Flanders and Tour de Suisse host men's and women's events on the same

day, but over different distances and routes. "The challenge we were given by UCI [Union Cycliste Internationale] was to deliv-

er a more condensed program of racing and optimise the time the women's teams spent in Australia," said race director Stuart O'Grady. "We saw it as an opportunity to do something different and bring both men's and women's racing together and finish off with a bumper final weekend of racing." The new schedule reduces the gap for women's riders between the two early season events in Australia, with the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race typically staged in late January or early February. Belgium's Alec Segaert claimed his first stage win on a Grand

Tour as his Bahrain-Victorious team-mate Afonso Eulalio extended his overall lead in the Giro d'Italia. The 23-year-old Segaert won stage 12 - a 175km race from Imperia to Novi Ligure - after a surprise late attack denied the sprinters their chance of a bunch finish. Eulalio, 29, extended his lead over pre-race favourite Jonas Vingegaard to 33 seconds by claiming intermediate sprint points. Key sprint rivals Jonathan Milan and Paul Magnier were earlier dropped on the Bric Berton climb with more than 50km remaining.

Mammootty & Mohanlal’s “Patriot” Premieres on ZEE5 June 5 After 18 Years Reunion

Mammootty, Mohanlal, Nayanthara, Fahadh Faasil, and Kunchacko Boban’s “Patriot” to Premiere Digitally on ZEE5 from June 5th in Malayalam, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada. Mammootty and Mohanlal Reunite After 18 Years as Mahesh Narayanan’s Political Thriller “Patriot” Premieres on ZEE5 From June 5th. Malayalam Cinema’s Biggest Icons Mammootty and Mohanlal Reunite After 18 Years as Political Thriller “Patriot” Premieres on ZEE5 from June 5th. Malayalam ZEE5 is set to premiere Patriot, a gripping political thriller directed by acclaimed filmmaker Mahesh Narayanan, on June 5. The film will be available in Malayalam, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada. Bringing together two of Malayalam cinema’s biggest icons, Mammootty and Mohanlal, after 18 years, the film also stars Nayanthara, Fahadh Faasil, and Kunchacko Boban in pivotal roles. Blending espionage, politics, technology, and emotional drama, Patriot explores the dangerous consequences of unchecked surveillance in a system built on secrecy and power. At the heart of the story is a man who once helped create a sophisticated government surveillance program, believing it would safe-



guard the nation. However, when he discovers that the system is being weaponised against innocent citizens through manipulation, blackmail, and control, he is forced to question everything he once stood for. As he turns against the very machinery he helped build, Patriot examines the blurred lines

between patriotism and betrayal, and whether exposing the truth makes someone a traitor or a true patriot. Set against an Indian socio-political backdrop, yet rooted in globally relevant concerns around surveillance and privacy, Patriot transforms a high-stakes conspiracy into an emo-

tionally charged cinematic experience. With Mahesh Narayanan’s sharp storytelling and the combined screen presence of Mammootty, Mohanlal, Nayanthara, Fahadh Faasil, and Kunchacko Boban, the film promises an intense and thought-provoking watch. The film also features a strong sup-

porting ensemble, including Revathy, Rajeev Menon, Darshana Rajendran, and Zarin Shihab. Director Mahesh Narayanan said, “Patriot is a story that reflects the anxieties of the times we live in today, where technology meant to protect people can also become a tool of fear and control. What drew me to this film was the emotional conflict at its core a man forced to confront the consequences of something he once believed in completely. I’m excited for audiences across the country to experience the Patriot on Malayalam ZEE5.” Mammootty said, “What makes Patriot compelling is that beneath its scale and political tension, it is ultimately a deeply human story about conscience, responsibility, and courage. The film asks difficult questions while remaining emotionally grounded, and I’m looking forward to audiences discovering it on Malayalam ZEE5.” Mohanlal added, “Patriot speaks about the world we are living in today, where truth and power are constantly in conflict. It was exciting to be part of a film that feels both cinematic and deeply relevant. Reuniting with Mammootty after many years for a story like this made the experience even more special.” Do not miss watching Patriot on Malayalam ZEE5 starting June 5, available in Malayalam, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada!

Vijay Antony, Mu. Maran’s Nanna Kutty Wraps Shoot, Intense First Look Out, Theatrical Release In August

Versatile actor Vijay Antony, known for choosing strong content-driven films, is currently awaiting the release of Vanda Devullu. He now teams up with director Mu. Maran for another intriguing project, Appa Kutty. The film, produced by Meera Vijay Antony, and co-produced by Ramanjaneyulu Javvaji of Sarvanth Ram Creations, is an action-packed family drama centred on the emotional bond between a father and daughter. The Telugu version is titled Nanna Kutty, and the makers unveiled the first look today. The poster showcases a bruised and bloodied Vijay Antony in an intense close-up, his face marked with cuts and swelling. His grim, determined expression carries emotional weight, while a young girl rests on his shoulder, subtly highlighting the core father-daughter relationship. Designed as a gripping blend of action, family emotion, intense drama, and striking visuals, Nanna Kutty is positioned to appeal to both family audiences and action lovers. The shoot has been completed, and post-production is progressing at a brisk pace. The team is targeting a grand theatrical release in August. Vijay Antony is set to deliver a performance that combines emotional



depth with high-octane action. The film also features Preethi Asrani, Lithanya, Bhagavathi Perumal, Haripriya Isai, Aruvi Madhan, Chitra Lakshmanan, Sreeja Ravi, Vettai Muthukumar, Jansen Diwakar, Muruganantham, Munnar Ramesh, and several other in key roles. Rajeev Raajendran handles cinematography, while Vijay Antony scores

the music, and also serves as the editor. A Raja takes charge of production design. With its mix of solid emotions, impactful action, soulful music, and engaging storytelling, Nanna Kutty is going to be one of the season’s notable family entertainers. The team is confident that the film will deliver an emotional, gripping, and memorable theatrical experience.

TFCC Chairman Dr. Prathani Ramakrishna Goud Congratulates New APFTTDC Team

TFCC Chairman and Producer Dr. Prathani Ramakrishna Goud Congratulates Newly Appointed Chairman and Directors of Andhra Pradesh Film, Television and Theatre Development Corporation. TFCC Chairman and producer Dr. Prathani Ramakrishna Goud extended his heartfelt congratulations to the newly appointed Chairman and Directors of the Andhra Pradesh Film, Television and Theatre Development Corporation (APFTTDC). He congratulated Chairman P. Bharat Bhushan, Vice Chairman Chikkala Meher Ramesh Kumar, and Directors Chadalavada Srinivasa Rao, Suman Talwar, Sai Madhav Burra, S. Shivaji, Mrs. Y. Jhansi, Vivek Kuchibhotla, V. Samudra, Meer S, Kandimalla Sambasiva Rao, A. Satyanarayana, S. V. Krishna Reddy, G. Raj Venkateswara Yadav, and D. Satyanarayana. Dr. Prathani Ramakrishna



Goud expressed his hope that the Telugu film industry would witness greater growth and development under the leadership of P. Bharat Bhushan, who possesses vast experience in the film industry. Speaking at a media confer-

ence organized on this occasion, Dr. Prathani Ramakrishna Goud said: “I am very happy that Mr. P. Bharat Bhushan has been appointed as the Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Film, Television and Theatre Development Corporation.

He is highly deserving of this position in every way. Bharat Bhushan garu previously served as the President of the Telugu Film Chamber and has had a long-standing career in film distribution. I strongly believe that the film industry will achieve greater heights under his leadership. I also hope that the prestigious Nandi Awards will be revived during his tenure and conducted in a grand manner. I am also delighted that Suman garu, who has acted in more than 700 films, has been appointed as a Director. I share a long association with him as both a producer and an actor. Suman garu is one of the most controversy-free actors in the industry. He has delivered many superhit films such as Neti Bharatam, Sitara, Tarangini, and Bava Bavamaridi. Whenever people think of Lord Venkateswara Swamy, Suman garu instantly comes to mind.

Venky Kudumula’s What Next Entertainments, New Guy In Town Aniesh, Mahesh Uppala, S Thaman’s Itllu Arjuna Musical Journey Begins From May 28th



Star filmmaker Venky Kudumula’s maiden production Itlu Arjuna, under his banner What Next

Entertainments, marks the debut of New Guy in Town Aniesh in the lead, with debutant Mahesh Uppala directing. Anaswara Rajan stars opposite Aniesh. The film grabbed attention right from its title glimpse, featuring a powerful voiceover by Akkineni Nagarjuna, which immediately resonated with audiences. The makers followed it up with multiple posters and a special video titled Finding Arjuna, further boosting curiosity.

Hero Satyadev's 16th Film Samavarthi - Title & First Look Unveiled



Young and talented actor Satyadev Kancharana, known for choosing diverse roles and carving a unique identity for himself as a hero, has unveiled the title and first-look poster of his new film “Samavarthi.” This marks the 16th film in his career as a lead actor. The film is being produced under the banners of Rudra Pictures & Panchabutha Productions by

Ajay Nag V. is directing the project. “Samavarthi” is being made as an ecological action thriller and is gearing up for a grand theatrical release in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam. The first-look poster of “Samavarthi” has generated curiosity among audiences. It features Satyadev in an intense avatar, calmly listening to music on his headphones while several men armed with axes and knives charge toward him. Followed by the Pre-look poster that has a substance of nature and wilderness loaded in it, The First Look poster emphasises subtle references to nature with the tiger in the background creating intrigue. The title and poster have already created expectations that this could be one of the most intense action films in Satyadev’s career.

Varun Dhawan joins Hollywood after Priyanka, Deepika and Alia?

Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan may soon take a major step in his career, if the latest reports are to be believed. The actor is reportedly in advanced discussions for a Hollywood project backed by producer Lawrence Kasanoff. While there is no official confirmation yet, the news has already created excitement among fans who have long wanted to see Varun enter international cinema.

Is Varun Dhawan making his Hollywood debut? According to recent reports, Varun has been offered a large-scale action film with an inter-parallel universe concept. Discussions between the actor

and the makers are said to be moving in a positive direction. If everything moves ahead as planned, this film could become Varun Dhawan’s first major Hollywood project and an important milestone in his career journey. The genre is also interesting because parallel universe action films are still not commonly explored in mainstream Hindi cinema.

Why this project is getting attention The biggest reason fans are excited is the association with Lawrence Kasanoff, who is widely recognised for working on the Mortal Kombat franchise. A col-

laboration at this scale could help Varun expand his reach beyond Bollywood and connect with a global audience. Interestingly, Varun had earlier shared in an interview that acting was always his dream and that he once imagined making his debut in Hollywood.

What’s next for Varun Dhawan? Before any international announcement, Varun is currently focused on his upcoming film Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai. The romantic entertainer stars Mrunal Thakur and Pooja Hegde alongside him and has already built strong buzz among audiences. The trailer release recently faced

delays, but fans continue to wait eagerly for updates. For now, there is no official statement from Varun Dhawan or his team regarding the Hollywood project. Until confirmation arrives, fans can only wait and watch whether this becomes the actor’s biggest career move yet. A collaboration at this scale could help Varun expand his reach beyond Bollywood and connect with a global audience.



Shivacharan Reddy Jakkidana and Shashidhar Reddy Padamati, while