

CHENNAI | BENGALURU | HYDERABAD | VIJAYAWADA | KOCHI

THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES

NATIONAL DAILY NEWSPAPER

Essence of the South



SWATI

PEARLS & JEWELLERS

www.swatipearls.in

NAMPALLY:

Opp. Public Garden, Beside Hero Show Room,
Chappel Road, Ph: 9949971337/23200048

GACHIBOWLI:

Near Telecom Nagar, Beside Cafe Coffee Day,
Ph: 9849026916/23002992

BANJARA HILLS:

Road No. 10,
Ph: 9848910502/23550896SCAN FOR
E-PAPEROM NAMO
VENKATESAYA28-05-2026
Total pilgrims : 74,569
Tonsures : 46,292
Hundi kumbhar : 3,80 CR
Laddu sale : 4.15 Lac
Annaspradams : 2.70 Lac
Medical treatment : 3,592Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam
(with out SSD Tokens) : 15-20 HBengaluru police ban
public celebrations
for IPL final

Bengaluru, May 29 : Bengaluru City Police on Friday issued a public advisory ahead of the Tata IPL 2026 final scheduled to be held on May 31, urging citizens and cricket fans to maintain law and order and avoid public celebrations after the match. With Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) reaching the final of the Tata IPL 2026 tournament, the police said strict safety measures and restrictions would be enforced across the city to prevent untoward incidents and ensure public safety. In the advisory, Bengaluru City Police directed the public not to engage in any kind of celebrations in public places after the announcement of the final match result. The police also stated that LED walls facing roads should not be installed without prior permission from the concerned authorities. Existing LED walls must not be used to screen the match publicly. Authorities further prohibited the installation of screens outside malls, pubs, and other commercial establishments, visible to the public, for watching the final match. The advisory also banned the bursting of crackers and the use of dangerous materials during celebrations. Citizens were asked to maintain peace and discipline, especially in crowded areas.

6 labourers buried alive
in bridge collapse due
to thunderstorm

Hamirpur (UP), May 29 (UNI) At least 6 labourers were buried alive, and 3 others were critically injured when a portion of an under-construction bridge over the Betwa River collapsed early on Friday. However, unofficial sources claimed that the death toll has touched 8. The incident occurred amid heavy rains and a thunderstorm that lashed the area at around 0300 AM. It also raises questions about the adequacy of safety measures at the construction site. The bridge stretches from Morkandar Parsani in Kurara to Naithi village. All the victims were reportedly sleeping on this section of the bridge at the time of the incident. Police said relief and rescue operations have begun. The bridge, approved through the efforts of Rajya Sabha member Baburam Nishad, was being constructed near his native village, Morkandar Parsani.

Trump says Iran deal awaits final decision

WASHINGTON (TSIT):

US President Donald Trump said Friday that he was preparing to make a final decision on a potential agreement with Iran, outlining terms that include a commitment by Tehran never to acquire a nuclear weapon and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. In a post on social media, Trump said Iran must accept a permanent ban on nuclear weapons as part of the proposed arrangement. "Iran must agree that they will never have a Nuclear Weapon or



Bomb," he wrote.

Trump said the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route for global energy supplies, should be reopened immedi-

ately. "The Hormuz Strait must be immediately open, no tolls, for unrestricted shipping traffic, in both directions," he said.

The President also claimed that mines in the waterway were being removed and that shipping disrupted by a U.S. naval blockade would soon resume. "Ships caught in the Strait due to our amazing and unprecedented Naval Blockade, which will now be lifted, may start the process of 'heading home!'" Trump wrote. He said US forces had already removed numerous mines and that Iran would complete the removal or detonation of any

remaining devices.

Trump's statement also addressed Iran's nuclear programme. He claimed that enriched nuclear material buried deep underground following a US military strike nearly a year ago would be recovered and destroyed. "The enriched material, sometimes referred to as 'Nuclear Dust,' which is buried deep underground with virtually collapsed mountains, caused by our powerful B2 Bomber attack 11 months ago, sitting on top of it, will be unearthed by the United States," he wrote.

CM Revanth calls for Congress
mobilisation on voter roll revision

HYDERABAD TSIT BUREAU:

Chief Minister and Telangana Congress leader A. Revanth Reddy on Friday urged party leaders and cadres to launch an intensive grassroots campaign to safeguard the voting rights of people during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Addressing a meeting at Gandhi Bhavan, Revanth Reddy said the SIR process could create challenges for vulnerable sections such as tribal communities, Lambadas, migrant workers, women, Dalits and minorities if adequate awareness and support were not provided.

He emphasized that Congress leaders must thoroughly understand the voter list revision process and work proactively to ensure that no eligible voter loses their right to vote. "If constituency in-charges function effectively, not a single vote should be deleted," he said. Drawing parallels with



the party's successful digital membership drive, the Chief Minister recalled that Congress enrolled 45 lakh members within 90 days through a strong network of booth enrollers. He suggested utilizing the same experienced cadre for the SIR exercise and strengthening booth-level coordination.

Revanth Reddy proposed appointing dedicated in-charges for all 119 Assembly constituencies and 17 Lok Sabha constituencies to monitor the voter roll revision process. He instructed Assembly in-charges to remain active in their constituencies and maintain

■ Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy urged Congress leaders and cadres to launch an intensive campaign during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls to protect voting rights, especially for vulnerable groups like tribal communities, women, Dalits, minorities, and migrant workers.

■ He instructed appointing dedicated in-charges for all Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies, strengthening booth-level coordination, involving ministers, MPs, MLAs, and party workers, and conducting awareness programmes to ensure no eligible voter is left out.

continuous engagement with party workers and voters. The Chief Minister also directed ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and corporation chairpersons to actively participate in party programmes and spend more time in the field. He said in-charge ministers should dedicate one full day every ten days exclusively for party activities and grass-

roots outreach. Announcing his own participation in the organisational drive, Revanth Reddy said he would personally meet party workers at regular intervals and allocate three days every month for party affairs. He stressed the need for unity and coordination among Congress leaders and called for taking suggestions from former PCC presidents. He noted that the party now has a strong network of elected local representatives, including sarpanches, municipal chairpersons and councillors, who should be effectively mobilised.

For Hyderabad, the Chief Minister suggested assigning responsibilities to Rajya Sabha MPs and MLCs and conducting constituency-wise meetings on SIR across all 15 Assembly segments. He also asked the Mahila Congress to organise cluster-level awareness programmes to address concerns related to voter registration and verification.

India targets \$120-150 billion
semiconductor value chain
by 2035: NITI Aayog

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

India should target developing a USD 120-150 billion semiconductor value chain by 2035 by prioritising leadership and purpose over mere participation, according to a report released by NITI Aayog on Friday. The report, Future of India's Semiconductor Industry, recommends that the Centre commit at least one-third of the required investment to de-risk projects and instill long-term investor confidence.

The report emphasises building a distinct and strategically self-reliant pathway rather than chasing the global wafer race. It estimates that cumulative semiconductor investments of USD 135-180 billion over the next decade will be required across design, fabrication, advanced packaging, materials, and



supporting infrastructure. Public funding should prioritise fabs, advanced packaging, compound semiconductors, and critical design infrastructure, complemented by predictable incentives and coordinated execution.

Despite rising domestic demand, 90-95% of India's semiconductor needs are currently met through imports, creating strategic vulnerability and foreign exchange outflows. By 2035, the country's semiconductor market is projected to reach USD

200 billion.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw highlighted that semiconductors form the critical infrastructure of the 21st century, powering AI, defence, electric mobility, and digital public infrastructure. The roadmap focuses on advanced packaging, compound semiconductors, wide-bandgap materials, and AI-native chip design, aiming to position India as a trusted global partner in the semiconductor ecosystem.

India, Canada push stronger trade
ties, set year-end CEPA goal

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

India and Canada reaffirmed their shared commitment for strengthening bilateral trade and investment ties to deliver tangible outcomes supporting economic growth and increased commercial opportunities for businesses in both countries, said Canada-India joint statement released here on Friday.

Building on the momentum generated through recent ministerial engagement,

Minister Sidhu underscored opportunities to deepen cooperation across sectors like clean energy, critical minerals, agri-food, advanced manufacturing, digital technologies and skill development. Both sides reiterated their commitment to advancing an ambitious and mutually beneficial Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and affirmed their shared objectives of concluding negotiations by the end of this year.

Top Congress leaders hold talks on
Karnataka govt formation

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Top Congress leaders were engaged in hectic deliberations on Friday over the new government formation in Karnataka on a day Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot formally accepted the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and dissolved the cabinet.

The Congress Legislature Party



(CLP) in Karnataka will meet on Saturday at 4 pm in the conference hall in Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru, to elect their new leader

in the state. The meeting will be chaired by Siddaramaiah and D K Shivakumar is set to be elected as the new leader.

A day after resigning from the top post, Siddaramaiah, accompanied by his son Yathindra, met the Congress brass including Rahul Gandhi and party president Mallikarjun Kharge in the national capital.

'Law and Order missing in TN':
Udhayanidhi attacks CM Vijay

CHENNAI (TSIT)

The brutal murder of a young woman, believed to be around 25 years old, in Cuddalore has sparked political criticism. Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin on Friday launched a blistering attack on the Tamil Nadu government, headed by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay over the state's law and order situation.

In a statement issued on Friday, Udhayanidhi described the incident as "deeply shocking" and said the repeated occurrence of murders, robberies, and sexual violence across



Tamil Nadu has left people questioning whether law and order still exists in the state. Targeting the ruling dispensation in the state, he alleged that since the "#SofaModelGovernment" came to power, "hardly a day has passed without incidents of murder, robbery, or sexual violence being reported." The Opposition leader also took a swipe at Chief Minister Vijay, accusing him of failing to deliver on promises made during the election campaign.

AP to Launch "AP Cyber Guard"
to Curb Cyber Crimes

CM Chandrababu Reviews Cyber Crime Prevention Measures

THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES,
VISAKHAPATNAM :

N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to implement a Zero FIR system to effectively tackle cyber crimes in Andhra Pradesh. During a high-level review meeting held at the Secretariat on Thursday, the Chief Minister said complaints related to cyber fraud should be registered immediately through the Cyber War Room so that banks can be alerted within the "golden hour" to prevent money transfers from victims' accounts. The Chief Minister emphasized the need for continuous public awareness campaigns and cyber patrolling on the lines of regular police patrolling. He instructed officials to focus particularly on retired employees and vulnerable sections who are increasingly becoming targets of cyber fraudsters. Stressing strict action against criminals involved in "digital arrest" scams, Chandrababu said those making such fraudulent calls must be tracked and arrested without delay.

During the presentation, Harish Kumar Gupta explained



that the state government is establishing a comprehensive cyber security system named "AP Cyber Guard" based on a six-pillar response framework. The system will include a Cyber War Room, 1930 Helpline Dashboard, Technology & AI integration, Capacity Building, a Three-Tier Cyber Architecture, and Public Awareness initiatives. A state-level Cyber War Room is being set up at Prabhala Tech Park in Mangalagiri and is expected to become operational within 30 days. The facility will house 11 specialized divisions, including emergency response, cyber threat intelligence, cyber security operations, cyber training, legal and policy coordination,

and district coordination units. The DGP said the government plans to strengthen the existing 1930 cyber helpline and integrate it with the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP) through a unified dashboard. A mechanism is also being developed to contact banks within 10 minutes of receiving a complaint and freeze suspicious accounts immediately. As part of the initiative, the state will establish cyber units in all 28 districts along with four regional cyber hubs. Around 500 police officers will receive specialized cyber crime training within a year. The government also plans to organize nearly 3,000 awareness programmes across the state to educate the public on cyber fraud prevention.

EDITORIAL

How Looting Became Embedded in Israeli Military Operations

Looting has accompanied wars and violent conflicts throughout human history and was therefore explicitly prohibited under Articles 28 and 47 of the 1907 Hague Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land, and under Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949).

While looting shares common characteristics across conflicts, every place in which it occurs has its own particular circumstances. Understanding those circumstances is essential if the phenomenon is to be reduced, even if it can never be entirely eradicated.

In the Israeli context, one could argue that looting is rooted in the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in 1948, the apartheid regime and the settlement project established in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. Yet while the phenomenon has always existed within the Israeli military, its scale has fluctuated over the years.

In *The Lions' Gate*, former Israeli Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur's account of the 1967 battle for Jerusalem through the experiences of paratroopers, looting by both soldiers and Israeli civilians is discussed openly. The book describes how Israeli civilians followed behind the advancing paratroopers, looting whatever they could carry from the Palestinian neighbourhoods that had been captured. The looters reportedly risked their lives, transporting stolen property through minefields separating East and West Jerusalem. One conclusion raised in the book is that the looting of 1967 was a direct consequence of the failure to address similar acts in 1948.

Many Palestinian families in the West Bank live in a cash-based economy. It is not uncommon for soldiers conducting searches of Palestinian homes or vehicles at checkpoints to steal cash. If a Palestinian chooses to file a complaint with the Israeli authorities, it is exceedingly difficult to prove the theft unless a soldier confesses.

In one such case, a civil lawsuit I filed on behalf of a Palestinian driver was dismissed. The driver alleged that he saw a commanding officer in an Israeli military unit steal 10,000 shekels from the glove compartment of his car during a search. During questioning, the officer acknowledged that the driver had immediately accused him of theft upon returning to the vehicle, but insisted the accusation was false. Although comprehensive studies have yet to be published – and it will likely be impossible to determine the full extent of looting carried out by Israeli soldiers in Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank since the outbreak of the war on Oct. 7, 2023, particularly because many homes have been completely destroyed and many of their owners killed – the images soldiers themselves have circulated on social media, together with the steady stream of testimonies reaching journalists, organisations and human rights lawyers, suggest a massive wave of looting unprecedented in recent decades.

Why did this happen? Two central explanations stand out. The Israeli military has no official order authorising looting, but senior commanders have long been aware of the phenomenon. As early as December 2023, then-chief of staff Herzi Halevi circulated a letter to soldiers following the spread of social media footage documenting looting. “We must preserve our humanity,” he wrote.

Under Modi, India's Democracy IS A WORK OF FICTION

Truth is immutable. Fictional script can be altered at will. An economic boom can be transformed into an economic nightmare overnight. The prime minister, who painted rosy pictures in election campaigns, all of a sudden screamed exceptional crisis. A sinister delimitation bill is packaged in the lofty ideal of women's empowerment. A trade deal insidious to Indian interest is portrayed as a boom for the nation. Consequences of flawed economic and foreign policies are presented as an unavoidable impact of war. A sinister sectarian agenda is couched in a noble narrative of sabka-saath-sabka-vikas – ‘with all, progress for all’. It will not be fallacious to presume that Narendra Modi is fictionalising Indian democracy.

The plot turns on situational logic, with the power of propaganda constructing a convincing pivot for the convenience of hawking the fiction.

While the desperation to control the narrative is the primary force behind this deceptive ploy, Modi also exploits this trick for refurbishing his own fading image. He chairs a routine meeting of the Council of Ministers and twists the messaging to link it to the larger goal of Viksit Bharat. His post on X gives some insight into how he conducted the meeting. The photograph he shared with the public separates him from the rest of the ministerial crowd and elevates him to a position distinct from the other members of the cabinet. It serves as a reminder that he does not hold the position of “first among equals,” a term used to describe the role of a prime minister in a parliamentary democracy. He also asks his colleagues to search for sources of alternative energy. Does the optics not undermine the constitutional arrangement of collective responsibility? Do they not transform the cabinet into merely a group of advisers? Is this not a declaration that he alone makes decisions? Institutions continue to exist but without their constitutionally assigned roles. The much-hyped “Melodi” drama in Rome also presents another dimension of the fictionalisation



of democracy, where common diplomatic gestures are made to appear as unique events intended not only to redeem his image but to divert attention from the true purpose of his visit. The gesture was loud and frivolous. The drama indeed brought a brief pause to the austerity shows in which ministers were travelling by bus and the chief minister was flying economy class.

The manner in which austerity measures were announced also points towards fictionalisation of the real discourse. Amidst striking extravagance as manifested in his craze for self-publicity and ostentatious foreign trips, a purely economic necessity was given a touch of patriotism. Buying costlier petrol, eating less oil and avoiding gold purchase become a response to call of nationalism. That's fiction bearing down facts. His appeal must have touched the core of the Indian ethos, aparigraha or non-possessiveness. The opposition's demand for answers was bound to go in vain. Democracy gets hurt, but without any noise.

The first step towards the fictionalisation of democracy was the mystification of the Israel-US war on Iran. The prime minister likens the crisis to the COVID pandemic, and the war takes on the character of a natural calamity. The mystification effectively

absolves Modi of charges of pursuing a flawed foreign policy, for no human being can be held responsible for a natural calamity. The narrative presents him as an innocent bystander who is ignorant of developments in West Asia and visits Israel without any awareness of escalating tensions. It renders irrelevant debates over Modi succumbing to US pressure and stopping the purchase of oil from Iran and Russia. The mystification also prevents questions from being raised about Modi's recent visit to the pro-Israel UAE when foreign ministers from BRICS countries were in Delhi to discuss the crisis. In an opaque democracy with little or almost no access to information on security, finance, or deteriorating living conditions, there is no avenue for people to know about the manipulations occurring behind the scenes. This makes the task easier for the rulers. However, in this case, some pointed to the corporate connections behind Modi's foreign policy. Speculation appeared suggesting that his tours of the Nordic countries and Italy might have been aligned with the interests of a major Indian corporate group.

We also find elements of fiction in Modi's choice of a public rally to announce austerity measures. He does this to make his communication with the public appear infor-

mal. The tactic forms an essential part of his governance. His Mann ki Baat is the best example of informal yet unilateral communication. In announcing austerity measures, he discards all available channels, including Parliament, state-run television channels, and even party platforms, in order to make the communication appear even more informal than before. He does not discuss the matter in the cabinet either. At a time when institutions are divorced from their constitutional roles, even the small gesture of consulting others might instil some confidence in democratic institutions. However, he deliberately chooses to eliminate such a possibility. He repeats the tactic in The Hague for the same purpose and announces the possible rise in poverty at a community gathering of immigrant Indians. How can the prime minister of a democracy reveal such vital information to an informal gathering outside the country? People may wonder why Modi fictionalises democracy at a time when he is in full command of every major institution and has achieved an unexpected victory in West Bengal. The conquest of West Bengal has demonstrated that little can prevent him from winning elections. The victory has decisively altered the nature of elections by introducing new ele-

ments into the electoral system – the SIR, a category of “logical discrepancies”, tribunals to scrutinise voters' eligibility, a large deployment of central forces, counting personnel from the Union government, and so on. However, absolute control hardly guarantees immunity from instability. The narrative of ghush-paithiyas (infiltrators) cannot legitimise control over West Bengal. Discontent arising from disenfranchisement and the suppression of minorities and the opposition may lead to destabilisation. Modi may therefore be looking towards the fictionalisation of democracy as a diversionary tool. However, the project of fictionalisation primarily depends on communal narratives, the time-tested tool of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the BJP. Analysts failed to pay attention to a recent event at Somnath. Within a week of the conquest of West Bengal, Modi organised an Amrut Mahotsava (75th anniversary) to commemorate the inauguration of the new temple at Somnath. One rarely hears of celebrations marking the inauguration day of a place of worship. Moreover, neither the RSS nor the BJP was associated with the construction of the new temple at Somnath. Sardar Patel conceived the idea, while Congress leaders K. M. Munshi and N. V. Gadgil executed it. Rajendra Prasad, another Congress stalwart, inaugurated it. Prime Minister Nehru wanted the Indian state to maintain distance from the affair, and Prasad did the same by inaugurating the temple in his private capacity. He had reiterated his government's commitment to the ideals of secularism. “It is very necessary that each one of us should realise that the best course is to act with a sense of respect and equality towards every community and creed. In it lies the welfare of our nation and country and of every one of us. This faith and conviction has impelled India to adopt the policy of secularism and to give an assurance that there shall be no discrimination on grounds of religion. Everyone would be provided equal opportunities,” he had said.

How Civil Society Reads India-Pakistan Signals Amid the West Asia War

What do civil society peace activists, especially the cross border 'people to people' dialogue enthusiasts say about the growing buzz around a senior political ideologue, and a former army chief signalling the possibility of India's reset in the confrontational face-off in the India-Pakistan bilateral relations? The media discourse has been heavy with mixed reactions of the political class and even some encouragement from realist strategists, but what about the cross border civil society networks – the track two, and particularly the people-to-people track – that supposedly are meant to break the deadlock in the zero-sum paradigm of the two nuclear armed neighbours?

Movements such as the three decades old Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPPFD) have not simply been idle, or waiting for government approvals or the commendation of fundamentalists. On April 18-19, PIPFPD shook off the constraining burden of anti-national labelling, surveillance and militarised nationalist propaganda, and re-energised the Pakistan-India people-to-people commitment to reject the logic of war, politics of hatred and silencing.

After eight years, the urgency of the political moment – of deepening militarisation, authoritarian megalomania and shrinking democratic spaces – drove the convening of the National Convention of PIPFPD, India chapter in Delhi. The thematic call of Ishq, Siyasat, Awam: Why Peace Matters, returned the enthusiastic inter-genera-



tional assembly once again to a shared historical responsibility as we invoked the memory and spirit of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Sahir Ludhianvi and Avtar Singh Pash – poets who refused the violence of borders, who spoke against hollow nationalism, and who placed love, dissent, and people at the centre of politics. It was a continuation of the tradition of celebrating voices such as Fahmida Riaz and Amrita Pritam who insisted that the subcontinent's history cannot be reduced to division, nor its future to hostility. For the hundreds who came – voicing the diverse struggles of farmers, fisherfolk, forest dwellers, workers, artists, academics and lawyers, across fault lines in Manipur, securitised and militarised regions of Chhattisgarh and Kashmir, displaced communities and students – peace was not a slogan. It was a political demand rooted in democracy, human rights and justice. Pakistani colleagues disabled from join-

ing by hostile visa regimes, were present in supportive video cameos, excited at the prospect of the return of the multitudinous PIPFPD joint conventions which, since the 1990s, had enabled ordinary Indians and Pakistanis to travel to each other's countries and pull down the walls of otherness that divided them. These multifarious contacts were ruptured by the sterile policy of “terror and talks don't go together” which broke off road, rail and air links, trade and medical tourism, divided families, and stripped diplomatic contacts to bare bones. Toxic propaganda and militarised nationalism triggered escalating military action culminating in Operation Sindoor and the May 2025 India-Pakistan military confrontation, presently ‘paused’.

The PIPFPD National Convention preceded this recent signalling of support for India-Pakistan people-to-people contacts. According to

M. Vijayan, general secretary of PIPFPD, “PIPPFD is a people to people membership based Forum and does not look at relations from the statist positions of governments, but rather from the prism of people – of fishers who are jailed; of divided peoples of undivided Jammu & Kashmir who have borne the brunt of the violent conflict and wars, of the traders and common people who would stand to gain by opening of borders for travel and trade”. Within weeks of the PIPFPD assembly's affirmation of a vision for the future of South Asia that rests on ordinary and diverse people standing at the centre of peace and democracy, there came a surprising convergent call. In an interview to PTI, Dattaraj Hosbale, the RSS General Secretary exhorted the resumption of people to people contacts, trade and commerce, and issuance of visas and thereby the renewal of diplomatic relations.

Despite Growing Revolt In Trinamool , No Sign of Introspection by Mamata Banerjee

The election results were declared on May 4. Today is May 28. That means nearly twenty-four days have already passed since the results came out, almost a full month. Yet during this entire period, one after another, Trinamool Congress leaders have publicly revolted against the party leadership. Many have resigned from party posts openly. Interestingly, most of them do not even directly say that they want to join the BJP. Their rebellion is not necessarily ideological migration; it is more a reflection of anger, frustration, and alienation within the party structure itself. The situation has become so serious that even the BJP's state leadership has publicly stated that, for the next three months, they are not interested in inducting defectors immediately. The BJP leadership has reportedly said that only after things settle down and the distinction between "good Trinamool" and "bad Trinamool" members becomes clearer, will decisions be taken regarding inductions. At the same time, several councillors of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, former MLAs, and even elected representatives have started openly criticising the Trinamool Congress leadership. The central complaints being raised are becoming increasingly repetitive and consistent. Many leaders allege that the party has become excessively corporatised. Others claim that access to the leadership has become restricted. There are also accusations that Abhishek Banerjee remained



politically unavailable during crucial periods. Alongside this, criticism surrounding the growing influence of I-PAC and professional political management structures has intensified. But beyond all these allegations, the bigger question is this: where is the introspection within the party leadership? In politics, no party wins forever, and no party remains undefeated permanently. Every major political force, after suffering setbacks, usually goes through a phase of internal reflection. History offers many examples. When the CPI(M) transitioned from the Jyoti Basu era to Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's leadership, serious internal discussions began within the Communist Party as well. Veteran Communist leader Abdullah Rasul, who stayed at the Park Circus party commune, had openly warned the party leadership at the time. He argued that the party leadership was increasingly slip-

ping into the hands of urban middle-class elites who had gradually become disconnected from workers and peasants, the very social base that once formed the backbone of the Communist movement. Abdullah Rasul was not alone. Similar concerns started emerging from senior Communist leaders across districts. Eventually, the party was compelled to undertake a phase of introspection. Senior CPI(M) leader Shyamal Chakraborty even initiated a programme called Atmashuddhi, meaning self-purification or self-correction. The BJP too has experienced moments of introspection. There was a time when almost everyone believed Atal Bihari Vajpayee would return to power for a second consecutive term. The BJP campaign projected the slogan that Vajpayee represented “magic, not arithmetic”. Much of the Indian media also assumed that the NDA would comfort-

ably return to power. But when Manmohan Singh unexpectedly became Prime Minister, the BJP too began questioning itself internally. It started examining where the disconnect had emerged. Over time, BJP leaders themselves acknowledged that while the party was growing quantitatively, questions remained about qualitative growth. The Communist movement had debated something similar long ago. During organisational discussions, debates often emerged around “quantity versus quality”. A party could expand numerically while simultaneously becoming hollow internally. The conflict between quantity and quality has emerged from the age of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Within Left circles, there used to be a phrase for such a phenomenon: “anaemic growth”. A body may appear swollen externally, but internally it suffers from a lack of blood and strength. Many political observers now feel a similar situation may be developing inside the Trinamool Congress. Yet what is striking is that the party leadership still appears unwilling to publicly acknowledge any mistakes. Neither Mamata Banerjee nor Abhishek Banerjee has openly admitted that strategic or organisational errors may have contributed to the electoral setback. Recently, Arup Chakraborty, a Trinamool spokesperson, resigned from a committee chairmanship and openly stated that these internal issues were among the reasons behind the party's poor performance.

Indian-owned companies in UK surge in record investment year: Report

AGENCY
London: The number of Indian-owned companies in the United Kingdom surged by nearly 60 per cent year-on-year to rise to 1,912 with a combined turnover of 105.77 billion pounds (approximately Rs 13.48 crore), according to the 'India Meets Britain Tracker 2026'. The latest edition of the annual Grant Thornton-led analysis of Indian investment and economic impact in the UK was launched by Indian High Commissioner to the UK P Kumaran in London on Thursday, May 28. The 2026 Tracker reflects a significant increase from the 1,197 Indian-owned firms generating around 72.14 billion pounds (approximately Rs 7.67 crore) in 2025, as well as a jump in employee numbers from 126,720 last year to 203,549. "The India-UK relationship today is no longer defined by nostalgia; it is defined by opportunity," said Kumaran, in one of his first addresses as the new High Commissioner. "India brings scale, growth, talent, and ambition, and the United Kingdom brings innovation, expertise, finance, and global leadership across advanced sectors, and together we have the chance to build one of the



defining economic partnerships of the coming decades," he said. 11.7 per cent year-on-year increase in bilateral trade The 2026 Tracker notes that bilateral trade between India and the UK rose to 47.4 billion pounds (approximately Rs 6.03 crore) in 2025, an 11.7 per cent year-on-year increase during the year, which marked the signing of the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). "With CETA now in place, the India-UK corridor is poised for unprecedented growth, creating value for both

economies and cementing a long-term partnership," said Anuj Chande, Grant Thornton Partner and Head of South Asia Business Group. "We are continuing to see that the India-UK corridor is not just a trade relationship; it is a strategic partnership leveraging innovation, resilience, and shared ambitions. "With nearly all Indian mid-market firms planning UK expansion and UK businesses eyeing India for growth, this collaboration is set to thrive in the coming years across technology, clean energy, and advanced

manufacturing," he said. The implementation of CETA is expected to inject further momentum into bilateral trade and investment ties once it takes effect in the coming months. "This year's Tracker comes at a landmark moment in the UK-India relationship. The signing of CETA in 2025 marked a historic reset and businesses in both countries are now looking ahead to the opportunities it will unlock," said Keshav Muruges, CEO of WNS Group and chair of the UK-India Business Forum at the Confederation

of Indian Industry (CII), one of the collaborators on the report. "This partnership is about much more than just economics. It is rooted in shared values and strengthened by the 1.8 million-strong Indian diaspora in the UK, the living bridge that connects our two nations," he said. UK continues to grow as a key destination for Indian investment, says IGF director Will Carne, director of India Global Forum (IGF) – another co-collaborator on the Tracker, said the findings highlight the huge advantages of ever deeper UK engagement with an "outward-facing, globalising India", which must be used as a "launchpad for further growth as CETA comes into effect". "The UK continues to grow as a key destination for Indian investment, crucially, in strategic areas that will determine future growth on both sides of the corridor. As Indian companies shift their focus towards innovation-led investments, regulatory alignment must keep pace to provide further headroom for growth," he said. The 2026 Tracker found that 66 companies reported annual revenue growth of at least 10 per cent and an average growth rate of 61 per cent.

Vedanta Power Meenakshi Energy Ensures Safe Drinking Water Access for Over 1,000 Residents in Nellore, Revives Defunct RO Plants

TSIT DESK
Nellore, Andhra Pradesh | 29 May 2026: Strengthening its commitment to community well-being and rural infrastructure development, Vedanta Power Meenakshi Energy Limited, a 1000 MW thermal power plant in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district, has restored and renovated Reverse Osmosis (RO) drinking water plants, benefiting over 1,000 residents across the two villages of Lingavaram and Varagalli.

The restored facilities shall ensure access to safe and clean drinking water for nearly 100 households through each RO plant in both villages. The initiative, as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), addresses a critical community need, as both facilities had remained non-operational for more than a year, significantly impacting residents' access to reliable drinking water. Before Meenakshi Energy's intervention, villagers were compelled to depend on distant and inconsistent water sources for their daily needs, causing considerable inconvenience, particularly for women and elderly residents. Recognizing the urgency of the issue, the company undertook extensive refurbishment of the plants to restore their functionality



and improve long-term operational reliability. As part of the renovation effort, Meenakshi Energy Limited carried out extensive refurbishment of the RO plants, including replacement of filters, membranes, and pumps, along with critical civil repairs and installation of automated systems to enhance operational efficiency, reliability, and water quality standards. Following the upgrades, the facilities were formally handed over to the respective Panchayat administrations for continued community use and maintenance. Speaking on the initiative, Rajinder Singh Ahuja, CEO, Vedanta Power said, "Access

to safe drinking water is fundamental to community well-being. Through initiatives such as these, we aim to strengthen essential rural infrastructure and improve quality of life across our operational areas. We remain committed to driving meaningful and sustainable CSR interventions spanning water, health, education, and community development." Panchayat representatives from both villages appreciated the timely intervention by Meenakshi Energy Limited and noted that the restored facilities would significantly reduce the daily challenges faced by residents, particularly in accessing safe and reliable drinking water.

Hyderabad home registrations increase 16% YoY in April 2026: Knight Frank India

TSIT DESK
Hyderabad, May 2026: According to Knight Frank India's latest assessment, residential property registrations in Hyderabad increased by 16% year-on-year (YoY) and 7% month-on-month (MoM) in April 2026, reflecting continued strength in residential market activity. A total of 6,837 residential properties were registered during the month. In value terms, homes worth INR 4,673 crore (cr) were registered, marking a 13% YoY and 1% MoM increase, once again indicating sustained momentum in transaction values. From a market perspective, property registration trends in April suggest that while premium housing continues to anchor overall transaction values, demand is increasingly becoming more broad-based, with stronger participation across affordable, mid, and premium segments supporting greater market stability. The Hyderabad residential market spans four districts namely Hyderabad, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Rangareddy, and

Sangareddy and includes transactions from both the primary and secondary real estate markets. Shishir Bajjal, International Partner, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India said "April's registration trends suggest that Hyderabad's residential market is entering a more balanced phase of growth, with demand broadening beyond the premium segment. While higher-value homes continue to account for a significant share of transaction, the simultaneous increase in activity across affordable and mid-income categories indicates improving market depth and wider buyer participation. With registrations increasing by 16% YoY to 6,837 units, the data points toward a market supported by multiple demand drivers rather than reliance on a single segment. Backed by a strong employment base, infrastructure expansion, and evolving buyer aspirations, Hyderabad continues to demonstrate resilient housing demand." In April 2026, Hyderabad's residential reg-

istration trends reflected a broad-based improvement in demand across ticket sizes, indicating strengthening market participation beyond the premium segment. Registrations of homes priced above INR 1 cr increased by 11% YoY, extending the sustained momentum in high-value transactions and highlighting continued buyer confidence in premium housing. At the same time, the affordable segment (homes priced below INR 50 lakh) recorded a stronger 18% YoY increase in registrations, pointing to renewed activity at the lower end of the market after a prolonged period of relatively muted demand. Unlike previous months where growth was largely concentrated at the premium end, April witnessed stronger participation across multiple segments. Homes priced above INR 1 cr continued to dominate in value terms, accounting for 49% of the total transaction value during the month, although this moderated slightly from 51% a year ago. In terms of volume, the seg-

ment accounted for 19% of total registrations, marginally lower than the 20% share recorded in April 2025, indicating that growth in the market was more evenly distributed across categories. Meanwhile, the mid-segment (INR 50 lakh-INR 1 cr) also returned to growth, with registrations rising 15% YoY, while maintaining a stable 25% share of total registrations. In value terms, its contribution increased from 24% to 26%, reflecting improving traction in a segment that had previously witnessed demand pressure. The simultaneous growth across affordable, mid, and premium categories suggests a broader strengthening of buyer sentiment and points toward a more balanced demand environment in Hyderabad's residential market. Most registered properties in Hyderabad ranged between 1,000 and 2,000 sq ft, comprising 67% of total registrations. Units above 2,000 sq ft comprised of 16% of the transactions during April 2026.

Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) Signs MoUs with Indian Army and Paramilitary Forces to Support Personnel and Their Families

TSIT DESK
Hyderabad, May 29, 2026: Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), India's leading test preparatory services provider, has signed multiple Memorandum of understanding (MoUs) with key Indian Army and paramilitary forces including the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to enhance educational access and welfare support for personnel and their families across the country. These collaborations are designed to extend structured scholarships, academic mentoring, career guidance, and nationwide coaching access to serving personnel, veterans, gallantry awardees, disabled members of the forces, and families of martyrs. The purpose of these MoUs (memorandum of understanding) is to remove financial barriers and enhance the academic preparation of students interested in pursuing competitive career paths (such as engineering and medical entrance examinations) by providing academic resources at no cost to those pursuing such careers at a competitive level. According to Mr. Chandra Sekhar Garisa Reddy, Managing Director & CEO, Aakash Educational Services Limited, "Anyone who has committed



themselves to serving their country should have every available opportunity for their family to grow and develop in a way that they can succeed. Through these partnerships, we hope to expand access to quality academic resources and support our defence families in achieving educational success. This is another step in creating an opportunity for us to give back to our military community." Scholarship Support Across Forces Indian Army Personnel and Families Registration Fee only is payable, 100% waiver on all other fee components for the wards of personnel who died while in harness. 100% tuition fee waiver for the wards of personnel with more than 20% disability and gallantry awardees.

20% tuition fee waiver for the wards of serving and retired personnel, applicable after other scholarships are deducted. **BSF Personnel and Families** Only registration/admission fees payable (100% waiver on tuition and other academic charges) for wards of personnel who lost their lives in service 90% tuition fee waiver for wards of gallantry awardees or personnel with more than 20% disability, subject to required certification 50% waiver on tuition fee for personnel having less than 20% disability 20% tuition fee waiver for wards of serving and retired personnel, applicable on tuition fees after other eligible scholarships

Delhi HC holds Google liable for selling a brand's goodwill it didn't own

AGENCY
New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has fined Google Rs 30 lakh for misusing the registered trademark "HINDWARE" as an auctionable advertising keyword, ruling that the tech giant was effectively selling the "commercial pulling power" of a brand it had no right to profit from. The dispute has its roots in 2013, when Hindware, a leading sanitaryware manufacturer, discovered that rival Cera Sanitaryware and its website developer Omkara Inforweb had been periodically purchasing the "HINDWARE" keyword through Google's AdWords programme. The following year, plumbing fixtures manufacturer Grohe was found to be doing the same. The result was that when customers searched for Hindware on Google, Cera and Grohe products appeared prominently at the top of the results. Hindware called this "unfair competition and



trademark dilution," a deliberate diversion of customers who were looking specifically for its brand. Both competitors eventually settled with Hindware out of court. Google, however, contested its own legal liability and proceedings against the company continued.

Does an invisible keyword count as trademark use? At the heart of the case was a deceptively simple question. Does using a trademarked name as a backend advertising keyword, one that never appears visibly in an ad, constitute "use in advertising" under the

Trade Marks Act? Google argued it did not. Because the keyword trigger remains hidden from consumers, the company contended, it falls outside the statutory definition of trademark use. Justice Mini Pushkarna, ruling on May 22, disagreed. "It is not necessary that the registered trademark physically appears in an advertisement for the same to be used 'in advertising,'" she held. Keyword bidding, she ruled, clearly qualifies as using a mark "in advertising" under Section 29(6) of the Trade Marks Act and therefore constitutes infringement.

Airtel Payments Bank Strengthens Cyber Fraud Vigilance Through Awareness, Action, and Community Outreach in West Godavari

TSIT DESK
India, 2026: Airtel Payments Bank continues to strengthen its ongoing efforts to safeguard customers against the rising threat of cyber fraud, with a sharp focus on awareness, prevention, and last-mile engagement. As India's digital banking revolution has expanded financial access to millions, it has also created new avenues for cybercriminals. With fraud tactics becoming increasingly sophisticated and often targeting first-time and rural banking users, the need for proactive awareness and responsible banking has become more critical than ever. Anchored in customer safety, the Bank continuously evolves its approach to stay ahead of emerging risks in an increasingly digital banking environment. As part of its sustained efforts, Airtel Payments Bank has embedded safety and awareness into every customer touchpoint across digital interfaces to on-

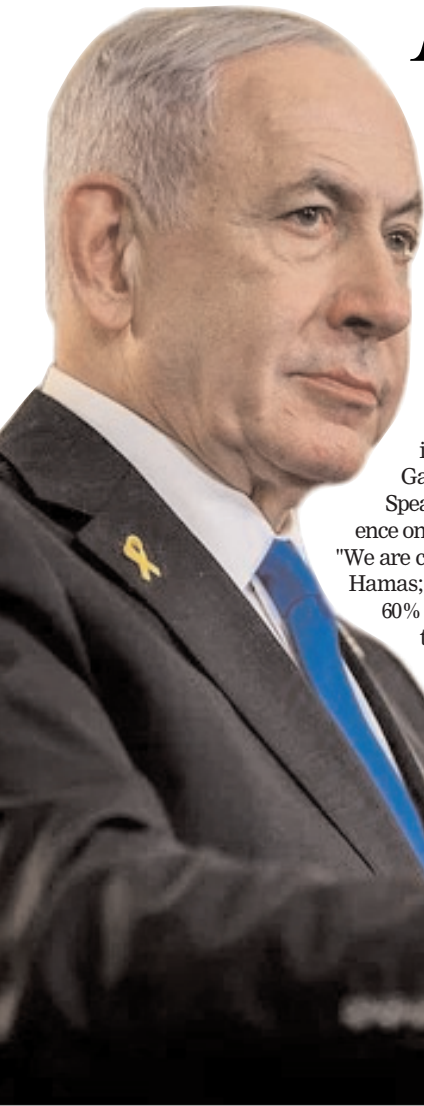


ground engagements. The Bank runs active, multi-platform awareness campaigns across social media, helping users recognise the language of cyber fraud through simple, relatable content. Recognising that a significant share of its customer base communicates and consumes information in their mother tongue, the Bank has started delivering awareness messaging through regional-language

content ensuring that fraud prevention guidance reaches people in the language they understand best. Extending its efforts beyond digital channels, the Bank's financial literacy camps bring safety education directly into communities covering how to identify suspicious activity and the concrete steps people need to take to protect their personal and financial data. Designed as a sustained

grassroots initiative rather than one-off events, these camps aim to build lasting financial awareness at the local level. **G a n e s h A n a n t h a r a y a n a n**, Executive Director – Business Operations, Airtel Payments Bank, said "With digital payment volumes crossing 220 lakh crore monthly on UPI, the scale of our responsibility has grown enormously. As digi-

tal adoption accelerates across Bharat, so does our responsibility to ensure that growth is built on a foundation of trust, awareness, and accountability. We are investing continuously in education, agent capability, and system-level safeguards because we believe that educating customers begins long before a fraud occurs. We will continue to work in full coordination with authorities and take uncompromising action against any form of malpractice that threatens the integrity of the financial ecosystem." Central to Airtel Payments Bank's last-mile safety framework is its network of over five lakh Business Correspondents (BCs). The Bank has established a robust onboarding process, supplemented by regular fraud prevention communications shared with BCs to keep them well-informed. This continuous engagement equips them to actively guide customers on secure banking practices.



Netanyahu says he has directed IDF to increase control of Gaza to 70%

AGENCY Tel Aviv: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says that he directed the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to increase control of Gaza to 70%. Speaking at a conference on Thursday, he said: "We are currently squeezing Hamas; we now control 60% of the territory of the Strip - you know this. We were at 50, we moved to 60. My directive is to move to," he said

before pausing as someone in the crowd said, "100". "Let's go step by step. First of all, 70. Let's start with that. We're pressing them from all sides, we'll deal with the remnants." The expansion in control by Israel would contradict the terms of the Donald Trump-led ceasefire Israel and Hamas agreed to in October 2025. Netanyahu's statement comes as Israel continues strikes on Gaza despite the ceasefire, and as Israel and Hamas remain deadlocked in indirect, US-brokered talks to advance Trump's peace plan. At least

738 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire came into effect in October, according to the Hamas-run health ministry, whose figures the UN considers reliable. Netanyahu has

Hamas disarm and Israeli troops withdraw, but indirect talks between Israel and the Palestinian armed group have stalled. On Wednesday, Israeli Defence Minister

Israel Katz wrote on X that his country had "pledged to eliminate every one who led the

October 7 massacre" in 2023. "We pledged that Hamas will not rule Gaza civilly or militarily," he said. He also said that what he called the "plan for voluntary emigration from Gaza" would be implemented "at the proper time and in the proper manner". Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and far-right Finance Minister Bezalel

Smotrich have previously publicly defended what they describe as the "voluntary migration" of Palestinians from Gaza - which could amount to the forced displacement of civilians, a war crime - and resettling it with Jews. This week has also seen several strikes in Gaza. At least 10 people, including five children, were killed in an Israeli strike on a building in Gaza City late on Wednesday, according to local hospitals. The Israeli military has released a short statement saying it struck "two central Hamas terrorists in the northern Gaza Strip", without disclosing their identities. The target of the attack appeared to have been Hamas battalion commander Imad Asleem, who was killed alongside his teenage daughter Israa. The Gaza City attack came a day after the newly chosen head of the Hamas military wing, Mohammed Odeh, was killed along with his wife and two sons in an Israeli strike.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says that he directed the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to increase control of Gaza to 70%. Speaking at a conference on Thursday, he said: "We are currently squeezing Hamas; we now control 60% of the territory of the Strip - you know this.

made several public remarks confirming that the IDF controls more than 60% of the Strip, up from the 53% agreed in October. Under the ceasefire agreement, the IDF withdrew to a demarcation line, known as the "yellow line". The next steps in the 20-point peace proposal would see

Italy restores lucky testicles on bull mosaic worn down by tourists



AGENCY Italy: A famous bull mosaic in one of Italy's grand arcades is getting some much-needed care after being worn down by tourists honouring a tradition involving its delicate body parts.

As the legend goes, tourists in Milan who grind their heels on the bull's testicles and spin in place three times are guaranteed good fortune and are destined to return. Visitors twirling clockwise for luck have left a small crater on the bull's "lucky spot". "Thousands of people every day have performed the famous

heel-spinning gesture," city councillors said. "The pink tiles that make up its testicles are being worn away." The beige and blue mosaic of a prancing bull surrounded by a coat of arms is located in the city's historic 19th-Century Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II arcade. It is representative of the city of Turin, which was the first capital of Italy. Restoration began this week, with a small construction site erected around the mosaic and a restorer working to return the artwork to its former glory, Milan's city council said in a statement.

US and Iran 'very close' to deal but 'not there yet', Vance says



AGENCY Washington: The US and Iran still need to work out several sticking points before an agreement on the war can be reached, Vice-President JD Vance has said. Asked by the BBC if President Donald Trump was close to signing a deal, Vance said it was too early to say "when or if" the two sides would finalise an agreement. Earlier on Thursday, US officials told the two countries had agreed a framework of a deal - known as a memorandum of understanding - pending the approval of Trump and Iran's leadership. It would reportedly extend the ceasefire for 60 days and launch talks on the future of Iran's nuclear programme. Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported it had not been finalised or confirmed. According to reports, the framework could allow "unrestricted" passage through the Strait of Hormuz and give Iran 30 days to remove mines from the narrow shipping passageway. The US would also lift its blockade, and issue

sanction waivers to allow Iran to resume selling oil. Axios, which first reported a tentative agreement between the US and Iran on Thursday, said Trump had been briefed on the proposal but did not immediately sign off on it and would take a couple of days to consider it. One-fifth of the world's liquefied natural gas and oil normally pass through the Strait of Hormuz, and its closure has impacted global fuel trade. Speaking on Thursday evening, Vance said negotiators were "going back and forth on a couple of language points", which include the "question of enrichment". "We're not there yet, but we're very close and we're going to keep on working at it," he told reporters. The US has long demanded that Iran stop producing highly enriched uranium and dispose of its existing stockpile, which in theory could be used to create nuclear weapons. Iran insists its nuclear programme is entirely peaceful and denies it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

PORTUGAL BREAKS HOTTEST MAY DAY RECORD AS EUROPE SWELTERS IN HEATWAVE



AGENCY Portugal: has recorded a new highest temperature for May of 40.3C as countries in Western Europe grapple with sweltering-hot weather. The temperature recorded in the central town of Mora on Wednesday bests Portugal's previous record of 40C set in May 2001. Ministers in France are meeting to assess the country's preparedness for heat-

waves, while tennis number one Jannik Sinner bowed out of the French Open after suffering from the heat. Meanwhile, Italian authorities issued a red heatwave alert for the capital, Rome, where it topped out at 32C on Thursday. The heatwave is forecast to continue into the weekend, with Germany, Spain and Switzerland having also faced unusually hot conditions.

Nato criticises Russia's 'reckless behaviour' after drone hits Romanian apartments, injuring two

AGENCY Moscow: Away from comments being made by Romania's president, Vladimir Putin is said to be "aware" of the drone incident in Romania, Russian state media reports the president's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov as saying. TASS also reports that Russia's foreign ministry will "respond soon" to Romania's decision to declare the Russian consul "persona non grata" in response to the crash. Romanian President Nicusor Dan says his administration will expel the Russian consul in the south-eastern city of Constanta and shut down the consulate, Reuters reports. According to news agency AFP, the Russian consul has been declared "persona non grata". Romanian President Nicusor Dan is currently making a



statement after meeting with the Supreme Defence Council and summoning Russia's ambassador. BBC Romanian are listening in and we will bring you the latest lines as soon as we can. One Gala?i resident tells the BBC that he continues to feel safe in the city, despite the drone crash. "We are part of Nato and there is, so to say, the necessary infrastructure in place to respond quickly [to such inci-

dent building. The President of Romania Nicusor Dan has summoned a meeting of the Supreme Defence Council, which is happening now. And the Russian ambassador has been summoned. He's been summoned before. He usually gets a slap on the wrist. I think there is some talk unofficially in Romania this time of needing a much stronger response, perhaps even the expulsion of the Russian ambassador from Bucharest. But I think that's a move that Romania would not take on its own - there have been obviously strong consultations this morning between Romania and Nato and EU allies. The drone crash in the south-east of Romania has left many in the country demanding a stronger response from Nato and the Romanian authorities.

Eight students arrested in Kenya after suspected deadly school arson attack

AGENCY Kenya: Eight students alleged to have been involved in a suspected arson attack at a Kenyan girls' school that killed 16 pupils have been arrested, police say. The fire in the early hours of Thursday morning at the Utumishi Girls Academy in Gilgil, about 120km (77 miles) north-west of capital city Nairobi, tore through the upper floor of a dormitory which had 135 bunk beds. After interviews with students and staff and a forensic review of CCTV footage, eight pupils at the school were identified as "persons of interest in connection with the planning and execution" of the fire, the National Police



Service said in a statement. Investigations are continuing into the exact cause of the blaze. Police said the students were detained for questioning after being traced to their homes and brought back to the school, while others who had remained in the area were also tracked down and

detained. The eight were among 30 students who were initially recalled to the school by detectives investigating the deadly fire. Regarding the aftermath of the fire, Education Minister Julius Ogamba said preliminary findings indicated that there had been multiple breaches of

safety measures at the school, including overcrowding in dormitories and a locked exit door. "In particular, there was congestion in the dormitory and one exit door was locked, contrary to the prescribed safety requirements," he said. He dissolved the school's board of management and ordered action against the headteacher. The minister said appropriate disciplinary and legal steps would be taken against anyone found to have failed in their duties. As investigators continue their work, sorrowful scenes unfolded at the school as parents and relatives broke down while waiting for updates about their loved ones.

MOTHER-IN-LAW OF INDIAN BRIDE WHOSE DEATH SET OFF MEDIA FRENZY ARRESTED

AGENCY New Delhi: India's top anti-crime agency has arrested the mother-in-law of an Indian woman whose death has sparked conflicting claims of murder and suicide. Twisha Sharma's parents and siblings have alleged that she was tortured by her lawyer husband, Samarth Singh, and his mother - retired judge Giribala Singh - over dowry demands and that she was murdered, allegations they have denied. The 33-year-old model and actor had been married for just five months when she was found dead in her matrimonial home in Madhya Pradesh state's Bhopal city on 12 May. On Thursday, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested Giribala Singh after questioning her for several



hours. The Madhya Pradesh High Court had earlier cancelled her anticipatory bail, finding that a trial court had ignored key evidence and witness testimony. Following Twisha's death, the police had registered a case of dowry death against the Singhs. Earlier this week, the investigation was taken over by the CBI. Twisha's death has made national headlines and has once again brought the issue of dowry deaths into the spotlight.

Man jailed for 15 years over plot to attack Taylor Swift concert in Vienna



AGENCY Cranberry: A 21-year-old Austrian man has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for planning a jihadist attack on a Taylor Swift concert in Vienna during the US singer's Eras tour in August 2024. The man, named only as Beran A in line with Austrian privacy laws, was also found guilty of a string of other terrorism-related offences. He was arrested after a tip-off from the CIA just before the first of three sold-out Taylor Swift concerts was due to take place in Vienna's Ernst Happel stadium. All three Austrian shows were immediately cancelled, to the dismay of almost 200,000 fans and the singer herself. Swift previously described how her record-breaking Eras Tour had narrowly "dodged a massacre situation". A tour documentary revealed the US singer had learned about the bomb plot while travelling to Austria. Prosecutors said Beran A had become radicalised and had sworn allegiance to jihadist group Islamic State (IS). They said he tried but had not succeeded in buy-

ing weapons illegally, including a machine gun and a hand grenade. Court psychiatrist Peter Hoffmann said Beran A showed no signs of mental illness, adding that there was "no psychiatric explanation" for his radicalisation. He was on trial in Wiener Neustadt, a city south of Vienna, with another 21-year-old man named as Arda K from Slovakia, accused of being part of a cell with jihadist group Islamic State (IS). Arda K - who was not involved in the plot against the concert - was sentenced to 12 years in prison. Beran A told the court earlier on Thursday that he was sorry, before the jury retired for several hours to consider its verdicts. Shortly after the foiled attack, Taylor Swift said it had filled her with "a new sense of fear" - and that the cancellations left her with a "tremendous amount of guilt". But the US mega-star added on Instagram: "I was also so grateful to the authorities because thanks to them, we were grieving concerts and not lives."



Blue Origin's rocket exploded during a test in Florida

Suspense Ends On Lionel Messi As Argentina Announce FIFA World Cup 2026 Squad

AGENCY
Argentina : Lionel Messi will captain Argentina at the World Cup, national coach Lionel Scaloni announced Thursday as he unveiled his 26-man squad. Messi, 38, had not previously confirmed he would play in what will be a record-breaking sixth tournament for the Argentine superstar. But it had been widely assumed the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner would again lead Argentina, four years after lifting the trophy in Qatar. As well as confirming Messi's presence, Thursday's announcement notably excluded Real Madrid's Franco Mastantuono from the Argentina squad. 18-year-old Mastantuono is considered one of the brightest prospects in Argentine football. The largest ever World Cup, co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, kicks off June 11. Argentina's first match will be five days later against

Algeria in Kansas City. Messi has been at the heart of an injury scare in recent days, with his club side Inter Miami this week saying medical tests diagnosed him with muscle fatigue in his left hamstring. The Major League Soccer club had provided no clear timetable for Messi's return after his abrupt exit from Miami's 6-4 victory over Philadelphia in the 73rd minute on Sunday. But Scaloni had played down the seriousness of the injury this week.

Romero returns
Center-back Cristian Romero, who suffered a knee injury last month and has not played since, was also named in the squad. The Tottenham Hotspur captain was ruled out

for the remainder of the Premier League season after he was shoved into his own goalkeeper by Sunderland striker Brian Brobbey. Argentina's roster retains 17 of the 26 players who won the title in Qatar. Young players who received calls include 21-year-olds Nicolas Paz and Valentin Barco. Palmeiras forward Jose Manuel Lopez, who only made his international debut last year, also features. Other notable absentees include Emiliano Buendia - currently in excellent form at Aston Villa - and Roma star Paulo Dybala. The South American giants will journey to the United States for pre-World Cup friendlies against Honduras on June 6 and



Lionel Messi will captain Argentina at the World Cup, national coach Lionel Scaloni announced Thursday as he unveiled his 26-man squad.

Rishabh Pant Resigns As Lucknow Super Giants Skipper After Disappointing IPL 2026 Show

AGENCY
New Delhi: Rishabh Pant stepped down as Lucknow Super Giants captain after the franchise finished last in IPL 2026. The IPL team confirmed on social media that Pant's request to give up the leadership role was accepted by the team management. LSG had a horrible run of form in IPL 2026 as they won just 4 matches and finished last with 8 points from 14 matches. Pant's performance as a batter was also not that impressive as he scored 312 runs in 14 matches at a strike rate of 138.05. He was bought for a record Rs 27 crore in the IPL 2025 auction but since then, LSG have finished seventh and tenth in the last two seasons. "Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) wish to formally announce that Rishabh Pant has requested to be relieved of his captaincy duties with the franchise, and the franchisee has accepted his request with immediate effect," LSG said in a statement on Friday. LSG

Director of Cricket, Tom Moody, described Pant stepping down as 'never easy'. "Rishabh approached the franchise with this request and we have respectfully accepted it. These decisions are never easy," Moody said in a statement released by LSG. "We are grateful for everything Rishabh has brought to this dressing room as captain. Our focus now is on the collective - rebuilding and restructuring to reach the best standards," he added. LSG did not make any announcement regarding who will become the next captain after Pant. "With an eye on making a positive comeback in the upcoming season, the new Lucknow

Super Giants captain will be announced in due course," the official statement from the franchise read.



Korean Golf Players Shine At LIV Golf Korea 2026; Bryson DeChambeau And Charles Howell III Top First Round

AGENCY
Korea: Korean golfers have been putting up a strong fight as their names have slowly begun to make headlines in Korea amidst the presence of global LIV Golf superstars Bryson DeChambeau, Charles Howell III, and Scott Vincent, who ended up tied atop the LIV Golf Korea leaderboard after the opening round. In fact, Korean Golf Club (OKGC) managed to put together one of its best performances of the season at Asiad Country Club in Korea. Korean Golfers Excel in LIV Golf Korea Amidst Bryson DeChambeau-led Leaderboard While the first round of the LIV Golf Korea tournament has showcased many of the best golfers out



there, Korean Golf Club managed to stand out on its own by making a strong play in the competition. Specifically, OKGC member Younghan Song scored a 4-under 68 while Doyeob Mun, playing in his debut match, earned a 4-under 68 as well, resulting in both ending up tied for 11th place overall. Korean fans found it refreshing that the good perform-

ance by their players gave hope amidst a highly stacked field. Among LIV Golf's top stars, who all had matching scores of 5-under 65 after day one to lead the tournament, were Bryson DeChambeau, Charles Howell III, and Scott Vincent, but homegrown golfers made sure there was not all the attention towards world stars. Bryson started brilliantly as he carded six

birdies before bogeying out during the last few holes. Charles Howell got his name on the leaderboard after making an eagle from 108 yards on the par-4 hole's 2nd tee, while Scott Vincent showed the best individual performance by recording a bogey-free round. Strong First Round By OKGC Puts Some Pressure On Crushers GC In Team Championship Race With Crushers GC still ahead of OKGC in the team rankings by five shots, the latter team could provide stiff competition as it played exceptionally well on day one. On the other hand, Crushers GC are still strong without their regular member, Paul Casey, who did not join the event due to an injury and was replaced by Travis Smyth.

Gujarat Titans vs Rajasthan Royals Weather Report: Will Rain Play Spoilsport In IPL 2026 Qualifier 2 Clash?

AGENCY
New Delhi: Rajasthan Royals are set to take on Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2 of IPL 2026 in Mullanpur on Friday. The winner of the game will face Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the summit clash, while the loser will be knocked out. RR have momentum on their side coming into this game. The Riyan Parag-led team has registered four consecutive victories, including its win against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Eliminator clash. During the game, the focus will be on Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, a 15-year-old wonderkid who has impressed one and all with his terrific batting. Breaking multiple records with his ultra-aggressive style of bat-



ting, Sooryavanshi currently holds the Orange Cap with 680 runs in 15 matches this season. On the other hand, Gujarat Titans will aim to put in an improved show after being outplayed by Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Qualifier 1. Batting first, RCB posted 254

for 5, and the total eventually proved to be too much for the chasing side. GT were bundled out for 162, losing the game by 92 runs. Will rain play spoilsport during GT vs RR IPL 2026 Qualifier 2? As per Google weather forecast, there is a nine per cent chance of precipitation on

matchday. Meanwhile, AccuWeather forecast indicates that rain will not play any role during the game. In case the GT vs RR IPL 2026 Qualifier 2 is washed out due to rain in Mullanpur, Shubman Gill and Co. will advance to the final by virtue of a better finish in the points table. Gujarat Titans finished at the second spot in the table with 18 points to their credit. On the other hand, Rajasthan Royals entered the playoffs with a fourth-place finish, having 16 points to their name. Both RR and GT have won one IPL title each. Rajasthan Royals bagged the glory in the inaugural edition in 2008, while Gujarat Titans won the trophy in 2022, their first season in the tournament.

Suffering was less than my passion for tennis, says Nadal



Rafael Nadal had one of the greatest tennis careers the game has ever seen. He also spent nearly all of it in pain. Between his first French Open win in 2005 and retirement in 2024, the Spaniard won 22 Grand Slam singles titles - the second-highest total of any man. He was part of the 'Big Three' era, where he, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic carved up the sport's biggest prizes and thrilled fans. But a chronic foot injury meant Nadal had to find different

ways just to get through matches, let alone win them. In a new Netflix series, the 39-year-old opens up about the risks he took with his health in order to achieve greatness. "I've had to make decisions about my health, where you are on the borderline between right or wrong," Nadal said. "But if I hadn't explored all that, I probably would have had 10 fewer Grand Slams. I'm not saying one or two, I'm saying 10 or 12. This is the reality."

Mangalore Set For Surfing Showdown As 7th NMPA Indian Open Of Surfing 2026 Begins

AGENCY
Mumbai: Indian surfing arrives at one of the most significant moments in its domestic history this week as the seventh edition of the NMPA Indian Open of Surfing 2026, a key stop on the national surfing circuit, prepares to bring together many of the country's leading surfers at the Blue Bay Tannirbhavi Eco Beach in Mangalore from May 29 to 31. Set against the backdrop of surfing's impending debut at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games later this year, the championship carries significance extending far beyond the pursuit of domestic titles. Featuring competitions in the Men's Open, Women's Open, Under-18 Boys, Under-18 Girls, Under-14 Boys, and Under-14 Girls categories, the event is expected to attract



over 80 athletes from Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Goa in what could prove to be a defining week for several of India's top surfers. Organised by the Mantra Surf Club and Surfing Swami Foundation under the aegis of the Surfing

Federation of India (SFI), the Indian Open has evolved steadily into one of the flagship events on the national calendar. The Karnataka Government continues its support for the competition for

a seventh consecutive year, while New Mangalore Port Authority (NMPA) returns as title sponsor for the third successive edition alongside Gold Sponsors Cycle Pure Agarbatti and Deconstruct Skincare. Asian Games Spotlight Raises Stakes in Mangalore This year's championship is expected to serve as the final major domestic assessment event before India finalises its squad for the Asian Games, placing unusual weight on performances across the three-day competition.



not looking great for

Axar Patel. With KL Rahul not willing to take a leadership role, Hardik Pandya can be the perfect choice for them to reignite the fire in the side. A potential trade could see Hardik and Axar switch places in a move that will benefit both sides massively.

AGENCY
Mumbai: Mumbai Indians stunned everyone in 2023 as they completed a sensational trade move for Hardik Pandya from Gujarat Titans. While Cameron Green moved to Royal Challengers Bengaluru to make way, it was the perfect homecoming for the star India all-rounder. This was the same franchise where Hardik found superstardom and, after winning the title with Gujarat Titans as captain and finishing runners-up in the next season, it was probably apt that he was going to take over the reins of captaincy from Rohit

Sharma. However, what followed was a bitter episode where fans were not happy with the decisions taken by the team management, and the disappointing show on the field even led to a section of supporters booing Hardik at the Wankhede Stadium. The next two seasons did not improve the situation and, although MI did finish fourth in 2025, the fans were just never convinced. Add the injury problems and off-field chatter around Hardik to an already tense situation, and one had the perfect recipe for disaster. Following a ninth-place fin-

ish in 2026, Mumbai Indians are reportedly going to sack Hardik as captain, and several media outlets reported that the all-rounder will be looking to move to another team after a breakdown in relations with the team management. With the IPL potentially looking at yet another blockbuster trade deal, here's a look at the top destinations for Hardik Pandya in IPL 2027 - Lucknow Super Giants The Rishabh Pant move has not worked for LSG and, if some reports are to be believed, they will most likely have a captaincy vacuum after this

season. Despite commanding a record amount of Rs 27 crore in the auction, Pant has disappointed - both as a batter as well as a captain. In that case, Hardik becomes a lucrative option for the franchise as their new leader. If they decide to release Pant, LSG will have more than enough money in their bank to complete an all-cash move for the all-rounder and, if it comes down to a trade, a combination of Nicholas Pooran and an Indian fast bowler can be considered. Delhi Capitals Another franchise with a captaincy problem, with things

What Happened To QTCinderella? Streamer Threatens DMCA Strikes Against X Clip Accounts For "Hate Farming"



AGENCY
London: Twitch streamer QTCinderella is once again at the center of online discussion after announcing that she plans to issue DMCA strikes against certain clip accounts on X. The streamer, whose real name is Blaire, called out pages that she believes are using her content in a misleading way to push hate and negativity online. The conversation picked up on May 28, 2026, after QTCinderella shared a long message explaining why she had reached her limit. According to her, some accounts were taking harmless clips and turning them into "hate farming" posts designed to create toxic discussions around her. She also revealed that she had been away from the internet recently while grieving the loss of her best friend of 15 years, making the situation even more emotional for her. QTCinderella says she's "done with the abuse" from X clip accounts in her statement, QTCinderella

explained that she no longer wants her content being used by accounts she believes are acting in bad faith. She accused certain pages of intentionally framing innocent moments in ways that encourage harassment and negative comment sections. The streamer said this is the first time she has seriously considered taking legal action through DMCA takedowns. She made it clear that she sees this as setting a personal boundary rather than trying to silence criticism online. QTCinderella also strongly defended herself in the post, saying she would not allow people to profit from content that spreads false narratives about her. She added that she was tired of the kind of online environment these accounts create and claimed many of them exist mainly to stir drama and outrage. The streamer also opened up about grieving a personal loss Part of QTCinderella's message focused on something much more personal.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SANJAY RRAO, HIT & RUN INTENSE FIRST LOOK RELEASED



Suspense and crime thrillers are gaining strong momentum today, and young filmmakers are stepping forward with fresh, daring concepts to keep audiences hooked. Joining this wave is Sanjay RRao, son of star comedian Brahmaji, who plays the lead in an intriguing new thriller titled Hit & Run. The film is written and directed by Sai Krishna Sagar and produced by Satish Reddy Allam and K. Shekar under the Satish Reddy Allam Entertainment banner, with Natasha Singh as the female lead. Marking Sanjay RRao's birthday, the makers unveiled the film's first-look poster. The design carries a dark, gritty mood dominated by

deep red and black tones. Sanjay's face emerges from heavy shadows, marked by wounds and dried blood, hinting at a character who has endured violence and emotional turmoil. The smoky, textured red background further amplifies the tension, promising a story filled with danger, intensity, and raw emotion. The cast also includes Kireeti, Muralidhar Goud, Lirisha Kunapareddy, Ravi Prakash, and Jabardasth Emmanuel in key roles, with the shoot currently underway. On the technical front, music is composed by Prince Henry. Cinematography is handled by Vijay Bhaskar Saddala and L.

Gangadhar, while editing responsibilities are taken up by D. Venkata Prabhu. The makers will unveil other details later.

Lyca Productions Subaskaran presents Filmmaker Jason Sanjay's Directorial Sundeeep Kishen starrer "Sigma" worldwide release on July 31

Lyca Productions Subaskaran's Sigma, marking the directorial debut of Jason Sanjay and starring Sundeeep Kishen in the lead role, is officially set to hit screens worldwide on July 31. Ever since its announcement, the film has remained one of the most talked-about projects in Tamil cinema, consistently generating strong buzz among audiences and trade circles alike. The excitement surrounding the film soared further with the teaser receiving an overwhelming response and crossing 20 million-plus views, significantly heightening anticipation for the theatrical release. Expressing his excitement on the official release date announcement, G. K. M. Tamil Kumaran, Head of Lyca Productions, said, "We are delighted to officially announce July 31 as the release date of Sigma. The film has shaped up exceptionally well, and we strongly believe audiences are in for a refreshing cinematic experience. Jason Sanjay has approached his debut with remarkable clarity, dedication, and conviction. The entire cast and crew have worked passionately towards bringing this vision alive, and we are excited to present Sigma to audiences worldwide." Sharing his excitement, director Jason Sanjay said, "Sigma has been an incredibly special and enriching journey for me.



I'm deeply grateful to Producer Subaskaran of Lyca Productions for placing their trust in my vision and for constantly supporting me throughout this process. Working with such a committed cast and crew has been truly rewarding, and I sincerely thank every artist and technician who contributed wholeheartedly to this film. We are eagerly looking forward to presenting Sigma to audiences on July 31 and can't wait to share more exciting updates soon." Produced on a grand scale by Lyca Productions, Sigma features Sundeeep Kishen in the lead role, supported by a powerful ensemble cast including Faria Abdullah, Raju Sundaram, Sampath Raj, Shiv Pandit, Anbu Thasan, Yog Japee, and others. The film's technical team includes music composed by Thaman S, cinematography by Krishnan Vasant, editing by Praveen KL, and Hariharasuthan handling VFX supervision.

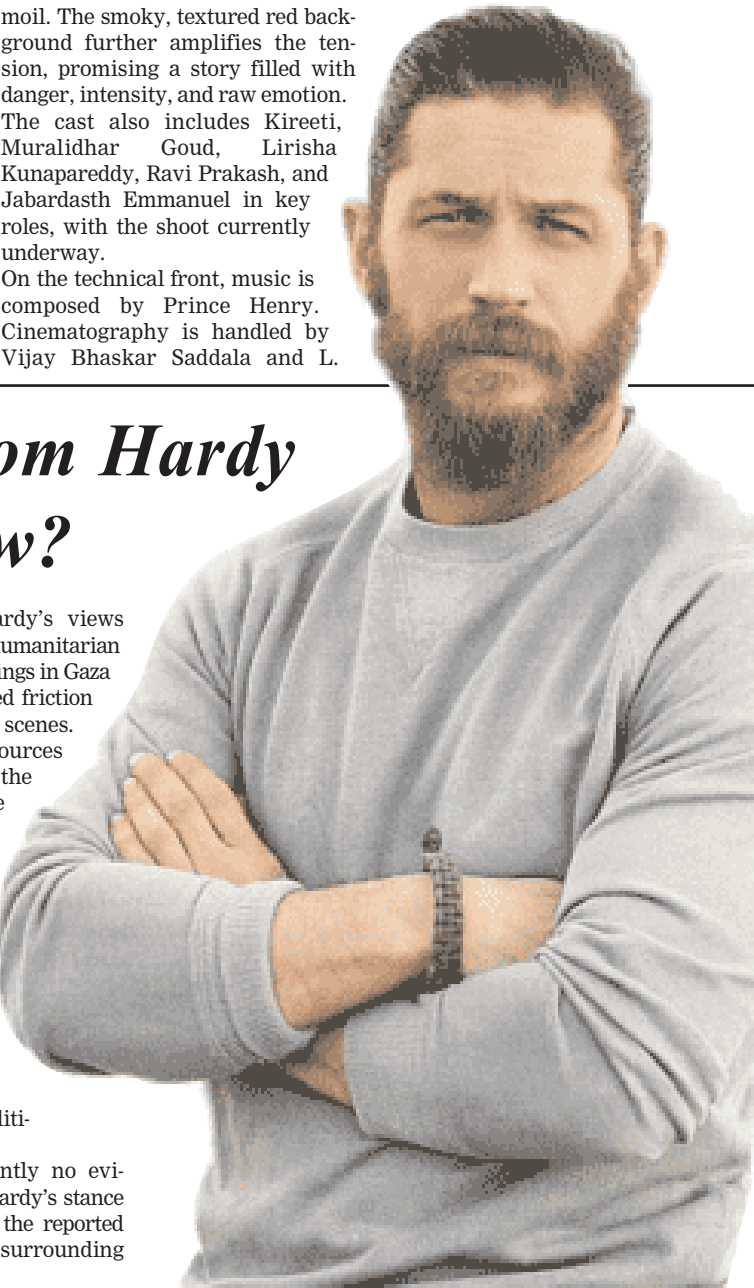
MobLand shocker: Is Tom Hardy really leaving the show?

For days, fans have been asking the same question. Has Tom Hardy been kicked out of MobLand? The rumours exploded online after reports claimed the Hollywood star had clashed with key members of the show's production team. Some fans even linked the controversy to Hardy's public support for humanitarian causes, including his concern over the ongoing conflict and bombings in Gaza, Palestine. Is Tom Hardy Leaving

MobLand Season 3? The answer is no, at least for now. According to fresh reports, Tom Hardy has not been fired from MobLand. Sources close to the production have confirmed that discussions are still ongoing and the door remains open for his return in Season 3. The makers are reportedly working to resolve creative differences and find a way forward.

Why Is Tom Hardy Involved In Controversy? One of the biggest rumours circulating online suggest-

gested that Hardy's views regarding the humanitarian crisis and bombings in Gaza may have caused friction behind the scenes. However, sources familiar with the situation have strongly denied any political fallout involving Hardy and his co-stars. Reports indicate that the tensions were related to production and creative issues rather than political opinions. There is currently no evidence linking Hardy's stance on Palestine to the reported disagreements surrounding the show.



POOJA HEGDE STUNS IN COOL DENIM OUTFIT

Pooja Hegde has faced a tough time at the box office recently with several flops in Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi films. However, her upcoming movie Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, releasing on June 5th, is giving her and her fans a lot of hope and excitement. The film is already creating massive buzz online. The songs and trailer are trending big time, and audiences are loving what they see. It looks like this movie has all the ingredients to become a big hit and bring Pooja back strongly into the spotlight. Meanwhile,

Highlights
■ Pooja Hegde has faced a tough time at the box office recently with several flops in Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi films. However, her upcoming movie Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, releasing on June 5th, is giving her and her fans a lot of hope and excitement.

Pooja is leaving no stone unturned in her promotions. She is stunning everyone with her back-to-back stylish looks. In her latest pictures, she looks absolutely gorgeous in a cool denim outfit, keeping it chic and effortlessly stylish. Fans are rooting hard for her!

SANIA MIRZA PICKS PAKISTANI DESIGNER OUTFIT FOR BAKRID



PEDDI GIRL'S CREAMY TREAT



Janhvi Kapoor is turning heads with her stunning traditional outfits as she promotes her upcoming movie Peddi, set to release on June 4th. The actress has been going all out with her ethnic fashion choices, and fans simply cannot get enough of her gorgeous looks. In her latest pictures, Janhvi looks absolutely breathtaking in a beautiful white embroidered saree. The outfit features intricate lace detailing and a stylish blouse, paired with heavy traditional earrings and a statement waist piece. She kept her long wavy hair open, completing the elegant look perfectly. Her latest pics from the Peddi Delhi pressmeet. Janhvi has been sharing these pictures on social media, and each one is better than the last. Her back-to-back traditional looks for Peddi promotions are creating a lot of buzz online. Fans and fashion lovers are eagerly waiting for the film's release on June 4th!

"Hai Re Strikes a Chord: Anirudh, Thaman & Aniesh Shine in Itlu Arjuna's First Single"

Natural Star Nani Launched Hai Re: A Fresh Breeze Of Music, Voice & Dance. S Thaman's Enchanting Melody, Anirudh Ravichander's Fascinating Vocals & New Guy In Town Aniesh's Elegant Moves Elevate Itlu Arjuna's First Single. Star director Venky Kudumula turns producer for the first time with Itlu Arjuna under his banner What Next Entertainments. The film introduces New Guy in Town Aniesh as the lead, directed by debutant Mahesh Uppala, with Anaswara Rajan as the female lead. From the beginning, the project grabbed attention- the title glimpse caught the attention, while

posters and the special promo Finding Arjuna added extra curiosity. After building anticipation with an announcement video and promo, the makers have now launched the film's first single, kickstarting the musical promotions. The song launched by Natural Star Nani feels warm, catchy, and full of youthful energy. S Thaman composes a lively, fast-paced rhythm number built on a strong, dance-driven electronic and hip-hop beat. The mix of trendy rhythms, mild classical touches, and bright instrumentation makes the track both modern and soulful. Anirudh Ravichander brings spark and charm with his fascinating vocals. His



singing lifts the entire mood, switching smoothly between soft emotion and high-energy hooks. Carnatic-style notes by Sanjana and a short rap segment by Harsha Vardhan

add interesting layers, making the track richer and more vibrant. Lyricist Kalyan Chakravarthy keeps the words simple and heartfelt, capturing the hero's silent

admiration for the girl he follows everywhere but cannot approach. Newcomer Aniesh made a strong impression with his challenging role shown in the promo, and Hai

Re highlights another side of him. This time, he surprises as a dancer. His natural flow, clean moves, and screen presence give the song a fresh visual spark. His hip-hop style and expressive performance make him look like a talent to watch. Anaswara Rajan brings elegance and blends perfectly with the song's mood. With Thaman's energetic composition, Anirudh's magnetic voice, and Aniesh's stylish dance performance, Hai Re becomes an instantly likeable first single- youthful, emotional, and addictive. As Itlu Arjuna gears up for its theatrical release, Hai Re sets the right tone and raises expectations for what's coming next.