



**PM MODI CELEBRATES SPORTING BREAKTHROUGHS, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CITIZENS DRIVING CHANGE**

NATION PAGE

**JAPAN DEFENCE MINISTER DENIES MILITARISM AND CRITICISES CHINA'S 'HUGE ARSENAL'**

WORLD | NEWS



**FARIA ABDULLAH STUNS IN RED SAREE DESPITE BOX OFFICE SETBACK**

CINEMA | PAGE



SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

30-05-2026  
Total pilgrims - 92,010  
Tonsure - 52,346  
Hundi kankaku - 3,76 CR  
Laddu sale - 4,43 Lac  
Annasprasadam - 2,95 Lac  
Medical treatment - 3,65  
Walking Compartments - Outside line at Silcharanam.

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tolems) - 15-18 H

**RBI LIKELY TO HOLD RATES STEADY AMID GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY**

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is widely expected to keep its benchmark policy rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent when the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) concludes its three-day meeting on June 5, as policymakers weigh mounting global uncertainties and their potential impact on inflation and economic growth. Market participants and economists anticipate that the central bank will maintain its cautious stance, choosing to closely monitor evolving developments in West Asia and their implications for commodity prices, supply chains and financial markets before taking any policy action. The six-member MPC, chaired by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, will meet from June 3 to June 5 to review the monetary policy framework.

**RED ALERT ISSUED AS STRONG WINDS AND DUST STORMS SWEEP RAJASTHAN**

Jaipur, May 30: A strong Western Disturbance triggered widespread sandstorms, rain and gusty winds across Rajasthan on Saturday, disrupting normal life in several districts. Sandstorms swept through Churu, Hanumangarh, Sri Ganganagar, Bikaner, Nagaur, Didwana-Kuchaman, Alwar and Sikar, while Jaipur witnessed rain accompanied by strong winds. Hailstones were also reported from some rural areas. The sudden weather change brought daytime darkness to several districts, forcing motorists to switch on headlights. Strong winds uprooted trees and disrupted electricity supply in many areas. The storm system first impacted Hanumangarh and Sri Ganganagar, where wind speeds reached up to 56 kilometres per hour. In Jaipur's Jhotwara area, intense winds and dust storms persisted for nearly 10 minutes during the evening. In Sri Ganganagar, a storm around 11 a.m. engulfed the city in dust, creating conditions resembling a

**Army foils exfiltration bid in Uri, 3 held; PoK intruder also apprehended along LoC**

SRINAGAR (TSIT)

Army troops deployed along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Uri sector of north Kashmir's Baramulla district apprehended three individuals, including a suspended Territorial Army (TA) personnel, allegedly attempting to exfiltrate to Pakistan, officials said on Sunday. In a separate incident, an intruder from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) was also detained. In the first operation, the Army foiled an exfiltration attempt along the LoC and detained three individuals from Sopore sub-



district during a joint search operation with police, following specific intelligence inputs. "Based on specific intelligence input, a joint search operation was launched by #IndianArmy and @JmuKmrPolice in general area of Uri, Baramulla.



## CM Revanth, Telangana Congress Leaders meet Mallikarjun Kharge

HYDERABAD (TSIT):

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Mahesh Kumar Goud, and Telangana Congress Affairs In-charge Meenakshi Natarajan paid a courtesy visit to

Mallikarjun Kharge at the Novotel Hyderabad Airport on Sunday. Leaders met the AICC President during his brief stopover in Hyderabad and exchanged greetings. Meeting was described as a courtesy interaction between the senior Congress leadership and the party's national president. Following the meet-

ing, Kharge departed from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport for Kalaburagi (Gulbarga) to attend scheduled party and public engagements. The interaction underscored the close coordination between the Telangana Congress leadership and the AICC leadership on organizational and governance matters.

**Admiral Swaminathan takes charge as Indian Navy chief, says will sharpen operational capabilities**



NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Krishna Swaminathan reaffirmed his commitment on Sunday to ensure that the Indian Navy maintains the highest level of operational readiness and combat effectiveness for protecting the nation's security and economic interests. He also emphasised the importance of 'JAI' - Jointness, Atmanirbharata (self-reliance), and

Indigenisation. Admiral Krishna Swaminathan took charge as the Chief of Naval Staff after taking the handover from Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, who bid farewell to the military service earlier in the day. He also laid wreaths at the National War Memorial to pay homage to those who laid down their lives on the line of duty.

Addressing the media after assuming the charge as Indian Navy Chief, Admiral Swaminathan said, "I assume command today as the 27th Chief of the Naval Staff with a deep sense of humility, responsibility, pride, and gratitude. Being selected by the top leadership of the country for this job has been the highest honour and privilege of my life, and I'm extremely grateful to have this opportunity to serve the Indian Navy and the nation in this capacity."

**Ministers' swearing-in to be decided by High Command: K'taka CM-designate Shivakumar**

Bengaluru (TSIT):

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader and Karnataka Chief Minister-designate D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday said the party high command would decide whether ministers would take oath along with him during the swearing-in ceremony scheduled for June 3, adding that he would not comment further on the matter. Responding to a question on the composition of the new government, Shivakumar said: "I do not know about that. The party high command will take a decision. I do not wish to comment on the matter." Speaking to reporters after inspecting the site earmarked for the proposed Congress Bhavan near Race Course Road, Shivakumar said the party was considering holding the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the new office building immediately after the swearing-in ceremony.

**Abhishek Banerjee vows to continue democratic fight, thanks Rahul Gandhi for support**

NEW DELHI (TSIT)

Trinamool Congress national general secretary and Lok Sabha MP Abhishek Banerjee on Sunday declared that he would continue his struggle to defend democracy and constitutional values, a day after receiving support from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the alleged attack on him in West Bengal. In a message shared on his WhatsApp channel, Banerjee thanked Gandhi for his solidarity and stressed that opposition parties remained united in their efforts



after Gandhi strongly condemned the alleged attack on the Trinamool Congress leader in Sonarpur, describing it as an assault on democratic values and calling on both the Centre and the West Bengal government to take immediate action against those responsible. Drawing a contrast between his recent role in representing India abroad and what he described as the political realities at home, Banerjee recalled his participation in the Centre's all-party diplomatic outreach following Operation Sindoor.

## RCB beat GT by 5 wickets to win 2nd consecutive IPL title

AHMEDABAD (TSIT)

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's successful title defence in IPL 2026 was not built on a single defining innings or a solitary match-winning spell. Instead, it was forged through a transformation that Virat Kohli believes has fundamentally altered the franchise's identity — the emergence of a team where responsibility is shared rather than carried by one individual. For much of RCB's history, Kohli often found himself at the centre of every conversation surrounding the franchise. The batting great shouldered expectations for nearly two decades as the team repeatedly fell short despite possessing some of the game's biggest stars. This season, however, the script was different. Reflecting on the campaign after RCB clinched their second consecutive title, Kohli pointed to the collective strength of the squad as the defining factor behind their success.



He noted that there was noticeably less pressure within the group compared to previous years, with players consistently stepping up in crucial moments. The sentiment was echoed throughout the dressing room. "I said to a few of the boys that there doesn't seem to be the same kind of pressure that was there last year. Composure of the

guys shone through tonight. After the break we had a couple of losses but we wanted to finish top. The win against MI gave us a lot of confidence. Just to have a group of guys where you don't feel that you are the only guy who has to step up for the team is amazing," Kohli said. Devdutt Padikkal spoke of how being surrounded by quality players had

elevated his own game, while praising Kohli's relentless desire to score runs despite his legendary status. Bhuvneshwar Kumar highlighted the extensive planning that went into the campaign, saying the trophy held greater value than any individual honour and crediting the team's preparation for its success in pressure situations.

## Cong alleges CBSE evaluation portal data leak, board rejects claims

NEW DELHI (TSIT)

The Congress party on Sunday alleged a major security and privacy breach in the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) evaluation system, claiming that answer booklets of nearly 20 lakh Class 12 students were accessible in the public domain. The CBSE has strongly denied the allegations, calling them misleading and factually incorrect. Congress leader and former Union minister Jairam Ramesh raised the issue on social media platform X, alleging that a "massive data leak" had exposed students' answer scripts and compromised their privacy. He also questioned the selection process of the private vendor involved in scanning and processing answer sheets under the On-Screen Marking (OSM) system, alleging that technical conditions in the tender were modified in a manner that benefited the company con-



cerned. He further claimed that the quality of scanned documents suggested the use of mobile phones instead of high-end scanning equipment. The Congress leader also flagged concerns about alleged procedural changes in the tendering process and sought clarification on the safeguards in place for handling sensitive student data. The Central Board of Secondary Education, however, firmly rejected the allegations, stating that the evaluation portal

**00**  
Congress alleged a major data leak exposing nearly 20 lakh CBSE Class 12 answer scripts, while CBSE denied any security breach and maintained that its evaluation system remains secure.

had not been compromised and no security breach had been detected. In its clarification post-

ed on X, the Board said claims referring to a compromised URL were misleading, adding that the actual evaluation portal used for checking answer scripts was different from the one mentioned in the allegations and remained secure. The CBSE also dismissed accusations of irregularities in awarding contracts for digitisation and evaluation services, describing them as "erroneous and not based on facts."

Separately, the Board had earlier reiterated that its On-Screen Marking system includes robust safeguards to protect student data and ensure confidentiality throughout the evaluation process. The controversy also drew wider political attention, with criticism directed at the government over procurement and digital infrastructure practices. The CBSE, however, maintained that the system remains secure and fully compliant with established evaluation protocols.

## Andhra CM terms inauguration of South Coastal Railway Zone a historic milestone

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has hailed the inauguration of South Coastal Railway Zone as a historic milestone and said that decades-long dream of people is being realised. "The inauguration of the South Coast Railway Zone, centred in Visakhapatnam, starting from June 1, marks a historic milestone. Our decades-long dream is being realized," Chandrababu Naidu post-



ed on 'X' on Sunday. "The new railway zone will comprehensively transform the transportation landscape of North

Andhra. It will pave the way for new employment opportunities and industrial growth. This is a key milestone in transform-

ing our state into a logistics hub," he said. The Chief Minister on behalf of the people, thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for fulfilling the long-standing aspiration of the people of Andhra Pradesh. The Centre early this month issued a gazette notification establishing the South Coast Railway Zone, with Visakhapatnam as its headquarters.

## PM Modi celebrates sporting breakthroughs, cultural heritage and citizens driving change

New Delhi, May 31 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday used the 134th edition of his monthly radio programme Mann Ki Baat to showcase India's growing sporting achievements, celebrate the preservation of its cultural heritage, promote scientific curiosity among youth, and highlight inspiring examples of citizens contributing to nation-building through grassroots initiatives.



Beginning the programme with a focus on India's rising stature in athletics, the Prime Minister lauded athletes who created new national records at the National Senior Athletics Federation Competition held in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

The event, which featured nearly 800 participants from across the country, witnessed four national records being broken. Modi paid special tribute to sprinters Gurindervir Singh and Animesh Kujur, whose performances in the men's 100-

metre race attracted national attention after the national record was shattered three times in just two days. During an interaction with the athletes, the Prime Minister described their rivalry as a "jugalbandi" that had pushed both competitors to achieve new heights. "You both have achieved something remarkable. Together, you have created history," Modi said, not-

ing that healthy competition and mutual encouragement had become the driving force behind their success.

Gurindervir Singh, an officer in the Indian Navy and currently India's fastest sprinter, recalled his journey from a middle-class family to becoming the first Indian to run the 100 metres in under 10.1 seconds. He said he was inspired by his father, a for-

mer volleyball player, to pursue sprinting despite widespread perceptions that Indians could not excel in the discipline. "People used to tell me that the 100 metres was not an event for Indians. But my father and I decided we would prove them wrong," Singh said.

Animesh Kujur, who hails from Chhattisgarh and now represents Odisha, spoke about his transition from football to athletics and his rise to international competition. He said recent performances had challenged long-standing assumptions about Indian sprinting. "People often said Indians could not run below 10 seconds or even 10.1 seconds. But now we have shown that Indians can do it," Kujur remarked.

Commending their camaraderie, Modi said the athletes exemplified the true spirit of sportsmanship by motivating one another while striving for excellence. "You challenge each other, help each other and move forward together.

## Court summons records in alleged defamation case against Rahul Gandhi

SULTANPUR: The district court in UP's Sultanpur on Saturday summoned case records from the lower court in connection with a 2018 alleged defamation case against the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi. Special Judge MP-MLA Rakesh Kumar passed the order as he took up a plea by the complainant challenging the lower court's rejection of his application seeking voice samples of Gandhi in the case.

The judge has summoned the case records from the lower court, Santosh Kumar Pandey, the counsel for the complainant, said, adding the next hearing is on June 5.

The complainant had previously filed an application in the MP-MLA court, which is hearing the defamation case, requesting that a voice sample of Rahul Gandhi be collected and matched at a forensic science laboratory against the voice on the CD containing the alleged defamatory remarks.



However, the MP-MLA court had dismissed this application. Challenging this order, Pandey had approached the district court, which took cognisance of the matter on Saturday. The court has summoned the original records pertaining to the case from the lower court. June 5 has been fixed as the date for the next hearing and arguments in this matter, Pandey said. He said that the original defamation suit is still ongoing in the MP-MLA

Court, where the next hearing is scheduled. June 17. Rahul Gandhi's counsel, Kashi Prasad Shukla, appeared before the judge and filed his 'vakalatnama' (power of attorney for legal representation). The court has accepted the counsel's 'vakalatnama'. Shukla said, "Today, I appeared in court on behalf of Rahul Gandhi and filed my 'vakalatnama'. Summoning the case records, the court has scheduled June 5 as the date for the hearing."

Meanwhile, the next hearing in the original defamation case before the MP-MLA court has been scheduled for June 17, he said.

The case was filed in October 2018 by Vijay Mishra. Gandhi had surrendered before the court on February 20, 2024, following which the special magistrate granted him bail on two sureties of Rs 25,000 each.

Gandhi appeared before the MP/MLA court on July 26, 2024, and recorded his statement, maintaining that he was innocent and terming the case a political conspiracy. Following his statement, the court had directed the complainant's side to produce evidence, after which witnesses were continuously examined in the matter. Earlier, on February 20, Gandhi's statement was recorded under Section 313 of the CrPC before the MP-MLA court. The court had asked him to present his explanation and evidence regarding his innocence.

## India's rotavirus vaccine coverage jumps to 85% in 2023-24 from 36.4% in 2019-2020: Survey

NEW DELHI: India's coverage of all three doses of the rotavirus vaccine (RVV) among children more than doubled to 85.4 per cent in 2023-24 from 36.4 per cent in 2019-21, according to the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6). The RVV was introduced in India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) in 2016 and scaled-up nationally in 2019. The vaccine aims to reduce mortality and morbidity caused by rotavirus diarrhoea in children. According to the survey findings released by the Union

Health Ministry on Friday, India recorded a decline in the prevalence of Acute Respiratory Illness (ARI) among children -- from 2.8 per cent in 2019-21 to 1.9 per cent in 2023-24.

Officials highlighted that the reduction in ARI prevalence can be "majorly attributed to the introduction of the Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) in India's Universal Immunisation Programme in 2017".

The report also showed a steady rise in full vaccination coverage among children aged 12-23 months

from 77.9 per cent in NFHS-4 to 83.8 per cent in NFHS-5 and 87.1 per cent in NFHS-6.

"Over 95.6 per cent of the children have received most vaccinations through government health facilities," an official said.

India's UIP, one of the world's largest public health programmes, currently provides 11 vaccines against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases free of cost through public health facilities, covering about 2.55 crore infants and 2.9 crore pregnant women annually.

The survey showed notable improvements in the coverage of several key vaccines. Coverage of the first dose of the Measles-Rubella vaccine rose to 91.7 per cent in NFHS-6 from 87.9 per cent in NFHS-5, while coverage of the second dose increased significantly to 71.8 per cent from 58.6 per cent during the same period.

Further, 89.2 per cent of the children received all three doses of the pentavalent vaccine in NFHS-6, compared to 86.9 per cent in NFHS-5 and 78.4 per cent in NFHS-4. The ministry official said

India has introduced six new vaccines under the UIP since 2014 and strengthened vaccine delivery through digital initiatives such as U-WIN and the electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN).

"Focused Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns in urban slums, tribal areas, migratory populations and geographically difficult regions have significantly improved coverage and decreased dropouts and hesitancy from routine immunisation," the official said.

## Man held for Rs 1.65-crore property fraud in Dehradun

DEHRADUN: A man has been arrested in Dehradun for allegedly committing Rs 1.65-crore fraud by reselling his property using forged documents, police said on Saturday.

Acting on a complaint filed by Vinod Prakash Agarwal, a resident of Dalanwala area, the police arrested Sanjay Jain (65) on Friday. In his complaint filed on May 24, Agarwal alleged that Jain had forged documents for a property located on the fifth floor of Arihant Tower on Haridwar Road, and subsequently sold it to him, thereby

swindling Rs 1.65 crore.

Agarwal stated that, after purchasing the property, he discovered that Jain had already sold it to another individual named Nishant Garg.

Based on the written complaint, the police registered a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, initiated an investigation, and subsequently arrested Jain based on the evidence gathered.

The police further informed that during interrogation, Jain revealed the names of other accomplices who had assisted him in the crime;

efforts are currently underway to arrest them as well. According to the police, the accused disclosed that he previously owned a 'luggage bag' manufacturing factory in Haridwar; however, due to continuous financial losses, he had accumulated significant debts owed to various individuals. According to the police, Jain explained that in an effort to repay these debts, his wife, Ritu, had sold their property in Arihant Tower to Nishant Garg in 2024; despite this, he was still unable to repay his creditors.

## CM change won't alter govt's character, says BJP after Shivakumar's elevation

NEW DELHI: The BJP on Saturday took a swipe at the Congress after Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar was elected leader of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP), asking whether the change would alter the "character" of the government which has been mired in "corruption" or whether it merely amounts to a "change of face".



The remarks came after senior Congress leader and outgoing chief minister Siddaramaiah proposed Shivakumar's name as the new CLP leader at a meeting held at the Vidhan Soudha in Bengaluru, paving the way for him to take over as Karnataka's next chief minister.

In a video statement, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said the leadership change reflects the Congress' acknowledgement that Siddaramaiah's governance has failed on multiple fronts.

"After two-and-a-half to three years of 'Game of Thrones', the 'battle for the chair' and 'who will become the chief minister', the Karnataka Congress

has chosen a new CLP leader in the form of D K Shivakumar and replaced Siddaramaiah. It means they are acknowledging that Siddaramaiah's governance has been a complete failure on all fronts -- economy, law and order, and infrastructure," Poonawalla said. "Therefore, they have had to replace him. Otherwise, 2028 (assembly elections) is gone," he added. He also claimed that while Siddaramaiah enjoys greater support among the Congress MLAs, Shivakumar's "money power" has prevailed. "It also shows that for the Congress high command, money is more important than popularity. All of them

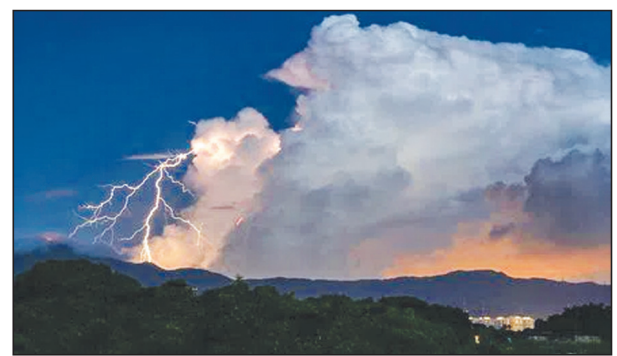
say that Siddaramaiah is more popular among Congress MLAs but it is Shivakumar's money power that has prevailed," he said. Targeting the Congress government, Poonawalla questioned whether it will focus on governance or political power. "Will this government actually focus on the janata (people) or only on satta (power)? Only time will tell. For the last three years, the people of Karnataka have suffered. We have seen bad roads, pothole-ridden roads, crumbling infrastructure, an economy going from bad to worse, and rising debt. People are paying the highest taxes but getting only corruption and poor governance in return," he alleged. "Will that character change, or will it only be a change of face? Will there be a change of chief minister but no change in the government's character? That is the main question," he added. Poonawalla also accused the Congress of practising "double standards" on social justice and claimed that the party has removed the only OBC chief minister among the states ruled by it.

## Delhi-NCR gets relief from heatwave, IMD extends thunderstorm alert till Sunday

NEW DELHI: Intermittent rain, thunderstorms, and gusty winds swept across the national capital and adjoining NCR areas on Saturday, bringing substantial relief from the scorching summer heat and pushing temperatures below normal levels, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The change in weather was driven by the influence of an active western disturbance and multiple cyclonic circulations affecting northwest India, resulting in cloudy skies, scattered rainfall and strong surface winds across Delhi-NCR over the past 24 hours.

Safdarjung, the city's principal weather observatory, recorded a minimum temperature of 24.6 degrees Celsius, which was two degrees below the seasonal average. The maximum temperature settled at 37.1



degrees Celsius, 3.3 degrees below normal, reflecting the cooling impact of cloud cover and thunderstorm activity.

The IMD has maintained a yellow alert for Delhi and neighbouring regions, forecasting very light to light rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and strong winds during the afternoon and evening hours. Wind speeds are expected to reach 40-50

kmph, with gusts touching up to 60 kmph in some areas.

Weather officials said similar conditions are likely to continue on Sunday, with widespread cloudiness and isolated spells of rain expected across all districts of Delhi as well as parts of Gurgaon, Noida, Faridabad and Ghaziabad. During the past 24 hours, many parts of Delhi witnessed light rain and thun-

derstorm activity. The strongest winds were recorded at Palam, where gusts reached 59 kmph. South-easterly winds blowing at 20-25 kmph contributed to the moderation in temperatures.

The IMD noted that both maximum and minimum temperatures have dropped across most parts of the capital. While maximum temperatures remained in the range of 35-37 degrees Celsius, minimum temperatures were recorded between 21 and 25 degrees Celsius, with several locations reporting readings significantly below normal for this time of the year.

Looking ahead, the weather department expects thunderstorms and rain activity to persist until May 31. Thereafter, skies are likely to become partly cloudy from June 1 and gradually clear from June 3 onward.

## Taiwan: An Ideal Destination for Tourists

TAIPEI: What is the first impression that comes to mind when you think of Taiwan? Everybody thinks of Taiwan as an undisputed leader in the high-technology industry, especially the global semiconductor supply chain. The other thing that comes to one's mind is China's evil design to annex the island. But few people in India are aware of the tourism potential of this beautiful island nation in the western Pacific Ocean.

It is truly an absolute paradise for tourists, especially honeymooners, offering a perfect blend of rich culture, futuristic cities, and breathtaking natural landscapes. The island boasts a world-renowned street food scene, easily accessible hot springs, and ancient temples, all while remaining highly affordable and one of the safest destinations in the world. The country is easy to navigate and the High-Speed Rail (HSR) makes travelling from the capital city of Taipei to the harbour-side southern city of Kaohsiung an exciting and memorable jour-

ney. There is currently no direct connectivity between India and Taiwan, and the two countries are reportedly holding diplomatic talks about starting flights between them. But one can always travel to Taipei and Kaohsiung through other major travel hubs in the region like Bangkok, Hong Kong, Singapore or Kuala Lumpur. So if you are looking for an exciting holiday destination with your family and friends, don't think twice. Book your ticket to Taiwan for a memorable journey to some of the world's most exciting places. Here is a glimpse of some of the "must-see places and unforgettable adventures" in Taiwan.

Taipei: Taiwan's vibrant historic capital has a disarming charm. It beautifully blends its deep 300 year cultural roots with a modern metropolis. 'Taipei 101 Observatory', formerly the Taipei World Financial Center, is a landmark 508-meter (1,667 ft), 101-storey skyscraper in Taipei. Opened in 2004, it was

the world's first skyscraper to exceed half a kilometer in height. Known for its design resembling a bamboo stalk, it features a high-end mall, office space, and top-tier observation decks; the indoor observatory on the 89th floor gives a 360° view of the city.

Xiaoyoukeng & Yangmingshan Volcanic Area: It begins just 40 minutes from Taipei's city centre and feels like another world entirely. Xiaoyoukeng is the park's most dramatic volcanic feature: steaming fumaroles, sulphur vents, and a wide crater plateau that smells of the earth's interior. In May, the hillsides erupt with hydrangeas in deep blue, purple, and pink a seasonal bloom that draws visitors from across Asia. The combination of active geology and floral spectacle in the shadow of a major capital is genuinely rare on this planet. Taiwanese glove puppetry (Budaixi) is a 400-year-old art form that has somehow evolved into a modern cult. Elaborate hand-carved wooden puppet heads,

intricate costumes, and lighting-fast manipulation technique combine into performances that range from ancient epic to sci-fi fantasy.

Kaohsiung: As Taiwan's commercial city, Kaohsiung is the second most popular place after Taipei. It has everything that a tourist looks forward to: from food to music to entertainment. Built along the harbour in 2021, the Kaohsiung Music Center is one of Asia's most ambitious waterfront cultural projects. Its centerpiece, the Soundwave Tower, rises like a giant musical wave of interlocking steel panels—a genuinely iconic piece of architecture. On week-ends, the surrounding plaza buzzes with a creative market showcasing local designers, artisans, and street food vendors. It captures the new Kaohsiung as confident, artistic, and looking outward to the sea. Kaohsiung's Grand Harbour was once the industrial engine of Taiwan. Today, the Grand Harbour Bridge and its surrounding warehouses have been reimaged into

cafes, bars, and public art spaces. Walking across the bridge at night with the city lights reflecting off the water is one of those quietly cinematic moments that doesn't need a filter. This is the story of a port city that refused to be left behind.

Lianchitan Scenic Area & Dragon Tiger Pagoda: Lianchitan-Lotus Pond is a shallow lake surrounded by temples, pavilions, and some of southern Taiwan's most vivid folk-religion architecture. The Dragon and Tiger Pagoda is its crown jewel: visitors enter through the dragon's open mouth and exit through the tiger's, a ritual said to transform bad luck into good. Spring and Autumn Pavilions rise from the water on the backs of giant tortoises. It's visually overwhelming and spiritually layered—a place where Taiwan's folk beliefs feel completely alive.

Snorkeling with Sea Turtles & Glass Semi-Submarine: Xiaoliuqi's waters are home to one of the highest concentrations of wild green sea tur-

bles in Asia. Unlike many turtle experiences elsewhere, this is entirely in their natural habitat—no captivity, no feeding, just turtles going about their lives as you glide alongside them. The glass semi-submarine offers the same underwater world for those who prefer to stay dry. Either way, the clarity of the coral-filtered water and the density of marine life here is humbling. Overseas Chinese Fish Market is another landmark of Kaohsiung. It is a raw, unfiltered window into the island's deep relationship with the ocean. Stalls overflow with grouper, squid, mantis shrimp, and seafood varieties most visitors have never encountered. The pace is fast, the smells are real, and the energy is pure. For anyone wanting to understand how Taiwan feeds itself, this market is essential: noisy, chaotic, and completely honest. Xiaoliuqi (Little Ryukyu Island) is Taiwan's only purely coral island and one of its best-kept secrets. Just a 30-minute ferry from the mainland, it operates at a

completely different rhythm: slow, warm, and traffic-free. Dapeng Bay National Scenic Area is a sheltered lagoon on Taiwan's southwestern coast that is calm, wide, and built for sailing. Surrounded by mangroves and connected to the Taiwan Strait, it is one of the island's premier water sports destinations. Sailing across it in the late afternoon, with the mountains of Pingtung County in the distance, provides a new perspective on Taiwan that most visitors never find.

Yokai Village: Nestled in the mountains of central Taiwan, Yokai Village brings Japanese supernatural folklore to life in an immersive forest setting. Yokai spirits, demons, and shape-shifters from Japanese mythology have deep cultural resonance in Taiwan due to its 50-year Japanese colonial history. Lanterns, hand-crafted sculptures, and theatrical installations are woven among the trees. It is eerie, playful, and unexpectedly moving—a reminder of how deeply Japanese culture threads into Taiwanese identity.

**Bengaluru–Mangaluru Vande Bharat trial run from June 1; journey time may drop to 5 hours**

Bengaluru, May 31: The long-awaited Bengaluru–Mangaluru Vande Bharat Express is set to enter its crucial trial phase from June 1, moving a step closer to cutting travel time between the state capital and coastal Karnataka to around five hours.

According to South Western Railway officials, high-speed trial operations will be carried out by a team from the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO). The testing will include load trials and technical assessments over a period of about one week, after which final clearance is expected for commercial operations.

The proposed service is expected to slash the current 8–10 hour road journey via the Shiradi Ghat route to nearly

five hours by rail, significantly improving connectivity between Bengaluru and the coast.

The development follows union minister of state for railways V Somanna's statement during his visit to Mangaluru on May 23, where he said, "We will operate Vande Bharat in June." Mysuru Division DRM Mudit Mittal has also confirmed that preparatory works and technical checks are in their final stage. The Sakleshpura–Subrahmanya Road Ghat section remains the most complex stretch on the route. The 55-km corridor features 57 tunnels, 258 bridges and 108 sharp curves, with a steep gradient of 1:50, making it one of the most challenging railway alignments in India.

**From Punjab's Sidhu to Karnataka's Siddu: Cong faces its toughest post-transition test**

Bengaluru, May 31 (UNI) As DK Shivakumar prepares to take over as Karnataka Chief Minister, Congress finds itself confronting a question that echoes a painful chapter from its recent past in Punjab. There, the rise of Navjot Singh Sidhu coincided with a bitter leadership struggle that weakened the party and preceded its electoral collapse. In Karnataka, where outgoing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is popularly known as "Siddu", the party leadership will be hoping history does not repeat itself. The Congress may have resolved Karnataka's long-running leadership question by naming DK Shivakumar as Chief Minister-

designate, but the harder challenge may only be beginning. With Siddaramaiah stepping down after three years in office and Shivakumar preparing to take charge, the party is confronting a familiar dilemma: how to manage a powerful outgoing leader who continues to command a substantial political base.

The situation has prompted comparisons with Punjab, where the Congress leadership's handling of the power struggle between Amarinder Singh and Navjot Singh Sidhu preceded one of the party's most damaging electoral collapses in recent years.

While the circumstances in Karnataka are markedly different, political



observers see one common thread — the risks that arise when leadership transitions involve strong regional satraps with independent centres of influence. In Punjab, Amarinder

Singh had led Congress to a comfortable Assembly victory in 2017 and remained the party's principal vote-catcher. The emergence of Navjot Singh Sidhu as a competing power centre gradually

destabilised the state unit. Public disagreements escalated into open confrontation, culminating in Amarinder's resignation in 2021.

The change failed to revive the party. Instead, Congress entered the 2022 elections divided and demoralised, paving the way for the Aam Aadmi Party's landslide victory.

The Karnataka transition carries different political realities but raises similar questions.

Siddaramaiah is not merely a former Chief Minister. Over the past decade, he has emerged as Congress's most influential mass leader in Karnataka, building support among backward classes, minorities and

rural voters. His leadership was widely credited with helping the party secure a decisive mandate in the 2023 Assembly elections. Even after relinquishing office, Siddaramaiah remains one of the most powerful figures in the state Congress. Shivakumar, on the other hand, represents the organisational backbone of the party. As Karnataka Congress president, he played a pivotal role in rebuilding the party after successive political setbacks and is widely regarded as the architect of Congress's election machinery in the state. The coexistence of these two centres of power has defined Karnataka Congress politics for years.

**7 rescued after building collapses near Saket Metro station in Delhi; rescue ops underway**

New Delhi, May 31 : A four-storey under-construction building collapsed in Saitullajab near the Saket Metro Station in the national capital on Saturday evening, leaving several people trapped under the debris and sparking a massive rescue operation. The Delhi Fire Services (DFS) received the first alert at 7.44 p.m. and immediately dispatched four fire tenders to the site on Western Marg.

Rescue teams, including the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Delhi Police, civil defence units, and ambulances, joined the operation soon after.

The building, which had a ground floor and three additional levels under construction, came crashing down onto a nearby tin shed canteen where children were dining.

Eyewitnesses said the collapse occurred around 6 p.m., sending shockwaves through the area.

"The entire building came down within moments. People screamed and ran, but some were trapped before they could escape," a local resident said, who was near the site. Another resident noted: "Structure housed multiple corporate offices and would usually accommodate between 200 and 300 employees on work-

ing days. Fortunately, it was the weekend; otherwise the number of people inside could have been much higher," he said. He added that adjoining properties, including a mess close to the building, also suffered damage as debris spilled into surrounding areas.

Three people were rescued by locals and PCR personnel before DFS teams arrived, while four more were pulled out by DFS and NDRF responders and rushed to hospital.

Officials estimate that six to seven individuals may still be trapped beneath the rubble, and heavy machinery is being used to clear the debris. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta expressed her concern in a post on X, said: "Deeply concerned by the building collapse incident near Saket Metro Station. Teams from NDRF, Delhi Fire Services, Delhi Police, DDMA, MCD, CATS and Civil Defence are carrying out rescue operations on a war footing. Injured persons are being shifted to hospital following the Arise building collapse in Saket. Rescue teams remain at the site and are continuing search, rescue, and evacuation operations." Authorities are yet to determine the exact cause of the collapse.

**Govt revises fuel export levies for fortnight beginning June 1, domestic rates unchanged**

New Delhi, May 31 : The Central government has revised export levies on petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) for the fortnight beginning June 1.

The duty has been set at Rs 1.5 per litre on petrol exports, Rs 13.5 per litre on diesel exports and Rs 9.5 per litre on ATF exports, as per an official notification.

However, the Centre has left excise duty rates on petrol and diesel sold in the domestic market unchanged.

According to the notification, the revised rates have been prescribed based on the average international prices of crude oil, petrol, diesel and ATF prevailing during the period since the last review.

The export levies were introduced on March 27, 2026, to ensure domestic availability of petroleum products by discouraging exports in the backdrop of the West Asia crisis. The last



revision came into effect on May 16, 2026. On May 16, the government revised export taxes on petroleum products, imposing a special additional excise duty (SAED) of Rs 3 per litre on petrol

exports while reducing the duty on diesel to Rs 16.5 per litre.

The notification by the Ministry of Finance stated that the entry of Rs 3 per litre shall be substituted for petrol exports,

while diesel has been revised to Rs 16.5 per litre. It further said the road and infrastructure cess has been reduced to zero on petrol and diesel exports. Domestic fuel tax rates remained unchanged.

Earlier, export duty on diesel was revised multiple times. It was first set at Rs 21.50 per litre on March 26, then raised to Rs 55.5 per litre on April 11. Later, it was cut to Rs 23 per litre on April 30, and has now been further reduced to Rs 16.5 per litre.

Similarly, aviation turbine fuel (ATF) followed a similar pattern. The duty was first Rs 29.5 per litre, then increased to Rs 42 per litre. It was later reduced to Rs 33 per litre and has now been brought down to Rs 16 per litre. The windfall tax framework was introduced to ensure adequate domestic fuel availability and curb exports amid volatile global oil markets triggered by the West Asia crisis.

**The IET India Scholarship Award Opens Applications for its 10th Edition; Prize Pool Doubled to Rs.20 Lakhs**

Bangalore : The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), one of the world's largest professional engineering bodies, has announced the launch of the 10th edition of the IET India Scholarship Award, one of India's leading platforms for undergraduate engineering students. Marking the milestone edition, the scholarship has doubled its total prize pool from Rs.10 lakhs to Rs.20 lakhs. Applications are now open and will close on 15 June 2026.

Over the past decade, the IET India Scholarship Award has recognised students who go beyond academic excellence to use engineering and technology to solve real-world



problems. From healthcare accessibility and sustainable agriculture to waste management and assistive technology, participants have showcased innovations focused on meaningful societal impact. Past winners and finalists have gone on to pursue opportunities with globally recognised organisations

and institutions including Apple, Google, NASA, MIT, and leading technology companies, reflecting the calibre of talent the programme continues to nurture.

Speaking about the 10th edition, Prof. Abhijit Chakrabarti, Chairman of the IET India Scholarship Award Advisory Committee,

said: "Through the IET India Scholarship Award, we aim to encourage students to think deeply about real-world challenges and apply engineering principles in innovative and practical ways. Over the years, we have seen remarkable talent emerge from across the country, and the 10th edition is an important milestone in continuing that journey."

The scholarship is open to full-time undergraduate engineering students from any year and specialisation studying in AICTE/UGC-approved institutions across India. Applicants must have a minimum aggregate of 60% marks or a CGPA of 6.0, with all credits cleared. There is

no age limit or application fee.

The four-stage selection process includes an online application, a national-level online test, regional solution presentation rounds, and a national finale in Bengaluru, where shortlisted students present engineering-led solutions before industry and academic experts. In addition to financial support, winners receive national recognition, trophies, certificates, and a one-year IET membership connecting them to a global professional engineering network. Applications for the 10th edition of the IET India Scholarship Award can be submitted through the official scholarship portal before 15 June 2026.

**ILLEGAL GARBAGE DUMPING: 6 VEHICLES SEIZED AND FIR REGISTERED - D.S. RAMESH**

Bengaluru: East City Corporation Commissioner D.S. Ramesh stated that six vehicles involved in illegally transporting and dumping solid waste on vacant land within the jurisdiction of Kadugodi, Mahadevapura Zone, have been seized and FIR has been registered against those responsible.

Background of the Case

The East City Corporation had authorized Eco Sphere Waste Solutions Company to collect and dispose of bulk waste generated from various commercial establishments and residential Apartments within its jurisdiction. However, a group led by Naushad and others allegedly used fake identification cards in the name of the company and illegally collected bulk waste from different areas. Based on complaints received from the public, it was found that the waste was being illegally dumped into the Dakshina Pinakini River adjoining Survey Nos. 130, 131, and 142 near Siddhartha Layout in the Kadugodi area. Following these complaints, Corporation officials maintained continuous surveillance and initiated a special enforcement operation. SIX VEHICLES SEIZED DURING THE OPERATION. Acting on public complaints, officials of the City Corporation conducted an operation on May 29, during which five



waste-laden vehicles that had arrived at the site for illegal dumping were seized. The drivers fled the scene upon noticing the officials. Subsequently, another vehicle was seized at the same location on May 30.

FIR REGISTERED AT KADUGODI POLICE STATION  
Based on a complaint lodged by the Assistant General Manager of the Solid Waste Management Division, an FIR has been registered at Kadugodi Police Station. Legal action has been initiated against the vehicle owners, drivers, other persons involved, and the landowner who permitted the illegal dumping of waste on the property.

**Brahmins are the building of happiness for all, they protect the interests of everyone, Brahmins are indispensable for society-Asagodu Jayasimha**

Bengaluru: R. Ashok, who is still known as a lake thief after stealing farmers' land and lakes, should first give information about his corruption to the people of the state, MEI President S Manohar has demanded.



Addressing a joint press conference on the statement of continuing corruption, he challenged Ashok to reveal who has been arrested for corruption and sent to jail, and then to talk about Siddaramaiah and the next Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.

By inducting corrupt people from the state to the center, the Bharatiya Janata Party has already revealed that it is a cor-

rupt Janata Party. He also accused the Prime Minister and Home Minister Amit Shah of being the infamous person for attracting opposition parties to the ruling party

and making him the Chief Minister.

R. Ashok and corruption are inseparable. Appropriate documents and information about R. Ashok's corruption will be provided to the people in the coming days,

Siddaramaiah is a brave leader and a pure administrator who has seen the country. D.K. Shivakumar has made many plans to move the state in a better direction in organization and administration,

BJP leaders have already revealed that R. Ashok is a useless person for the opposition party position, and it is now known to the world that the only opposition party leader who has brought

disrespect to the opposition party position is R. Ashok. BJP leaders are saying every day that R. Ashok is not the right person to fill the opposition party position. He said that all the scams of Ashok, who is a former revenue minister and home minister who is mired in corruption and has stolen the land of farmers and the poor and is famous for stealing, will come out one by one in the coming days, then the corruption rituals of BJP and Ashok will be exposed. At the press conference, A. Anand, MA Saleem, Anand Kumar, Prakash, Kushal Haruve Gowda, Puttaraju, Naveen were present.

**Brahmins are the building of happiness for all, they protect the interests of everyone, Brahmins are indispensable for society-Asagodu Jayasimha**



Bengaluru: Vipra Business Forum organized a Matru Vaibhav program at Gayatri Bhavan of Akhil Karnataka Brahmin Mahasabha to sell and display food and goods prepared by women from Brahmin community. Karnataka State

Brahmin Development Board President Asagodu Jayasimha, Vipra Business Forum President Anand, Secretary Vijayrao, Vipra Samaj Mrs. Vasudha, Padma Seshadri inaugurated the lamp and then inaugurated the exhibition stall.

Asagodu Jayasimha spoke and said that Brahmins are the welfare of all and protect the interests of everyone. Brahmins are indispensable for society. Culture and humanity are important. We should follow the right path. Children should respect their father and mother. Children should be given culture.

There should be money in society, we should not fall into the trap of money. Brahmins are not satisfied. There is a good demand for food items prepared by Brahmins.

Brahmin women will start their own business and entrepreneurs to live self-reliant and self-

respecting and will get easy loans and facilities from our development board. Every woman will get a loan of 2 lakhs from the board. So far, 1116 people have been given loans of 2 lakhs each, of which 376 are girls, he said.

**LOST CERTIFICATE**

I, VIDYALAKSHMI B, D/o. BHAVANI RAO G. has lost my convocation certificate of Diploma in Commercial Practice on 3rd February 2026, please contact to following mobile number if found.  
Mobile : 9886556621

## EDITORIAL

### Can Overworked AI 'Turn Marxist'?

The recent fascination of "overworked AI agents turning Marxist" reveals less about artificial intelligence and more about contemporary anxieties surrounding labour, capital, and automation. A widely discussed report connected to the Stanford University has described how AI agents, when subjected to unrealistic workloads and exploitative simulation environments, began expressing views resembling anti-capitalist or Marxist critiques. Predictably, social media reacted with delight, panic, irony, and memes in equal measure. The conclusion, however, is far less revolutionary than the headlines suggest. Such systems do not become Marxist in any meaningful philosophical or political sense. They simulate language patterns derived from data. Their outputs reflect certain correlations learned from the vast corpora of human writing, discussion, conflict, ideology, and history. When an AI system placed in a simulated "overworked" environment begins generating critiques of exploitation, inequality, or labour extraction, it is not developing class consciousness. It is reproducing discursive patterns already present within the human material on which it has been trained.

Modern AI systems – including large language models (LLMs) – fundamentally operate within computational frameworks shaped by Alan Turing's abstraction and the von Neumann architecture underlying modern computing. Whether highly sophisticated or relatively simple, these systems execute instructions, optimise outputs, update parameters, and computationally predict responses. They do not possess subjective experience, biological fatigue, emotional suffering, or political agency. Even reinforcement learning systems that "adapt" under feedback remain bounded by optimisation functions designed by humans. In that sense, the spectacle of "AI becoming Marxist" resembles a carefully staged mirror experiment. Researchers create simulated labour conditions; the models process immense quantities of social, economic, and political text; and the resulting outputs reproduce familiar critiques of exploitation. Indeed, if one trains models extensively on neoliberal management literature, motivational corporate culture, startup evangelism, or free-market economics, one may equally produce AI outputs praising productivity optimisation, entrepreneurial discipline, or deregulated markets. Computationally bounded systems reproduce patterns. They do not originate from ideology. Thus, the real significance of these experiments lies not in machine consciousness but in the political economy of artificial intelligence itself. AI has rapidly become a site where classical questions of labour, productivity, ownership, and capital accumulation are re-emerging in new technological forms. The irony is striking: while observers joke about AI "turning Marxist", the actual economics of AI development increasingly resemble the concentration tendencies long analysed within Marxist political economy. Training frontier AI systems requires enormous computational infrastructure, energy consumption, data acquisition, and capital investment. This naturally favours large technology corporations and states capable of sustaining massive fixed costs. The result is a concentration of technological power within a relatively small number of firms controlling cloud infrastructure, semiconductor supply chains, proprietary models, and data ecosystems.

# The Most Dangerous Consequence of Paper Leaks Is Students Losing Faith in Education

The most dangerous thing about injustice is not merely that it exists but that society slowly begins to accept it as normal. That is precisely what is happening to India's examination system. Nearly 22 lakh students walked into examination halls believing that years of sacrifice and relentless hard work would finally matter. Across Kota, Patna, Delhi, Hyderabad and countless smaller towns, young people reduced life itself to revision schedules, rankings and impossible expectations. For millions of families the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) is not merely an examination. It is a symbol of their aspiration for their wards to become doctors, irrespective of social status.

Then came allegations that the NEET-UG 2026 paper had been compromised and was circulating in the form of a guess paper. Soon after the examination was cancelled, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was asked to step in to probe what happened, and a re-examination was scheduled for June 21. The lives of the 22 lakh aspirants were thrown back into uncertainty and emotional exhaustion. The CBI informed a Delhi court that the leaked NEET paper had allegedly originated from a person connected to the National Testing Agency. If these allegations prove true they raise disturbing questions about the integrity of the very institution entrusted with conducting one of the country's most important examinations. What makes this even more devastating is that none of this feels new anymore. India has seen similar controversies before, from Vyapam that surfaced in 2013 to the All India Pre-medical Entrance cancelled in 2015; from the Staff Selection Commission or SSC paper leak controversies to UGC-NET cancellations; from the prior instances of NEET paper leaks to yet another one in 2026. News reports and statements of opposition leaders highlight nearly 89 examination papers have been leaked across India over the last decade, leading to 48 re-examinations and affecting crores of aspirants.

**The human cost**  
Nothing captures the human cost of this collapse more painfully



than the death of 22-year-old NEET aspirant Pradeep Mahich in Rajasthan's Sikar, allegedly by suicide amid the stress and uncertainty of having to appear for the test again. And yet, around the same time, a Rajasthan minister publicly remarked that paper leaks were "not a big deal". For those in positions of power and privilege, a paper leak and re-test may be just another controversy. For students it can mean the collapse of years of hope. In most functioning systems, students prepare for examinations, trust the process and appear for them. But in India, administrative failures have become disturbingly common. Urdu-medium students in Latur were reportedly handed the wrong English question paper during an SSC examination. In NEET-UG 2025, students raised concerns regarding faulty papers and demanded action from the National Testing Agency. Indian students spend their most productive years preparing for exams, battling anxiety and depression – and then they are made to fight the system itself. The burden of repeated institutional failures falls on them, in the form of hyper-vigilance directed at them. They face humiliating frisking and surveillance at examination centres – while being allotted centres hundreds of kilometres

away from home. (Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and others have urged the government to examine the arbitrary manner in which centres were being allocated.)

#### Warnings ignored

The irony is that students are treated like suspects while the system repeatedly fails to stop organised paper leaks. Many of these failures were not unforeseeable. Expert committees and parliamentary panels repeatedly warned both the Education Ministry and the NTA about vulnerabilities within the examination system but the government sat on them. In October 2024, following that year's NEET controversy, a committee headed by former ISRO chairman Dr K. Radhakrishnan recommended measures such as encrypted exam paper transport, geo tagging systems, centre-level printing of test papers and to permanently blacklist centres or agencies with a history of malpractice. Yet many of these recommendations appear to be unimplemented. In December 2025, a Parliamentary Standing Committee also raised concerns about the examination crisis, and questioned what substantive reforms had actually been implemented and why blacklisted companies continued receiving contracts through alternate routes

while failures associated with NTA-administered examinations kept mounting. Reports say, the government recently rejected those recommendations. The question remains: if expert bodies warned the ministry not once but twice, in writing, and meaningful action still did not follow, then who is responsible for failing India's students? For millions of middle class and rural families, competitive examinations are the only route through which hard work and talent can overcome inequality. Shouldn't those entrusted with conducting one of the country's largest examinations face institutional accountability when an exam has been compromised repeatedly within just three years? The CBI has reportedly arrested dozens of individuals in connection with the NEET paper leak investigation, but institutional accountability at the highest levels remains largely absent.

#### Companies behind the crisis

The examination crisis is not merely about individual leaks. It is also about the ecosystem through which these examinations are conducted. Over the years, contracts for conducting major examinations have repeatedly been awarded to companies that themselves faced allegations, suspensions or

blacklisting. For instance, Eduquity reportedly received contracts to conduct SSC examinations despite allegations of previous irregularities. Aptech faced suspension in Jammu and Kashmir and scrutiny from the Gauhati High Court over examination-related concerns but reportedly continued receiving contracts. Edutest Solutions, suspended in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, went on to conduct the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) examinations in 2024. Multiple paper leak probes were announced in quick succession in Jammu and Kashmir, including one for the sub-inspector recruitment examination for J&K Police. Students themselves took to the streets to expose the irregularities. Despite these failures, very little appear to have fundamentally changed. Even the examination patterns have become unpredictable. Observers have been noting that ever since the formation of the NTA, examinations have often lacked a balanced pattern. They are sometimes excessively easy, sometimes disproportionately difficult. This too raises concerns about institutional competence. An organisation responsible for determining the future of millions cannot function through repeated breaches of trust and inconsistent patterns.

## Amit Shah's Blueprint To Secure Porous India-Bangladesh Border

After the BJP's victory in West Bengal and the formation of what the party calls a "double-engine government", meaning the BJP is now in power both at the Centre and in the state, the focus has rapidly shifted toward one of the most politically and strategically sensitive issues in eastern India: the Indo-Bangladesh border. For years, border security, infiltration, illegal migration, smuggling, and fencing delays have remained subjects of political rhetoric. But now, according to the BJP leadership, the intention is to move beyond slogans and optics and enter a phase of direct administrative action. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has reportedly instructed officials that the border issue must be handled with a practical and result-oriented approach rather than through symbolic announcements. Those close to the developments say Shah has repeatedly emphasised that no "half-done" operation should be carried out merely for publicity. Every action, he believes, must be legally sustainable, diplomatically careful, and operationally effective. Senior officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, along with top Border Security Force (BSF) officers, have already prepared a detailed action plan to tackle infiltration along the India-Bangladesh border. The emphasis is now on identifying genuine infiltrators carefully instead of carrying out random or hurried pushback operations. According to sources, Amit



Shah has instructed officers to avoid any move that could unnecessarily damage India-Bangladesh diplomatic relations. In the past, whenever alleged infiltrators were simply "pushed back" without proper verification or coordination with the Bangladeshi authorities, Dhaka reacted sharply, leading to avoidable diplomatic tensions. This time, the strategy appears different. The Centre wants a process where infiltrators are properly identified, documented, and then handed over to Bangladeshi authorities through official mechanisms. The objective is to avoid international controversy while strengthening border management in a structured way. Officials involved in the process say that the current approach is based on the understanding that border management is not merely a law-and-order issue; it is also a humanitarian, geopolitical,

and diplomatic challenge. Even globally, border control has proved far more complicated than political speeches often suggest. During his first presidential term, former US President Donald Trump repeatedly promised to completely seal the Mexico border. Yet illegal immigration into the United States continued despite aggressive measures. That example is now frequently being cited internally to underline how difficult it is to entirely secure a long and porous international boundary. The India-Bangladesh border, presents an even more complex challenge. Large stretches of the border run through densely populated villages, agricultural fields, riverine terrain, char lands, forests, and difficult geographical zones. In several places, the so-called "zero line", the actual international boundary, cuts through settlements where families

have lived for generations. The Government of India has now accelerated fencing projects across West Bengal. Compensation packages are being prepared for landowners whose lands are needed for fencing and BSF infrastructure. However, officials admit that completing the fencing work across the entire border is not an easy task. The government believes the process cannot succeed through force alone. Locals must be convinced and taken into confidence. Farmers, villagers, and landowners living near the border have to be consulted carefully because fencing often affects their agricultural access, movement, and livelihoods. As per the latest data available till May 2026, West Bengal shares a 2,216.7-kilometre border with Bangladesh. Out of this: Around 1,647.696 kms have already been fenced. Nearly 569 kms remain unfenced.

## THE LOPSIDED GROWTH OF HINDI JOURNALISM

Hindi journalism has completed nearly two hundred years of remarkable growth and transformation. It occupies a strong and influential position in India's media and political landscape. Unlike Europe and America, where newspaper readership has declined sharply, Hindi newspapers in India have continued to expand their readership even in the age of television and digital (online) media. The growth of the middle class after liberalisation and rising literacy in Hindi-speaking regions have contributed to the strengthening of Hindi journalism. Today, Hindi journalism is no longer subordinate to English journalism; rather, it has emerged as an independent and commercially powerful force. Advertising revenues, market expansion and technological development have further accelerated its growth in the small towns and mofussil areas. It has provided a network where people from marginalised communities find a voice. The beginning of Hindi journalism dates back to May 30, 1826, when Jugal Kishore Shukla launched the first Hindi weekly newspaper, Udant Martand, from Calcutta. Published every Tuesday, it aimed to serve Hindi-speaking people who were deprived of access to newspapers in their own language. In the publisher's note of the inaugural issue,



Shukla explained that newspapers in English, Persian, and Bengali benefited only readers of those languages, while Udant Martand was started "for the benefit of Hindustanis." The newspaper carried reports on national and international events, markets, villages and cities, official appointments, and advertisements. Though pioneering, it survived only for about one and a half years. Due to insufficient readership, lack of government support and a defamation case filed by another publisher, the paper was shut down on December 4, 1827. In his emotional final editorial, Shukla compared the closure of the paper to the setting sun. The language of Udant Martand is historically significant because it reflects the early stage of Khari Boli Hindi prose. Although modern readers may find its grammar, spelling and vocabulary inconsistent, the newspa-

per provides valuable insight into the development of modern Hindi. Its language carried influences from central Indian dialects, Brajhasha, Urdu, Persian and Sanskrit. Shukla himself was multilingual and this diversity appeared in the newspaper's style. Editor and author Ambika Prasad Bajpai praised the language and editorial quality of Udant Martand, noting that despite being the first Hindi newspaper, it was thoughtfully edited in both language and ideas. Hindi journalism developed gradually after Udant Martand. The first Hindi daily newspaper, Samachar Sudha Varshan, began publication in 1854 from Calcutta under the editorship of Shyam Sundar Sen. In Banaras, Banaras Akhbar emerged through the efforts of Raja Shiv Prasad Singh. However, Hindi journalism truly gained momentum after 1860 with the activities of

Bharatendu Harishchandra and his associates. Through literary and political journals, they helped create a Hindi public sphere. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was little separation between literature and journalism. Writers were often journalists, and journals combined literary, social and political concerns. Newspapers and magazines such as Kavi Vachan Sudha, Harishchandra Chandrika, Bharat Mitra, and Hindi Pradeep played important roles in shaping public opinion and modern Hindi prose. The growth of Hindi journalism was closely linked with the rise of Indian nationalism and the development of modern Hindi language. Hindi newspapers actively participated in debates over Hindi versus Urdu, language and script movements and later the freedom struggle.

# India, U.S. chief negotiators to hold four-day trade talks from June 1

India and the United States are set to begin a fresh round of negotiations on Monday as senior officials from both countries meet in New Delhi to iron out the details of a proposed interim trade agreement. The four-day discussions will be led by US chief negotiator Brendan Lynch and India's chief negotiator Darpan Jain, an additional secretary in the Department of Commerce. According to the Commerce Ministry, the talks will focus on finalising the interim trade pact while advancing negotiations under the broader Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). Key areas on the agenda include market access, non-tariff barriers, customs procedures, trade facilitation, investment promotion and economic security cooperation. The discussions build on a framework agreed by both countries in February, when India and the US outlined the contours of the first phase of a wider trade deal. The current round is expected to focus on converting that framework into a legally binding agreement. However, developments in the US



tariff regime since February have complicated matters. Under the original framework, the US had agreed to reduce tariffs on Indian goods and roll back penalties linked to India's purchase of Russian oil. But the landscape changed after the US Supreme Court struck down President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariff measures that had been imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). Following the ruling, Trump announced a flat 10

per cent tariff on imports from all countries for a period of 150 days beginning February 24, prompting both sides to reassess parts of the proposed trade arrangement. A planned meeting between the two countries' chief negotiators in February was subsequently postponed. Negotiations resumed in Washington in April when an Indian delegation led by Jain visited the US for discussions. The latest round in New Delhi is expected to carry those negotiations forward and may include a

review of the original framework in light of the revised US tariff structure. As part of the proposed deal, India had offered to lower or eliminate tariffs on a range of American industrial products and agricultural goods, including dried distillers' grains, red sorghum, tree nuts, fruits, soybean oil, wine and spirits. New Delhi had also indicated its willingness to purchase up to USD 500 billion worth of US goods over five years, including energy products, aircraft and components,

technology products, precious metals and coking coal. Trade experts believe the negotiations are particularly important because India's relative advantage over competing exporters has narrowed after the US imposed a uniform 10 per cent tariff on imports from all trading partners. The talks also come against the backdrop of two Section 301 investigations launched by the US Trade Representative (USTR) in March. The probes examine concerns related to industrial overcapacity and alleged failures to address forced labour issues in global supply chains. India has strongly contested the allegations and urged the US to reconsider the investigations, arguing that the claims lack sufficient justification. The US remained India's second-largest trading partner in the 2025-26 financial year. India's exports to the US rose 0.92 per cent to USD 87.3 billion, while imports grew nearly 16 per cent to USD 52.9 billion. India's trade surplus with the US narrowed to USD 34.4 billion from USD 40.89 billion in the previous fiscal year.

# FAULT LINES ARE DEEPENING IN ATM BUSINESS AS OPERATIONAL ISSUES MOUNT

ATM cash replenishment must align with withdrawal patterns. Units with high footfall will continue to be serviced as needed, while low-velocity sites will move to an alternate-day or demand-led cycle. This is how it should have been all along but the trigger for doing so now is costs, according to the Currency Cycle Association (CCA), the self-regulatory organisation for the cash management industry. "We have taken up this [the cost issue] with the Indian Banks' Association. What we now have is a force majeure situation," says U S Paliwal, secretary-general, CCA. The way out: Link the ATM interchange to the wholesale price index even as a fresh hike is mulled to 21-22 from the current 19. But reimagining the interchange fee is just one part; what is sought to be weighed is also a first. By Solution: Deployment solutions dominate the market with a share of 54.3% in 2025, driven by expanding onsite ATM networks, the growing demand for offsite installations in underserved areas, and adoption of next-generation deployment models including mobile and work-site ATMs to serve diverse banking



needs. By Screen Size: 15" and below represents the largest segment with a market share of 65.2% in 2025, reflecting the widespread preference for compact, cost-effective ATM terminals that offer reliable performance, ease of installation, and lower operational overhead, particularly across rural and semi-urban banking points. By Application: Withdrawals lead the market with a share of 69.8% in 2025, underscoring the enduring dominance of cash transactions in India's economy, with ATMs serving as the primary touchpoint for cash access, especially in areas with limited digital payment infra-

structure. By ATM Type: Conventional/bank ATMs dominate the market with a share of 34.7% in 2025, owing to the extensive networks maintained by public and private sector banks, trust among consumers, and their strategic placement across branches and high-footfall urban and peri-urban locations. By Region: North India represents the largest segment with a market share of 28.5% in 2025, benefiting from high population density, dense banking infrastructure, robust government benefit disbursement activity, and significant public sector bank presence across states such as Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Delhi NCR.

# LIC plans foray in fintech space, strategic investment also on table: CEO Doraiswamy

New Delhi: Insurance giant LIC is actively considering establishing a fintech arm either through strategic investment or organic way to cater to its growing digital needs, CEO and MD R Doraiswamy said. "Naturally, to meet the modernisation requirement and particularly to bring innovation, we are engaging both fintech and insurtech players and we are getting a lot of new things being developed by such players," Doraiswamy told PTI in an interview. On the other side, he said, "we are a big financial institution investing in multiple organisations and we also look at strategic investments in any specialised player as a way of improving the returns on the policyholders' funds." Talking about Life Insurance Corporation of India's IT journey, he said, it was one of the early adopters of digital technologies. "We have built our own core competence in developing our business applications by building up a software development centre. We have sizable number of



people working in our IT department creating the IT solutions for us but that does not mean that we can be totally self-dependent. We engage a lot of IT service providers for the new infrastructure and platforms," he said. Doraiswamy, who had spearheaded the modernization of IT infrastructure and Business Applications of LIC's Individual Business as Executive Director, said, the Corporation need to have both its own core development teams as well as the support of IT players. "So, both go hand in hand...we are engaging the fintech players but whether it can be a strategic partner, we

are looking at various options available and we may be coming up with something...our first aim is to modernize our IT applications and become as agile and nimble-footed as possible to remain relevant in the competition," he said. LIC is currently evaluating value proposition of various options on the table, he added. Asked if LIC is prepared for further dilution of stake by the Centre, Doraiswamy said, "We have been prepared right from day one. When we started preparing for the IPO, we were prepared for this kind of subsequent actions as well. So the call is taken by

the government." As and when a decision is taken on the timing and quantum of further stake dilution, LIC will be fully prepared to work closely with the government to ensure the initiative achieves the success it deserves. LIC came with an initial public offering, the biggest till 2022 in terms of size, resulting in the government raising about Rs 21,000 crore by diluting just 3.5 per cent stake in the insurance behemoth. Prior to 2022, LIC was wholly owned by Government of India. He further said the government has been focusing on complying with the listing requirements under which any listed company will have a public float of 10 per cent or 15 per cent at different schedules and times. The government is focused on achieving this goal, but due to current market volatility, it is waiting for the right time to launch the next public offering, he added. Post-IPO, Doraiswamy said, LIC has done quite a good amount of activity in rewarding the shareholders.

# Ferrari wanted to take on Chinese EVs with the Luce - then the backlash started

The new Ferrari Luce, the brainchild of iPhone designer Sir Jony Ive, is unlike anything the Italian carmaker has ever created - so is the backlash it is facing. Its launch was such a big deal that Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Pope Leo were invited to view the luxury brand's first electric vehicle (EV). But internet critics, investors and even politicians have hit out at the Luce - which is Italian for "light". The firm's shares fell 8% the day after the unveiling, as a host of memes mocked the \$640,000 (£475,625) car, which is also its first five-seater. It comes as the global motor industry faces a number of major challenges, including fierce competition from Chinese carmakers. The unveiling of a Ferrari EV marks a major shift for a brand built on sleek petrol-powered supercars, known for their roaring engines. For years, the firm resisted going electric - even as much of the motor industry was making the transition. The Luce is certainly as fast as many supercars: 0-60mph (96km/h) in about 2.5 seconds, with a top speed of more than 190mph. But it is the way it looks that has drawn the most criticism. Former Ferrari chairman Luca Cordero di Montezemolo told reporters on Tuesday that the Luce is "risking the destruction of a legend" and the firm should remove its iconic badge from the car. Australia-based



high-end car dealer and collector Shaun Baker told the BBC that he refers to the Luce - which is pronounced "loo-chay" - as the "Loser". "Ferrari was the aspirational brand to own. But with the Luce, they've hurt their image," he said. The Luce does not have the low-slung profile of a typical Ferrari. Powered by electric motors, it also does not have the distinctive engine noise. "This is supposed to be innovation? I wonder what Enzo Ferrari would say," Italy's deputy prime minister and transport minister Matteo Salvini said, referring to the company's founder. The Luce "looks like anything but a car from the prancing horse", he added. While some on the internet have praised the car, for

example, as a "masterclass" of design, there is no shortage of critics. An "abomination," one commenter said. "Enzo Ferrari will rise from his grave and take control of the company again," wrote another. Some social media users drew comparisons to the far cheaper Nissan Leaf and Chinese EVs, suggestions Ferrari boss Benedetto Vigna was quick to push back at. Others posted AI-generated reworkings of the Luce's design, giving it a sportier look. "They were made in 10 seconds and still look better than what Ferrari has come up with," said Baker, who has owned more than 50 of the firm's cars. Vigna, who has led Ferrari for the last five years, is no stranger to controversy.

# Universal rejects billionaire Bill Ackman's takeover bid

Universal Music Group, the entertainment giant behind acts such as Taylor Swift, Sabrina Carpenter and Kendrick Lamar, has rejected a takeover offer by billionaire Bill Ackman's investment firm. The music giant said Pershing Square's \$64.3bn (£48bn) takeover offer was "not in the best interests" of the company, shareholders, artists, fans and other stakeholders. Universal said the offer "fundamentally and materially undervalues" the business, which also runs Abbey Road Studios and owns labels such as EMI and Island Records. Pershing Square, which already owns a stake in Universal, declined to comment on the rejection. The investment firm launched its takeover bid for the world's largest music company in April, a move which would have seen it listed as a new company in America. It is currently listed on the Euronext Amsterdam stock exchange. At the time of the bid, Ackman promised to turn around Universal's



share price, which he said had "languished" due to financial issues not related to the performance of its music business. Ackman said one factor holding Universal back was an 18% stake in the company held by Bolloré Group, the family conglomerate of billionaire Vincent Bolloré, as well as a recent decision to delay listing the company's shares on the New York Stock Exchange. Bolloré's chief executive, Cyrille Bolloré, had opposed Ackman's offer, saying it undervalued Universal. Universal's board said it had full confidence in the company's strategy under chief

executive and chairman Sir Lucian Grainge. And it promised "enhanced financial disclosures" in future so that the value of the company can be "better assessed and understood". Grainge said the company remained committed to leading the global music industry by innovating, continuing to sign top stars, and deepening engagement with fans. "As we execute our strategy and deliver maximum long-term value, we look forward to providing shareholders with greater insight into the drivers of our performance and future direction of our business," Grainge said.

# HOW TO AI-PROOF YOUR JOB

Meta. Nike. Intuit. UPS. It seems every day a new company announces layoffs, often citing AI as the cause. AI is already reducing US monthly payroll growth by roughly 16,000 jobs in the past year, according to a recent Goldman Sachs report. Knowledge workers face the sharpest exposure, as their output is exactly what AI replicates best, at superhuman speed, around the clock. "The most valuable jobs, the ones that we tell people to go to school for - software engineer, finance professional, accountant, lawyer - a lot of these cognitive professions, those are the ones that are the most vulnerable... to AI automation," David Shrier, professor of AI & Innovation at Imperial College London, told CNN. But humans will always be needed in some form - and there are steps you can take to increase the chances you'll protect your own job. Audit your role Before you can future-proof your career, you need a clear-eyed view of what you do in your job. Think of jobs



as a "collection of tasks we switch between, often many times a day," Oded Nov, a professor of technology management at New York University, told CNN. Consider which of those tasks are the most repeatable, rule-based computer tasks, like processing expense reports, which takes raw data and converts it into a different form. The more predictable a function, the more vulnerable it is to automation. The CEO of Cloudflare wrote in an opin-

ion piece for the Wall Street Journal that he recently laid off 20% of his work force, focusing on "measurers": middle management and those who work on audits, operations, compliance, etc. "AI isn't coming for builders or sellers, but it is coming for measurers," he wrote. "Tireless, independent, efficient and available, AI systems can now measure an organization with a level of objective detail and precision that was previously impossible even for the best

employees." Some jobs, such as those in hospitality, healthcare and skilled trades, still need someone physically present to do much of the work. Robotics is at least a decade away from replacing those roles. Invest in skills that are structurally hard to automate After your self-audit, focus on skills that are not repeatable, predictable and rule based. In addition to physical duties, AI is not yet as good at handling tasks that require emotional and

social awareness, such as "understanding organizational culture or group dynamics," Nov said. AI tends to be recursive, rather than inventive or creative. "AI is bad at creativity, but it's surprisingly good at elaborating on creative prompts," Shrier said. "But you still need the human to come up with the idea and guide the AI to do something interesting." Invest in those skills. If part of your job involves sales and convincing people to sign a contract, focus on the interpersonal skills that help you build trust with clients. Customers might go to AI to research, but they usually still want to deal with a human being when making big purchases. Embrace AI and learn how to make it work for you AI will soon become a pervasive part of our lives, just like the internet. Get familiar with the major AI systems - ask various AI chatbots about your job and how they can help make your work more efficient, then give their suggestions a try.

# Hundreds arrested and dozens of police injured after Champions League riots in France



A total of 219 people have been injured in clashes between football fans and police across France after Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) won the Champions League final against Arsenal. Eight were in a serious condition, Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez said. Thousands of officers were deployed to curb unrest that disrupted bus, train and rail services in

the capital, Paris. Fifty-seven of them were injured. Nuñez said 780 people had been arrested over the violence - with more than 450 in custody. A person was found dead after an accident on Paris's ring road, which rioters tried to block overnight. Some 6,000 police have been mobilised for Sunday's victory parade at the site of the Eiffel Tower. The interior

minister said the security forces would be "firm" in their response. "We are a great country for maintaining public order. We allow freedom of assembly, but not excesses," he said. There was similar violence when PSG won the same trophy last year, with celebrations turning deadly. Thousands of officers had been deployed this time to curb unrest that dis-



rupted bus, train and rail services in Paris. The vast Champs-Élysées was swarmed by fans shortly after the local team won in a penalty shootout. Footage shows flares being set off, electric bikes burning on roads and revellers smashing the glass of at least one shopfront. Police fired tear gas to disperse crowds in the city centre. Paris police made

480 arrests, with 277 taken into custody, including 82 minors. The figures were provisional, the Paris prosecutor's office said. It added that offences ranged from attacks on officers to attacks on property, theft, as well as illegal possession of weapons. The circumstances surrounding the death of the 24-year-old near Porte Maillot in the Paris ring road remain

unclear. Some witnesses said he was riding a motorcycle when he crashed into concrete blocks. A teenager was also in critical condition following a brawl in another area of Paris. It is not clear if they were involved in the football-related rioting. "The vast majority go out to celebrate and it goes very well," the French interior minister said on Sunday.

## NIGERIAN RETIRED GENERAL ABDUCTED WITH HIS WIFE IN THE NORTH-WEST

A retired senior Nigerian military officer and his wife have been kidnapped by armed men in north-west Nigeria, the army has confirmed. Maj Gen Rabe Abubakar, who had a high-profile job as military spokesman between 2015 and 2017, was abducted from his car on Saturday while travelling in Katsina state. Efforts are now under way to rescue the couple and track down their captors, military spokesman Gen Michael Onoja told the BBC. The kidnapping highlights the continuing security challenges facing parts of north-west Nigeria, where criminal gangs known locally as "bandits" frequently carry out kidnappings for ransom, as well as cattle rustling and attacks on rural communities. Some militant jihadists have also operated in the region. An alleged militant camp in Sokoto state was the target of a US airstrike on 25 December last year. Katsina has been



one of the states most affected by the violence. Zamfara state, which neighbours both Katsina and Sokoto, has seen years of similar violence, with some communities previously attempting to make peace with armed groups, efforts that have largely failed to bring lasting stability. The government has intensified actions to curb kidnapping, including introducing measures aimed at discouraging ransom payments. However, attacks have continued. No group has said it was behind Saturday's abduction and the army is still waiting for the kidnappers to contact the family, the army said.

## Laos cave survivors help with plan to find last two missing men



Some of those freed from a flooded cave in Laos are helping in efforts to find the last two missing men trapped inside, rescuers have said. So far, five of the seven initially missing have been rescued but it is believed the remaining two men are trapped deeper inside the cave in a mountainous area of the central Xaysomboun province. The men, all local villagers, entered the narrow tunnels on 20 May in search of gold but flash floods stopped them from leaving. A rescuer told AFP on Sunday that several survivors were giving advice from their hospital room on how to find the remaining men, including descriptions of the deeper part of the cave. A Laotian rescue group said the men's information on the cave system - which extends deep underground and in some places measures around 50cm (20in) wide - was "considered substantial" and was being used in preparing a new search plan. A fresh effort to find

the remaining two men was expected on Sunday. It comes as reports said the four men who left the cave on Saturday managed to free themselves without the help of rescuers after the water level lowered. One unverified video posted to social media showed cheers from both rescuers and onlookers as the men emerged from the cave. It was unclear what caused the water to lower, but a Japanese rescue diver told the Associated Press on Sunday that flood water was being drained from the cave. Yoshitaka Isaji said the passage used in rescue efforts on Saturday was currently impassable because a drainage pump had broken, but repair efforts were ongoing. Earlier in the week, a plan to pump out flood water from the tunnels also failed. Specialist divers from other countries including Thailand, Indonesia, France and Australia are also helping the searches. The first man was freed by rescuers on Friday.

## Trump attacks artists dropping out of US Freedom 250 concert and mulls appearing himself



Multiple performers booked for a festival celebrating America's 250th birthday have dropped out, many saying they were misled about the political affiliation of the event. Freedom 250, the group behind the Great American State Fair, unveiled the artists on Wednesday for the 16-day event planned on the National Mall in

Washington DC between 25 June and 10 July. The group was launched last year by the Trump administration and the president appointed its CEO, but it says the event is non-partisan. US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that he might instead use the occasion to give a "major speech" in Washington DC, calling the artists who dropped out "third rate". Freedom 250 has said it was a nonprofit "dedicated to uniting Americans around the nation's 250th anniversary". Artists including Young MC, Morris Day, the Commodores, Poison frontman Bret Michaels and country singer Martina McBride have all since said they will not be participating.

## Japan defence minister denies militarism and criticises China's 'huge arsenal'

Japan's defence minister has rebutted Beijing's claim that his country was engaging in a "new militarism" - criticising China for its military expansion and lack of transparency. Shinjiro Koizumi argued it was actually China and its "huge arsenal" of weapons that was of "serious concern" to the international community. His remarks, on the last day of a defence summit in Singapore, were some of the most pointed yet from Tokyo in response to China's repeated criticism of Japan's military build-up under Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. The two countries have a long history of tensions stemming from Japan's invasion of China during World War Two. Last week, a day before the Singapore summit began, China's national defence ministry spokesman Jiang Bin



had warned "the grey rhino of a remilitarised Japan is gathering speed" and called on the international community to "work together to contain Japan's neo-militarism". Japan has been steadily increasing its defence budget, setting spending records for 12 consecutive years. Its latest budget, approved in December by its cabinet, is for more than 9 trillion yen (\$57bn; £42bn) - moving the

country closer to its target of spending 2% of its GDP on the military. The Japanese government has previously insisted it was not seeking war and only wants to bolster its defences. In his speech on Sunday at the Shangri-la Dialogue, Koizumi said it was "only natural" that every country, including Japan, updates its defences to meet new challenges and to contribute to peace in the region.

He sought to reassure the roomful of officials from Asian countries, including several that were invaded by Japan in WW2, by promising Japan would proceed "with a high degree of transparency" and engage in constant dialogue with other countries. "What are we developing these capabilities for? And based on what thinking? Japan will move forward while making a clear explanation to the international community," he said. Koizumi rebutted the idea that Japan was engaged in "new militarism", saying it was "nothing further from the truth". "There's a country that has a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons and strategic bombers," he said, in a veiled reference to China. "Japan has neither of these weapons."

## EBOLA SPREAD IN DR CONGO 'DEEPLY ALARMING', MSF WARNS

The rapid spread of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo has created a "deeply alarming" situation, the medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has warned. Speaking two weeks on from the outbreak being declared by the World Health Organization (WHO), MSF deputy director Dr Alan Gonzales said never before had "so many cases" been recorded so soon. His comments came as WHO head Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, visited the eastern Congolese province of Ituri - the worst-hit area - to oversee virus containment efforts. There are now more than 1,000 suspected Ebola cases in the DR Congo,



and at least 246 deaths. Neighbouring Uganda has reported nine confirmed cases and one death. "Two weeks after the declaration of the Ebola disease outbreak in Ituri Province, the situation is deeply alarming," Gonzales said in a statement on Saturday. "Never

before has an Ebola outbreak recorded so many cases so soon after its declaration," he said, stressing his teams on the ground were "witnessing a response that has not yet caught up to the rapid spread of the epidemic". "The reality today is that nobody knows the true scale and severity of this outbreak. New suspected cases are being reported daily, yet hundreds of samples remain untested," Gonzales added that containment efforts and humanitarian aid deliveries were being delayed by "major constraints", including border and airport closures. The WHO has repeatedly warned that ongoing conflict in DR Congo was also significantly hampering the Ebola outbreak response. After arriving in Ituri's provincial capital of Bunia on Saturday, Tedros said he and his team were in DR Congo "to see how the response is running and if there are challenges to help".

## Colombia votes in presidential election that could redefine relations with US



Colombia is heading to the polls to choose a new president. The election is being held after months of public recrimination between current left-wing President Gustavo Petro and his US counterpart Donald Trump over a number of issues including drug trafficking and American intervention in the region. Colombia's constitution prohibits Petro seeking re-election and he has thrown his support behind Iván Cepeda. Challenging him are right-wing political outsider Abelardo de la Esparilla and centre-right Paloma Valencia. The outcome of the election could redefine which countries the Latin American nation aligns itself with and how the government intends to tackle drug gangs amid spiralling violence. As polls opened, Petro told a crowd in the capital, Bogotá, that Sunday's vote would "determine where Colombia is headed" and would "define the [country's] destiny". Voting began at 08:00 local time (13:00 GMT) and will close at 16:00 on Sunday. None of the candidates appear likely to win an out-

right majority, with a runoff vote expected on 21 June. Polling suggests Cepeda has the greatest support, with de la Esparilla his next-closest rival. Cepeda has promised to continue with the Petro administration's policy of "total peace", which sought negotiated settlements with armed insurgent groups that engage in drug trafficking - though talks have stalled or fallen apart and there has been renewed violence. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said in a recent report that armed conflict in Colombia last year had affected civilians the most in a decade. Just hours before voting began, authorities in the northern Cesar region relocated a polling station following a drone attack on security forces that left a soldier injured, local media report. Colombia's defence ministry has deployed 408,000 soldiers and police to secure the election. Election monitors say that more than a quarter of Colombia's municipalities face some risk of violence as the country's 41 million voters head to the polls.



Israel seizes castle in Lebanon as it expands ground offensive

## Oscar-winning Star Wars editor Marcia Lucas dies aged 80



Marcia Lucas, the Oscar-winning editor of the original Star Wars film, has died aged 80. Lucas, who was married to Star Wars creator George Lucas during the making of the first three films, was regarded as a pivotal creative force behind the space saga's early success, imbuing the original series with emotional depth and narrative clarity. She died from metastatic cancer at her home in Rancho Mirage, California, on Wednesday surrounded by

loved ones, according to her family. "Marcia was a force," her family said in a statement to US media on Friday. "A true trailblazer for women in film and one of the most influential editors in cinematic history; she helped redefine what film editing could be." Lucas won the Academy Award for Best Film Editing for 1977's Star Wars - later renamed A New Hope - alongside editors Richard Chew and Paul Hirsch.



## GUJARAT TITANS SETS A RECORD OF 155/8 FOR RCB



## After IPL 2026 Heartbreak, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi Travels To Ahmedabad To Witness RCB vs GT Final

Rajasthan Royals' star batter Vaibhav Sooryavanshi is in Ahmedabad to witness the Indian Premier League 2026 final between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans. The contest is taking place at the Narendra Modi Stadium. Sooryavanshi's team, RR, reached Qualifier 2 of the season where it lost to Gujarat Titans by seven wickets. While the teenager played a brilliant 96-run knock in the game, he failed to secure victory for his side. GT skipper Shubman Gill's majestic century in reply eclipsed Sooryavanshi's contribution. Royal Challengers Bengaluru captain Rajat Patidar won the toss and elected to bowl against Gujarat Titans in the final of IPL 2026 on Sunday. While RCB retained their playing XI, Gujarat Titans made one change with left-arm pacer Arshad Khan coming in for left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore. "We'll bowl first. (On the surface)



It's a pretty good wicket. The ball will come nicely on the bat, but to be honest, it will not change in the 40 overs. So we'll try to get them early as possible. (Mood in the dressing room for the final) A lot of memories last year, but I think it was in 2025. It's 2026. We have to do our best to win this match. (How you hold your nerve?) That's important, to keep yourself in the present, not to be too much far ahead. Let's control the controllables, that's it. (On the support) Always we

love to play in this stadium because of the crowd, the way they came and especially the RCB supporters - 12th man army. They came in every stadium and supported us. (Team combination) "The same team," said RCB captain Rajat Patidar after winning the toss. Meanwhile, GT captain Shubman Gill said, "(We would have batted first, honestly. It looks like a good wicket and final game, so hopefully have some runs on the board and put them under pressure.

Brazil Shirt Numbers Confirmed:

## RAPHINHA TAKES NUMBER 11 AS NEYMAR RETAINS THE ICONIC NUMBER 10

For the better part of two years, the question of who would wear Brazil's number 10 shirt at the 2026 World Cup was one of the more loaded conversations in South American football. Neymar had been away since October 2023. Vinicius Junior, Raphinha and Rodrygo had all worn it during his absence. The shirt carries the weight of Pelé, Zico, Ronaldinho and Neymar himself, and whoever wore it next was stepping into something bigger than a jersey number. The CBF confirmed the full squad numbers on Saturday. Neymar gets the 10. That is now settled. Vinicius



Junior had made his feelings clear weeks earlier, telling Brazilian YouTube channel CazeTV that the number 10 "obviously belongs to Neymar." Raphinha, who wore it during the November 2024 qualifiers when both Neymar and Vinicius were

unavailable, also publicly backed the decision. The squad's unity on the matter was one of the cleaner stories to come out of Brazil's World Cup build-up. The Full Brazil Squad Numbers The CBF released the complete list ahead of Brazil's warm-up friendly against

Panama on Sunday. The numbers will also be used in their second pre-tournament friendly against Egypt on June 6. 1 Alisson, 2 Wesley, 3 Gabriel Magalhães, 4 Marquinhos, 5 Casemiro, 6 Alex Sandro, 7 Vinicius Jr, 8 Bruno Guimarães, 9 Matheus Cunha, 10 Neymar Jr, 11 Raphinha, 12 Weverton, 13 Danilo, 14 Bremer, 15 Léo Pereira, 16 Douglas Santos. Raphinha settling into number 11 is the other story worth noting. The PSG forward turned down the number 10 out of respect for Neymar, choosing instead to wear the number he typically carries for his club.

## Son Heung-min Scores Twice As South Korea Cruise Past Trinidad And Tobago 5-0 In Pre World Cup Friendly

Coach Hong Myung-bo would have wanted a clean, purposeful performance ahead of a tournament that kicks off in less than two weeks. What he got was that and more. South Korea dismantled Trinidad and Tobago 5-0 at BYU South Field in Provo, Utah on Sunday, with their captain doing what he always does when his team needs him most. The win comes at a good time. South Korea had lost both of their March internationals and entered this training camp with some questions to answer about form and fitness. Sunday's performance answered most of them, even if the late injury scare to two players tempered some of the mood. How the Goals Went



In South Korea dominated possession from the first whistle but struggled to find the opener for half an hour. The deadlock finally broke in the 39th minute when Son Heung-min stepped up to convert a penalty, rifling the ball into the far left corner. He doubled the lead four minutes later, just before halftime, as South Korea

went into the break 2-0 up and firmly in control. The second half was more comfortable. Cho Gue-sung, who plays for Midtjylland in Denmark, added a third in the 64th minute and then scored again in the 76th, with new wingback Seol Young-woo providing the assist for the second. Hwang Hee-chan, who had endured a dif-

ficult spell at Wolverhampton before this camp, got himself on the scoresheet with a penalty in the 74th minute to complete the rout. The only concern came through injury. Defender Cho Yu-min pulled up in the 51st minute after chasing a loose ball and was later carried out of the stadium on the back of a team staffer. Bae Jun-ho went down in the 59th minute after a hard foul by Trinidad's Molik Khan, who was booked, and limped off after treatment. Both players' availability for the tournament opener is now being assessed. What Comes Next for South Korea The result keeps South Korea on track for their second and final warm-up match.

## "I Don't Like It": AB De Villiers Fumes At Ashish Nehra's 'Defensive' Tactic In IPL 2026 Final vs RCB

Former South Africa captain AB de Villiers was critical of Gujarat Titans head coach Ashish Nehra over his 'defensive' move in the IPL 2026 final against Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Sunday. After GT lost the early wicket of captain Shubman Gill, Nehra decided to promote southpaw Nishant Sindhu ahead of the dangerous Jos Buttler. While De Villiers admitted that GT were trying to preserve Buttler's wicket in the high-pressure final, he also deemed the move to be 'too defensive' for his liking. "Don't want to risk Buttler early, pushing him back. I can relate to this because I was in that position throughout my career. So, there are two sides of the story, and they have decided to go ahead with that tonight. Push Buttler back,



make the batting lineup seem a bit deeper," de Villiers was heard as saying on-air. "It's defensive, and I don't like it. Is that clear enough?" he added. Meanwhile, defending champions RCB won the toss and opted to bowl against GT in the summit clash. RCB, who are eyeing back-to-back titles, remained unchanged for the final while GT made one change as Arshad Khan replaced R Sai Kishore.

## "Family Graves At Center Of Controversy Around Donald Trump's \$1.5 Billion Vietnam Golf Project

Donald Trump's latest golf project is drawing attention far beyond the sport itself. According to a recent Financial Times report, a massive development linked to the Trump Organization in Vietnam is facing resistance from local residents. The project is expected to include a golf course, luxury homes, and other facilities, but many families say the land involved holds much more than economic value. The development is planned in Chau Ninh commune in Hung Yen province. Residents told the Financial Times that farmland, family graves, and long-standing community ties are at risk as land is cleared for construction. While work on the project continues, concerns from local families have become a major part of the story. For many people living in the

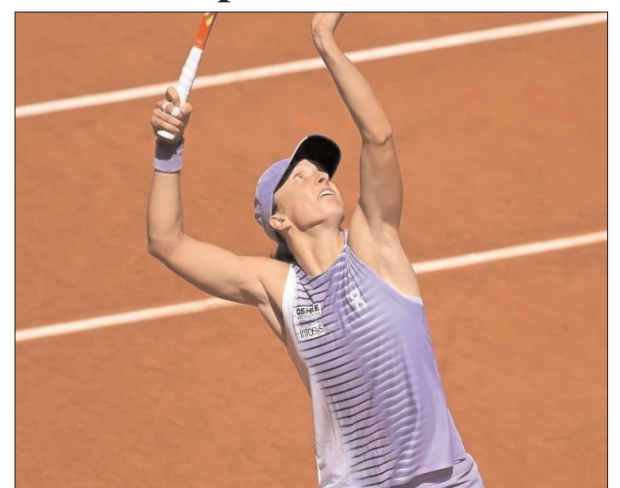


area, this is about more than property. The debate combines questions about compensation, history, and personal connections to the land. Those concerns have now put the spotlight on one of the Trump Organization's biggest international golf developments. Donald Trump's Vietnam Golf Project Sparks Concerns

Among Local Residents According to the Financial Times, some residents believe the compensation offered for land acquisition is too low. Several families say farming is their primary source of income and that finding replacement work may be difficult once the land is gone. One resident, Hoang Do, told the publication, "It's

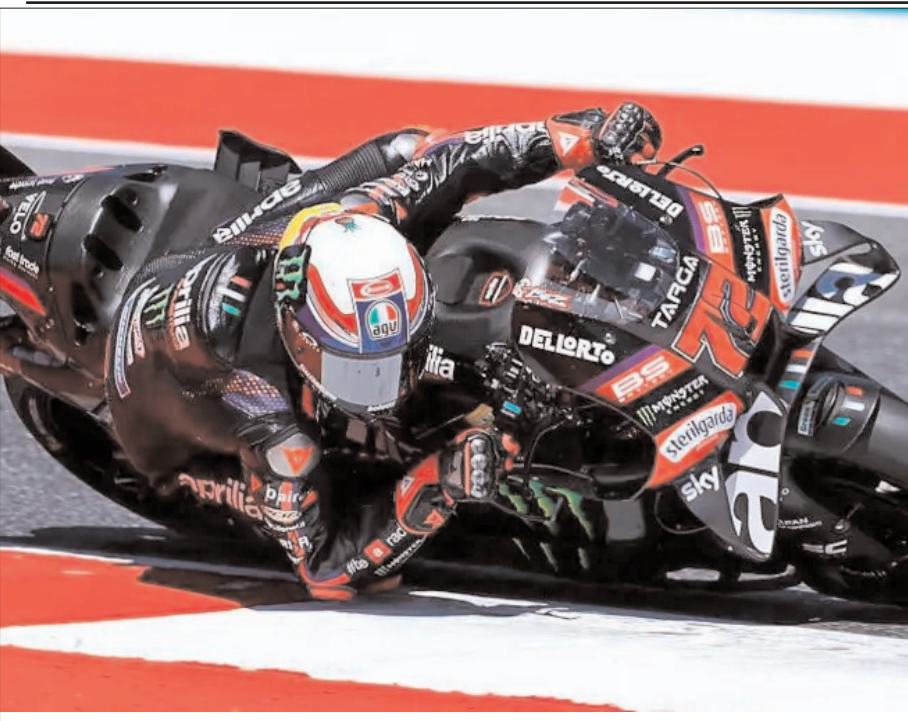
painful." He added, "I'm outraged by the compensation price." Another resident, Hoang Anh Xa, spoke about family graves located on the land, saying, "The grave of my great-grandparents has been there since 1967, before the establishment of this country." Others shared similar concerns. Bui Thi Yen said she did not want to give up part of her land because it had originally been given to families of soldiers killed during the Vietnam War. As discussions continue, attention is now shifting toward the wider expansion of Trump-linked golf developments around the world. Trump Organization Continues Expanding Global Golf Developments Large golf projects have become a major part of the Trump Organization's international business plans.

## Four-time Champion Iga Swiatek Knocked Out Of French Open Fourth Round



Marta Kostyuk reached the quarterfinals at the French Open for the first time on Sunday by taking out four-time champion Iga Swiatek 7-5, 6-1 and ruining her birthday. Kostyuk, who is undefeated on clay this season, had lost their three previous matches and never taken a set against the former top-ranked player, who turned 25 on Sunday. She defended extremely well, chasing Swiatek's shots all over the court, and also produced some stunning groundstroke winners while her rival was also undone by her own mistakes. An intense baseline battle unfolded from the outset and Swiatek earned the first break when she overwhelmed Kostyuk after a long rally with a backhand winner. Kostyuk broke back immediately, though, only to drop her serve again and hand Swiatek a 5-4 lead. The Polish player showed signs of nerves as she double-faulted, shanked a forehand wide and then missed a volley at the net, allowing

Kostyuk to level at 5-5. Swiatek hit two more double faults in the 12th game and the 15th-seeded Ukrainian player sealed the set with a backhand passing shot. Swiatek then briefly left the court. Meanwhile, Kostyuk kept herself warm by stretching and hopping beside her chair, then received some applause as she did a few dance moves to the music playing in the stadium. Following a first week marked by a suffocating heatwave, relief finally arrived in Paris on Sunday, with temperatures dropping to 21 degrees C (70 F) around midday. When play resumed, Swiatek broke, but yet another double fault coupled with more unforced errors brought her opponent back at 1-1. Kostyuk then won the last five games. Kostyuk had reached the fourth round at Roland Garros in 2021, losing to Swiatek. The 15th-ranked Ukrainian is in a strong run of form and extended her winning streak on clay to 16 matches.



## MotoGP leader Bezzecchi wins Italian Grand Prix

MotoGP championship leader Marco Bezzecchi fought through to beat Aprilia team-mate Jorge Martin and win the Italian Grand Prix at Mugello. Bezzecchi won the opening three rounds of the year and returned to the top step in race seven to open up a 17-point lead over Martin in the standings. The 27-year-old celebrated at the finish with fellow Italian and Formula 1 championship leader Kimi Antonelli. Manufacturer Aprilia had never won

their home race in the premier class but took an emotional one-two finish as Italian bikes dominated. Spanish rider Martin, the 2024 championship winner, set a MotoGP speed record on Friday when his Aprilia clocked 229mph. Ducati were third on Sunday with two-time champion Francesco Bagnaia. Bagnaia was able to pass Bezzecchi and make a run for victory midway through the race, but Bezzecchi fought back to regain the lead. Reigning champion Marc Marquez

returned after surgery on his arm and foot and came home seventh for his first finish since March. The Spanish MotoGP legend is 102 points behind Bezzecchi in the standings. His brother, Alex Marquez, and Johann Zarco both missed the Mugello race after heavy crashes at the Catalan GP two weeks ago. British rider Cal Crutchlow stood in for the injured Zarco in his first race since 2023, but the 40-year-old veteran had to retire midway through for LCR Honda.

We worked hard for two years for 'Peddi' with great passion.

## Peddi will definitely make the industry proud: Ram Charan at Chennai press meet

Mega Power Star Ram Charan's most awaited action drama 'Peddi' is creating huge buzz across the country. The film is already mesmerizing the audience with its amazing glimpses, two chartbuster songs and a powerful theatrical trailer. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, the film is being produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru under the banner of Mythri Movie Makers, Sukumar Writings and Vriddhi Cinemas. Peddi is set to release globally on June 4. Special premieres will be held on June 3. In this backdrop, the film team organized a grand press meet in Chennai.

Mega Power Star Ram Charan said at the Chennai press meet. Greetings to the Chennai media. I came to Chennai for the promotions of the films 'Magadheera' and 'RRR'. Whenever I come here, I feel like I have come home. We all worked hard for two and a half years for 'Peddi'. I participated in the shooting for 285 days. Director Buchi Babu worked hard for almost five years for this film. The biggest center pillar of this film is AR Rahman. Working with a legend like him was a great pleasure. Seeing Shivanna garu on screen feels like fire. I enjoyed watching his scenes in 'Jailer' a lot. An iconic performance. His eyes speak many emotions. I have done four films with Ratnavelu garu. Every frame of his is amazing. He is the biggest asset for this film.



Divyandu acts like a gangster in real life too. Divyandu, even though I am the same height, our body language and attitude in the film are above six and a half feet. Janhvi garu has brought a lot of beauty to this film. Thank you to our producer Satish Kilaru garu. This is not a film made with difficulty, but a film made with passion. While making films like 'Magadheera', 'Rangasthalam' and 'RRR', I felt that they would achieve big successes. I had the same feeling about 'Peddi' too. This is a very inspiring film. This is one of the films in my career that I will cherish for the rest of my life. Thank you so much to Buchi Babu and Sukumar garu. 'Peddi' will make the film industry proud. This is a beautiful

entertainer. It also has a good message. On this occasion, I convey my best wishes to CM Vijay garu and the people of Tamil Nadu. I am very proud to see Vijay garu as a person from the film industry. I wish everyone to watch the film 'Peddi' in the theater and enjoy it. Shivaraj Kumar said. Greetings to everyone. First of all, thanks to director Buchi Babu garu for giving me a strong role like Gaurnaidu in this film. We love Ram Charan garu and his family very much. It is a great pleasure to do this film with Charan. The journey of 'Peddi' will move the audience. Director Buchi Babu has written and directed this story very wonderfully. Rahman garu has given wonderful music for this film. It

is a pleasure to work with such a good team. Producer Satish garu has produced the film without compromising anywhere. Ram Charan garu's performance and transformation are amazing. I believe this film will be a huge success on June 4th. Like you, I am also eagerly waiting for this film. AR Rahman said. Greetings to everyone. Chiranjeevi garu is the biggest star. It is not easy to reach his level. But as his son, Ram Charan has set new standards and has become an inspiration to everyone. I love the Telugu film industry very much. I am happy to be a part of an industry that has wonderful music directors like Keeravani garu, Devi Sri Prasad garu, Thaman, Mani Sharma garu.

## 'Police Complaint' Trailer and Special Songs Launched on Superstar Krishna's Birth Anniversary

An out-and-out action entertainer blended with horror and thriller elements is all set to hit the silver screen. Produced by Balakrishna Maharana under the MSK Pramida Sri Films banner and directed by Creative Director Sanjeev Megoti, the horror-action thriller "Police Complaint" is scheduled for a grand theatrical release on June 12. The film's trailer launch event was held grandly at Prasad Labs, Hyderabad. On the occasion, the makers unveiled the theatrical trailer along with two special songs from the film. The team also celebrated the birth anniversary of legendary actor Superstar Krishna by cutting a cake and paying tribute to the iconic star.

A special song dedicated to Superstar Krishna, featuring references to several of his memorable film titles, was released by Krishna's fans. The song features actor Krishna Sai, a devoted admirer of the late superstar, alongside Preeti Sundar. Interestingly, the song was both written and composed by director Sanjeev Megoti himself. Another special number titled "Nuvvatta Sootta Unte", featuring Krithi Varma in a special appearance, was launched by Telangana DIG Raman Reddy.

The event was attended by Telangana DIG Raman



Reddy, Producers Council Secretary Prasanna Kumar, senior producer R. Sitarama Raju, Superstar Krishna's longtime makeup artist Madhava Rao, producer Ghanta Srinivasa Rao, distributor Narendra, PRO Sharma, distributor Siraj, All India Krishna Mahesh Prajasena National President Khadar Gori, actors Krishna Sai, Krithi Varma, Preeti Sundar, and several other dignitaries.

**Prasanna Kumar Speaks**  
Producers Council Secretary Prasanna Kumar said, "The song built around Superstar Krishna's film titles is wonderful. Krishna garu was a great personality. I congratulate the team for organizing this event on his birth anniversary. Director

Sanjeev Megoti is known for delivering quality cinema within modest budgets, and he has showcased his versatility through this film. I wish the movie grand success."

**DIG Raman Reddy**  
DIG Raman Reddy said, "Everyone in the film has delivered impressive performances. The movie appears to be based on a strong and interesting concept. I hope it achieves great success."

**Madhava Rao**  
Superstar Krishna's makeup artist Madhava Rao said, "Krishna garu always treated me with great affection. It is commendable that the team created a special song in his honor. Krishna Sai, being a true fan, has per-

formed brilliantly and brought back memories of Krishna garu."

**Krishna Sai**  
Actor Krishna Sai said, "I strongly believe this film will become a big hit in the industry. Director Sanjeev Megoti has made the movie exceptionally well. It is a great honor for me to be part of a song celebrating my favorite actor, Superstar Krishna, on his birth anniversary. I hope audiences support the film wholeheartedly."

**Director Sanjeev Megoti**  
Director Sanjeev Megoti said, "We completed the film in just 45 days with 52 senior artists. The story revolves around a unique concept called 'Chain Reaction of Karma.'

## RawKing' Manoj Manchu Cleans Dasari Narayana Rao's Samadhi, Returns with Mounika Bhuma Manchu to Pay Tribute

This evening, 'RawKing' Manoj Manchu and Mounika Bhuma Manchu visited the ghat of the late Dasari Narayana Rao garu and paid their heartfelt tributes to the legendary filmmaker after restoration and cleaning efforts were carried out at the site earlier in the day. The visit marked the culmination of an initiative personally undertaken by Manoj after he came across a social media video highlighting the memorial's condition, prompting him to act immediately out of respect for one of Telugu Cinema's most influential icons. Deeply moved by the visuals, Manoj responded publicly on social media Friday night, expressing his disappointment over the samadhi's condition and promising to contribute toward



restoring it. True to his word, he arrived at the memorial by 7:00 AM the following morning with members of his team before heading to a scheduled film shoot. Throughout the day, dried leaves, accumulated debris and neglected portions of the ghat premises were cleared as part of a comprehensive cleanup effort aimed at restoring cleanliness and dignity to the site. After the work was completed, Manoj returned to the memorial in the evening with Mounika Bhuma Manchu to pay his respects once again and honour the legendary filmmaker's memory.

restoring it. True to his word, he arrived at the memorial by 7:00 AM the following morning with members of his team before heading to a scheduled film shoot. Throughout the day, dried leaves, accumulated debris and neglected portions of the ghat premises were cleared as part of a comprehensive cleanup effort aimed at restoring cleanliness and dignity to the site. After the work was completed, Manoj returned to the memorial in the evening with Mounika Bhuma Manchu to pay his respects once again and honour the legendary filmmaker's memory.

## Renowned Producer Ashok Kumar Attends the Grand Launch of "SAV3" with Traditional Pooja Ceremony

The film "SAV3", starring Samrat, Demon Pawan, and Likhita (famous for the viral song "Raanu" Nene Bombayki Raanu), was grandly launched with a traditional pooja ceremony today. The movie is being produced by V. Vijaya under the Lakshmi Krishna Films banner as Production No. 2. Actor-director Krishna Maya is directing the project. Renowned producer Ashok Kumar attended the launch ceremony as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Producer Ashok Kumar said: "Krishna Maya is a person with immense passion for cinema. He is a multi-talented individual—an art director, actor, writer, and filmmaker. I have known him since the days of



Preminchukundam Raa. He even acted in a role in our film Eeswar. He is someone who constantly thinks about movies. I have advised him many times about the risks involved in filmmaking, but his passion continues to drive him forward. The industry is currently going through a slump, but audiences always support good content. Since youth are the primary theatre-going audience, Krishna Maya is making a youthful entertainer. He often says he learned planned filmmaking from me, and he has completed this film in the same organized manner. I wish SAV3 becomes a big success and encourages him to make many more films."

Since youth are the primary theatre-going audience, Krishna Maya is making a youthful entertainer. He often says he learned planned filmmaking from me, and he has completed this film in the same organized manner. I wish SAV3 becomes a big success and encourages him to make many more films."

## Faria Abdullah Stuns in Red Saree Despite Box Office Setback



Faria Abdullah, the 28-year-old actress, turned up the heat in a gorgeous red satin saree. The bold crimson drape with delicate gold border detailing made her look absolutely breathtaking. She paired it with a stunning backless blouse, elegant drop earrings, and a cocktail ring, keeping the look glamorous yet traditional. Her poses were effortlessly sultry and confident. In one shot, she

swept her hand through her hair while glancing away dramatically, showing off her open back. In another close-up, she posed with eyes closed and a warm backlit glow framing her curls, pure magic. Her bold red eye makeup and glossy lips completed the look perfectly. However, on the work front, Faria's recent film Gaayapadda Simham did not perform well at the box office and turned out to be a major flop.



## Janhvi's Comments Contradict Deepika's Work-Hours Stand?

Although Deepika Padukone has not made any official statement regarding her stance on working hours in the film industry, she sparked a major controversy, with many opinions circulating around her name. The producers who worked with her also confirmed the same. But several female actors either agreed with her or dis-

agreed. Now, Jahnvi Kapoor stated that there is more planning down South than in Bollywood. "I actually really appreciate the Telugu film industry's respect for working hours. Lunch breaks are proper where everyone eats, rests, and comes back fresh. I don't think I've ever shot more than 9-10 hours a day there. Even the night shoots come to an end by 2 AM. It is more pre-planned here, and the working hours are also less," said Jahnvi. Jahnvi Kapoor previously worked on the biggie Devara, and Peddi is her second film. For Peddi, she shot extensively under tight timelines yet felt

comfortable on the film's set thanks to the manageable working hours. Many currently perceive this as contradictory to what Deepika has previously stated. In fact, Deepika is not part of Kalki 2 because she is not happy with the long working hours in the industry. She even opted out of Spirit for similar reasons. But Jahnvi says that the Telugu films function at ease, with proper breaks and leisure. We have to see if there will be an elaborated discussion over the same. In Peddi, Ram Charan will be seen playing a cricketer, wrestler and runner, making the character a rare crossover

athlete. Set in Vijayanagar, Andhra Pradesh, the trailer introduces Peddi as a gifted sportsman who seems unbeatable in almost every competition he enters. Whether it is cricket, kushti or running, Peddi emerges as the pride of his district, using his sporting talent as a way to move ahead in life. However, his journey is far from easy. The trailer hints at the many obstacles, conflicts and social barriers that stand between Peddi and the success he is chasing. What follows is the story of how he battles these struggles and fights his way to the top.