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## CM VIJAY

URGES CENTRE TO RECONSIDER  
NLC DISINVESTMENT PLAN

NATION PAGE

RESCUERS SEARCHING  
RUBBLE AFTER  
VENEZUELA'S STRONGEST  
EARTHQUAKE SINCE 1900

WORLD | NEWS

## SREELEELA

Turns Heads With  
Chic New Look

CINEMA | PAGE

SCAN FOR  
E-PAPEROM NAMO  
VENKATESAYA

24-06-2026

Total pilgrims : 70139  
Tonsures : 34,940  
Hundi kankada : 4,63 CR  
Laddu sale : 3.44 Lac  
Annaspradams : 2.05 Lac  
Medical treatment : 2561  
Waiting Compartments : 31Approx. Darshan Time for Sarvadarshanam  
(with out SSD Tokens) : 12 HGovt lifts curbs on  
commercial LPG as  
supply improves

**New Delhi (TSIT) :** In a major relief to industrial and commercial LPG consumers, the government on Thursday removed all sectoral restrictions on the supply of non-domestic packed LPG and restored supplies to the levels prevailing prior to the West Asia crisis. The restrictions have been lifted due to improved indigenous LPG production and the projected availability of imported LPG cargoes following the US-Iran peace agreement and the opening of the



Strait of Hormuz, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Further, the supply of bulk LPG, which had been suspended at the onset of the crisis, has been relaxed by 50 per cent of the pre-crisis consumption levels, providing significant relief to commercial and industrial consumers. The restoration follows the recent improvement in the LPG supply situation, the statement said.

10 newly elected RS MPs sworn-in,  
V-P Radhakrishnan administers oath**New Delhi (TSIT) :**

Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan administered the oath and secrecy to ten newly elected members of the Upper House on Thursday.

The newly elected MPs, who took the oath as Rajya Sabha members, included four from Andhra Pradesh – three of whom came from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and one from Jana Sena Party (JSP), both constituents of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). From Andhra Pradesh, Sana Satish Babu, Vijay Chintakayala and Bhashyam Rama Krishna were elected unopposed from the TDP while JSP's Lingamaneni Ramesh was elected opposed during the recent Rajya Sabha elections for 24 seats, spared across 10 states.

Among the other lawmakers who took oath in the Upper House included Tai Tagak (Bharatiya Janata Party) from Arunachal Pradesh, Rajesh Parmanad Shukla (Bharatiya Janata Party) from Gujarat, Baidyanath Ram (Jharkhand Mukti Morcha) from



Jharkhand, Debashish Samantaray (Bharatiya Janata Party) from Odisha and Praveen Chakravarty (Congress) from Tamil Nadu. Parimal Nathwani, who won as Independent from Jharkhand, was also administered oath of office by Vice-President Radhakrishnan.

With the completion of swearing-in, these members formally assume their Rajya Sabha membership and are now eligible to participate in the proceedings of the House. A notable feature of the oath ceremony was the country's linguistic diversity at display – five of the ten members took the oath in Hindi, one in English, one in Tamil, and three in Telugu. Union Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal, Rajya Sabha Secretary-General P.C. Mody, several members of the House, and senior officials of Rajya Sabha Secretariat attended the ceremony.

Addressing a press conference at the Institute of Agricultural Technology on Queens Road in Bengaluru, Gaikwad said

**Hyderabad (TSIT) :**

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy called upon government employees to play a key role in transforming Telangana into a \$1 trillion economy by 2034 and announced accident insurance coverage for all State employees.

Speaking at a programme held at Ravindra Bharathi, where the government signed agreements with banks for the insurance scheme, the Chief Minister said the initiative was inspired by the successful accident insurance model implemented for Singareni workers. He said the scheme would provide financial secu-

rity to employees' families in times of need and reaffirmed the government's commitment to employee welfare. Revanth Reddy urged employees to contribute an extra hour of work daily to strengthen governance, increase revenue, and accelerate development. He credited government staff for the successful implementation of welfare schemes and assured them of the government's continued support.

CM Revanth urges employees  
to drive Telangana's growth**Hyderabad (TSIT) :**

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After Lucknow fire tragedy, Chhattisgarh CM Sai  
orders statewide safety audit of buildings

The directive comes in the wake of some recent fire incidents in different parts of the country, including the deadly blaze in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow on June 22

**RAIPUR (TSIT) :**

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai has ordered a comprehensive review and special safety audit of multi-storey residential complexes, commercial establishments, coaching institutes, hotels and other public buildings across the state, officials said on Thursday.

The directive comes in the wake of some recent fire incidents in different parts of the country, including the deadly blaze in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow on June 22 that claimed 15 lives, they



said. The building, which caught on fire in Lucknow's Aliganj area, housed an animation centre, among other establishments, and most of the victims who lost their lives were students. Taking serious note of such incidents, the CM said strict

compliance with safety norms must be ensured to prevent similar tragedies, an official statement said. "Any issue related to the safety of citizens, students and the general public is the government's top priority," Sai said in the statement.

India, Iran discuss energy  
ties as sanctions relief  
revives oil trade prospects**New Delhi (TSIT) :**

India and Iran on Thursday explored ways to deepen cooperation in the energy sector as Iranian Petroleum Minister Mohsen Paknejad held separate talks with Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Union Power Minister Manohar Lal on the sidelines of the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting.

Cong launches 40-day nationwide campaign against  
alleged exam paper leaks, irregularities**Bengaluru (TSIT) :**

Congress MP Varsha Gaikwad on Thursday announced a nationwide 40-day campaign against alleged examination paper leaks and irregularities in the country's education system, accusing the NDA government of failing to protect the interests of students.

Addressing a press conference at the Institute of Agricultural Technology on Queens Road in Bengaluru, Gaikwad said



the campaign would run from June 25 to August 9 across 28 states and 28 major cities. The initiative follows Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's recent public outreach on education issues and concerns

surrounding NEET and other competitive examinations.

Gaikwad said the campaign was not merely about isolated incidents of question paper leaks but reflected a deeper crisis in India's education and examination system.

"It is not the students who are failing; it is the Education Ministry and the NDA government that are failing. Due to their failures, lakhs of students are facing immense difficulties," she said.

## India expanding long-range strike capabilities with focus on China

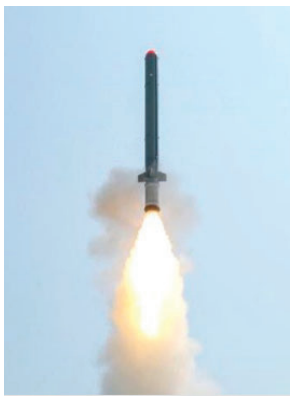
**New Delhi (TSIT) :**

India's military modernisation is increasingly focused on developing long-range capabilities that can reach targets across China, while continuing to account for security challenges posed by Pakistan, a report has said. Citing the latest assessment by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI),

Nikkei Asia reported that defence planning is placing greater emphasis on longer-range weapon systems amid China's military rise and its deepening strategic ties with Pakistan.

The report further estimated that India's military expenditure rose 7.5 per cent to \$92 billion in 2025, making it the world's fifth-largest military spender.

It is also estimated that India possessed around 190



nuclear warheads as of January 2026. According to the report, India's strategic planning has increasingly shifted towards capabilities aimed at deterring China.

While India previously deployed nuclear-capable systems with ranges of up to 2,000 km, it has gradually inducted missiles capable of striking targets 3,000 km away and beyond. According to the report,

India possessed 24 Agni-V nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missiles as of January this year. The missile has a claimed range of up to 5,000 km.

Nikkei Asia's analysis noted that India's military modernisation reflects concerns over China's growing military capabilities and its close defence partnership with Pakistan.

It highlighted the growing role of drones, cyber

operations and precision-strike weapons in modern warfare. The report further said that India is accelerating efforts to strengthen indigenous defence manufacturing and advanced military technologies. Domestic defence production increased from Rs 46,400 crore in FY15 to Rs 1.78 lakh crore in FY25, while defence exports touched a record Rs 38,400 crore.

CM Naidu calls for interlinking  
Godavari, Cauvery rivers**Amaravati (TSIT) :**

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday called for interlinking Godavari and Cauvery rivers.

He said the interlinking of the two rivers will benefit Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana. He added that the Centre should take up interlinking of Godavari and Cauvery rivers as a national project.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu was addressing a public meeting following the inauguration of 33 new crest gates at the Tungbhadra dam at Hospete in Karnataka along with his Karnataka counterpart D.K. Shivakumar and Telangana counterpart A. Revanth Reddy.

He claimed that India is achieving rapid development under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "India has achieved success through initiatives like 'One Nation, One Grid', as well as robust telecom and road networks. If the Ganga and Cauvery rivers are interlinked, India will become unstoppable."

He said that rivers in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have already been interlinked through the Ken-Betwa project. He praised the Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Paatil for



playing a key role in bringing together the Chief Ministers of three states – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. He said that the meeting of the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana under the leadership of Union Minister C.R. Paatil is a historic event. "While we may be separate states, we are united as one nation. Today, under the leadership of Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Paatil, the Chief Ministers of three states met to discuss the interests of farmers in this region. This meeting will go down in history for the Southern states; let us work together to safeguard the interests of our farmers."

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu noted that the Tungbhadra Dam is vital, as it supplies water to farmers across three states and provides drinking water to the local population. "When the 19th gate was washed away in 2024, we installed a stop-log gate; now, we have successfully replaced all 33 crest gates.

## Dana Kishore stresses effective implementation of welfare schemes



Mahabubnagar (TSIT): M. Dana Kishore, Special Chief Secretary of the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department and District Special Officer, directed officials to ensure that government welfare schemes reach every eligible poor family and that issues identified under the Praja Palana Pragathi Pranalika programme are resolved on priority. Addressing a district-level review meeting at the Collectorate on Thursday, he said officials should prepare action plans to address public grievances and infrastructure gaps identified during village and ward sabhas. Problems that do not require funds should be resolved immediately,

while proposals requiring financial support should be submitted to the government. Dana Kishore also instructed officials to strengthen rural infrastructure, improve sanitation, promote plastic waste management, and ensure proper follow-up treatment for health issues identified during special camps. District Collector Khushboo Gupta said Praja Palana Pragathi Pranalika is a continuous initiative and urged officials to proactively resolve public issues. She reviewed the activities undertaken by various departments under the 99-day action plan and highlighted ongoing development and welfare programmes in the district.

## CMC Commissioner Srijana Leads Ground-Level Civic Review

Hyderabad, TSIT: Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner Srijana conducted a comprehensive field inspection in Nekkampur Ward of Narsingi Circle as part of the Corporation's "One Ward Every Day" initiative, reaffirming the civic body's commitment to resolving public grievances through direct citizen engagement. Accompanied by the Zonal Commissioner of Serilingampally Zone and senior officials, Commissioner Srijana interacted with residents and representatives of Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), who highlighted key civic issues requiring immediate attention. These included inadequate street lighting, fencing of open plots, recurring footpath encroachments, augmentation of the underground drainage (UGD) network, installation of speed breakers, improved park lighting and CCTV surveillance, shifting of wine shops, and addressing waterlogging at Pasha Colony.



## Special Voter List Revision Begins in Husnabad

The South India Times Husnabad : Siddipet District: The special summary revision program for the voter list has officially commenced within the Husnabad municipality limits. Municipal Chairperson Dandi Lakshmi and Municipal Commissioner T. Mallikarjun jointly inaugurated the program on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, they advised all eligible individuals to verify their



details in the voter list. They urged people to

## Missing Man Found Dead Near Shadnagar; Murder Suspected

RANGAREDDY : A missing person case took a tragic turn after M.D. Hasan (36) of Manganur village in Nagarkurnool district was found dead in bushes at the True Landmark Venture near Kashireddyguda on Thursday. Hasan had been reported missing on June 23 by his brother M.D. Haji. Police said Hasan was last seen on June 22 with his friends Panuganti Aravind and Veerakari Shivaji. Before his phone was switched off, he had shared his location near the Burgula area. Following a search based on CCTV footage and location data, Hasan's body was recovered from the area. Police suspect the murder may be linked to a financial dispute involving paddy trading transactions. Shadnagar police have registered a murder case and launched a manhunt for Aravind and Shivaji, who are suspected to be involved in the crime. Further investigation is underway.



submit applications within the stipulated

timeframe for new voter registrations, as well as for address changes or name corrections. Emphasizing that every vote plays a crucial role in strengthening the democratic system, they called upon every eligible citizen to register as a voter. They also appealed to Booth Level Officers (BLOs), public representatives, and the general public to work in coordination to ensure the success of this special revision program.

## Pregnant woman undergoes successful kidney stone removal at KIMS Hospital, Kurnool

KURNOOL, June 25, 2026: Doctors at KIMS Hospital, Kurnool, successfully removed a large kidney stone from a pregnant woman in her early second trimester, ensuring the safety of both the mother and the foetus. According to Dr. Y. Manoj Kumar, Head of the Department of Urology and Senior Consultant Urologist, the patient was admitted with severe flank pain and fever. Diagnostic investigations revealed a 16-mm stone lodged in the renal pelvis. Although a ureteric stent had been placed at another hospital, her symptoms persisted, prompting referral to KIMS Hospital. After stabilising the patient with intravenous antibiotics and counselling the family regarding potential risks, including



miscarriage and infection, the medical team proceeded with a definitive intervention. A Retrograde Intrarenal Surgery (RIRS) was performed under general anaesthesia, and the stone was fragmented and completely removed using laser technology.

Dr. Manoj Kumar said the patient experienced complete relief from pain and fever following the procedure. A follow-up scan conducted 10 days later confirmed complete clearance of the stone. The foetus was found to be healthy, with normal car-

diac activity and growth parameters. Kidney stones during pregnancy are relatively uncommon, occurring in only 0.03% to 0.5% of pregnancies worldwide. Most cases are managed conservatively or through temporary drainage procedures. However, performing definitive stone removal through RIRS at 14 weeks of pregnancy, particularly in the presence of persistent infection, is considered rare and technically challenging. The procedure was carried out by a multidisciplinary team led by Dr. Y. Manoj Kumar, with support from Dr. Pruthvi, Junior Consultant Urologist, Dr. Kusuma, Consultant Gynaecologist, and Dr. Indu Priya from the Department of Anaesthesiology.

## Collector stresses quality healthcare services in government hospitals

Mancherial: District Collector Kumar Deepak directed health officials to ensure quality medical services for patients visiting government hospitals and healthcare institutions across the district. During an inspection of the 30-bed Government Hospital at Laxetipet on Thursday, the Collector reviewed ward facilities, laboratory services, records, and overall hospital maintenance. He interacted with doctors and enquired about disease patterns and treatment being provided to patients. With the monsoon season underway, Kumar Deepak instructed officials to create awareness on the prevention of seasonal diseases and maintain adequate stocks of essential medicines. He also stressed the importance of punctuality and accessibility of



doctors and healthcare staff. Later, the Collector inspected the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, reviewed ongoing classroom construction works, and directed officials to complete them at the earliest. He also visited Venkatraopet village to review electoral roll revision activities and urged officials to ensure accuracy in voter registration. The Collector further inspected the Government Junior College at Laxetipet and emphasized the need to improve student enrolment and educational infrastructure.

## Anirudh Reddy participates in voter list revision drive



Mahabubnagar : Jadcherla MLA Anirudh Reddy participated in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls on Thursday by filling and submitting his Enumeration Form to the Booth Level Officer (BLO) at Rangareddyguda village. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA urged all eligible voters to cooperate with BLOs and provide the required information to ensure their names are correctly

included in the electoral rolls. He stressed the importance of safeguarding voting rights and encouraged citizens to actively participate in the revision process being conducted by the Election Commission of India from June 25 to July 24. Anirudh Reddy also advised BLOs to carry out the revision exercise in a transparent, impartial, and error-free manner, ensuring that no eligible voter is left out of the electoral rolls.

## Suvarnam Jewels Opens Its Second Showroom in Banjara Hills

MODELS DAZZLE IN EXQUISITE GOLD JEWELLERY COLLECTIONS



Hyderabad, June 2026: Premium designer jewellery brand Suvarnam Jewels has inaugurated its second showroom in Hyderabad at Road No. 10, Banjara Hills. To mark the occasion, a special showcase featured models adorned in the brand's exclusive gold jewellery collections, captivating guests and jewellery enthusiasts alike. Committed to blending traditional Indian craftsmanship with contemporary design aesthetics, Suvarnam Jewels continues to offer high-quality jewellery that reflects elegance, heritage, and inno-

vation. The new showroom houses an extensive range of gold, diamond, Polki, and Kundan jewellery collections. The brand is particularly known for its handcrafted bridal and occasion-wear jewellery, including necklaces, chokers, waist belts, bangles, earrings, rings, and other statement pieces that have received an enthusiastic response from customers. Founder Siddhant Nahar completed his post-graduate studies in Wealth Management from Queen Mary University of London. By combining India's rich jewellery-making

ing traditions with modern tastes and preferences, he has successfully established Suvarnam Jewels as a trusted and distinguished jewellery brand. Speaking on the occasion, Siddhant Nahar said, "The launch of our second showroom is more than just a business expansion; it is a reflection of the trust and confidence our customers and partners have placed in us. Their support has helped us reach this milestone. We remain committed to offering jewellery that beautifully combines tradition, elegance, and exceptional quality." The company stated that the new showroom will feature exclusive bridal collections, festive jewellery ranges, heritage-inspired designs, and customised jewellery services tailored to individual customer preferences. Suvarnam Jewels also expressed its heartfelt gratitude to its customers, artisans, suppliers, business partners, and well-wishers whose continued support has contributed significantly to the brand's growth and success.

## Auto Driver's Honesty Wins Praise



Bhadradri Kothagudem (TSIT): An auto driver from Illandu set an example of honesty by returning Rs. 15,000 he found near an ATM kiosk. Pilli Mallesh noticed the cash while refuelling his auto and immediately informed TUCI district secretary Shekiyaqub Shahwali. After making inquiries, Mallesh learned that the money belonged to bank manager Mutyala Naresh, who had accidentally misplaced it after a withdrawal. He promptly handed over the cash to the manager. Naresh thanked and congratulated Mallesh, saying he was deeply worried after losing the money and appreciated the driver's integrity.

## Awareness Rally Organised on International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking



The South India Times Nagarkurnool : Marking the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, an awareness rally and several awareness activities were organised at the Government Science Degree College in the district headquarters. Speaking on the occasion, Principal Madan Mohan administered a pledge to students, urging them to stay away from

drugs and contribute towards building a healthy and responsible society. He highlighted the importance of awareness and collective responsibility in preventing substance abuse among youth. Following the pledge, a large-scale awareness rally was conducted to spread the message against drug abuse and illegal trafficking. Students participated enthusiastically and carried placards promoting a drug-free society. AO Mohammed Irfan and faculty members Anjaiah, Vanitha, Umadevi, Kodandaramulu, Ramakrishna, and others took part in the programme and encouraged students to become ambassadors of awareness in their communities.

## MLA Anirudh Reddy Participates in Voter List Revision Process

URGES CITIZENS TO PROTECT THEIR VOTING RIGHTS BY COOPERATING WITH BLOS



Mahabubnagar, June 25 :As part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being conducted by the Election Commission of India from June 25 to July 24, Jadcherla MLA Anirudh Reddy on Thursday received the Enumeration Form from the Booth Level Officer (BLO) at Rangareddyguda village, filled in his details, and submitted the completed form back to the BLO. After participating in the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Advanced Technology Centre (ATC) at Rangareddyguda along

with Minister G. Vivek Venkataswamy, the MLA visited the Gram Panchayat office and completed the enumeration process under the SIR programme. Speaking on the occasion, Anirudh Reddy urged all eligible voters to provide the required information to BLOs and safeguard their voting rights. He emphasized that every citizen should ensure that their name is correctly included in the electoral roll. The MLA also advised BLOs to conduct the revision process in a transparent, impartial, and meticu-

lous manner. He said that officials have a responsibility to ensure that no eligible voter loses the right to vote during the revision exercise. He appealed to the public to extend full cooperation to election officials by submitting the necessary information and documents on time. A transparent and error-free electoral roll can be prepared only through active public participation, he noted. District Collector Khushboo Gupta, Assistant Collector (Under Training) Sai Shivani, election officials, and local residents participated in the programme.



## EDITORIAL

### Will Bhagwant Mann's 'Video' Row Become A Larger Punjab Battle

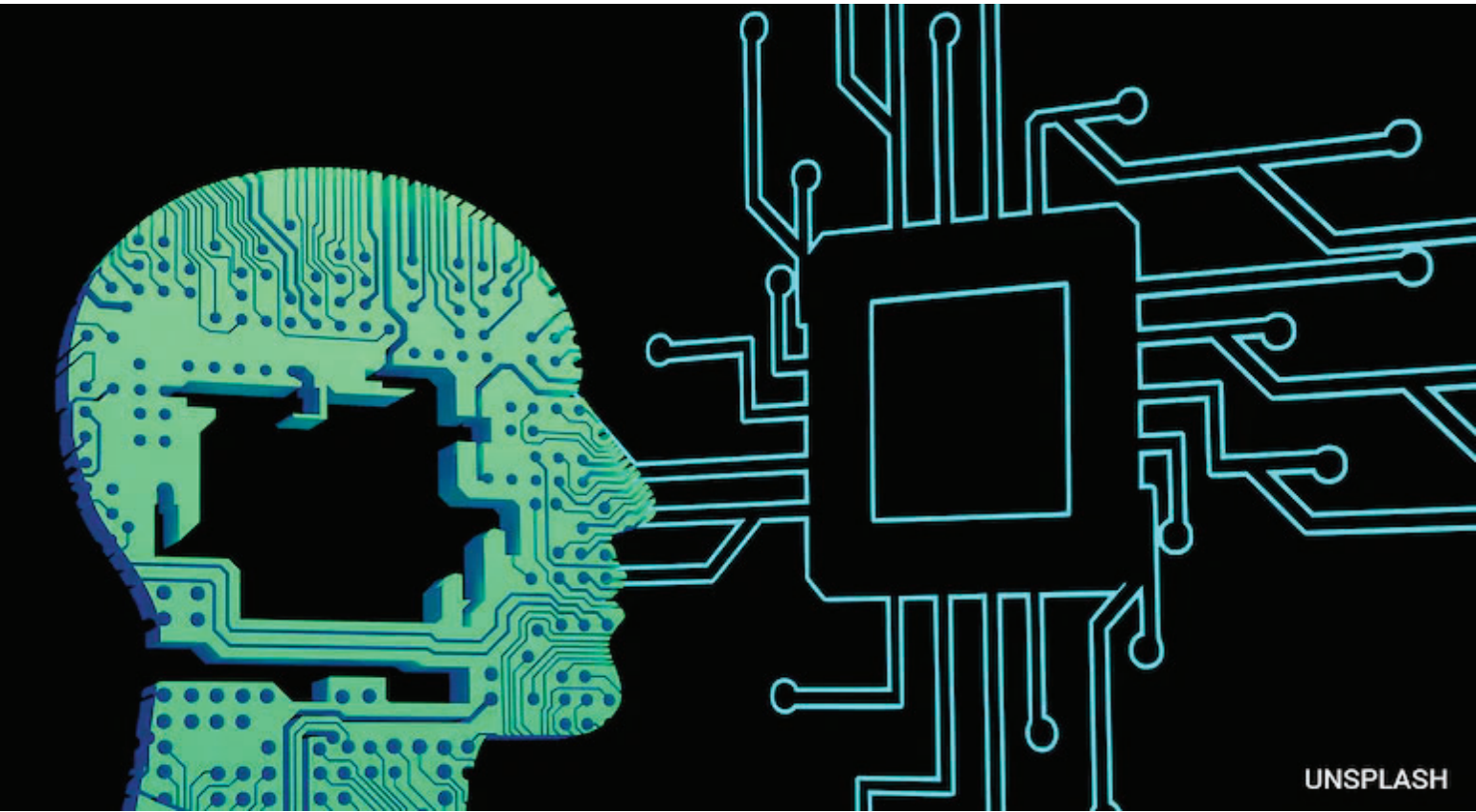
Some words, once spoken in Punjab, never fully retire. They wait: Dharam Yudh Morcha. Guru Dokhi. Panth Virodhi. These are not ordinary political expressions. They carry religious sanction, institutional memory and the weight of decades Punjab has spent trying to put behind it. When such words resurface in the confrontation now playing out between Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Sri Akal Takht Sahib and the Shiromani Akali Dal, the right question is not who wins this round. It is whether Punjab is watching a dispute over one contested video or the opening moves of a wider Panthic mobilisation ahead of the 2027 Assembly election. The clearest signal has come from Sukhbir Singh Badal, who has given the AAP government until July 19 to remove Mann, failing which he has threatened to launch a Dharam Yudh Morcha to force him out. Punjab has witnessed many Panthic morchas, but the title Dharam Yudh Morcha refers primarily to the movement formally launched by the Akali Dal on August 4, 1982.

The phrase describes an organised struggle for what is considered a righteous cause, rather than literally meaning a "holy war". Its most consequential political use was during the Akali Dal movement under Harchand Singh Longowal, built around the Anandpur Sahib Resolution and other Punjab-related demands. The politics of 2026 shares little with that of 1982. But the phrase does not carry politics alone; it carries memory. Once invoked, it can turn a political disagreement into a moral confrontation that is much harder to resolve or step back from.

Beyond Mann: Why June 29 could be a turning point The confrontation enters a sensitive phase on June 29. The Five Singh Sahibans have summoned Sikh ministers and MLAs from different parties to appear before Sri Akal Takht Sahib. Non-Sikh ministers have been asked for written explanations instead. The summons relates to the Jagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Act, 2026, passed allegedly without proper consultation with Panthic institutions. Bhagwant Mann has not been included because Sri Akal Takht Sahib has already issued a separate and more serious directive against him. The stakes go well beyond one appearance. For AAP's Sikh ministers and MLAs, this creates a real conflict: between staying loyal to their party, which passed the law, and respecting the Akal Takht, which many see as the Sikh community's highest authority. If they appear, it may look like they accept religious scrutiny over their legislative work. If they refuse, they risk being seen as disrespecting the Takht. Defending the law in person could also raise hard questions about where religious authority ends and constitutional authority begins. It may also expose cracks within AAP, if Sikh legislators respond differently from their party's official line and making Mann look more isolated. June 29, in short, will show whether this stays a fight about one Chief Minister, or grows into a bigger clash between the Punjab government and Panthic authority.

# India In The Age Of AI: Producer, Consumer, Or Bystander

When Jio Platforms file for what promises to be one of the largest IPOs in Indian market history, the natural instinct is to celebrate. A company that rewired how 1.4 billion people connect with the internet is now inviting public capital into its story. That is, by any measure, a significant moment. But, capital markets have a way of forcing clarity. When institutional investors price an offering, they are valuing the next decade, weighing where value will be created and by whom. In that light, the Jio IPO arrives at a moment when a far more uncomfortable question about India's position in the global technology order deserves examination without sentiment. The question is quite straightforward. In the age of artificial intelligence, is India becoming a net consumer rather than a producer of the infrastructure that will govern economic life for the next half century? The honest answer is that we are trending in that direction. Understanding why, and whether that trajectory is reversible, matters more than the celebration or the alarm. The Platform Shift Problem Every generation of technology infrastructure produces a distinct class of winners. The winners are rarely those who were strongest in the previous era. They are those who recognised, early enough, that a platform shift had occurred and committed capital and conviction to the new foundational layer before the window narrowed. India understood this once. When mobile internet arrived, the government built Aadhaar and UPI. When 4G threatened to remain a premium product serving urban elites, Jio made the counter intuitive decision to subsidise access until scale made the economics work. From that infrastructure base, an entire generation of Indian digital busi-



nesses became possible. Zomato, Meesho, PhonePe, Nykaa, Zepto. None of them built the pipes. All of them needed the pipes to exist. Artificial intelligence is the next foundational layer. It is infrastructure itself, as much as fiber or spectrum. The distinction matters enormously, and India has yet to internalise it with the urgency the moment requires. The Seduction Of The Application Layer The consensus view that took hold among Indian technology leaders roughly two years ago had the surface logic of pragmatism. The United States and China were burning hundreds of billions on foundational model development. India's competitive advantage, the argument ran, lay in its deep software services capability, its cost efficiency and its ability to build applications serving specific markets and verticals. Why enter an arms race from a position of disadvan-

tage? It was a reasonable, plausible argument. It deserves to be taken seriously. There is even a version of the future where it proves correct. If AI models follow the trajectory of cloud computing or bandwidth, moving from scarce and expensive to abundant and cheap, then the greatest value may ultimately accrue to those who build indispensable products and workflows on top of commodity intelligence. India's strengths in enterprise software, services delivery, and market-specific execution could, in that scenario, prove more durable than ownership of any underlying model. The concern is that India appears to be making this bet by default rather than by design. That distinction matters because the ultimate economics of AI remain unsettled. It is entirely possible that foundation models evolve much like cloud infrastructure which is increasingly abundant, increasingly

interchangeable with value migrating toward products, workflows and distribution. If that proves to be the case, India's instinct to build at the application layer may ultimately look prescient rather than defensive. The problem is arriving there without having first made a conscious strategic choice. There is a meaningful difference between choosing the application layer because you have made a considered judgment about where value will compound rather than drifting toward it because building foundational models requires a scale of conviction and capital that no institution has yet organised. That is the distinction between strategy and drift. The evidence, at this point, points toward drift. What the Foundational Layer Confers If AI models remain strategic assets rather than commodities and serious analysts sit on both sides of that question, then the foundational

layer confers three things that the application layer is structurally unable to replicate. The first is pricing power. The second is data sovereignty. India has what may be the most valuable and least systematically captured training dataset on earth. Twenty-two scheduled languages. Over sixteen hundred dialects. A healthcare system whose patterns are distinct from any Western baseline. An agricultural economy whose granular data has no equivalent elsewhere. A legal and administrative repository that reflects governance at a scale no other democracy matches. Very little of this is being converted into model intelligence at national scale. Nor is conversion straightforward. Much of India's data remains fragmented, inconsistently labelled, or protected by legitimate privacy considerations. Possessing data is not the same as possessing usable training corpora.

Turning national data assets into model intelligence requires governance, standards and institutional coordination as much as raw scale. The third is compounding. There is, however, another plausible future. Open-weight models are improving rapidly, inference costs continue to decline and enterprises are increasingly fine-tuning existing models rather than training entirely new ones. If these trends accelerate, the barriers to building competitive AI applications could fall dramatically. India's software ecosystem would then enjoy a much larger opportunity than many currently assume. That possibility deserves to be taken seriously. It simply remains one possible future rather than an established outcome. One Company, Many Languages India's response to this challenge, at present, is largely embodied in a single organisation.

## ACHIEVEMENT OR CONCERN: FIXED DOSE DRUG COMBINATIONS

- Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

Health is the most important asset of any nation. Modern medical science has made unprecedented progress in the treatment of diseases, and a significant aspect of this progress is the combined use of various drugs. Many diseases require more than one drug for treatment. Keeping this need in mind, fixed-dose drug combinations (FDCs) were developed. FDCs are medicines that combine two or more active pharmaceutical ingredients in a specific ratio and are presented as a single drug. These can be in the form of tablets, capsules, syrups, or injections. FDCs have become an important part of the medical world today. They are widely used in the treatment of high blood pressure, diabetes, tuberculosis, HIV infection, heart disease, asthma, and various infections. The World Health Organization also considers the use of FDCs useful in certain conditions. While they have many benefits, their uncontrolled and irrational use has also raised serious concerns. There has been a long-standing debate, particularly in India, regarding the regulation and quality of FDCs. The basic purpose of FDCs is to simplify treatment. When a patient needs to take different medications multiple times a day, they often miss doses or don't take them regularly. This impacts the success of treatment. If the same medications are available in a single pill, it becomes easier

for the patient to take them. This is why FDCs are considered an effective tool to increase patient compliance. The biggest advantage of FDCs is patient convenience. Containing multiple medications in a single tablet simplifies medication administration. This is particularly useful for older patients, children, and those on long-term treatment. Reducing the number of medications reduces the likelihood of patients discontinuing treatment. This advantage is particularly important in diseases like tuberculosis and HIV, where incomplete treatment can have serious consequences. Another important benefit of FDCs is increased treatment effectiveness. In many diseases, combining different drugs produces better results. For example, the treatment of tuberculosis requires the combined use of multiple drugs because single-drug treatment can lead to bacterial resistance. Similarly, multi-drug therapy is part of the standard treatment for HIV infection. In such cases, FDCs simplify and make treatment more effective. Another benefit of FDCs is controlling drug resistance. Antibiotic resistance has become a global health crisis. If a patient skips one of the necessary medications, the potential for pathogens to develop resistance increases. FDCs help mitigate this problem by giving all necessary medications simultaneously. This prevents the patient from skipping a single medication,

making treatment more effective. FDCs are also often economically beneficial. The production, packaging, transportation, and distribution costs of combined drugs can be lower than those of individual drugs. This reduces the financial burden on healthcare systems. The use of FDCs in large government health programs can also simplify drug management and supply systems. FDCs are also useful for health administration. In national health programs, when medicines must be provided to large numbers of patients, distributing a single combined drug is more convenient than distributing individual drugs. This reduces storage requirements and makes it easier to ensure drug availability. Despite these advantages, FDCs also pose several serious challenges. The most significant problem is the lack of dosage flexibility. Each patient's needs are different. Often, a physician may want to increase or decrease the dosage of a particular drug, but this is impossible with FDCs because all the components are in fixed proportions. As a result, the patient must either change the entire drug or take a dosage that does not meet their needs. Another major drawback of FDCs is that they make it difficult to identify side effects. If a patient experiences an allergic reaction or other adverse effect after taking a combined medication, it can be difficult to identify which component caused the problem. This

can complicate treatment and compromise patient safety. Another significant problem is unnecessary medication use. Sometimes, patients don't need all the medications included in an FDC, yet they are still required to take the entire combination. This increases the risk of side effects and exposes patients to unnecessary additional medications. A fundamental principle of medical science is to give patients only the medication they need, but irrational FDCs can go against this principle. The biggest concern regarding FDCs in India has been irrational combinations. For a long time, many drugs were available on the market for combinations that had no clear scientific basis. In some cases, the components of the drugs reduced rather than enhanced each other's effects, while some combinations posed unnecessary risks to patients. This situation exposed the weaknesses of the drug regulatory system. Irrational combinations of antibiotics have been a particular concern. Their improper use promotes resistance in bacteria. When antibiotics become ineffective, even common infections become difficult to treat. The World Health Organization has identified antibiotic resistance as one of the greatest threats to human health. Therefore, special caution is necessary in the use of antibiotic FDCs. Challenges related to FDCs include the complexity of the regulatory system.

## Britain Seems To Have A New National Hobby:Firing Its Prime Ministers

The tale of Britain's revolving-door prime ministers has become an embarrassment, if not the outright butt of social media jokes and memes. The churning at alarming regularity in Downing Street looks less like democratic renewal and more like political musical chairs. The country once prided itself on political stability. Not long ago, Margaret Thatcher spent more than a decade in Downing Street. Tony Blair lasted 10 years. Even David Cameron survived six. Today, however, the world's one of the oldest democracies suffers from an unbelievable inability to keep a prime minister in office. If Andy Burnham eventually succeeds Keir Starmer, Britain will have had seven prime ministers in roughly a decade: David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, Rishi Sunak, Keir Starmer and now Burnham or someone else. For a country that likes to lecture others on stable democratic governance, it is an astonishing but quite worrying record. The most obvious question is why. Why has British democracy become so politically restless? Why do prime ministers now seem to have shorter shelf lives and are found easily disposable? Some here believe that the easy answer is Brexit. The referendum simply divided Britain. It also shattered the political consensus that had ruled the country for decades. It exposed deep tensions between London and the rest of the country, between younger and older voters,



between those who felt globalisation had benefited them and those who felt abandoned by it. No British prime minister since Brexit has truly escaped those divisions. Theresa May was consumed by trying to implement Brexit. Boris Johnson won power by promising to "Get Brexit Done" but discovered that slogans are easier than governing. Liz Truss destroyed her own premiership in a matter of weeks. One saw Rishi Sunak coming as a breath of fresh air. He inherited a broken Conservative Party but carried on bravely until he was undone by the weight of his own promises. Keir Starmer, who also inherited a broken country, must be credited for getting a handsome win at the election in 2024, temporarily uniting the people in opposite camps. But in many ways, Starmer's fall is the most fascinating of them all. Future historians will struggle to identify his great political crime. He did not crash the economy. He felt the pressure of Trump who pushed him hard to join him

in the war against Iran, But he did not lead Britain into war. He was not involved in any corruption or scandal. Yet he still fell. His mistake appears to have been more subtle. He offered just about enough competence at a time when voters were demanding transformation. Britain today is a country where economic growth has stagnated, public services are struggling, housing is increasingly unaffordable and living standards have barely improved for many households in years. Voters did not merely want a more efficient prime minister. They wanted someone who could persuade them that the future would be better than the present. Starmer never managed to tell that story. He could never win the war of narratives against the Reform Party or other opponents. Ironically, it's quite shocking to see that the former chief prosecutor struggled to make his case. He was seen as a ruler who believed that seriousness alone would eventually be rewarded. But he should have known that

voters often forgive mistakes. What they rarely forgive is a sense that nothing is changing. Stagnation is a politician's biggest adversary. The other thing that slowly crept against his premiership was the rise of Reform UK and the wider populist right. Nigel Farage has achieved something remarkable. He has convinced millions of voters that he is an anti-establishment outsider despite spending decades in politics. The more mainstream politicians attacked him, the stronger he appeared to have become. Labour responded by shifting to the right on migration and border controls, hoping to win back voters tempted by Reform. The strategy failed. And it failed miserably. The public wanted the original, they did not want the imitation. The result was predictable. Labour lost support both to Reform on one side and to the Greens on the other. To be fair Starmer came to power at a time when the move to the right had become a force globally. Across Europe, centre-left parties faced the same dilemma. Do they move closer to the populist right or offer a clear alternative? Starmer chose convergence. His critics now argue that Burnham is being chosen because he represents contrast. Whether that proves true remains to be seen. But Burnham's appeal is easy to understand. He comes from northern England. He talks about jobs, transport, housing and public services. He defeated the Reform Party candidate a few days ago in a bypoll.

# OIL PRICE FALLS BACK TO PRE-IRAN WAR LEVELS

The price of oil has fallen to levels not seen since before the Iran war as traffic through the key Strait of Hormuz shipping route gradually resumes. Global benchmark Brent crude briefly fell below \$72.48 (£55) a barrel, the price it was at the day before the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on 28 February, before edging up to \$73.23. Energy prices have been on a wild ride since Iran responded to the strikes by effectively closing the strait, a critical waterway for oil and gas shipments. The cost of crude has been moving sharply lower since the US and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 17 June which set out a 60-day period for negotiations on Tehran's nuclear programme and other measures to end the war. However, Pratibha Thaker, regional director of Middle East and Africa at the Economist Intelligence Unit, said though oil prices have fallen back to pre-conflict levels, risks still remain. "Markets are still watching the region closely, and any renewed tensions could quickly send oil higher again," she said. More ships crossing the strait Representatives from the



two sides met in Switzerland last weekend for talks to end the war, which resulted in the US partially lifting sanctions on Iranian oil exports. The number of vessels crossing the Strait of Hormuz has risen significantly since the MOU was signed, according to maritime intelligence firm Kpler. Its latest data suggests 284 vessels have made the transit from 18 June, the day after the deal was signed, although that is still well below the pre-conflict average of some 138 crossings each day. The ships passing through the waterway in recent days include those carrying crude oil, liquefied

natural gas (LNG), fertiliser and other goods, Kpler told the BBC. The US and Iran had also formed a "communication line" to prevent misunderstandings "with the aim of safe passage for commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz", mediators Qatar and Pakistan said in a joint statement on Monday. There has been a "tremendous shift" with far more ships using the strait in recent days, said Dimitris Maniatis, the chief executive of Marisks, a maritime risk advisory firm working with ships stuck in the region. A limited number of ships can cross a northern passageway

with the permission of Iranian authorities, he said. The US navy has also provided guidance for vessels to travel through a southern route that is safe from mines and other obstacles that has been laid out since the war, Maniatis said. But the number of ships crossing the strait is still below levels seen before the war, when it was used by more than 100 ships a day. Fuel prices at the pump rose sharply when the Iran war began, and now the focus is on how quickly they will fall. "On the back of the lowest oil price since before the Iran war started, drivers should see the average price

of petrol fall below 150p [a litre] in the next week or so," said Simon Williams, head of policy at UK motoring group the RAC. He added the price of diesel "ought to go back under 160p. Petrol peaked at 159.53p a litre on 28 May, according to the RAC, while diesel has fallen from a high of 191.54p on 15 April. The average price of regular gasoline in the US has dropped to around \$3.93 a gallon after reaching \$4 a gallon in April, its highest since 2022, but is still well above pre-war levels. US President Donald Trump on Wednesday ordered an investigation into major energy companies, accusing Shell, ExxonMobil and other firms of "gouging" drivers by not reducing fuel prices even as oil costs fell. "Oil prices have come down so much and we are not seeing anything at the pump by comparison the way they should be," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. The American Petroleum Institute, which represents the oil and gas industry in the US, said fuel prices "don't move in lock-step with crude oil". British energy firms have faced similar accusations of unfairly hiking petrol prices since the Iran war.

## Waste-tech firm Recykal closes \$23 million bridge round

Recykal, the Hyderabad-headquartered waste management company, has raised \$23 million to strengthen its technology platform and fund international expansion. Recykal has emerged as one of India's leading technology platforms for waste management and the circular economy. The company announced on Wednesday the successful closure of a \$23 million bridge round, comprising a combination of primary and secondary capital from existing investors and a select group of new family offices. According to the company's management, the fresh capital will be deployed to strengthen Recykal's technology platform, accelerate its Deposit Return System (DRS) deployments, expand its behavioural-change solutions in waste management, and support international growth initiatives. The investment is expected to help the company enter its next phase of growth. In FY26, Recykal reported gross revenue of 1,498 crore, a 53.2 per cent increase over 978 crore in FY25, while narrowing losses from 6 per cent to 4 per cent — demonstrating improved operating leverage and disciplined execution. Investment details As part of the transaction, early cli-



mate-focused investor Circulate Capital completed a full exit, realising approximately 5x returns on its original investment. A core focus of the new capital is the acceleration of Recykal's DRS business — a technology-led model in which consumers pay a small refundable deposit on packaging that is returned upon recycling, increasing collection and recovery rates. Recykal provides the digital clearinghouse, reverse-logistics, consumer-engagement and verification infrastructure that enables such schemes to operate efficiently and at scale. The company has established a leading DRS track record across Indian states and neighbouring markets, with deployments and pilots spanning Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Bhutan.

Recykal is expanding internationally, taking its waste-management technology and DRS capabilities into global markets. The company is actively pursuing opportunities in Europe through organic expansion, strategic partnerships and potential acquisitions, with the ambition of becoming the technology backbone for circular economy infrastructure worldwide. Alongside DRS, Recykal is also expanding its Open Marketplace, which enables domestic and global sourcing of recyclable materials and circular commodities by connecting aggregators, recyclers and industrial buyers. The fresh capital will also support strategic investments aligned with Recykal's long-term vision of building a fully digitised, globally connected circular economy.

## Amazon CEO meets PM Modi, announces USD 48 billion investment

New Delhi: US e-commerce giant Amazon on Thursday, June 25, announced to invest a total of US Dollar 48 billion to expand and support its businesses in India from 2026-2030, as its CEO Andy Jassy met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here. Jassy reiterated Amazon's long-term commitment to India and announced plans to invest an additional \$13 billion to expand AI and cloud infrastructure in the country by 2030. This takes Amazon's total planned investment in expanding and supporting AI and cloud infrastructure to over \$21 billion between 2026 and 2030 (part of the \$48 billion total investment), establishing it as one of the largest global AI and cloud infrastructure investors in the country. The investment will expand AWS data centre capacity in Mumbai and Hyderabad, giving startups, enterprises and government organizations access to custom AI chips, managed AI services, secure and reliable cloud



technologies and developer tools to innovate faster, scale rapidly, and serve customers globally. Amazon's cumulative investments in India from 2010-2030 stand at over \$88 billion. "We came to India over a decade ago and have since been serving customers, sellers, developers, start-ups and enterprises through our different businesses. The response has been tremendous, with strong growth especially

across our ecommerce, AI, and cloud businesses," said Jassy. "We are investing over \$48 billion in the coming five years to meet the strong demand across our business in India and to help the country achieve these priorities. We are inspired by Prime Minister Modi's vision of a Viksit and Atmanirbhar Bharat, and we are committed to being a long-term partner in India's growth story," he mentioned. Jassy thanked

Prime Minister Modi for his leadership and highlighted the growing importance of India, where Amazon operates several businesses including ecommerce, AI and cloud, and entertainment among others. He noted that the company's India business is on a strong growth trajectory with strong customer demand especially in its ecommerce and AWS business. Since its launch in India, Amazon has digitised 12 million small businesses, enabled over \$20 billion in cumulative ecommerce exports, and supported 2.8 million jobs. Amazon has also trained over 10 million Indians on cloud skills. In line with the government's priorities, the company will continue its strong focus on AI-led digitization, export growth, and job creation. The company has pledged to support 3.8 million jobs, \$80 billion in cumulative exports, enabling AI benefits for 15 million small businesses, and AI education for 4 million government school students.

## Philippines bans video game played by alleged high school shooter

The Philippines has temporarily blocked gaming app Gorebox after an initial investigation found that a teenage suspect in a rare school shooting had been playing the game. Three students were killed and 20 others wounded after two suspects - aged 15 and 14 - allegedly fired handguns inside a classroom in Tacloban, south-east of Manila, on Monday. Police said the 14-year-old was a player of Gorebox, a game where players can "obliterate anything [they] desire" and "engage in brutal combat with an extensive arsenal of weapons and explosives", according to its Google Play listing. "We cannot ignore possible online influences that may have contributed to this tragic incident," the country's cyber-security agency said. "Temporarily blocking the game will allow authorities to conduct a thorough assessment into whether the platform played any role in the actions of the suspects," said Aboy Paraiso, an undersecretary at the



Cybercrime Investigation and Co-ordinating Centre. BBC News has contacted Gorebox's maker, Germany's F2Games, for comment. Scientific studies have not found a direct link between video games and violent behaviour. Gorebox is a first-person shooter video game that can be played as solo or online multiplayer. The International Age Rating Coalition gave it an R18 rating due to extremely violent, explicit, and unrestricted gameplay. Mass shootings are rare in the Philippines, though gun-

related crimes are not uncommon and the most sensational cases are staples of early evening newscasts. What was unusual this time round was that the suspects were minors. Akbayan party-list congressman Chel Diokno called for stiffer penalties for those who allow minors access to firearms. The worst mass shooting in recent Philippine history happened in November 2009, when a town mayor in the southern province of Maguindanao shot dead 58 people, mostly journalists, who were travelling with

the convoy of a political rival. "Influenced by online content" Late on Tuesday, police filed murder charges against the 15-year-old suspect. The 14-year-old suspect who allegedly played Gorebox is too young to be charged under Philippine law. He appeared to have been "heavily influenced" by online content, said Allan Rae Co, spokesman of the Philippine National Police. The boy had also been posting violent content online, he added. Police said the 9mm pistol the 14-year-old is alleged to have fired belonged to his aunt, a policewoman who was suspended from duty after the shooting. The 15-year-old's .38 was registered to his grandfather's security agency. According to the preliminary investigation, the suspects claimed they were bullied in school. Before Monday's shooting at the San Jose National High School, Co said the two boys had holed themselves up in the bathroom. "All indications point to the fact that it was planned.

## AI+ SMARTPHONE BEGINS SALES OF NOVA 2 PRO AND NOVA 2 NEO STARTING 26TH JUNE

Mumbai, June 2026: Ai+ Smartphone today announced the commencement of sales of its latest devices, Nova 2 Pro and Nova 2 Neo, as part of the newly launched Nova Series. Designed to cater to a broad spectrum of users, from first-time smartphone owners to performance-focused upgraders, the Nova 2 Neo and Nova 2 Pro will be available exclusively on Flipkart and select retail outlets starting June 26 at 12 noon. The launch of Nova 2 Neo and Nova 2 Pro builds on the strong momentum of the Nova Series, which has witnessed exceptional consumer demand and growing affinity among Indian smartphone buyers since its inception.

The units will be available at the following pricing (Day 1 of Sales):

Nova 2 Neo 5G  
4GB + 128GB | 12,999  
6GB + 128GB | 13,999

Nova 2 Pro 5G



6GB + 128GB | 14,999 onwards  
8GB + 128GB | 16,999 onwards

Including 1,000 Bank Offer on all Banks (Debit/Credit)  
Commenting on the commencement of sales, Madhav Sheth, CEO, Ai+ Smartphone and Founder, NxtQuantum Shift Technologies said "The Nova 2 Neo and Nova 2 Pro reflect our effort to make capable, well-designed and dependable smartphone experiences accessible to a wider set of

consumers. We have focused on the things that matter most in daily use - performance, battery life, imaging, software quality and privacy so that users do not have to compromise based on budget. With sales beginning today, we are excited to bring the next chapter of the Nova Series to more users across India."

Nova 2 Neo: Built for Everyday Reliability  
The Nova 2 Neo is powered by

the MediaTek Dimensity 6300 5G chipset and features a 6.745-inch HD+ display with a 120Hz refresh rate for smooth everyday use. It runs on Android 16-based NxtQuantum OS, offering a clean software experience backed by the NxtPrivacy Dashboard and AI Key support. The device houses a 48MP Sony IMX582 AI camera and an 8MP front camera for everyday photography and video calls. A 6000mAh bat-

tory with 18W charging support ensures all-day usage, while a side-mounted fingerprint scanner, IP65 dust and water resistance, dual SIM 5G, expandable storage of up to 2TB, and a slim 8.5mm profile round out a highly practical package.

Nova 2 Pro: Built for Performance and Creativity  
The Nova 2 Pro is powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 7100 chipset and features a 6.9-inch FHD+ punch-hole display with a 144Hz refresh rate, up to 800 nits HBM brightness, and a multi-layer cooling system for sustained performance. It runs on Android 16-based NxtQuantum OS with the NxtPrivacy Dashboard and advanced AI Key customisation. Its camera setup includes a 48MP Sony IMX582 AI main camera, an 8MP ultra-wide camera, and a 13MP front camera built for content creation and video communication. The device features customisable lights in the back panel

## Stock markets rally in early trade tracking drop in oil prices

Mumbai: Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rallied in early trade on Thursday, June 25, tracking a decline in crude oil prices and a positive trend in Asian equities. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 440.23 points to 77,435.76 in early deals. The 50-share NSE Nifty went up by 137.80 points to 24,147.60. From the 30-Sensex firms, InterGlobe Aviation, Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, State Bank of India and Hindustan Unilever were among the major winners. Power Grid, Titan, Infosys and Bharat Electronics were among the laggards. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 1.70 per cent lower at USD 72.49 per barrel. "The biggest positive for India is Brent crude falling to below USD 73 level," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments



Limited, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi jumped over 5 per cent, Japan's Nikkei 225 index traded nearly 4 per cent higher and Shanghai's SSE Composite index quoted marginally in the green. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index quoted lower. US markets ended on a subdued note in the previous trade. "Crude oil prices have extended their recent decline. Oil has now erased most of the gains recorded during the recent Middle East conflict as concerns over supply disruptions have eased, geopolitical risk

premiums have unwound and global supply conditions have continued to improve," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,843.40 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. On Wednesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 790.54 points, or 1.04 per cent, to settle at 76,991.22. The Nifty climbed 197.55 points, or 0.83 per cent, to end at 24,021.65. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 440.23 points to 77,435.76 in early deals

# Rescuers searching rubble after Venezuela's STRONGEST EARTHQUAKE SINCE 1900

President Trump and other administration officials have vowed to help Venezuela - a process helped along by warmer relations between the two countries following the US capture of Nicolas Maduro in early January. Since then, Trump has repeatedly signalled a willingness to work with interim president Delcy Rodríguez, on whom he frequently lavishes praise. So far, we have very little information on what that US assistance will look like. Secretary of State Marco Rubio earlier said that US-based search and rescue teams are being deployed. He added that aid flights will be handled by the defence department, due to damage to Caracas' main airport. The Pentagon, however, tells me they have no information to provide at this time. Similarly, the White House and State Department has yet to provide any information on what assistance might be coming, and how



much. Representatives of Venezuela-focused organisations in South Florida - the heart of the country's diaspora in the US - tell me they're working on ramping up assistance from their communities, but so far have no further details. Maduro, for his part, is currently in a federal detention facility in New York awaiting trial. In a statement posted on X - presumably by members of his

team - Maduro called for "maximum solidarity" and "maximum action" in response to the earthquake. I've been speaking to Leander Pérez, who lives in the Santa Rosalía parish in central Caracas. His home was badly damaged in the earthquake so he slept on the street last night. During the earthquakes he and his mother and his neighbours were trapped in the building

for a while, as one of the security gates was bent and it wouldn't open, but they eventually kicked it open, he says. "We spent the night in a public square. On the pavement. Most of the neighbours slept in the streets. We are in deep shock," he says, "I have friends with missing relatives". He says his apartment block is "uninhabitable". "All the walls cracked during the earthquake and

we had to evacuate the building," he tells me. "You cannot live there. It is not safe." It is now mid-morning in Venezuela, which last night was hit by two powerful earthquakes. What happened The 7.2-magnitude and 7.5-magnitude quakes hit less than a minute apart at around 18:00 local time (23:00 BST) - the second was the strongest to hit the country since 1900. Both were very shallow at less than 30km below ground, potentially adding to the damage. Footage shows the moment the earthquake shook a BBC journalist's home in Caracas. The damage At least 164 people have been killed and 971 injured, according to acting president Delcy Rodríguez. These tolls could increase significantly as rescue efforts continue, with the US Geological Survey putting the potential loss of life at more than 10,000 - here's a closer look at its estimates

and how they are calculated. The most affected state is La Guaira, north of Caracas, where "dozens" of buildings have collapsed, according to Rodríguez. Before-and-after pictures show a 10-storey hotel reduced to rubble. The rescue effort Footage shows rescuers searching devastated buildings in the capital Caracas, and people have been heard calling for help, BBC News Mundo reports. Several countries have offered support, with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio saying the US response would be "big", "fast" and "effective". More than 100 buildings have collapsed in La Guaira, the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has said. The update adds that acting President Delcy Rodríguez has given permission for all UN urban search and rescue teams to be deployed to offer logistics and other support to other incoming teams.

## KEY FIGURE IN SOUTH AFRICA POLICE CORRUPTION SCANDAL PLEADS GUILTY



Vusumusi "Cat" Matlala, a central figure in a major ongoing police graft inquiry in South Africa, has pleaded guilty to corruption, fraud and money-laundering charges as part of a deal with state prosecutors. He was accused of bribing top police officials to win a 360m rand (\$22m; £16.5m) tender for his health company Medicare24 in 2024. The plea deal, which has not yet been accepted by the magistrate, would result in Matlala giving evidence against "high-ranking officials", state advocate Santhos Manilall said. Police chief Gen Fannie Masemola is one of those facing charges in relation to this case. He has denied the charges. Manilall told the court in

the capital, Pretoria, that it had taken almost two months of negotiations to put the deal together. If accepted, it would result in Matlala, 49, serving eight years in prison. The state's lawyer said that the "sacrifice" of a more lenient sentence would be worth it, as "for the first time we have an accused who has... given us detail that we would not have been made aware of". As part of the deal, Matlala is required to give honest and frank testimony at future trials. But in a blistering attack, the Democratic Alliance (DA), the junior partner in South Africa's governing coalition, called the arrangement a "sweetheart deal" and "a betrayal of accountability" that may not result in a successful prosecution. DA justice spokesperson Glynnis Breytenbach said it was evidence of a two-tier justice system, as "one of the country's most prominent corruption accused is allowed to negotiate what amounts to a discounted sentence".

## Trump asks Congress for billions for Iran war, after tension with Republicans

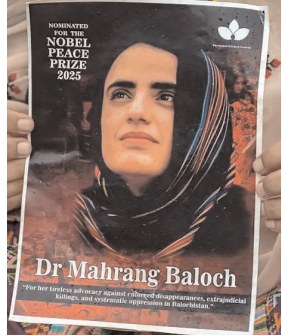


The White House has asked lawmakers to approve \$87.6bn (\$66.5bn), mostly for "urgent needs" connected with the US war on Iran, a day after Congress passed a resolution rebuking the military action. The bulk of the funding - \$67bn - is for the US Department of Defence, the White House said. But the proposal faces an uphill battle in Congress. The Iran conflict is unpopular with voters ahead of the US midterm elections in November, though a ceasefire is currently in effect. US President Donald Trump has also found himself at odds with some members of his Republican Party over the issue of Iran, and is alleged to have ended up in an angry exchange with one senator on Wednesday. That senator, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, was one of a handful of Republicans who defied the president on Tuesday by voting to pass a measure demanding that he halt the war or seek congressional approval before continuing military action. Cassidy fell back in line after his alleged sparring

with the president, and after receiving assurances from members of Trump's administration. He and others went on to vote down another similar measure in the Senate late on Wednesday. "Most of this request will address urgent needs related to Operation Epic Fury (OEF)," says the letter, referring to the Iran war. The request includes \$21bn for munitions, \$17.3bn for operational costs and \$12.1bn for classified programmes. It also asks for about \$300m to bolster security at US embassies and diplomatic outposts in the Middle East and South Asia after some of them came under attack earlier in the war. The other requested money would be for unrelated measures, including \$11bn for US farmers and \$1.4bn to tackle the Ebola outbreak in Central Africa. Washington and Tehran are currently observing a ceasefire in the war, but the White House budget office letter notes that the Pentagon needs to "rebuild stocks" after its military strikes.

## The woman who fought for Pakistan's disappeared men now faces life in jail

When Dr Mahrang Baloch was a teenager, she joined hundreds of families across Pakistan's south-western province of Balochistan to search for her father, who was allegedly arrested by security forces and later killed. Years on, the doctor-turned-activist became one of the most recognisable faces of a movement demanding answers about enforced disappearances in the province. Now, she faces life behind bars. A Pakistani anti-terrorism court sentenced Mahrang and fellow activist Sibghatullah Shah to life imprisonment on Monday after convicting them of terrorism, sedition and murder in connection with the death of a paramilitary soldier during a protest in the town of Gwadar in



2024. The pair deny the charges and are expected to appeal. Speaking to the BBC after the ruling, Mahrang's sister Nadia Baloch said the family remained defiant. "We will challenge this decision in the higher courts," said Nadia, who is also part of her sister's legal team. Asked whether she had visited her sister in prison, Nadia paused.

## Europe's heatwave shifts east as France raises health alert to highest level

Heatwave conditions that have left Spain, France and the UK sweltering for days are set to shift to the east, with forecasters in Germany and the Czech Republic warning of extreme conditions. Temperatures in Germany could hit 40C in some western and south-western areas on Thursday, and across the country on Friday. An extreme weather warning is now in place in much of the Czech Republic. In France, Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu announced the health alert level is being raised to its highest, to boost hospital staffing and protect the vulnerable. Health Minister Stéphanie Rist said they were now seeing deaths linked to the extreme temperatures among "young

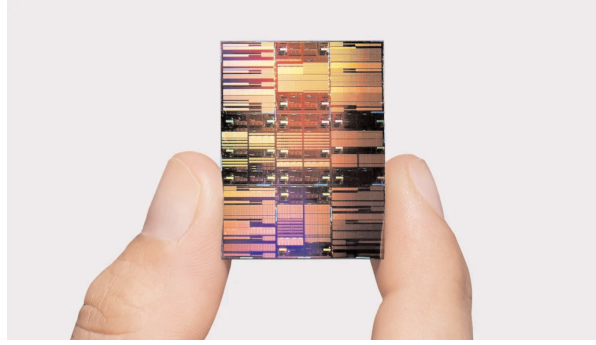


people who suffer cardiac arrests", as well as the elderly. United Nations climate change chief Simon Stiell has said "Europe's savage heatwave has the fingerprints of the climate crisis all over it", and he has called for "a faster shift to renewables, protecting forests and boosting climate resilience". After France recorded its hottest day on Wednesday

over a 24-hour period, although she stressed there were no confirmed figures for the number of deaths linked to the heatwave. Paris mayor Emmanuel Grégoire said the mortality rate was on the rise in the capital. "We must not believe ourselves to be invulnerable," he told French TV. "I am thinking especially about the youth... At about 19:30 last night... I saw 100 or so joggers on the street. Frankly, that's irresponsible." "It's fine to take a couple of days off from exercising," he added. Meanwhile, a three-year-old child has been found dead in a car in the Paris region, days after two young children were found dead in the family's car in the southern town of Carpentras.

## IBM HAILS NEW 'BLOCK OF FLATS' DESIGN BREAKTHROUGH FOR ULTRA TINY CHIPS

IBM has unveiled a new chip design which it says could enable manufacturers to cram 100 billion transistors on a silicon chip the size of a fingernail. The current industry-standard size for chips, measured in the unit of nanometres - a billionth of a metre and the size of a few atoms - is around two nanometres (nm). But IBM claims its new chip tech is the equivalent of around 0.7nm, which may make it the world's first known chip technology below 1nm. However, it will be several years before the chip tech could be ready to go into production. The firm claims in tests, its prototype performed 50% better than its own 2nm



chip and was 70% more energy efficient. It claimed similar leaps in performance when it debuted its 2nm chip tech back in 2021 - saying at the time its tests of those, slightly larger, chips produced similar leaps in performance and energy efficiency. Jay Gambetta, direc-

tor of IBM Research and IBM Fellow, described the NanoStack tech as a "landmark moment" for the future of chips. "With our new NanoStack architecture, we're not just making smaller transistors, we're reinventing how chips are built to deliver dramatically more

power and energy efficiency," he said. Transistors are the building blocks of silicon chips - which provide computing power for the world's electronics, including smartphones, games consoles and laptops. They have also become crucial to the powerful computers housed in data centres, processing a range of everyday digital activities from streaming to online banking, and powering the generative AI boom. The more transistors manufacturers can squeeze onto a chip, the more powerful the chip becomes, and therefore the more devices can do. At the same time, designers strive to make the chips themselves ever smaller.

## THE ICE RAIDS ARE OVER, BUT SOME MINNESOTANS SAY THEY STILL LIVE IN FEAR



Aliah, a 20-year-old student in Minnesota, expected her new American life to be all about studying and work after fleeing Afghanistan in 2021 and being granted asylum in the US. But earlier this year, when federal immigration enforcement agents flooded the Minneapolis area during Operation Metro Surge, she faced a much different reality. Months after the operation's official end,

its effects still linger. "We're still a little scared," Aliah, who has a green card, told the BBC. Like several people in this report, she is not sharing her real or full name over safety concerns, but her identity has been verified. Her family is praying the immigration operation in Minnesota doesn't ramp up again. "We don't have anywhere to go if we go back to my country."



Families lay flowers on barbed wire barricade on anniversary of deadly Kenya protests

## Ryanair says it will reluctantly not charge parents to sit next to children



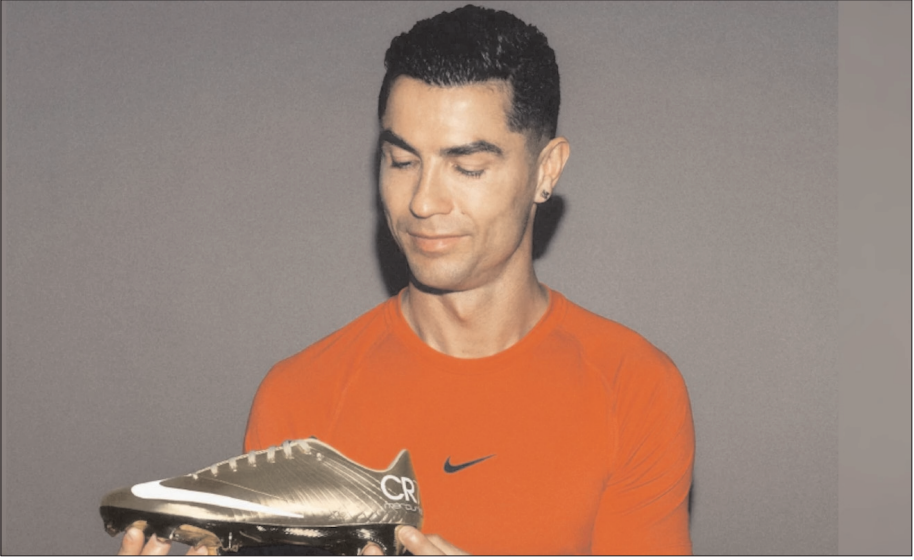
=Ryanair has changed its family seating policy to allow parents to sit next to their young children without paying a seat reservation fee, after an investigation was opened. Adults travelling with children who do not wish to pay for a reserved seat will now be told of their free seat allocation after check-in, which Ryanair said was in line with most other European airlines. Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary said it would "reluctantly adjust to this industry standard", but insisted its long-standing policy fully complied with laws and had given families "certainty". It comes after the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) said it was looking into whether the policy was unfair under consumer law. The CMA said it would test whether the airline's new seating policy complies with the law, and that its investigation continues. 'Minor policy tweak' Under the old policy, Ryanair said adults travelling with children paid one reserved seat fee, and could select seats beside them for up to four children for free. This typically led to a fee of £8 each way, the CMA said when it

launched its investigation earlier this month. It said at the time it was looking at whether the airline's "approach to seat reservations may mean parents are being charged for the airline to meet its child safety and disability-related obligations as set out under aviation rules - and will investigate to determine whether or not this practice is in line with consumer law". Other airlines offered to seat children next to a parent or guardian without a fee, or allocate seats together automatically during booking for free, it added. Ryanair said its policy had given families certainty of where they would be sitting at the time of booking, which they had valued. It said the "free parent seats" will now be available at the back of the aircraft, as front rows tend to be reserved. The "minor policy tweak" came into effect on Thursday, it said. It does not expect the change to have an effect on Ryanair's revenue. O'Leary hit out at the CMA for targeting its family seating policy, which he said had been "universally embraced by consumers as the most progressive and transparent in Europe".

HISTORY IN GOLD: C

# Cristiano Ronaldo's World Cup 'Record' Honoured With Special-Edition Boots

American sportswear giant Nike has released a special edition Gold Mercurial Superfly RGN football boot to celebrate Cristiano Ronaldo's remarkable 20-year career. Ronaldo, who has a lifetime contract with Nike, is likely to wear the boot during Portugal's FIFA World Cup 2026 Group Stage clash against Colombia on Sunday. According to Footy Headlines, the boots feature a striking metallic gold base with white detailing. Each pair incorporates a 3/4-length Air Zoom unit, Flywire support, and a tacky, soft upper finish for optimal ball control. Retailing at \$300 (Rs 28,343 approx.), the boots were released worldwide on Wednesday, a day after Ronaldo scored a brace during Portugal's 5-0 win against Uzbekistan. Ronaldo



became the first player to score at six different World Cup editions, and the boots celebrate his remarkable consistency and a career spanning more than two decades. In a career defined by records, resilience and

relentless ambition, Ronaldo once again showed that age is merely a number. As football's grandest stage welcomed him for a sixth World Cup, he responded in the only way he knows -- by making history. Ronaldo produced

a record-breaking performance with a brace as Portugal registered a commanding 5-0 victory over Uzbekistan. Nuno Mendes and Rafael Leao were also on the scoresheet, while an own goal involving Uzbekistan goalkeeper

Abduvohid Nematov added to the Fabio Cannavaro men's woes as Roberto Martinez's side secured their first win of the tournament in emphatic fashion. Speaking after the match, Ronaldo said the team showed significant progress from their opening match, which was a draw against DR Congo. While acknowledging that breaking records was special, he stressed that his main objective is always to help the national team achieve its goals. "The team performed really well and improved a lot. As the saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining. Obviously, speaking personally, records are always nice but my goal is always to help the national team achieve its objectives," he said as quoted by Reuters.

## NBA DRAFT 2026: LOS ANGELES LAKERS ACQUIRE NO. 56 PICK FROM CHICAGO BULLS FOR CASH

The Los Angeles Lakers made sure they would not sit out the second round of the 2026 NBA Draft. Just hours before Wednesday night's draft action, the Lakers and Chicago Bulls completed a deal that brought the No. 56 overall pick to Los Angeles. According to ESPN insider Shams Charania, the Lakers sent cash considerations to Chicago in exchange for the selection. While the move may look small on paper, it gives the Lakers another opportunity to add young talent and possibly set up more moves later in the night. Los Angeles Lakers Acquire No. 56 Pick From Chicago Bulls In Cash Deal The Lakers entered Wednesday without a second-round selection, but that changed after the front office struck a deal with the Bulls. ESPN's Shams Charania reported on X, "The Los Angeles Lakers are acquiring No. 56 from the Chicago Bulls



in the second round of the NBA draft tonight at 8 pm ET on ESPN. Lakers sent cash to the Bulls to get a pick tonight." The trade ensures Los Angeles will now have a presence in the second round. The move continues a recent pattern for the Lakers. The franchise has regularly used cash to buy second-round picks in recent years. In 2022, Los Angeles acquired

the No. 35 pick and eventually selected Max Christie. Last year, the team moved around the board before landing the No. 36 pick, which they used to draft Adou Thiero. With a similar strategy unfolding again, league observers expect the Lakers to remain active. More importantly, acquiring the No. 56 pick gives the Lakers flexibility.

## Lionel Messi's Argentina Teammates Celebrate His Birthday With Heartfelt Gesture

Lionel Messi celebrated his 39th birthday on Wednesday during a World Cup that, at least for now, has brought him nothing but joy: Defending champion Argentina has already qualified for the knockout stage, and its captain has become the tournament's career scoring leader. Messi marked the occasion alongside his teammates at Argentina's training base in Kansas City, Missouri. This is his sixth World Cup and the fifth time he's had a birthday during the tournament. The exception was the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, which was played in November and December. Messi has scored all of Argentina's goals so far: three in its opening win over Algeria



and two more in its victory over Austria. He has 18 for his World Cup career, two better than Miroslav Klose and Kylian Mbappe. On social media, Messi shared a photo of himself with a

cake, alongside some of his teammates. The cake was from Pan Caliente, a Kansas City bakery owned by an Argentine pastry chef. In another picture, Argentina players posed

alongside Messi, all wearing T-shirts featuring a personal photo of themselves with the captain. "To the man who changed our lives, gave us unforgettable moments, and made us believe that dreams are possible... The best part wasn't just seeing it - it was living it with you! Happy birthday, Captain; we love you. May you be immensely happy," the T-shirts read, according to a social media post by forward Julian Alvarez. FIFA, his club Inter Miami and his former club Barcelona were among those sending birthday wishes to Messi. In his hometown of Rosario, around 5,000 kids from local schools sang "Happy Birthday," and a few even brought cakes.

## Olympic Equestrian Anush Agarwalla Goes To Court Over Asian Games Non-Selection

Indian dressage rider Anush Agarwalla has challenged his exclusion from India's dressage team for the 2026 Asian Games and approached the Delhi High Court. At its core, the dispute is about how the selection criteria should be interpreted and whether some of Agarwalla's international competition scores should have been counted while preparing the final order of merit. The dispute centres on the treatment of scores achieved by Agarwalla at two international competitions: CDI Hagen, Germany (April 22-26) and CDI Lier, Belgium (May 20-24). The EFT ad-hoc panel says those scores could not be counted in the manner sought by Agarwalla because they did not comply with the selection criteria. Agarwalla,



on the other hand, has challenged that interpretation before the court. The selection system for Asian Games selection, riders had to compete in designated selection trials and achieve the required standards. One of the key requirements, according to EFT, was that riders had to declare at least

Agarwalla emailed EFT stating that only the Inter-I test at CDI Hagen would count as his third Asian Games trial. He also indicated his intention to compete in PSG and Inter-I Freestyle at Lier later. On April 18 he made a revised request, asking that both PSG and Inter-I at Hagen be counted as part of his third qualifier. EFT's position is that this revised request came after the seven-day deadline and therefore could not be accepted. The Hagen score At Hagen, Agarwalla recorded a PSG score of 70.941 per cent. However, EFT says that because the PSG test had not been declared within the stipulated time, the score could not be counted for qualification, merit ranking or selection purposes.

## FIFA OPENS WAY FOR RUSSIA YOUTH TEAM TO ENTER COMPETITION

More than four years after the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, FIFA on Thursday indicated that it was opening the way for Russia to enter an international youth competition. In announcing its under-15 'World Cup and Festival' in Azerbaijan from October 22 to 31, the governing body of world football said it would be open to everyone. Even though Russian national teams and clubs have been barred from international competitions since 2022, FIFA never suspended the membership of the Russian football federation. A spokesperson for FIFA would not directly mention Russia when talking to AFP but confirmed that the tournament "is open to all FIFA member associations" and noted that the competition format and details regarding participants would be



announced later. Russia immediately interpreted the statement as an invitation to return. "We welcome FIFA's decision to allow the Russian national team to take part in the World Cup and the FIFA U-15 Festival, which will be held in Azerbaijan in October 2026. This is an important step toward bringing Russian teams back into international sport," posted Russian Sports Minister Mikhail Degtyarev on

social media. This move appears to be part of a gradual relaxing of restrictions on Russian and Belarusian athletes. In May, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) recommended lifting restrictions on Belarusian athletes — allowing them to compete under their national flag and anthem and participate in team sports — while recommending that restrictions on Russian athletes remain in place.

## VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI WOULD SAY 'HIS HEAD WAS HURTING': A NEVER-HEARD-BEFORE TALE ON STAR'S METEORIC RISE

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's family, and the rest of India, would be looking forward to the team sheet on Friday when the side gets down to action against Ireland in the first of two T20Is in Belfast. If Sooryavanshi is named in the XI, he will be the youngest cricketer (15 years, 91 days) to play for the Indian cricket team. Sooryavanshi has also been selected for the India T20I series against England that starts next month, and his chances of making an India debut are high. Sooryavanshi might be making his India debut before reaching the age of just 16, but his journey has been long and arduous. In fact, it did not even begin with him; it began with his father, Sanjiv, who was a club-level cricketer from the village of



Motipur, according to a deep-dive story on Sooryavanshi by The Athletic. He could not fulfill his dream but invested everything when cricket coaches said his son had the poten-

tial to make it big. Brajesh Jha was Sooryavanshi's first coach. "When he first came, there were very few children playing cricket in Samastipur district," Jha says. "There was this tiny child among all the seniors... as soon as he was told something, he followed the task very quickly - how to take a stance, how to run, whatever was explained to him."

## MRITI MANDHANA DEPARTS, SHAFALI VERMA ON THE CHARGE



Smriti Mandhana has departed but Shafali Verma and Yastika Bhatia are batting with confidence. India limited Bangladesh to 136 for 8 in their crucial Women's T20 World Cup match on Thursday. Opener Juairiya Ferdous (33) and skipper Nigar Sultana (32) were the significant contributors for Bangladesh after they opted to bat first. Coming back into the side, left-arm spinner Radha Yadav (3/28 in 4 overs) picked up three wickets for India during an impressive outing, even as her other colleagues chipped in economical bowling. OUR! Not from the middle but it does the job. Marufa serves it on a length, on off. Shafali gets on the front foot and goes hard on the drive. The bat turns in her hand but she manages to pick the gap between cover and mid off for a four. India Women have already surpassed what Bangladesh Women managed to score in their Powerplay. Now, with two overs still to go before field restrictions are lifted, India will want to extend the difference even more.

Rabeya Khan holds onto it and that will be that for Smriti Mandhana. Floated up there, on off. Mandhana leans onto the drive and plays it crisply but can't keep it down. Rabeya Khan gets low to her left at cover. She grabs hold of the ball before falling to the ground. Mandhana starts to walk off, but is asked to wait as the third umpire is summoned to check the legality of the catch. As Rabeya fell to the ground, she had the ball in her left hand. The third umpire checks a couple of angles, but she has no conclusive evidence to say that the ball came in contact with the ground at the time Rabeya was not in control of her body. She sticks to the on-field call of Out. India Women are 31/1, chasing 137 runs. ntidy by Nigar Sultana. Very full, outside off by Marufa. Mandhana is late in getting her bat down, and it sneaks under the blade. Nigar was moving to her right and was caught wrong-footed. She gets low to make the stop, but the ball clips her fingertips and goes behind.

## Neymar's 4-Word Post After Long Awaited Return To Brazil Team Is Viral

Neymar Jr., one of the most iconic football players of his generation, made a return to the Brazil national team after a hiatus of about 1000 days, appearing as a substitute in the FIFA World Cup Group C match against Scotland. Neymar, whose addition to the Brazil team for the FIFA World Cup 2026 was quite debatable, wasn't available for selection for the Selecao's first two games due to an injury. As he stepped onto the pitch as a second-half substitute against Scotland, Neymar's eyes filled with tears. The Brazil No. 10 also shared a post on Instagram after his debut in this edition of the tournament. The post has since gone viral. Neymar

remains one of the most loved players from his country. The former Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain man is the top-scoring active player for Brazil in World Cups, with 8 goals to his name. The man leading the charts in the all-time list for Brazil is Ronaldo (El Fenomenon) with 15 strikes. Taking to Instagram after making an appearance in Brazil's 3-0 win over Scotland on Wednesday, Neymar wrote: "REMEBER WHO YOU ARE". Speaking to reporters after the match, Neymar said the team is united and fully focused on achieving their target in the tournament. "I'm eager for it, not just me, but the whole team. The group

wants to win. We know that if we unite and this 'desire' grows stronger and stronger, we have a great chance of achieving our goal," he said. Neymar took the field for Brazil for the first time since 2023 as the 34-year-old came off the bench in the closing stages. Neymar marked his return to the field after recovering from a calf injury, after he missed the first two Group C matches. Neymar not only marked his first appearance in the ongoing World Cup but also marked his return to action for the first time since October 2023, when he sustained a serious anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury during a World Cup qualifier against

Uruguay. The injury ruled him out for an extended period and limited his involvement in Brazil's qualification campaign. Neymar entered the field in the 76th minute of the match against Scotland as he substituted Matheus Cunha. The forward came on to make his fourth FIFA World Cup appearance, completing a remarkable milestone in his international career.



# GRAND LAUNCH OF 'VENKATRAMAYYA GARI TALUKA' TEASER AND AUDIO

Star-Studded Event Held at Prasad Labs

Worldwide Theatrical Release on July 18

ETV Prabhakar's Daughter Divija Prabhakar Makes Her Debut as Heroine

The teaser and songs of the upcoming family entertainer 'Venkatramayya Gari Taluka', starring Dinesh Kumar as the lead hero and introducing Divija Prabhakar, daughter of renowned actor ETV Prabhakar, as the heroine, were unveiled at a grand event held at Prasad Labs, Hyderabad, in the presence of several prominent personalities from the Telugu film industry.

Directed by Satish Awala and jointly produced by Komali Mahender Thotte and Somesh Saripalli under the Komali Creations banner, the film has completed all production formalities and is all set for a worldwide theatrical release on July 18. The teaser and songs

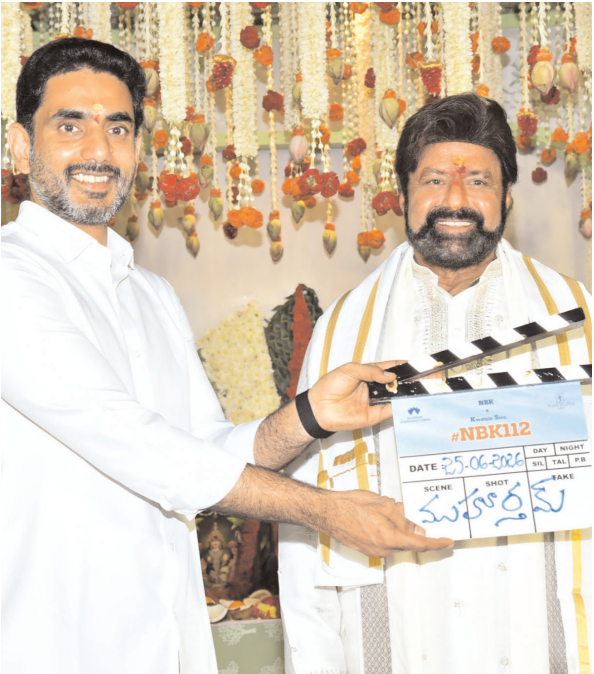


received an overwhelming response from the audience as well as members of the film fraternity. According to the makers, the film revolves around human relationships, family values, parental love, emotional bonding, and father sentiment, promising a deeply emotional cinematic experience.

The film also features Muralidhar Goud and Sudha

Speaking at the event, ETV Prabhakar said: "I am delighted to be part of the teaser and audio launch of this beautiful film. The story reminded me of the emotionally rich family dramas directed by Muthyala Subbaiah garu. It has been a long time since I heard such a touching script, and that is why I encouraged my daughter Divija to be a part of this project. Producer Komali has worked tirelessly to bring this film to life, while director Satish Awala has shouldered the responsibility with great dedication. The film beautifully portrays the greatness of a father and the importance of parents. Every song in this film has the power to touch the audience's hearts. We always thought our daughter would become a doctor, but today she is making her debut as an actress through this wonderful film. I request everyone to bless her and wish the film grand success."

# NBK112 LAUNCHED GRANDLY IN AMARAVATI



Balakrishna for giving me this opportunity to be part of this special occasion. Under the leadership of our Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, we are working with a vision to strongly promote the film industry in Amaravati, the People's Capital. Along with cinema, it is also the Hon'ble Chief Minister's vision to encourage the creator economy. To achieve this, the government is committed to developing world-class infrastructure, advanced finishing studios, and facilities equipped with the latest technology, creating a sustainable ecosystem for the industry. I would also like to thank the producers and the director. We consider it our privilege that this launch event is taking place here. This is not just

## Sukumar Writings, Bunny Vas Works, and Priyadarshi's Film "Idupu Kayitham" Grandly Launched by Acclaimed Star Director Lokesh Kanagaraj

The film Idupu Kayitham, starring Priyadarshi and produced under the banners of Sukumar Writings and Bunny Vas Works, was launched grandly today with traditional pooja ceremonies. The film is being produced by Bunny Vas and acclaimed filmmaker Sukumar. Telangana folk Dancer Nagadurga plays the female lead. Directed by young filmmaker Vamsi Reddy Dondapati, Idupu Kayitham is an entertaining family drama

set against a Telangana backdrop. Renowned Kollywood director Lokesh Kanagaraj attended the launch event as the chief guest and unveiled the film's first-look poster. Prominent personalities including Allu Aravind, Dil Raju, Naveen Yerneni, KL Damodar Prasad, SKN, Bapineedu, Sai Rajesh, Venu Udugula, and Sai Marthand were also present. Allu Aravind gave the ceremonial clap for the muhurtham shot.



## The Bhaukaal Gets Bigger Than Ever! The Teaser of the Year's Most Awaited Film, Mirzapur: The Movie out now

The wait is finally over, and the bhaukaal is bigger than ever. The teaser of Mirzapur: The Movie has arrived, offering the first glimpse into one of the most anticipated cinematic events of the year. For the first time, the iconic world of Mirzapur is making the leap from OTT to theatres, bringing its trademark intensity, gripping storytelling, and larger-than-life scale to cinemas. Staying rooted in the timeline that began with Season 1 in 2018, the film expands the saga with an epic untold story crafted for the big screen. Set to release on 4th September 2026, it promises to present the beloved franchise in an all-new theatrical avatar. The teaser welcomes audiences back to the world of Mirzapur with Ali Fazal, Pankaj Tripathi, and Divyenndu, while Jitendra Kumar steps into the role of Bablu Pandit, bringing the fan-favourite character back to the screen. Joining the saga is Ravi Kishan, whose powerful new presence adds another intriguing dimension to the Mirzapur universe. From the streets of Purvanchal to the deserts of Rajasthan, the saga grows bigger than ever, bringing its gripping world and larger-than-life storytelling to cinema halls across regions. Further expanding the ensemble, the film features Abhishek Banerjee, Rasika Dugal, Mohitt Maalik, Sheeba Chadha, Rajesh Tailang, Pramod Pathak, Shriya Pilgaonkar, Harshita Shekhar Gaur, Shweta Tripathi,



and Sonal S Chauhan, coming together to bring to life an epic untold chapter from the world of Mirzapur.

## ARUNACHALA CREATIONS, HARSH ROSHAN NEXT THELLA KAAGITHAM FIRST SINGLE "CHILAKA" SONG OUT NOW



Young and talented actor Harsh Roshan is all set to begin an exciting new chapter in his career with his next film Thella Kaagitham under the Arunachala Creations banner. Backed by producer Krishna Kommalapati, the project comes after the actor's impressive success

generating considerable buzz among movie lovers. Thella Kaagitham is described as a heartwarming musical love story that revolves around youthful emotions and memorable relationships. For this musical love story, music director Vijai Bulganin brings the narrative to life with his soulful tunes. As part of the film's musical promotions, the first single, "Chilaka," was released today in the form of a lyrical video. This beautiful melody, composed by Vijai, carries vibrant energy and heartwarming notes that are sure to make listeners fall in love with it. Renowned singer Anurag Kulkarni has sung the track with great emotion, allowing listeners to feel every bit of love through his vocals.

## Promising Hero Nithin Unveils First Look of "It's Life Bro"



he first look of the upcoming emotional love story "It's Life Bro" was unveiled by promising hero Nithin. Starring KM (Krishna Mohan) and Pooja Sundar Shetty in the lead roles, the film is being produced by Krishna Mohan Sallagunda under the KM Entertainments banner and directed by Somasekhar Reddy. Speaking about the film, director Somasekhar Reddy said, "It's Life Bro is being crafted as an emotional love story with a unique storyline and engaging narrative. The film is designed to touch the hearts of audiences and leave a lasting emotional impact. Based on true-life incidents, this heartfelt romantic drama is sure to resonate with viewers and win their appreciation." The first-look poster has already generated curiosity among movie lovers with its appealing visuals and emotional undertones, hinting at a moving and realistic love story.

## Sreeleela Turns Heads With Chic New Look

Sreeleela may have faced a tough year at the box office with two of her recent releases failing to meet expectations, but the actress continues to stay firmly in the spotlight. Her latest social media pictures have once again grabbed attention, with fans praising her effortless style and confidence. Dressed in a chic black outfit paired with trendy boots, Sreeleela looked every bit the modern fashion icon. The actress struck a series of glamorous poses amid luxury travel trunks and designer accessories, creating a stylish photoshoot that quickly went viral online. Her charming expressions and elegant presence added to the appeal of the pictures. On the career front, Sreeleela still has promising projects lined up. She is currently filming an untitled Hindi film directed by Anurag

Basu and the Tamil fantasy-action entertainer OM Chapter 1: Udhiram – The Blood Wood, giving fans plenty to look forward to. Sreeleela has been making headlines ever since a video from a Yoga Day event in Mumbai went viral on social media. The actress found herself at the center of online discussions after an awkward moment during a group photo session sparked mixed reactions from netizens. While the debate continues online, Sreeleela

seems to have chosen silence over statements. A seemingly ordinary public appearance has turned into a social media talking point after a video featuring actress Sreeleela and Amruta Fadnavis, wife of Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis went viral online. The clip, which surfaced from a recent yoga event, has led to widespread speculation among netizens, with many trying to decode the interaction between the two. In the video, Sreeleela can be seen standing alongside other attendees when Amruta Fadnavis appears to gesture in her direction. This led some viewers to believe that Sreeleela was being asked to move out of the frame for photographs. Within hours, the clip spread across social media platforms, triggering a flood of reactions and differing interpretations. While a section of users felt the gesture suggest-

ed Sreeleela was being repositioned, others argued that the moment was being blown out of proportion. Many pointed out that crowded public events often involve organizers and attendees adjusting positions for photographs, making it difficult to draw conclusions from a short video clip alone. Interestingly, neither Sreeleela nor Amruta Fadnavis has commented on the viral discussion. The incident once again highlights how brief moments captured on camera can quickly become major online talking points.

