

Vimal Negi death case: Himachal BJP demands impartial investigation

SHIMLA: BJP State general secretary Sanjeev Katwal on Saturday demanded a fair and comprehensive investigation and strict punishment for those responsible for the mysterious death of former Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL) Chief Engineer Vimal Negi. Katwal told media persons that the allegations revealed by the CBI in the case -- concerning the issuance of fake completion certificates, manipulation of official records, and decisions made in violation of established rules -- raise serious concerns about the credibility and integrity of the administrative system. Lashing out at the Congress-led state government, the BJP leader said the Negi case is not merely about one individual but concerns administrative accountability, transparency, and good governance. Negi went missing on March 10,



2025. His body was found on March 18 in Bilaspur under mysterious circumstances, and his wife alleged that his seniors harassed him. The case stirred a political storm in the state, with the opposition BJP alleging a cover-up.

"If certificates were issued despite discrepancies between the actual status of a project and official records, if officers were allegedly subjected to pressure, and if those raising objections were sidelined from the decision-making process, then the matter is extremely serious and demands complete transparency," he said. Katwal said people of the state have a right to know under whose protection such activities continued. "If investigations indicate that rules were ignored to benefit certain individuals or entities, then the Congress government must explain why timely action was not taken despite the seriousness of the allegations," he said. He said if an officer was forced to work under pressure, if objections were ignored, and if institutional processes were weakened, then it reflects a much larger systemic failure that cannot be overlooked.

Khan Sir to seek anticipatory bail over FIR on vandalism at his coaching centre in Patna

PATNA: A lawyer representing educator Faisal Khan, popularly known as Khan Sir, said that his client will file an anticipatory bail petition in Patna civil court as he has been named in an FIR in connection with vandalism at his coaching centre here. The lawyer, Arvind Kumar Mahuar, alleged that the FIR has been registered against his client as "part of a conspiracy to defame him". Patna SSP Kartikeya Sharma had said on Friday that the educator and YouTuber was named in an FIR in connection with the case of vandalism of Khan Global Studies Institute. Police had detained two guards of the coaching



centre for allegedly firing shots on Tuesday night when a group of 15-20 people allegedly tore down the coaching centre's poster and threw stones at its premises.

"Khan Sir has been named in the FIR as part of a retaliatory measure because his staff had registered a case against another coaching centre's director. He will not surrender and file an

anticipatory bail petition before the court," said the lawyer. Mahuar said the anticipatory bail petition is likely to be filed on Monday. He alleged that there are no actual charges against his client. "Based on videos and photos of the incident, it is clear that the guards fired shots in the air for safety purposes. There was no injury to anyone. His name has been inserted in the disclosure statement to implicate him," the lawyer said. Mahuar said the anticipatory bail petition will likely be filed by the educator on Monday when court proceedings resume after the weekend.

TVK in power due to DMK's grace, take pledge to end Vijay-led regime's rule, says M K Stalin

CHENNAI: DMK president M K Stalin on Saturday asserted that the TVK is in power in Tamil Nadu only due to the benevolence of his party and its allies, and urged his party workers to take a pledge to put a full stop to Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay-led government. Welcoming more than 1,000 AIADMK workers who joined the DMK at a function held here, Stalin traced the party's history since its founding in 1949 and underlined that his party opposed the imposition of Emergency in 1975, knowing fully well that it would lead to the dismissal of the government. In 1976, the DMK government was dismissed and till 1989, the party could not win polls and form the government, he said, and recalled the ups and downs seen by the party till it formed the government yet



again in 2021. The former chief minister said that the reason for him recalling all that is to underscore that victory and defeat will alternate. He said: "That is why we are proving today that a DMK member is someone who neither goes wild chasing victory, nor loses heart and gives up when facing defeat, but continues to work forever."

It is in this situation, when the party has lost the opportunity to win and when it works as the principal opposition, so many have joined the party under the leadership of Gaja alias Gajendran, AIADMK Kattankolathur-North Union Secretary, who fought Assembly polls form the Chengelpet constituency as the candidate of that party,

he said. Further, Stalin said: "You have no reason to worry. You must not forget that the current regime is functioning only due to our grace (favour/benevolence). We (the DMK-led alliance) faced the election with the determination that we must win; the government must be formed under the leadership of the DMK, and that all opposition parties must be defeated. It is only with the grace of the parties that were in our alliance that this government is functioning today. It is only with the cooperation of the alliance parties, who wished for the DMK to come to power, that this government is running today." Furthermore, he said: "Let us take a pledge in this event to put a full stop to this government which is functioning due to our benevolence."

Chandigarh University holds 8th CU Online Annual Convocation; 363 Degrees Awarded

CHANDIGARH: Chandigarh University organised the 8th Annual Convocation of CU Online and the Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE) during which degrees were conferred on 363 students from 19 states and UTs from across the country in the presence of students and their family members, faculty members and university officials. The graduating cohort consisted of 214 male and 149 female students. Out of the total degrees awarded, 330 were postgraduate (PG) degrees and 33 were undergraduate (UG) degrees. The graduates belonged to both Online Learning (OL) and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes offered by Chandigarh University. Sanjeev Parkar, Senior Di-

rector, PwC India graced the prestigious convocation ceremony as the Chief Guest. The ceremony was also attended by Prof. (Dr.) Raviraja N Seetharam, Vice-Chancellor, Chandigarh University, Prof. (Dr.) SS Sehgal, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Operations) & Registrar, Chandigarh University and Prof. (Dr.) Gurpreet Singh, Director, Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE). Meanwhile, Chandigarh University also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with PwC - one of the world's 'Big Four' consulting firms of the world to offer an online MBA program thus becoming the first university in India to launch such a programme in collaboration with PwC. Among the postgraduate

programmes, 210 students were awarded the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA), 78 students received the degree of Master of Computer Applications (MCA), 23 students earned Master of Science (Data Science) degrees, nine students were awarded Master of Science (Mathematics) degrees, five students received Master of Arts (English) degrees, three students earned Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication degrees, while two students each received Master of Arts (Economics) degrees. Congratulating the graduating students, Chief Guest on the occasion, Sanjeev Parkar, Senior Director, PwC India said, "With emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence entering almost ev-

ery sector, people fear that their jobs will go away but that's not going to happen. Infact, AI is going to create more and more opportunities all across the world for the learners who adapt and upskill themselves. The world is changing rapidly. If there has ever been a better time for learners in India to prepare themselves for the future, this is the time. I am pleased to see universities and industry coming together to equip students with AI-enabled competencies and the skills required to succeed in an increasingly technology-driven world. And that's going to add lot of value to the students and to the nation and also to the industry because you will get learners or candidates who are prepared for the role that industry is looking out for."

Arunachal CM Pema urges people to make tree plantation lifelong mission

ITANAGAR: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday urged people of the state to make tree plantation a lifelong mission rather than a symbolic annual exercise, asserting that environmental conservation and development must progress together for a sustainable future. Participating in the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' plantation drive near here, Khandu said every tree planted would contribute to cleaner air, a healthier environment and a better future for the coming generations. "Planting trees is not something we do once a year and forget. It must become a lifelong mission," Khandu said in social media post after the event. "As the nation celebrates 12 years of transformative leadership and service under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this campaign reminds us that development and environmental responsibility must go hand in hand," he said. Khadu also said that on the occasion of the



tree plantation drive, he had the opportunity to interact with students, teachers, and authorities at the Government Secondary School, Chimpur. "The visit also provided an opportunity to hear firsthand the concerns and grievances of the school. The state government has taken note of the issues raised and will work towards addressing them," he added.

JMM nominates ex-minister Baidyanath Ram for RS polls

RANCHI: The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) on Saturday nominated former minister Baidyanath Ram as its candidate for one of the two Rajya Sabha seats in the state, going to polls on June 18, a party official said. JMM general secretary and spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya told reporters that Ram will file his nomination papers in the presence of Chief Minister Hemant Soren on June 8. On the second seat, Bhattacharya said the final decision will be taken on this by party leadership following a discussion with the Congress. The Congress on Friday announced senior party functionary Pranav Jha as its candidate for one of the two Rajya Sabha seats from the state. The ruling JMM legislators, during a meeting chaired by the chief minister on Friday, had demanded that the party contest both the seats go-



ing to the polls. Meanwhile, AICC observers for the Rajya Sabha polls, Bhupesh Baghel and Ajay Sharma, on Saturday arrived in Ranchi, and they met Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, hours after JMM announced

Ram as its candidate for the polls. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday approved the proposal for the appointment of Baghel and Sharma as AICC observers for the upcoming Rajya Sabha Biennial Elections in Jharkhand. Baghel and Sharma met the CM to seek JMM's support for the Congress candidate Jha, a senior Congress leader said. Congress minister Radhakrishna Kishore claimed that of the two Rajya Sabha seats in Jharkhand, one will go to JMM and another to Congress, as the India bloc has 56 members in the 81-member assembly. The BJP has already announced that it will field a candidate for one of the two Rajya Sabha seats, but it has not yet announced the name of the candidate. One of the Rajya Sabha seats fell vacant following the death of JMM co-founder Shibu Soren, while BJP member Deepak Prakash will com-

plete his six-year term on June 21. The nomination process for the elections commenced on June 1, and the last date for filing papers is June 8. Polling will be held on June 18. As many as five candidates, including JMM's Baidyanath Ram, Congress's Pranav Jha, Rajya Sabha MP from Andhra Pradesh Parimal Nathwani and BJP leader Gaurav Vallabh, purchased nomination forms on Saturday, an election official at Jharkhand Vidhan Sabha said. To ensure victory, a candidate is required to secure a minimum of 28 first-preference votes. In the Jharkhand Assembly, the INDIA bloc has 56 members, comprising 34 from the JMM, 16 from the Congress, four from the RJD and two from CPI(M)L Liberation. The NDA has 24 MLAs -- 21 from the BJP and one each from the LJP (Ram Vilas), AJSU Party and JD(U). Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha has one MLA.

Kerala govt will resist attempts to politicise education sector: Min John

KOCHI: Kerala Higher Education Minister Roji M John on Saturday said that the government would resist any attempt to politicise the state's education sector and would work towards creating better opportunities and facilities to prevent brain drain among students. Addressing reporters at a 'Meet the Press' programme organised by the Ernakulam Press Club here, the minister said the government had a responsibility to create an environment that encourages students to pursue higher education and career opportunities within the state. "The government has the responsibility, and we will take initiatives as part of it," he said. Responding to questions on differences between the Governor, who is the Chancellor of universities in Kerala, and the state government, John said such issues would be handled in a manner that does not adversely affect the higher education sector. "It does not always mean fighting with the Governor.

We will not compromise on our ideologies and principles," he said. Replying to queries regarding the appointment of Dr B Mavuth as the temporary Vice-Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University, the minister said the government was not asked to provide a panel of candidates. "The Chancellor has certain rights and powers under the statute. He was appointed within a few days of our assuming office. The government was not asked to provide a list and did not get time to examine the matter," he said. John said the government would move forward with its higher education policies while safeguarding the autonomy and credibility of academic institutions. "We do not agree with saffronisation and will take steps against it," he said, adding that the Chancellor was exercising powers available under the university statutes in making the temporary appointment. The minister said political influence should have no role in matters such as the appointment of vice-chan-

cellors and stressed that improving the quality and credibility of academic institutions remained the government's objective. He said the government was seriously examining issues such as declining student enrolment in some colleges and the presence of surplus teachers in certain institutions. Policy decisions on these matters would be taken after consulting experts and related announcements could be expected in the upcoming state budget, he said. The minister also criticised the manner in which the four-year undergraduate programme was implemented, saying it had been introduced without adequate preparation and had created practical difficulties for students and teachers. He said a special committee would be appointed to study various aspects of the programme and recommend necessary changes. On private and foreign universities, John said the government was keeping an "open mind" about allowing them in Kerala.

Nadda, Kharge spar over NFHS-6 findings on health and nutrition

NEW DELHI: A political debate over the findings of the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6) intensified on Saturday, with Health Minister J.P. Nadda rejecting criticism by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and arguing that the survey reflects improvements in several key health indicators over the past decade. The exchange began after Kharge questioned the Modi government's handling of health and nutrition challenges, citing findings from NFHS-6 and earlier surveys. In a post on X, the Congress chief alleged that malnutrition and anaemia continue to affect a large section of the population, particularly women and children. He claimed that one in five children suffers from acute malnutrition, around one-third are underweight, and over 84 per cent of children aged six to 23 months do not receive adequate nutrition. Highlighting the prev-



alence of high levels of anaemia among women, Kharge cited NFHS-5 figures showing that 57 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 are anaemic and one in five women is undernourished, while accusing the government of deliberately hiding crucial data which exposes its failures. Responding on Saturday, Nadda accused the Congress leader of selectively interpreting the survey findings. In a series of posts on X, the Health Minister said NFHS-6 showed improvements in maternal and child healthcare indicators compared with earlier rounds of the survey. According to Nadda, first-trimester antenatal registration, institution-

al deliveries and births attended by skilled health personnel have increased significantly since NFHS-3, conducted in 2005-06. The health minister in his post also highlighted that full immunisation coverage has increased to 87.1 per cent, health insurance coverage has risen from 4.9 per cent to 60.2 per cent, and the use of hygienic menstrual protection has reached 79.2 per cent. He further noted that child stunting has declined from 48 per cent to 29.3 per cent compared with data from two decades ago, attributing the changes to investments in healthcare, nutrition, sanitation and welfare programmes.

Ranthambhore tigress spotted with cub, big cat count rises to 72

JAIPUR: A tigress in Rajasthan's Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve (RTR) has been sighted with a cub, taking the total number of big cats in the reserve to 72, officials said on Saturday. Tigress RBT-124, known as Riddhi, was recently spotted with the cub in the Gal Ghati area during routine patrolling and monitoring activities. Officials said the cub appeared healthy, and its movement was being closely monitored to ensure the safety of both the tigress and the offspring. "The sighting of the cub is an encouraging sign for tiger conservation efforts in Ranthambhore. Continuous monitoring is being carried out, and necessary protection measures have been put in place in the area," a forest department official said. He said that successful breeding reflects the effectiveness of habitat protection, anti-poaching measures, regular patrolling and support from local communities. With the latest addition, the number of big cats, comprising adult tigers and tigresses and cubs, in Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve has reached 72, the official said. Ranthambhore, one of India's premier tiger habitats, has witnessed steady growth in its tiger population over the years and is a key centre for wildlife tourism and conservation in the country.

Three killed after assailants attack village in Kangpokpi

IMPHAL: Three people, including a woman, were killed after armed assailants launched an attack at a village in Manipur's Kangpokpi district early on Friday, officials said. At least seven houses were also gutted in a fire during the attack around 4 am at Loibol Khullen village in Saitu-Gamphazol subdivision of the district, they said. The three died amid exchange of fire between rival groups for several minutes, which prompted villagers to run for shelter in nearby forest areas, an official said. The deceased have been identified as Leththongam Haokip, Tinmary Haokip and Jangminlal Haokip.

EDITORIAL

Remembering
Roy David

“Born in an unjust society, we shall not die in it, until we change it.” This tagline of the Coorg Organisation for Rural Development (CORD) captures the core conviction that shaped the life of its founder and director, Vijayasingh Ronald David, known to many as Roy David. The people he stood alongside over decades of grassroots activism and mobilisation saw how this principle animated everything he did. While I only had the opportunity to know him during the last two years of his life, as a young researcher I learnt much from him, his stories and his endless commitment to social change. For me, he was Roy sir. On May 16, many of us were devastated by the news of his sudden passing, caused by a cardiac arrest while he was driving home from Bangalore to Kushalnagara. He was 71.(I first met him in 2024, while doing research around Karnataka’s Nagarahole Tiger Reserve. Several people had told me to know the history of this place, you must go see David. After our initial interaction, I remember feeling unsure whether I would hear more from him. To my surprise, over the following months, we ended up spending several weeks together. He went from constantly reprimanding me during these visits, to convincing me – with big grins and offers of fish fry and boiled rice from the shop next door – to stay a few more days. Then he would stare intently at his phone as if his hearing had suddenly declined while I murmured complaints. I always ended up staying, and he would hand me a pile of papers or a messy folder on his old laptop to sort through. On the day of our scheduled first meeting, I had reached Kushalnagara several hours late. He was still waiting in the CORD office attached to his house. The room had a faint musty smell. The bookcases were crammed with papers, binders and framed certificates. The papers spilled over to his desk. Behind it sat David, peering at me through his glasses. He wore a long-sleeve shirt, hair and beard dyed jet black, his tall stature evident even while seated. One hand rested against his stomach. I had heard the stories – he lost full function of the hand after surviving an attack instigated by landlords in Mangalore in the 1970s; he had been demanding land rights for tenant cultivators. He began to ask me questions, probing my motivation for visiting him. Dissatisfied, he listed all the ways in which academics had neglected this region. “If you are here just to get information for yourself, I won’t talk to you. If someone wants to work for the people, contribute, then I have time,” David said. He shuffled across the room to hand me pamphlets as he spoke, stopping occasionally to cough. The slowness in his movements revealed as much about the 45 years he had dedicated to the Adivasi-led peoples’ struggle around Nagarahole as his narration did. “Anyway, what knowledge I have, I will share. Information must be shared, not held too close to the heart, hmmm”. David founded CORD in 1981. By 1984, the organisation began to focus entirely on the concerns of forest-dwelling communities in Kodagu and Mysore districts. He began by working alongside Soliga Adivasis in Periyapatna in their effort to organise their community and demand nutritious food and education for their children. They eventually started an informal school in one of the villages and enrolled 45 children in a nearby government school.

Anti-Muslim Politics Has Become
Central to the Modi Era

Having been born and brought up in a Namboodiri landlord family in Kerala’s only Muslim majority district before independence, this author has seen how, as part of untouchability, Kerala also had ‘unapproachability’. For those practicing this casteist norm, an Ezhava, part of other backward classes (OBC), must be kept off 30 feet lest the ‘upper’ caste person get ‘polluted’. For Dalits, the rule was 60 feet, and for unassimilated tribals, 100 feet. The feudal system had ruthlessly imposed these social mores before the birth of the Indian constitution. Curiously, there was no such restriction for Muslims and Christians; they could approach an ‘upper’ caste Hindu without the latter fearing getting ‘polluted’ by them. I bring this up only to underline a curious aspect of the Kerala psyche. It was casteist towards Hindus but could be ‘syncretic’ towards others. Vavar, a Muslim associate of the Sabarimala deity, has a mosque near the temple and Hindus make it a point to visit it. The 14th century Koratti Muthi church was uniquely constructed on land gifted by the local Raja. It retains many Hindu features. There are several more such cases. For those coming from a pluralistic background, it is agonising to find the mindless ghettoisation being pursued by the Modi-Shah duo as a well thought out political strategy during the past 11 years. Communal ‘othering’ is the chief instrument in their toolkit to create and maintain an assured vote bank. Before Modi, the BJP could not come to power without the support of the minority groups. “The BJP believes that Indian Muslims are an integral part of the nation,” the party had said in a 2005 political resolution, adding: “However, since Independence, the Congress has viewed Muslims purely as a vote-bank. In the process, their pressing issues such as modern education, living conditions, livelihood and women’s rights have been glossed over. The BJP reiterates its principle of justice for all and appeasement of none. The party will always remain committed to this.” “I wanted the Hinduism of Vivekananda, not the



one based on ‘narrow-mindedness’,” Atal Bihari Vajpayee had once said in a taped speech in 2002. One may debate the sincerity and meaning of those words but the language of the BJP today is markedly different. Indeed, the Modi regime has been openly using Hindu-Muslim conflict as its winning strategy. That is the crucial difference between the two approaches: Modi and the previous BJP leadership. Consider the Modi-Shah regime’s single-minded efforts at saffronisation of history textbooks, elimination of opposition voters, imposition of Hindi, Nazi-style detention camps along borders, mandating the singing of Vande Mataram in Bengal’s madrasas, media control, concentration of powers through rule changes. The list is rather long. All this leads to political, administrative and judicial manipulation. The Modi-Shah regime seems to have no ‘illusion’ about Muslim support for the BJP. For instance, 38% of Assam’s population is Muslim, but there is none among the 102 new BJP MLAs in

the Himanta Sarma government. On the contrary, of the 19 Congress MLAs in the assembly, 18 are Muslim. In the past five years, the Modi government did not have a single Muslim minister or MP. This is deliberate ghettoisation, keeping a whole section of the polity outside of politics. Political observers also fear that the Modi-Shah regime intends to introduce some kind of separate electorate for the minorities. Such administrative measures get prompt support from the Hindutva groups at the ground level. For instance, every religious festival, Hindu or Muslim, is an occasion for heightening communal tension: Muharram, Id, Diwali, temple festivals and processions like Kawadias are used for creating communal tension. When the dates of festivals clash, it is all the more delightful for hate mongers. The VHP and other Hindutva groups take objection to Muslim artisans preparing the kits and costumes for kawariyas. The Supreme Court had to intervene when some BJP

governments ordered a ban on Muslims traders setting up shops along the route. Uttar Pradesh chief minister Adityanath, the most virulent anti-Muslim chief minister, recently warned Muslims against holding namaz in public places. When reminded there was hardly any place available to accommodate all of them, he advised them to control their population. His latest drive has been to shut Varanasi’s decade old Eid-eve goat market. In Kolkata, Amit Shah’s newly captured region, fresh curbs were imposed on Eid namaz this year. The venue was shifted and no public slaughter of animals allowed. In Maharashtra, ‘pig worship’ and a ban on goat sacrifice have been the highlights of pre-Eid harassment this year. Pig worship by Hindutva ardents in Muslim areas was reported from Mumbai, Delhi and West Bengal. The BMC also revoked permission granted for goat sacrifice. Goats were removed from residential areas in Thane

and a housing society cluster in Mumbai. A favourable high court judgment was used by Hindutva hardliners on the basis of a revised report by the ASI – a government department – on the Bhojshala dispute. The next in the firing line is the Kasmandi dispute. Earlier this year, the BJP’s Andhra Pradesh ally Chandrababu Naidu had announced cash incentives for couples having third and fourth child. This was to raise the state’s population. Later, the VHP urged Naidu to confine the incentive to Hindu parents, not Muslims. With almost the entire domestic media toeing Amit Shah’s blackout dictum, it will be rewarding to have a look at the much maligned foreign media. And most of them provide what our domestic media try to hide from the readers. In a lengthy piece with on-the-spot details, The New Yorker concluded that a “populist Prime Minister has legitimized India’s more militant groups”. Clearly, targeted attacks on minorities are on the rise, it found giving details.

The Most Dangerous Thing About Vaibhav
Sooryavanshi Isn’t Really His Age

Some batters have great technique; others have extraordinary power. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi sits in the intersection of technique and power because he seems to have more time than everyone else to play a ball. By the time the ball leaves the bowler’s hand, it almost feels like he already knows what he’s going to do. While everyone else is still reacting, he’s locked onto the ball, perfectly balanced, and his hands seem to find the right position without any hesitation. Every movement unfolds with the natural progression of Beethoven’s symphony. The best batters in the world are often defined by this tiny ability to pick up tiny clues before anyone else does, process information faster and turn them into a decisive advantage. It’s a rare combination of vision, anticipation, timing, and instinct-traits that defy simple explanation. Beyond all the runs, records, and accolades, what separates him is an almost uncanny understanding of the game as it unfolds. The kind of instinct that suggests he is not merely playing the game, but reading the bowler like a mentalist. His efforts and his approach have earned him a ticket to UK this summer for T20s against England, Ireland, as well as in the Asian Games Team. Sooryavanshi thereby becomes the youngest Indian, even younger than Sachin Tendulkar, to be inducted into the Indian Cricket Team.

The USP Of IPL Is No More King Khan
In 2008, somewhere in the middle of the first season of



IPL, Shah Rukh Khan, the celebrated owner of Kolkata Knight Riders and Bollywood Badshah, had told NDTV, “I am the USP of IPL.” Enter the next-generation software-installed humanoid called Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, the Bollywood superstar would perhaps agree that the USP of IPL has now shifted. Jos Buttler, in fact, said, “Sooryavanshi was the IPL this year”. Nineteen seasons later the baton changed hands and now it is well and truly with the Bihari boy. Sooryavanshi is perhaps the single biggest brand to emerge out of Bihar. The most revealing thing about him is his unhurried approach.

The Boy Who Has Extra Time
The ball leaves the bowler’s hand at the same speed it does for everyone else, yet Sooryavanshi often appears to inhabit a different zone. There is an extra beat before he commits. An extra fraction of a second before the bat comes down. An extra layer of

information being processed. Remember when he took down Pat Cummins for three successive sixes? The best batters do not simply react, they read the situation. And Vaibhav Sooryavanshi appears to read cricket in a language few others can speak. His father, Sanjeev Sooryavanshi, says, “Whenever he played, older boys would call him a kid. If I told him a particular bowler was the opposition’s biggest bowler, he would target that bowler. Vaibhav would say, “Papa, if I hit him for a six, the other bowlers won’t dominate me.” That has always been his strategy. He wants people to know him for his cricket, not judge him by his age.” That is why many international coaches who have watched him closely rarely begin with his age - they begin with perception. One international coach who observed him during his developmental years described elite batting as existing at the intersection of

vision, timing, balance and instinct. Great players, he argued, seem to receive information from the ball that others do not. In that framework, Sooryavanshi is not merely a talented batter. He is the point of intersection. The easiest mistake to make with a player this young is to focus entirely on the extraordinary acceleration of his career. A Ranji Trophy debut at 12. India Under-19 selection at 13. A hundred against Australia Under-19 in Chennai that left franchise scouts scrambling for reports and phone numbers. An IPL auction became a bidding war. The chronology of events that had unfolded up until this point made experienced coaches, scouts and talent evaluators speak about him with unusual conviction.

That Boy From Tajpur
Former Bihar cricketer and Rajasthan Royals scout Samar Qadri remembers hearing whispers about a boy from Tajpur in Samastipur long before the wider cricketing world discovered him. In a local match in Patna, Qadri, who is a leg spinner bowled to him and watched the teenager dismantle attacks with a confidence that felt entirely disproportionate to his age. “He told me I don’t play bowlers, I play balls,” Qadri recalled while speaking to NDTV. The clue to understanding this teenager is embedded in that sentence. Most young players become overwhelmed by reputation. They see international bowlers, senior professionals, established names and historical achievements.



Whenever corruption, black money, and disproportionate assets are discussed in the country, a question repeatedly arises in the minds of ordinary citizens: when will a comprehensive and impartial investigation of assets be conducted? The luxurious mansions, expensive farmhouses, multi-story buildings, and real estate worth crores of rupees that are being built in urban sectors, posh colonies, and developed areas often leave people wondering. It’s natural to wonder what sources of income these properties were built from and whether their prices are in line with the individuals’ declared incomes. This question isn’t directed at any particular individual, but rather at the transparency and accountability of the system. Citizens’ faith in democracy remains strong only when they believe that the law is equal for all. If a person becomes wealthy through their hard work, talent, business, employment, or investments, this is a testament to their success and should be respected. However, when an unusual discrepancy is observed between a person’s income and wealth, calls for investigation become natural. Acquiring wealth is not a crime, but its legality and source must be clear. This is the foundation of good governance and accountability. Today, most Indian cities have developed areas where mansions and buildings worth crores of rupees stand. Most of these assets must have been acquired

When will the property be inspected?

LUXURY MANSIONS, GROWING ASSETS
AND QUESTIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY



through legitimate means. There are millions of businessmen, industrialists, doctors, engineers, teachers, scientists, and entrepreneurs in the country who have achieved economic success through years of hard work and struggle. Doubting their hard work and achievements would not only be unfair but also send a negative message to society. However, it is equally true that in some cases, there is a discrepancy between the size of assets and declared income, which raises questions. An impartial investigation in such cases is a necessity of the democratic system. The common citizen’s concern isn’t just about wealth, but also about the inequality that exists within society. On one hand, middle-class families struggle to build a home, investing their entire life’s savings, taking out bank loans and paying installments over years. On the other hand, some individuals amass immense wealth in a short period of time. When this disparity becomes so stark, questions arise. If these questions aren’t answered through transparent investigation and accountability, distrust of the system grows. In any democratic society, greater trans-

parency is expected from those holding public office. Government officials, elected representatives, and those involved in the management of public resources are custodians of the public trust. Therefore, details of their income and assets should be more clear and public. If a public servant acquires assets commensurate with their legitimate income, they need not fear any investigation. Rather, such investigations can serve as a means of verifying their integrity. However, if irregularities are found, it is equally important to bring them to justice. The problem isn’t limited to declared assets. Benami property also poses a significant challenge to the country. Often, the true owner registers their property in the name of a relative, employee, or acquaintance. This makes it difficult to trace the true ownership and source of the funds. The government has enacted laws to prevent benami transactions, but their effective implementation remains a challenge. The goal of financial transparency will remain unfulfilled until the true beneficiary of the property is identified. From a technological perspective, asset verification is now much easier than ever before.

West Asia crisis, oil prices to drive stock market this week

New Delhi: Stock market this week will track simmering tensions in West Asia, its impact on crude oil prices, and the trading activity of foreign investors, analysts said. The trading week may begin on a cautious note following a sharp decline in the US markets over the week-end, an expert said. Besides, progress of monsoon and inflation data announcement will also be important factors to watch out for. "This week will be driven by key inflation, and global macroeconomic data releases. In India, investors will closely track inflation data for May, scheduled for release on June 12, along with foreign exchange reserves data on the same day. "Globally, developments around the US-Iran negotiations and their implications for crude oil prices, currency movements, and overall risk sentiment will remain in focus," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. US markets ended sharply lower on Friday, June 5, with the Nasdaq Composite tumbling 4.18 per cent. The S&P 500 dived 2.64 per cent and Dow Jones Industrial Average declined 1.35 per cent. "The week ahead is likely to begin on a



cautious note following a sharp decline in global markets, particularly AI-related technology stocks. On the positive side, domestic markets have some supportive factors in the form of resilient GDP growth, strength in the rupee following the RBI policy announcement, and a meaningful decline in crude oil prices," Santosh Meena, Head of Research at Swastika Investmart Ltd, said. Developments on the US-Iran front remain highly fluid and continue to generate volatility in global markets, he said. "This week will also be data-heavy, with sev-

eral important macroeconomic releases from both the US and China. Among them, the US inflation data scheduled for Wednesday will be particularly critical, as it could significantly influence expectations regarding the Federal Reserve's future policy path and set the tone for global markets," Meena added. Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex declined 532.4 points, or 0.71 per cent, and the NSE Nifty dipped 181.05 points, or 0.76 per cent. "The Nasdaq fell 4 per cent, marking its worst single-day decline since April 2025, as investors aggressively

reduced exposure to semiconductor and technology stocks. Given the significant weight of IT in Indian indices, this weakness could spill over into domestic markets and keep sentiment under pressure during the early part of the week," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Livelong Wealth, said. Globally, the key event to watch will be the US CPI inflation data, he said, adding that a softer-than-expected reading could revive hopes of future Federal Reserve rate cuts and improve risk appetite across global mar-

kets. Domestic commodity markets ended the week lower, with MCX gold futures for August delivery falling Rs 5,317, or 3.3%, to Rs 1.55 lakh per 10 grams. Silver for July delivery fell Rs 18,461, or 7%, to Rs 2.48 lakh per kilogram on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). "Gold witnessed a weak performance last week as rising crude oil prices diverted market attention away from safe-haven assets," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst, Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said. The rupee strengthened against the US dollar, adding further pressure on precious metals. As a result, domestic bullion underperformed than its international counterpart, with currency gains offsetting part of the support from global gold prices, he added. In the global markets, Comex gold futures shed \$27.7, or 5%, to end the week at \$4,365 per ounce, while silver fell \$6.77, or nearly 9%, to \$69.10 per ounce. Gold prices faced pressure in the overseas trade and closed the week down nearly 55, while silver, too, sold-off sharply tracking a sharp corrective move in industrial metals, Mer said.

Coal stock in Singareni falls to lowest level in 10 years

Hyderabad: State-owned Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) on Saturday, June 6, said its coal stocks stood at 26.51 lakh tonne as of June 4, the lowest level recorded in the past decade. In a statement, the company said coal stocks are maintained as part of routine mining and transportation operations and are essential for ensuring uninterrupted supplies to thermal power stations, particularly during the monsoon season. According to SCCL, coal stockpiles at mines and coal handling plants averaged around 50 lakh tonne annually between 2014 and 2024. The company said stocks had touched 70 lakh tonne in 2015-16 and 74 lakh tonnes in 2016-17. SCCL said thermal power stations require a minimum reserve of around 30 lakh tonne, sufficient for about 15 days, to ensure uninterrupted electricity generation during periods when production or transportation may be affected. Site-visit norm introduced after contract disruptions The company also clarified that the site-visit certificate requirement for overburden removal tenders was introduced to ensure contractors fully understand local mining, geographical



and logistical conditions before bidding for projects. According to SCCL, some contractors in the past had either slowed down or abandoned projects midway after underestimating local conditions, affecting coal production targets and leading to financial and legal complications. It cited instances in the Srirampur OC-2 and IK Open Cast projects where contractors allegedly failed to properly assess site conditions, resulting in disruptions to overburden removal works. The site-visit certificate requirement was introduced in May 2025 and is intended to help bidders assess project conditions, safety requirements and work scope before quoting rates, SCCL said. The com-

pany added that similar provisions are followed by several public and private sector organisations, including mining and infrastructure companies, and that tenders awarded after the introduction of the rule have progressed without major issues. ACB probe into medical board continues SCCL also said an Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) investigation into alleged irregularities involving medical boards was continuing following complaints from both affected persons and the management. The company noted that two persons have already been arrested in connection with the case and said the probe was being conducted by the ACB.

Conscious Indulgence: Fairmont Jaipur Introduces Green Kitchen

Jaipur, June 2026: Fairmont Jaipur marked the introduction of Green Kitchen, its dedicated pure-vegetarian culinary initiative, with an exclusive seated dinner at the hotel's signature rooftop venue. The intimate evening brought together tastemakers, industry leaders and distinguished guests all under one roof. The guests were presented with a refined approach to vegetarian dining rooted in authenticity, cultural sensitivity and culinary excellence. Nestled amidst the majestic Aravalli hills, the gathering offered guests an opportunity to experience hotel's evolving culinary philosophy through a refined and immersive dining journey. A thoughtfully curated menu brought the philosophy of Green Kitchen to life, celebrating authenticity, balance and refined vegetarian cuisine through every course. Green Kitchen- conceptualised with deep cultural sensitivity and culinary precision reflects Fairmont Jaipur's commitment to



serving discerning vegetarians guests with the highest standards of care and respect. The initiative features a completely exclusive kitchen environment dedicated solely to vegetarian cuisine, ensuring there is no cross-utilisation of ingredients, utensils or cooking spaces. The approach has been designed to honour the dietary preferences and cultural considerations that are significant during celebratory occasions, including

weddings and family gatherings. Chef Anal Uniyal, Director of Culinary, Fairmont Jaipur, added: "Green Kitchen has been designed to celebrate vegetarian cuisine with authenticity, creativity and care. Every dish on the menu reflects our focus on purity, flavour and exceptional culinary craftsmanship." The evening also highlighted an important evolution in culinary practices. As part of its continued focus on

mindful hospitality, the hotel has eliminated refined oils across its kitchens. Following a comprehensive review of cooking methods and menu offerings, clarified butter (desi ghee) and mustard oil are now used for Indian cuisine, while olive oil and cold-pressed canola oil are used for Western and global preparations. This transition reflects a conscious move towards more wholesome and nutrient-rich cooking practices. Rajat Sethi, Cluster General Manager, Fairmont and Raffles Jaipur, said: "The introduction of Green Kitchen reflects our commitment to thoughtful hospitality and evolving guest preferences. Together with our refined oil-free culinary philosophy, it represents a meaningful step towards conscious luxury dining." Guests enjoyed an elegant, slow dining experience with meaningful conversations, culinary exploration and a deeper understanding of the philosophy behind Green Kitchen and Refined Oil free approach.

The gamers taking on the industry to stop it switching off games

Can a company take away something you've already paid for? In the world of online video games, some already do. Publishers can decide to switch off a game's servers, often leaving it effectively unplayable. Stop Killing Games, a growing consumer rights campaign started by American YouTuber Ross Scott in 2024, is challenging that practice. In January, the group submitted a petition featuring nearly 1.3 million signatures to the European Commission, triggering a public hearing in the European Parliament in April. What began as an online campaign is now awaiting a decision from one of the EU's most powerful institutions. Scott's campaign began following an announcement from the major studio Ubisoft, saying it would shut down the online-only racing game The Crew in 2024. The French company said it was taking the game, which attracted more than 12 million players during its lifetime, offline, citing "upcoming server infrastructure and licensing



constraints". For players such as Chemicalflood, who told me he had been playing The Crew for nearly a decade, the move - which left the game unplayable - felt personal. "I was around 18 at the time of the launch - it was a big part of my adult life growing up," he said. "It was a great escape from hardship at the time, so it has always been something special to me." Over the years, he said, the game became something he shared with his children, who enjoyed exploring its virtual recreation of the United States. "The shutdown itself wasn't upsetting," he explained. "But

how they handled it was the kick in the teeth." For Chemicalflood and many fans like him, the issue was not that Ubisoft ended support. It was that players lost access altogether. The announcement from Ubisoft caught the attention of Scott, also known online as Accursed Farms, who had already been creating content around the issue of ownership around games for several years. "I just hate seeing creative works effectively destroyed," he told me. He quickly decided to start a campaign, naming it Stop Killing Games - the killing referring to when "every

copy of that game that's ever been sold has been disabled, and no one on the planet can run it". Whammy4, a gamer who founded the fan community The Crew Unlimited and helped lead efforts to preserve the game after its shutdown, likened it to "someone just breaking into your home and stealing your bike or your car". "You buy a physical copy of a game, you bring it home and install the game, you play it for some amount of time. Then all of a sudden the publisher completely destroys all copies of the game worldwide, including yours." "No refunds, no actual heads-up at the time of purchase, and nothing you can do to keep it at all," he said. Industry response Ubisoft has already defended its position in court. Responding to a proposed class-action lawsuit brought by two The Crew players in California, the studio argued that customers had purchased a licence to use the game, not unlimited ownership rights, and that players had been warned online services would not be available forever.

APEDA Facilitates First Export of Fresh Mangoes from Jharkhand to United Kingdom

In a significant development for agricultural exports from Jharkhand, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, flagged off the first commercial consignment of fresh mangoes from the State to the United Kingdom. The flag-off ceremony was held in Kolkata on 4 June 2026. The consignment comprises 1.5 metric tonnes of fresh Amrapali mangoes sourced from Beura Farmer Producer Company Ltd., an all-women Farmer Producer Company (FPC) located in Bano Block of Simdega district, Jharkhand. The consignment is being exported by M/s JGB Agrofresh Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata, to London, United Kingdom. The export follows an



Export-Oriented Capacity Building Programme organized by APEDA on 5 May 2026 for Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and progressive farmers of Simdega district. The programme focused on export requirements, quality standards and market opportunities. Subsequently, APEDA facilitated linkage between Beura Farmer Producer Company Ltd.

and M/s JGB Agrofresh Pvt. Ltd. for procurement of export-quality mangoes from the district. The present shipment is the outcome of this initiative. The linkage has enabled direct participation of the FPC in the export value chain and provided market access for its member farmers. The farmers associated with the FPC realized higher returns for their produce compared to prevailing domestic market prices.

Indian households continue to pay among the lowest cooking gas prices in the world

The Indian household continues to buy cooking gas much cheaper than the household in any neighbouring country, and far below the price paid in advanced economies such as the United States, Australia and Canada. A beneficiary of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) pays an effective 642 for a 14.2 kg cylinder, and the general consumer in Delhi 942, against a cost to supply that has now risen to over 1,600. The prices of petroleum products in India are linked to the corresponding prices in the international market. The Government, however, continues to modulate the effective price to the consumer for domestic LPG. Any household can buy as many cylinders as it needs at 942. A PMUY beneficiary will additionally receive the direct benefit transfer of 300 a cylinder on the first four refills each year — broadly the average annual consumption of a typical Ujjwala household, about four refills a year — and so pays an effective 642 on those refills; this support is unchanged. Even a non-PMUY household would pay about 700 below the market-linked cost of the cylinder. Retail prices differ marginally across locations on account of distribution costs.



What the household does not bear the brunt of is the several hundred rupees a cylinder which the Government is bearing. Through a period of sharp international cost increases, that burden has been absorbed upstream rather than passed to the consumer. A pass-through that has been held back The commercial cylinder used by hotels and businesses is revised automatically every month, because its price is a direct pass-through of the international benchmark. The domestic

cooking cylinder is not. India used to import 60 per cent of its LPG requirements, and the landed cost of that import tracks the Saudi Contract Price (CP) that Saudi Aramco sets at the start of each month. This is an external price over which the Indian consumer has no control. Through the West Asia disruption the benchmark moved sharply higher. Expressed as the 50:50 propane-butane blend used for India's LPG, the Saudi CP for LPG stood at about US\$543 a tonne in February, before

the disruption. Following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz in late February, the April contract price — the first set after the disruption tightened Mideast Gulf exports — rose to US\$775 a tonne, with propane at US\$750 and butane at US\$800, and has since edged up further to US\$790 a tonne in June. The blended LPG benchmark has thus risen by about 46% since the pre-crisis February level. The cost of the imported molecule rose with it. The cost a consumer is not asked to pay Following the June contract price, the cost of supplying a 14.2 kg cylinder, were it priced on an import-linked basis, has risen to over 1,600. The under-recovery now absorbed on each domestic cylinder is about 700. The scale of this is visible in the fully market-priced commercial cylinder: the 19 kg cylinder used by hotels and restaurants sells in Delhi at 3,113.50, about 164 a kg, after five increases during the West Asia crisis. The domestic household, by contrast, pays about 66 a kg after the revision. Commercial gas carries a higher rate of tax and larger margins, so it sits above the household's cost-reflective level; even so, the import-linked cost of a domestic cylinder works out to over 1,600.

Zelensky criticises 'vile' Chornobyl drone strike ahead of London talks

UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer will host Volodymyr Zelensky in Downing Street later on Sunday, alongside French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, for talks on European support for Ukraine. Ahead of the meeting, Kyiv officials said a Russian drone had hit a storage facility for spent nuclear fuel near the Chornobyl nuclear plant in the north of Ukraine. They said a fire was put out and there were no injuries, with officials adding that radiation levels remained stable. Zelensky labelled it a deliberate and "vile Russian strike". Separately, at least three people were killed in a Russian strike in a village outside Zaporizhzhia in the south-east of the country, authorities said. Zaporizhzhia has come under relentless Russian attacks recently, with at



least two people killed there on Saturday. The Russian strike on Chornobyl "partially destroyed" a spent nuclear fuel storage building, according to Ukraine's state-owned nuclear operator, Enerhoatom. The operator said there were no injuries, and a fire in the building was put out, adding

that radiation remained at a normal level. The body also criticised Moscow for what it called a deliberate threat to nuclear safety, in words echoed by Zelensky. "Russia deliberately struck this particular nuclear infrastructure facility," Zelensky said in a post on X, describing the building as an "as

extremely critical infrastructure facility" and the attack as "vile". He went on to detail Russian overnight strikes in 13 regions, adding that Moscow had launched 88 missiles, more than 3,250 drones and 1,800 guided bombs over the past week. On Saturday, Ukraine targeted St Petersburg and the

surrounding area as the city hosted the final day of a major economic forum, in a drone attack described as "unprecedented" by Russian authorities. Days earlier, Kyiv had attacked the outskirts of the same city - some 1,000km (620 miles) from Ukraine - as Russian President Vladimir Putin's flagship forum was getting started, sending a large plume of black smoke over the city's skyline. In the four years since Moscow's invasion began, Ukraine has developed its defence sector, with Kyiv now able to regularly hit targets within Russia. The three Western powers represented at Downing Street - the so-called E3 group - are some of Kyiv's strongest allies. The UK and France lead the "coalition of the willing" initiative to provide security guarantees for Ukraine as part of a future potential peace process. The group had previously con-

vened in London in December, at a time when the US was pushing hard for Moscow and Kyiv to sign up quickly to a plan to end the war in Ukraine. Since then US efforts to mediate a truce have petered out, and Washington's focus has shifted to the Iran war. On Friday, Putin rejected a proposal by Zelensky for face-to-face talks on ending the war, saying he did not see any point in meeting the Ukrainian leader. Zelensky sent an open letter calling for a direct negotiations, writing that it would be "wrong to simply wait" for the conflict to once again become the focus of US attention. Speaking at the economic forum on Friday, Putin refused the request for a meeting with Zelensky and reiterated his position that a truce would only allow Ukraine to regroup. He said he would only end the war when Russia's goals had been met.

INSECURITY AND INSTABILITY DRIVE VOTERS IN PERU'S TIGHT PRESIDENTIAL RACE



"If you don't meet our demands, we will kill your drivers." This message, demanding about \$15,000, was sent by a criminal gang to a bus company in a poor suburb of Peru's capital, Lima. It preceded an armed attack on bus driver, Toño. "They shot me in the legs and abdomen. I was out of work for four months, now I work with fear. Although my wounds are dry, internally I feel pain," he says. Toño's case was one of nearly 30,000 extortion incidents reported in Peru in 2025, many targeting small businesses or transport workers. This issue, along with rising homicides, is why insecurity and crime have

become top concerns for voters in Sunday's presidential election in Peru. The right-wing Keiko Fujimori, daughter of the late former president, Alberto Fujimori, is running for a fourth time against left-wing Roberto Sánchez. Fujimori has defined her campaign with an array of "tough-on-crime" policies, while Sánchez has promised sweeping changes to the state and higher public spending. In Lima's suburb of San Juan de Lurigancho, dusty hilltop neighbourhoods sprawl precariously down the slopes. Armed police guard the gate to the bus depot where Toño works.

Hegseth attacks Europe over migration with beach 'invasion' D-Day speech



US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth has criticised European nations over migration for allowing what he described as an "invasion" on their shores, during a D-Day anniversary speech in France. Hegseth was speaking in Normandy 82 years after allied forces stormed French beaches to liberate Nazi-occupied Europe in 1944. "Sadly, today, different European beaches are stormed by different dangerous ideologies," Hegseth said. "Beaches in Spain, in Italy, in Greece and Bulgaria. Boats and men arrive. When will European capitals do something about that invasion?" Migration has become a major political issue across Europe, with parties supporting hardline immigration policies surging in polls. The Trump administration sees an immigration crackdown as a key part of its domestic policy agenda, requesting billions more in funding for enforcement agencies. Hegseth's comments mark

a further criticism of European migration policy by senior members of the Trump administration. On Friday, US Vice-President JD Vance blamed the death of the 18-year-old British student Henry Nowak, who was fatally stabbed last year in Southampton by Vickrum Digwa, on the "mass invasion of migrants" and said the "only response" was "righteous anger". Downing Street responded by criticising "people trying to interfere in our democracy," adding that the Nowak family had "said they do not want his death to be used to create further division". And Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy told the BBC's Laura Kuenssberg that "politicians should be very careful and very cautious" about their language. "We're in this new online space that can rapidly become toxic," he explained, adding that concerns around Henry Nowak's case had become a "global" issue because of the "viral" footage of his arrest.

HUNDREDS OF CAPTIVES FREED FROM BOKO HARAM MOUNTAIN HIDEOUT



At least 360 people kidnapped by Boko Haram jihadists from a mainly Muslim community in Nigeria's north-eastern Borno state in March have been freed from a remote mountain hideout. The circumstances of how they were freed are disputed. The army says it had launched an unprecedented intelligence-led operation that had

been weeks in the planning and taken the Islamist militants by surprise. But a local group, the Borno South Youth Initiative, says it mediated the unconditional release, putting the number of those freed at 416. Mass abductions by armed groups for ransom have become a common tactic in Nigeria in recent years - and though it is illegal to pay ransoms.

STEVE ROSENBERG: Russia's economic forum overshadowed by drone attacks on St Petersburg

An evil sorcerer is the last person you'd expect to see at an economic forum. But there he stood working his wizardry. With sleight of hand Russian folklore villain "Koshchei the Deathless" (or, rather, someone dressed as him) produced coins out of thin air, "broke" and reassembled someone's glasses and shocked passers-by with occasional puffs of smoke from his fingers. "Russians are unpredictable people," he declared. "We do things no one expects." Perhaps. But in St Petersburg this week, the unexpected was delivered most dramatically by Ukraine. Ukrainian drones attacked the St Petersburg area on the opening - and closing - days of the set-piece



International Economic Forum (SPIEF). The abiding image of SPIEF 2026 will be the huge plume of thick black smoke which dominated the St Petersburg skyline on Wednesday. Without specifying what was hit, local officials admitted that drones had damaged "infrastructure". All the delegates saw the smoke as they arrived at

the expo centre on the edge of the city. Few could have predicted what came next. Volodymyr Zelensky published an open letter to Vladimir Putin. Ukraine's president taunted Russia's leader about his age and about Russian setbacks in the war but proposed the two leaders meet in a neutral country to talk peace. President Putin's

response? Nothing unpredictable about that. The Kremlin leader, who had rejected previous calls for direct talks with President Zelensky, criticised the letter's "rude" tone and dismissed the offer. "It's not the author of the letter I need to respond to," President Putin said, "but our soldiers on the frontline...I say to them: keep at it, brothers!" Vladimir Putin is not ready to end Russia's war on Ukraine. Not unless it's on his terms. I listened to what he said at the forum's plenary session. There were few surprises. The Putin we saw is the Putin we expected to see - uncompromising, unrepentant, determined to project an image of strength and unwavering conviction.

ARMENIA VOTES AS RUSSIA PILES PRESURE ON PRO-WEST GOVERNMENT

Voting is under way in Armenia in an election which could decide whether the country continues edging towards the West, or returns to its traditional ally Russia. The small South Caucasus country of three million people has been under mounting economic pressure from Moscow, as Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan seeks re-election on a promise of European integration. The election has drawn significant international attention to Armenia, which has steadily grown closer to the West while still intertwined with Russia, its largest trading partner. The rapprochement with the West is largely Pashinyan's doing.



Since coming to power in 2018, the prime minister has steered his country away from Moscow, passed a law to launch the process of joining the EU, and accelerated the peace process with neighbouring Azerbaijan via a US-brokered agreement. The latter

has won him US President Donald Trump's endorsement. Pashinyan also hosted a large summit of EU leaders and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in the capital, Yerevan, earlier this year. Yet despite these successes, Pashinyan's domestic

support has fallen from 54% in 2021 to around 30% today. The main reason is Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous enclave inside Azerbaijan that was home to 100,000 ethnic Armenians until Azerbaijan took it by force in 2023. Pashinyan's critics have never forgiven him for making concessions in favour of peace with Azerbaijan, like refusing to campaign for the release of former leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh who are in jail in the neighbouring country. The peace deal with Azerbaijan, too, remains deeply divisive, with one recent poll showing 44% of public opinion in support and 41% opposed.

Manhunt continues after 12 people shot near festival in Ohio



Police say they are searching for suspects after at least 12 people were shot near a festival in Toledo, in the midwestern US state of Ohio. The Toledo Police Department said 10 people "are reported to be in stable condition, while two remain in critical condition". Police say they are searching for suspects after at least 12 people were shot near a festival in Toledo, in the midwestern US state of Ohio. The Toledo Police Department said 10 people "are reported to be in stable condition, while two remain in critical condition". It said it responded to a report of a shooting near the Old West End Festival at around 17:37 local time (21:37 GMT) on Saturday. Toledo Deputy Police Chief Joe Heffernan said it appeared that two people fired weapons and they were "probably shooting at each other". Footage shared online - which the BBC has not yet independently verified - appears to show people running and screaming as a volley of gunshots rings out. The victims' ages ranged from 16 to 61. Police Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz earli-

er told local news outlet WTOL 11 that they all were expected to survive. Eyewitness Tito Aguilar told the BBC's US partner CBS News he was ordering food when he saw a group of "juveniles" attacking another young person. Aguilar said he started recording on his phone and then heard gunshots. He then ran from the area, he said, but eventually returned to find his own friends and saw several injuries from the shooting. Police Lt Dan Gerken expressed shock at the level of violence. "Twelve people being shot, that's the most I've been to a scene. I've been to a lot of scenes, but this is way over the top," he told reporters. Gerken said police were talking to victims and witnesses and reviewing camera footage. He appealed for help from locals. "Beloved community event" The Old West End Festival describes itself as "a two-day event celebrating one of the largest historic districts in the country with live music, multiple food markets, a beer garden, house tours, shopping, and much more".

'It was either killed or be killed' - ongoing nightmares of an ex-child soldier in Somalia

Shopkeeper Yusuf Ali still battles with memories of his time as a child soldier fighting on the streets of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu. The 34-year-old became embroiled in the Islamist insurgency, which erupted nearly 20 years ago, and while the city's urban landscape is healing, few resources are devoted to those still suffering with the psychological scars of the conflict. Warning: This article contains details some readers may find upsetting. When he was 14 years old, a coalition of Sharia courts seized power in Somalia and provided some sense of stability in a country that had been riven by devastating clan warfare since the regime of President Siad Barre collapsed in 1991. But the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC)

marked the first instance of political Islam gaining a foothold in the African continent since al-Qaeda's 11 September 2001 attacks on the US. Policymakers in Washington viewed the UIC with hostility, accusing it of having ties to al-Qaeda. Its military youth wing was known as al-Shabab, meaning "The Lads". In December 2006, thousands of Ethiopian troops invaded Somalia under the cover of American drones with the aim of toppling the courts just six months after they had taken over. Ethiopia's invasion was deeply unpopular in Somalia and was met with fierce opposition as al-Shabab and its allies, including a coalition of splinter groups known as the Muqawama, meaning "Resistance".



Huge crowds throng Madrid streets for Pope's open-air Mass

FIFA Allows Water Bottles In World Cup Stadiums In USA And Canada

After days of confusion and multiple u-turns, FIFA has finally allowed fans to bring one soft plastic water bottle into stadiums during the World Cup that starts 11th of June. Football's governing body faced criticism after repeatedly changing its position. Fans and politicians have accused FIFA of commercialising even basic necessities like water, forcing supporters to pay for them inside venues. The latest "clarification" of FIFA's water bottle policy came just a couple of days after it said refillable water bottles would not be allowed. The approach mirrors policies followed by bodies such as the ICC and BCCI in India, where spectators are not permitted to bring water bottles from outside and are instead required to purchase them inside stadiums at higher prices. FIFA faced intense criticism from fans and politicians across several countries. Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow



described FIFA's decision to ban outside water bottles as a "pure money grab". Her city will host six World Cup matches. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer also criticised the policy, calling it "wrong" and suggesting it was primarily about revenue, as fans who had already paid high ticket prices were being forced to buy expensive water inside stadiums. After several U-

turns, FIFA has now introduced a new policy allowing water bottles inside stadiums in the United States and Canada. "All fans will be permitted to bring in one soft plastic 20-ounce (590ml), factory-sealed disposable water bottle into any FIFA World Cup 2026 match in the USA and Canada," World Cup chief operating officer Heimo Schirgi said in a video posted on FIFA's X account.

However, FIFA has yet to clarify whether the same rule will apply in Mexico, raising the possibility that fans attending matches in Mexico City, Monterrey and Guadalajara may not be allowed to bring water bottles into venues. Last week, FIFA had said it would allow transparent plastic bottles of up to one litre in capacity, which supporters could refill at fountains inside stadiums.

That policy has since undergone two further changes. So what is the fuss about? Fans argue that FIFA is effectively forcing them to buy drinks from concession stands inside stadiums. FIFA receives a significant share of concession revenue, while its soft-drink partner Coca-Cola will be selling both its sodas and bottled water brand Dasani at World Cup venues. However, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani welcomed FIFA's latest reversal. "I'm glad that FIFA decided to reverse this policy and allow water bottles to be brought into World Cup games. "No one should have to fear being priced out of staying hydrated, especially fans who are often waiting for hours before a game in extreme heat." So why is FIFA restricting water bottles in the first place? The governing body has defended the policy on safety grounds, saying it is intended "to prevent risk and injury to players and attendees."

'SYSTEMIC ILLNESS': CONTROVERSIAL EX-INDIA COACH DROPS 'VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI' BOMBSHELL

Legendary Australia cricketer Greg Chappell was impressed by the 15-year-old sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi but expressed his concern about what his explosive style of batting can mean for the battle between bat and ball. Sooryavanshi has been enjoying a sensational run of form with 776 runs in IPL 2026 and he even earned a national team call-up for the upcoming T20Is against Ireland and England. In his column for ESPNCricinfo, Chappell compared Sooryavanshi's batting technique to that of greats like Sir Garfield Sobers and Brian Lara but said that although it is an evolution of the T20 batting, the dominance shown by the youngster also serves as 'profound warning sign'. "As I watched this young left-hander take modern batting to a completely unheralded plane, a profound sense of unease accompanied the marvel. The central question we must now confront is clear: are we witnessing the magnificent evolution of T20



batting or are we presiding over the permanent evisceration of the contest between bat and ball?" Chappell wrote. "When studying Sooryavanshi in full flight, one is immediately struck by a technical purity that elevates his work above the crude, muscle-bound power-hitting of the modern era. His clean, uninhibited bat swing possesses an organic symmetry that evokes cricket's finest aestheticians. In his elegant downswing and flawless balance, there are distinct echoes of the great Graeme Pollock and the incomparable Sir Garfield Sobers. When he slashes

across the line or lofts over extra cover, one glimpses the ferocious, instinctive genius of Brian Lara, combined with the devastating, ball-one intent of Adam Gilchrist." "It is a classic, pure method being deployed with contemporary violence, proving that his talent is a rare gift to the game. However, his unprecedented success at such a tender age serves as a profound warning sign." Chappell went on to point out that the dominance shown by Sooryavanshi shown against top bowlers in the IPL 2026 also shows a 'systemic illness' within the sport.

Patrick Mahomes And Brittany Mahomes Net Worth 2026: Inside NFL Power Couple's Multi-Million-Dollar Empire

Few power couples in American sport have built wealth as fast as NFL star Patrick Mahomes and wife Brittany Mahomes. What began as a high school romance in Texas has turned into a multi-million-dollar success story built on professional sports, business ventures, endorsement deals and real estate investments. As of 2026, Patrick and Brittany Mahomes are estimated to have a combined net worth of around \$175 million. Patrick contributes the bulk of that wealth, while Brittany has built her own successful business and investment portfolio. Together, their fortune continues to grow through NFL earnings, brand partnerships, sports ownership stakes and other investments. Patrick Mahomes' NFL



Contract Remains The Foundation The biggest driver of the family's wealth is Patrick Mahomes' landmark contract with the Kansas City Chiefs. In 2020, the superstar quarterback signed a 10-year extension worth up to \$503 million, one of the richest deals in sports history. The

contract transformed Mahomes from a franchise quarterback into one of the highest-paid athletes in the world. Beyond his salary, he continues to earn tens of millions annually through endorsements. The Chiefs quarterback reportedly earns more than \$20 million annual-

ly from sponsorship deals and has worked with some of the biggest brands in the world. His long list of partners includes Adidas, State Farm, Subway, Oakley, T-Mobile, Coors Light, Boss, Head & Shoulders, Essentia Water, Airshare and Whataburger, among others. He also became the first NFL player to receive a signature shoe from Adidas. Brittany Mahomes Has Built Her Own Business Success Brittany Mahomes, too, has created a substantial business profile of her own. A former professional soccer player, Brittany launched fitness ventures, built a strong social media brand and became a founding co-owner of the National Women's Soccer League club Kansas City Current. Her personal net worth is around \$15 million.

Former WWE World Champion Opens Up About Being ‘Disgusted’ By Wrestlemania 42 Championship Match

WrestleMania is considered one of WWE's major stages, where championship matches are expected to create unforgettable moments for fans around the world. Every year, fans from across the world gather together at one point for witnessing the high voltage matches. Fans have huge expectations, especially when major titles are on the line. One particular match in WrestleMania became a major talking point among fans. Many enjoyed the contest, whereas others felt that it did not meet the high standard usually associated with a WrestleMania main event level title match. The discussion became more focused when the former WWE World Champion shared his honest reaction. Seth Rollins explains his strong reaction



In a recent appearance, former WWE World Champion Seth Rollins shared that he was 'disgusted' by the WrestleMania 42 World Heavyweight Championship match, which was held between Jey Uso and Gunther. Rollins said that his reaction was not necessary because of the in-ring action

itself, but because he felt the outcome represented a direction he strongly disagreed with. Rollins believed that the championship should be represented by the competitors who can carry the title at the highest level week after week. He suggested that seeing the championship move in a dif-

ferent direction frustrated him, as someone who has spent years helping establish the status of the World Heavyweight Championship.

The championship match continues to divide fans WrestleMania 42 title match has been a hot topic ever since the event ended. Fans of Jey Uso argue that his popularity with the audience and years of hard work earned him the opportunity to hold a World Championship. They view his victory as a major career milestone and reward for connecting with fans on a massive level. Whereas Rollins fans are unhappy with the company's decision that prevented him from competing at WrestleMania 42 and forced him to vacate his title.

India Debutant Manav Suthar's Family Did Not Come To Stadium, Father Reveals 'Superstition'



Jagdish Suthar, a retired Physical Education teacher from Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar district, had travelled all the way to Mullanpur with his family to watch his elder child Manav make his Test debut for India but left for home without watching his son's on-field exploits on second day of the match against Afghanistan on Sunday. Suthar made a brilliant debut as he had the Afghanistan batters tied in knots with figures of 3 for 21 in 15.5 overs. "Yes, me, my wife and my daughter Mansi (Manav's younger sister) had come to watch his debut. I can't describe how it felt seeing him get the Test Cap yesterday. However today we had come back home as we were all nervous and a bit superstitious watching him live in action from the stadium," the soft-spoken Jagdish Suthar told PTI during an exclusive interaction on the second day of the Test. A man of few words, Jagdish

was very reluctant to take any credit for his son's success on the cricket field which has now culminated into donning the national colours. "It is completely Manav's hard work and the hours that he has put into practice. He would leave home for training in the morning and return late in the evening. It is his credit and his childhood coach Dheeraj Sharma to whom we are all indebted. Manav learnt all his cricket under him," Suthar senior said. Asked when did he actually found that his son has talent, the father said that it wasn't like one fine day that he realised it. "Like every other child, he was also passionate about cricket. He would play with tennis and rubber ball when he was around six to seven years old. Since I was a PT teacher, I always encouraged my son to play the sport and enjoy. When he was around 10 to 11 years old, I had enrolled him in Dheeraj sir's academy.

Dianna Russini-Mike Vrabel Controversy: Ex-NFL Reporter Makes Bold Claim, Says They Were In A Relationship For 10 Years

As NFL teams move closer to training camp and the focus slowly shifts back to football, one offseason scandal refuses to die down. New claims about New England Patriots coach Mike Vrabel and former NFL insider Dianna Russini have surfaced, after a high-profile resignation and months of scrutiny across league circles. This time, the latest allegation comes from former USA Today NFL writer Crissy Froyd, who claims the relationship between Vrabel and Russini stretches back far longer than previously discussed publicly. Crissy Froyd Claims Mike Vrabel And Dianna Russini Were Together For Years During an appearance on The Howard Eskin Show, Froyd was asked how long people



ple around the league may have known about the reported relationship. She pointed to a much longer timeline and said, "At least 10 years," Froyd replied. "At least 10 years. I would assume... for what I know between her and him and certainly for what I know about her, at least 10 years." Froyd then questioned how the situation remained unaddressed for so long despite what she believes was common knowledge. "The

biggest thing to me was the way that everyone knew and no one did anything about it, and it was obvious. To me, the worst part of it was... I would almost feel bad for her if she, like, fell in love for six months and made these horrible mistakes and she owned up to it 'cause everybody makes mistakes in their lifetime... But you don't make the same mistake for six years, 10 years, anything of that longevity whatsoever." Her comments arrive months after photo-

graphs published by Page Six showed Vrabel and Russini together at an adults-only resort in Arizona. More photos reportedly showed the pair kissing at a New York City bar in March 2020. TMZ also published video of the two on a private boat trip in Tennessee in 2021. Why The Mike Vrabel-Dianna Russini Story Still Matters The fallout from the controversy has already been huge. Russini resigned from The Athletic in April while The New York Times continued its investigation into her reporting. Froyd, who has repeatedly spoken about the issue publicly, also criticised Russini's since-deleted social media presence. "The way that she had deleted her Twitter account and it appeared, at least the way I took it and the way that most people took it, that she had been like covertly bragging on that. I mean, it's disgusting."

R Praggnanandhaa On Beating Magnus Carlsen Twice, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi 'Google Search'



India's Golden Generation chess champion, Grandmaster R

Praggnanandhaa, considers his victory at the prestigious Norway Chess tournament as one of the defining moments of his career. In one of the most elite and demanding events in the chess world, the Tamil Nadu Grandmaster clinched the title late last night, finishing with an impressive 18 points. During the tournament, Praggnanandhaa left the

chess world awestruck by defeating World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen twice. Speaking exclusively to NDTV from the Norwegian capital, Oslo, he opened up about his historic win, his sleep schedule, his upcoming celebrations, and the immense role his support system played in his success.

Teenager Kimi Antonelli Claims Monaco Pole For Mercedes After 'Magic Lap'



Kimi Antonelli produced a "magic lap" to edge Max Verstappen in the dying seconds of Saturday's qualifying and claim pole for the Monaco Grand Prix. The 19-year-old Italian clocked one minute and 12.051 seconds in his Ferrari for his fourth pole this year, extending Mercedes run to six out of six, and putting him in position to become the first Italian since Alberto Ascari of Ferrari in 1952 to win five consecutive F1 Grands Prix. "It was one of those laps that we call a magic lap," said a beaming Antonelli, after hugging his father, Marco. "I was able to put it all together and it was such a close qualifying with Max. "I think the first run off in Q3, there was just one millisecond between us. I knew the last lap was good, I was just hoping that it would be enough! But it was very close." Antonelli's sensational lap came at the end of a sequence of dramatic laps in the final seconds of a classic session as, in turn, Ferrari's Charles Leclerc,

Verstappen and then the precocious Italian clocked pole laps. "I am very happy with that and massive thanks to the team because yesterday we struggled a little bit and today we were able to improve massively," said Antonelli, who last year finished 18th, three laps down on a triumphant Lando Norris of McLaren. "I think this is one of the most intensive, if not the most intense qualifying of the year and it takes a massive effort – and also the practices because you just keep trying to get close to the limit. "When it is about finding the last two tenths, it is not easy because the walls start to come closer and it is not easy to gain the confidence, but I felt great this morning and I am happy that we could finish the job today." He said despite mounting media attention and speculation, he had not felt any increased pressure. "For sure, I am just enjoying the driving, enjoying the car, enjoying the weekend," he said, with a customary grin.

ANUSHKA SHARMA
FACES BACKLASH
OVER HOMEOPATHY
SUPPORT



Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma has found herself at the centre of a social media debate after expressing support for homeopathy. Her recent Instagram Story, where she praised renowned homeopathic doctor Rajan Sankaran, has triggered mixed reactions from doctors, health experts, and social media users. Why is Anushka Sharma's Homeopathy Post Trending? The controversy began when Anushka shared a video featuring Rajan Sankaran in conversation with entrepreneur Namita Thapar. In her post, the actress revealed that homeopathy has played an important role in her life and credited Dr. Sankaran for being a significant part of her health journey. Her statement quickly went viral, with many people discussing whether celebrities should publicly endorse alternative medical treatments. Several medical professionals criticised the actress for promoting a treatment system that remains scientifically controversial. Critics argued that there is limited scientific evidence proving the effectiveness of homeopathy for treating serious illnesses. Among the

strongest critics was liver specialist Cyriac Abby Phillips, popularly known as The Liver Doc on social media. He strongly opposed the endorsement and reiterated his long-standing criticism of homeopathy, calling for greater reliance on evidence-based medicine. The internet remains split on the issue. Some users accused Anushka of promoting an unscientific treatment to her millions of followers. Others expressed concern that celebrity endorsements could influence people to delay or avoid proven medical care. However, many supporters defended the actress, saying she merely shared her personal experience and did not ask anyone to replace conventional treatment with homeopathy. Several users also shared their own positive experiences with alternative medicine. The debate has once again highlighted the influence celebrities have on public opinion, especially when discussing health-related topics. While supporters believe individuals should be free to share personal health journeys, critics argue that public figures should be cautious when discussing treatments that remain under scientific scrutiny.

Nagabandham' goes on a spectacular promotional
tour from Hyderabad to Varanasi - A grand
release in Nizam by renowned producer Dil Raju

The epic adventure thriller 'Nagabandham - The Secret Treasure', directed by Abhishek Nama, is being promoted extensively to make it a sensation across the country. Produced by Kishore Annapureddy and Nishitha Nagireddy under the banner of Nick Studios, the film stars Virat Karna in the lead role. The makers have announced a special promotional tour across the country for the film, which is set to release worldwide on July 3. Unlike regular promotions, this promotional campaign has been designed in line with the treasure hunt concept of the film's story. The event, which will be held in each city, will bring the world of cinema, its mysteries and adventures closer to the audience. The first event on this tour is the trailer launch in Hyderabad on June 19. This event will be designed to further increase interest in the film's scale, visuals, and story. Afterwards, promotional events will be held in Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Kochi from June 20 to 23. The film team is moving forward with the aim of further expanding the film's reach across the country through these events. As a special attraction of this promotional



tour, the song 'Veera Naga' will be released in Varanasi on June 26. The spiritual and cultural significance of

the city of Varanasi is a great fit for the title of the film and the background of the story.

Police Complaint' Set for Worldwide
Theatrical Release on June 12



Ghattamaneni Adishesagiri Rao appreciates the Film Team. The horror-action-thriller entertainer 'Police Complaint' is all set for a worldwide theatrical release on June 12. Produced by Balakrishna Maharana under the MSK Pramida Sri Films banner, the film is directed by creative director Sanjeev Megoti. The film has already generated considerable buzz with its trailer and promotional songs. Recently, a special tribute song dedicated to legendary Superstar Krishna became a major attraction. After watching

the song, Superstar Krishna's brother, Ghattamaneni Adishesagiri Rao personally appreciated the film team. He praised the song and conveyed his best wishes for the film's grand success. The makers have also released the special song featuring Krishna Sai and Krithi Varma. The tribute song dedicated to Superstar Krishna has been receiving an enthusiastic response from fans. Speaking on the occasion, director Sanjeev Megoti said, "We are honored that Ghattamaneni Adishesagiri Rao garu appreciated our film, especially the special song dedi-

cated to Krishna garu. His blessings have given our team great encouragement. We completed the film in just 45 days with the participation of 52 senior artists. The story revolves around a unique concept called 'Chain Reaction of Karma.' Along with horror-thriller elements, the film also features action and emotional drama, offering a fresh cinematic experience to audiences." Lead actor Krishna Sai said, "It is a privilege to be part of a song dedicated to our beloved Superstar Krishna garu. We are delighted that Adishesagiri Rao garu watched the song and appreciated it.

VETERAN DIRECTOR A. KODANDARAMI REDDY
LAUNCHES TRAILER OF 'KOTHA MALUPU'

The trailer of Kotha Malupu, a romantic love suspense entertainer starring Akash Goparaju, son of renowned playback singer Sunitha, and Bhairavi Ardhya in the lead roles, was officially launched by veteran filmmaker A. Kodandarami Reddy. The film is directed by Shiva Varaprasad Keshanakurthi and produced by Tati Balakrishna under the Tathastu Creations banner. The movie is scheduled for a theatrical release on June 12 and will be distributed by Mythri Movie Distributors. Speaking at the trailer launch event, Kodandarami Reddy praised the film and said, "The trailer looks very impressive, and I liked the concept. Both the hero and heroine have performed well. I wish the audience makes this film a grand success." Set against a rural backdrop, Kotha Malupu promises a perfect blend of romance, sus-



pense, and entertainment. Akash Goparaju and Bhairavi Ardhya will be seen portraying the roles of bavaradalu (cousin relationship), adding a traditional flavor to the story. The film also features Raghu Babu, Prithviraj, Prabhavati, and several other notable actors in key roles. Music has been composed by Yashwanth Nag. Director Shiva Varaprasad Keshanakurthi expressed his gratitude to

Kodandarami Reddy for launching the trailer and blessing the team. He said, "We have made this film in the romantic love suspense genre. The chemistry between Akash and Bhairavi has come out wonderfully. We have also showcased the scenic beauty of Konaseema while presenting an engaging story packed with comedy and emotions. We are confident audiences will enjoy the film when it releases on

June 12." Producer Tati Balakrishna stated, "I am thankful to Kodandarami Reddy garu for appreciating our film. This is my debut production, the director's first film, and the heroine's debut project. It is Akash's second film. Made entirely in a rural setting, Kotha Malupu will offer a refreshing cinematic experience. Comedian Mahender's performance will be one of the major highlights." Hero Akash Goparaju thanked Kodandarami Reddy and the entire team, saying, "I am grateful to our director for giving me such a good story. It is a privilege to have the support of a reputed distribution company like Mythri. I also thank my mother Sunitha and everyone associated with the film." Heroine Bhairavi Ardhya described the film as a special milestone in her career. "The story combines romance, suspense, and comedy in an entertaining way.

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja, Shiva
Nirvana, Mythri Movie Makers'
Irumudi Worldwide Theatrical
Release On August 21st



Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja has teamed up with director Shiva Nirvana for Irumudi, being produced by leading pan-India banner Mythri Movie Makers. The film has already generated significant buzz with the impressive response to its first glimpse, The Heart of Irumudi. Promising an emotional family drama set against a powerful devotional backdrop, the film is expected to connect with audiences across all age groups. Ravi Teja, in particular, has delivered a deeply moving performance as a devoted father, adding a new dimension to his screen image. Encouraged by the overwhelming reception to the glimpse, the makers have now officially announced the film's release date. Irumudi is set for a grand worldwide release on August 21st, coinciding with the auspicious occasion of Varalakshmi Vratam. With nearly two

months remaining for release, the team has also promised a steady stream of promotional updates in the coming weeks. Production is progressing at a brisk pace in Hyderabad, where the lead cast is currently participating in the ongoing schedule. Ravi Teja and Shiva Nirvana have been working with complete dedication, ensuring that the film is shaping up exactly as envisioned. While Ravi Teja is widely celebrated for his energetic commercial entertainers, Irumudi offers him an opportunity to explore a more emotionally driven character. He will be seen portraying a relatable middle-class family man, a role that is expected to strike an emotional chord with audiences. Shiva Nirvana has crafted a story rooted in human relationships, faith, and family values, blending heartfelt drama with engaging commercial elements.

RUHANI'S RELAXED POSE
IN UNBUTTONED TOP

Ruhani Sharma has carved a quiet but solid place for herself in Telugu cinema with films like Chi La Sow, HIT: The First Case and Saindhav. Her last release Mask did not do well at the box office, but she is not slowing down. She has another film titled Alcohol coming up this year, and all eyes are on whether it will turn things around for her. In the meantime, Ruhani shared some stunning new pictures that are turning heads for all the right reasons. She is seen lying on a wooden floor in a soft pink open-knit crochet shirt paired with distressed blue denim. The sheer white curtains in the background give the whole picture a dreamy, sunlit feel. Wavy hair and tiny hoop earrings keep the look effortlessly chic. The pose is relaxed, the look is casual, but the impact is anything but



ordinary. Ruhani proves that sometimes the simplest outfits make the loudest statement.

INDIAN NOLAN FANS
FEAR ODYSSEY CUTS

Christopher Nolan's upcoming film Odyssey is already facing growing discussion in India even before its release on July 17, with censor fear trending among movie enthusiasts. The concern mainly stems from the film's R-rated classification in Hollywood, which often includes mature themes, intimate scenes, and strong visual content. Audiences in India are now worried that the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) may trim or modify several sequences to meet local guidelines. In past Hollywood releases, including major titles like Oppenheimer, Indian censors have removed or altered scenes involving nudity, intimacy, and smoking before granting certification, changing the viewing experience. Since Odyssey is associated with Christopher Nolan, expectations are even higher, as his films are known for immersive storytelling



and carefully structured emotional sequences. Fans fear that any major cuts could affect the narrative flow and impact of the film, especially if key romantic or

dramatic moments are shortened. Social media discussions suggest that audiences are split while some understand the need for local certification rules.