



PM MODI
says yoga can pave way for world peace, calls for making it part of daily life

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RANVEER
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SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

20-06-2026

Total pilgrims: 93,303

Tonnages: 4,688

Ward numbers: 4,49 CR

Laddu sales: 4,58 Lac

Annaprasadams: 2,80 Lac

Medical treatment: 3,607

Waiting Convoys: Out side line at

Mallathuram.

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

Hyderabad NEET aspirant dies by suicide a day before retest

HYDERABAD (TSIT)

A 19-year-old NEET aspirant, Sheikh Sana, allegedly died by suicide at her residence in Miyapur, Hyderabad, a day before the NEET (UG) re-examination. Police suspect academic pressure, family expectations, and anxiety over previous exam setbacks may have contributed to the incident. Sana, who was preparing for the re-exam after failing to qualify last year, was staying with her two younger sisters. She reportedly left a note stating that no one was responsible for her death. Police have registered a case and shifted the body to Gandhi Hospital for post-mortem. This is believed to be the first reported suicide of a NEET aspirant in Telangana following the controversy surrounding the examination.



NEET retest held for 20 lac aspirants

NTA said NEET Re-Exam Conducted at 5,454 Centres

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Over 20 lakh medical aspirants took a second shot at the NEET (UG) examination on Sunday, June 21, after the original test was cancelled due to paper leaks, an issue that became a hot potato for the government and also triggered a popular protest movement.

Abhishek Singh, the Director General of the National Testing Agency (NTA), which has been receiving flak following the paper leak row, said the whole-of-government approach helped it to conduct the mammoth exercise in record time.

In a statement, NTA said more than 20 lakh candidates appeared for the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination across 5,440 centres in India and 14 centres abroad. The exam was conducted in 13 languages, including Hindi and English. "This was not the NTA acting alone. It was Team Bharat - a chain of people across the country who showed up so that, for each candidate, the only thing that mattered that morning was the paper in front of them," the agency said. "In all, around 7 lakh officials - police teams, observers and examina-



NEET-UG candidates gather at Babu Pariksha Bhawan after appearing for the Re-NEET UG 2026 exam, in Patna, Bihar, Sunday..

tion staff - were mobilised across India to conduct this examination, and it was done in a record 37 days. NTA is especially grateful to the experts from academic institutions across the country who gave their personal time to help prepare multiple sets of question papers," the NTA said.

Extensive arrangements made for NEET

The NTA said extensive arrangements were made for all candidates, including more than 10,000 Persons with Disabilities. "Special arrangements

were put in place for around 81 candidates with medical conditions, among them a child who had been in a road accident, and a child undergoing chemotherapy, who were determined not to miss an exam they had prepared for years," it said.

The agency said Aadhaar-based biometric and face authentication, CCTV surveillance, jammers and two-layer frisking with the support of state police were deployed at examination centres. "Command and control centres for CCTV moni-

toring were established at the national level - at the NTA and at the Ministry of Education, at 34 Centrally Funded Institutions of the Department of Higher Education, in every State, and at District Collectorates," it said. "There were some minor reports regarding people coming with wrong admit cards, people coming with some forged admit cards at a few places; impersonation cases were also found out," NTA DG Abhishek Singh said.

India's maritime strength key to economic & strategic power: Modi

PM commissions three indigenous naval vessels, highlights self-reliance in defence.

KOLKATA (TSIT):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted that strong maritime capabilities are crucial for a nation's economic growth, security, and strategic influence, emphasizing that India is steadily transforming from a defence equipment buyer into a global builder. Speaking after commissioning three indigenously built Indian Navy platforms at the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata, the Prime Minister said no country can emerge as a major power without maritime strength.

"Development, security and prosperity are linked to the seas. A nation with strong maritime capabilities enjoys greater economic and strategic influence. India understands this reality and is preparing itself accordingly," he said.

The Prime Minister commissioned the stealth frigate INS Dunagiri, survey vessel INS Sanshodhak, and anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft INS Agray. He described the vessels as symbols of India's growing self-reliance and technological capability in maritime defence. Modi noted that India's journey from the commissioning of the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant in 2022 to the latest naval platforms reflects the



PM attends Tri-Commissioning Ceremony of Dunagiri, Sanshodhak & Agray at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, in West Bengal..

country's determination to achieve self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

"These ships were designed and built in India and represent the talent, innovation, and capabilities of our people. India is rapidly transforming from a buyer nation into a builder nation," he said.

Highlighting the growth of the domestic defence industry, the Prime Minister said more than 40 warships and submarines have been commissioned in recent years, while 45 major naval platforms are currently under construction. He added that over 200 MSMEs contributed to the construction of the three vessels, each having more

than 75 percent indigenous content. Modi said the maritime sector is being developed as a major employment generator with the potential to create lakhs of jobs. He emphasized that shipbuilding, ship repair, recycling, and maintenance have been identified as key national priorities.

Referring to the Centre's Rs.70,000-crore package announced for the shipping sector, the Prime Minister said it represents a long-term investment in India's maritime future and industrial expansion. He added that the government is also modernising ports and strengthening the overall maritime ecosystem to support economic growth.

CM Unveils 'EAGLE 1972' Posters

CM Naidu Appreciates EAGLE Services at Yogandhra Event

VISAKHAPATNAM (TSIT)

The state-level "Yogandhra" program organized at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium in Vijayawada on the occasion of International Yoga Day was held in a grand manner. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Sri Nara Chandrababu Naidu attended the event as the chief guest. Renowned Yoga Guru Baba Ramdev and State Minister for Education, IT and Electronics Sri Nara Lokesh participated in the program, adding special significance to the occasion. Following the event, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu flagged off the "Vyasanamukta Bharat Abhiyan" campaign vehicle being conducted under the auspices of the Brahma Kumaris. Subsequently, he formally unveiled the "EAGLE 1972"



posters. On this occasion, EAGLE Andhra Pradesh Wing IGP A.K. Ravikrishna briefed the Chief Minister about the social service activities, public safety initiatives, and awareness programs being undertaken by EAGLE across the state. After learning about the public-oriented programs and services being carried out by the organization, the Chief Minister conveyed his special appreciation. Encouraging the EAGLE team, he suggested that the organization further expand its service activi-

ties in the future to reach more people. NTR District Collector Dr. Lakshmisha, Vijayawada Police Commissioner S.V. Rajasekhara Babu, several legislators, senior officials, and public representatives were also present at the event. The unveiling of the "EAGLE 1972" posters, held after the successful conclusion of the "Yogandhra" program that witnessed the participation of thousands of people, youth, and yoga practitioners, brought further recognition to the EAGLE organization.

International Day of Yoga

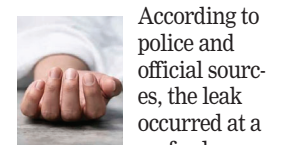


PM Modi participates in the 12th International Day of Yoga - 2026 celebrations at Kolkata, in West Bengal... PIB PHOTO

6 killed in ammonia leak at Tiruvallur seafood unit, CM orders probe

CHENNAI (TSIT):

At least six workers were killed and several others hospitalised after a suspected ammonia gas leak at a seafood export processing unit near Periyapalayam in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvallur district on Sunday, officials said. The Tamil Nadu government has ordered an immediate investigation into the incident.



According to police and official sources, the leak occurred at a seafood processing and export facility where a large number of migrant workers were employed. Around 120 workers, including women from Assam, Odisha and Jharkhand, were reportedly within the factory premises when the incident took place. Authorities said the suspected ammonia leak originated from the unit's refrigeration or processing system and quickly spread across parts of the facility. Workers exposed to the gas began experiencing severe breathing difficulties, dizziness and irritation. Some reportedly suffered bleeding from the mouth and nose, indicating the intensity of the exposure. Panic gripped the premises as workers rushed out in search of safety, while others collapsed after inhaling the gas.

Guarantee committees at every panchayat and ward: CM Shivakumar

BENGALURU (TSIT)

Outgoing Karnataka Congress President D.K. Shivakumar announced on Sunday that five-member guarantee committees will be formed at every panchayat and ward across the state. Speaking at the Sankalpa Samavesh at Palace Grounds, where he handed over the KPCC president's post to B.K. Hariprasad, Shivakumar said the committees would review records of guarantee scheme beneficiaries.



"A guarantee committee of five people will be formed in each ward and panchayat—7,000 pan-

chayats and 4,000 wards. Think for yourselves how many leaders we are preparing through this," he

said, stressing that the Congress party is committed to developing leaders, not followers. All sections of society will receive equal representation in these committees, he added.

In a firm pledge to party workers, Shivakumar declared, "Even if I become the Chief Minister, I will work with you as an activist." He reiterated the party's vision to return to power in 2028 and make Rahul Gandhi Prime Minister in 2029. Taking a

dig at the BJP, he said, "The BJP is wringing its hands saying they did not get the opportunity we got. Your own government will come to power in 2028 and 2029 too."

Shivakumar also announced that student leader elections in colleges would be held from this year, following Rahul Gandhi's guidance, to prepare leaders from panchayats to Parliament. He called for strengthening the party's student and women's units.

SIT asks trust & Ram temple functionaries not to leave Ayodhya

AYODHYA (TSIT):

The SIT probing the alleged embezzlement of funds in the Ram Temple here has instructed its trust and temple functionaries not to leave Ayodhya, according to temple sources who claimed that investigators found discrepancies in documentation of offerings like gold, silver and precious stones. The instruction by the three-member

Investigation Team (SIT) was issued before they left for Lucknow on Sunday. The sources said one of the key findings of the SIT pertains to the records of gold and silver jewellery and other precious stones, including diamonds, offered by devotees to Lord Ram. According to them, investigators found discrepancies in the documentation and accounting of such offerings.



PM Modi says yoga can pave way for world peace, calls for making it part of daily life

Kolkata, Jun 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday highlighted the role of yoga beyond personal health, saying the ancient Indian practice can act as a catalyst for global peace and harmony amid growing conflicts and tensions across the world. Addressing the 12th International Day of Yoga celebrations at the iconic Red Road in Kolkata, where thousands participated, Modi said yoga teaches the importance of balance in life and helps individuals achieve physical and mental well-being. Quoting the Bhagavad Gita, the Prime Minister said a balanced lifestyle involving work, food and sleep is essential to overcome suffering, and yoga guides people towards achieving that balance.

"Most people are struggling to maintain that balance in their modern lifestyle. Yoga teaches us the art of living our lives in a balanced manner," Modi said, adding that when people learn to manage their bodies correctly, health becomes a habit. Emphasising that yoga is not limited to physical exercise, Modi said it connects mental well-being with physical fitness and helps build inner peace. "The con-



sciousness of identifying the dos and don'ts not only brings inner peace, it opens up the path to world peace. That's why yoga is not only required for our personal lifestyles, it is essential for a better future of this world," he said. The Prime Minister urged people not to restrict yoga to a single day or event but make it a part of daily life for themselves, their families and future generations. He said June 21, which marks the longest day of the year, has now become the world's largest community celebration because of yoga, bringing together people across countries and cultures.

Highlighting this year's theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing," Modi said yoga plays an important role in improving physical health, mental well-being and quality of life across all age groups. "Yoga is not just physical exercise. It is not restricted to any age group. It is an expression of the human spirit," he said. Modi stressed that healthy ageing should focus on ensuring that increasing age does not reduce human potential.

"Our target is to be more flexible at 40 than we were at 20. We aim to be more

energetic at 50 than we were at 30. Our target must be to be more resistant to lifestyle-related diseases at 70 than we were at 50. This is where yoga can help us," he added. The Prime Minister said a healthy society makes a nation more capable, powerful and confident.

Referring to Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, Modi said the true essence of humanity lies in connecting with the world around us. He added that the fundamental idea of yoga is connectivity and when it becomes part of life, it becomes a symbol of human unity. West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, addressing the gathering, credited Modi for taking yoga to the global stage and said the tradition has been practised in Bengal for more than a century. Adhikari said organisations and institutions across the state registered around 2.57 lakh participants for the event. He expressed confidence that more than one crore people across West Bengal would participate in yoga celebrations. The event marked the first large-scale International Day of Yoga programme in Kolkata, with participation from thousands of yoga enthusiasts.

International Yoga Day Observed at Nellore Central Jail

Over 1,000 inmates and prison staff participate; AYUSH Department launches yoga training initiative



Nellore, June 21: The 12th International Yoga Day was celebrated at Central Jail, Nellore, on Saturday in collaboration with the AYUSH Department, with enthusiastic participation from prison staff and inmates. The programme witnessed the participation of 150 prison staff, 400 convicted prisoners, 500 remand prisoners and 18 female convicts. The event was inaugurated by Guntur Range Jail Deputy Inspector General Dr. Varaprasad, who attended as the chief guest and lit the ceremonial lamp.

During the programme, AYUSH Department yoga

expert Penchalaya explained the importance of various yoga asanas, pranayama techniques and meditation practices. Participants actively performed yoga exercises under his guidance. He highlighted the role of yoga in improving physical fitness, mental peace and concentration.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Varaprasad described yoga as a priceless gift from India to the world. He emphasized that regular yoga practice helps improve health, resilience, concentration, self-confidence and emotional balance. He urged inmates to adopt yoga as a

daily habit to lead healthier and happier lives. He also announced that the AYUSH Department, in association with Central Jail Nellore, has launched a three-month yoga training programme for selected inmates. The trained participants will, in turn, help spread yoga practices in district jails across the state. Central Jail Superintendent Dr. V. Sanyasi Rao highlighted the unique benefits of yoga and said it has been effectively used to reduce stress among prisoners. He noted that regular yoga practice would now become an integral part of the jail's daily routine to promote both physical and mental well-being.

Iran-US peace talks begin in Switzerland amid Strait of Hormuz tensions

Geneva, Jun 21: A high-level Iranian delegation arrived in Switzerland on Saturday for peace talks with the United States, even as tensions increased after Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) announced the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The Iranian team, led by chief negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, includes Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi along with senior officials, Iranian state media reported. The talks follow a 60-day ceasefire agreement between Washington and Tehran, aimed at negotiating an interim deal to end their nearly four-month-long conflict. The agreement was brokered by Pakistan and signed on Wednesday by US President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

However, Iran's decision to shut the Strait of Hormuz has raised concerns over the future of the negotiations. The IRGC warned that ships approaching the strategic waterway, which carries a major share of global oil and gas supplies, could face risks.

Iran cited Israeli strikes in Lebanon and what it described as a US violation of ceasefire commitments as reasons behind the move. US Central Command said 55 merchant vessels crossed the strait on Saturday, transporting



large amounts of cargo and more than 17 million barrels of oil to global markets. It added that US forces would continue ensuring the movement of ships. Trump, in a social media post, said no toll would be imposed on vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz during or after the 60-day ceasefire unless the US introduced one if peace talks failed.

He said a possible toll could be charged by the United States for "services rendered" as a protector of Middle East countries if a final agreement was not reached.

Mohammad Mokhber, an adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, accused Washington of failing to implement the first clause of the 14-point interim agreement, which includes a ceasefire on all fronts, including Lebanon.

He said energy supplies from the region would remain disrupt-

ed as long as the agreement remained only on paper.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said Tehran would push for guarantees that commitments are fulfilled during the Switzerland talks, citing previous instances where agreements were not honoured.

US Vice President JD Vance, who travelled to Switzerland for the discussions, said he was confident the ceasefire would hold and claimed he had not seen evidence confirming the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Vance said negotiations could continue for a few days and expressed hope of progress on Iran's nuclear programme and the Lebanon ceasefire.

The talks are also linked to efforts to halt fighting in Lebanon, one of the conditions for continuing the 60-day negotiations. However, the ceasefire remained

fragile as Israeli forces and Iran-backed Hezbollah exchanged attacks. Lebanon's Civil Defence reported that 20 people were killed in Israeli strikes on Saturday, hours after the truce came into effect.

Israel said it was responding to Hezbollah attacks, while the group said it would not allow Israel "freedom of movement" in Lebanon. Israel has maintained that it is not part of the Iran-US agreement and will keep forces in areas it occupies in Lebanon.

Lebanon's state news agency reported Israeli airstrikes and drone attacks in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley, both Hezbollah strongholds.

An Israeli military official said Hezbollah fired more than 50 projectiles at Israeli forces overnight, following which Israel targeted what it described as Hezbollah positions. Israel said it remained committed to the ceasefire but would continue responding to threats against its forces. Lebanon's Health Ministry said 4,057 people have been killed in Israeli attacks since March 2, including women, children and medical workers, though it did not specify the number of combatant deaths. Israeli authorities said at least 32 soldiers and four civilians have been killed during fighting with Hezbollah.

Yoga Key to Healthy Living, Says Tirupati Collector

THOUSANDS PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY CELEBRATIONS AT SV UNIVERSITY STADIUM

Tirupati, June 21: District Collector Dr. S. Venkateswar emphasized that yoga is the most effective path to a healthy lifestyle and an important tool for preventing lifestyle-related diseases caused by changing food habits and stress.

Addressing the district-level Yoga Andhra programme organized as part of the 12th International Yoga Day celebrations at Sri Venkateswara University's Tarakarama Rao Stadium on Saturday, the Collector urged people to make yoga an integral part of their daily routine.

The programme commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by District SP L. Subbarayudu, Joint Collector R. Govindarao, SV University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Narasimha Rao, Sri Padmavathi Mahila University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Uma, State Yadav Corporation Chairman Narasimha Yadav, District BJP President Saamanchi Srinivas, and DRO G. Narasimhulu.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Venkateswar said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been promoting International Yoga Day globally to



showcase India's cultural heritage and the benefits of yoga. He noted that the state-wide Yoga Andhra initiative, led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, has successfully created awareness and encouraged people from all walks of life to adopt yoga.

The Collector highlighted that this year's theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing," focuses on promoting long-term physical and mental well-being. He advised citizens to practice yoga for at least an hour every day and encouraged students to adopt yoga from an early age. District SP L. Subbarayudu stressed that yoga fosters discipline, positivity and a healthy outlook on life. He called upon youth to stay away from addictions and contribute to building a better society through regular yoga practice. Under the guidance of Art of Living Yoga instructor V. Kumari Kranthi, participants enthusiastically performed various yoga asanas for nearly an hour. Cultural performances by girl students at the beginning of the event added colour to the celebrations. Several dignitaries, university officials, district officers,

Sandhya Ravali 2026 Makes Grand Hyderabad Debut

OVER 130 PERFORMERS SHOWCASE CLASSICAL DANCE FORMS AT CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA



Hyderabad, June 21: Sandhya Ravali 2026, a prestigious annual classical dance festival traditionally held in Anantapur, was organized for the first time in Hyderabad in collaboration with Ananta Anand Trust and Saral. The event featured 35 outstanding performances by more than 130 artists, drawing enthusiastic par-

ticipation from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The cultural extravaganza showcased a wide range of Indian dance forms, including Kuchipudi, Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Folk and other traditional styles, highlighting the richness and diversity of India's artistic heritage. The programme was

attended by former Union Minister and former MP Samudrala Venugopala Chary as the chief guest. BJP Telangana State Council Member Royyuru Seshasai participated as the guest of honour. Also present were Dr. Anita Rao, Founder Director of Dakshinathya Arts Academy, and renowned Kuchipudi dancer Mrutyunjay Sharma.

The dignitaries encouraged students to preserve India's rich cultural traditions and appreciated the organizers for conducting the event consistently for several decades. Ms. Anuradha Murthy, daughter of noted dance guru Sandhya Murthy, thanked the guests for their support and inspiration to young artists.

Tiruvallur gas leak: TN govt confirms 2 deaths; many battling for life in ICU, ventilator support

CHENNAI: Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Sunday ordered an inquiry into the ammonia gas leak at a seafood processing unit near Periyapalayam in Tiruvallur district that killed at least two workers and left several others critically injured, and constituted a three-member committee to investigate the incident and recommend further action.

The committee, comprising the Director of Industrial Safety and Health, the Member Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and the Additional Director of Public Health, has been directed to submit an interim report within 24 hours and a final report within three days.

While reports from Tiruvallur said at least six died, and added that the toll may rise further, the State government said the death count was two while the others are undergoing treatment.

Many in ICU, some on ventilator support

The incident occurred at St Peter & Paul Seafood Exports at Kannigaipair near



Periyapalayam, where ammonia reportedly leaked from the processing facility and spread across the premises. Several workers experienced breathing difficulties after being exposed to the gas.

According to official sources, more than 70 workers were admitted to the Tiruvallur Government Hospital. Seven workers were shifted to the Government Stanley Medical College Hospital in Chennai, where they were placed on ventilator support. Hospital

authorities said one of them was in a critical condition. At least nine women workers were admitted to the intensive care unit at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, while five others were also undergoing treatment there.

Sources said around 120 migrant workers, including women from Assam, Odisha and Jharkhand, were staying on the factory premises. Several workers complained of breathlessness, while some reportedly suffered bleeding

from the mouth and nose.

Ministers deployed to coordinate relief work

The Chief Minister directed Information Technology Minister and Tiruvallur district monitoring minister R Kumar, along with monitoring officer KP Karthikeyan, IAS, to visit the district and coordinate with the Collector and local administration to ensure treatment and relief measures for those affected.

Vijay also instructed Minister for Public Works, Highways and Sports Development Aadhav Arjuna and Minister for School Education A Rajmohan to rush to Government Stanley Medical College and Hospital and RGGGH to facilitate the best possible care to patients in coordination with the Deans of the respective institutions.

Separately, the Health and Family Welfare Department constituted a committee headed by Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital Dean Dr K Shantharam to examine the medical aspects of the incident and submit a report.

DMK student wing to stage protest on June 23



CHENNAI: The DMK student wing on Sunday announced a protest in Chennai on June 23 against NEET and the Union government's language policy, alleging that both issues have affected students across the country. In a statement, the student wing secretary J Veeramani said concerns over NEET have persisted due to alleged irregularities and repeated controversies surrounding the examination. It claimed that students have faced stress and uncertainty over the conduct of the test and its outcomes. The student wing also referred to

The DMK reiterated Tamil Nadu's demand for exemption from NEET and said resolutions passed by the State Assembly seeking relief from the entrance test have not received a response from the Union government.

reports of student suicides linked to examination-related anxiety.

The DMK reiterated Tamil Nadu's demand for exemption from NEET and said resolutions passed by the State Assembly seeking relief from the entrance test have not received a response from the Union

government.

The statement also accused the Centre of promoting Hindi and Sanskrit through educational policies and programmes. It cited a reported move to expand Sanskrit instruction for students from Classes IX to XII in CBSE schools and said such measures could affect the position of regional languages in education.

The party said its president MK Stalin had opposed the move and reiterated the party's commitment to the two-language policy followed in Tamil Nadu. It maintained that language-related decisions should remain within the domain of states and that linguistic diversity must be protected.

According to the statement, the protest will be held near Karunanidhi arch in Saidapet at 9 am on June 23. The demonstration will seek the abolition of NEET and oppose what the organisation described as attempts to introduce Hindi and Sanskrit through the education system.

Premalatha seeks lasting solution to rain-soaked paddy stocks issue

CHENNAI: DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakanth on Sunday urged the ruling TVK government to immediately move paddy stocks stored in the open-air godowns to secure warehouses, alleging that thousands of bags had been damaged by recent rains at Direct Procurement Centres (DPCs) and storage facilities across the State. In a statement, the Virudhachalam MLA said that over a month ago, the party had warned the government about the need to protect paddy stocks in view of the monsoon season and had cautioned against storing them in the

open without adequate safeguards. Premalatha highlighted that paddy bags stored in an open yard at Pateeswaram near Kumbakonam in Thanjavur district were damaged after continuous rain. Similar incidents were reported at procurement centres in Srivilliputhur and Vathirayiruppu in Virudhunagar district, she said. According to Premalatha, delays in procurement, the absence of sufficient temporary storage facilities and inadequate tarpaulin cover had resulted in harvested paddy remaining in the open for long periods.

NEET UG 2026: Tough re-exam may lower cut-off marks

CHENNAI: The NEET UG re-examination, conducted across the country on Sunday under heightened security arrangements, is expected to result in a slight lowering of the MBBS admission cut-offs this year, according to education experts. More than 20 lakh candidates appeared for the examination held at 5,440 centres across 551 cities. In Tamil Nadu, over 1.40 lakh students took the test at 307 centres. The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducted the re-examination after the May 3 NEET UG test was cancelled following a question paper leak.



Students who appeared for the examination. Physics and Chemistry were reported to be more difficult than the cancelled examination. Botany and Zoology were comparatively easier. As NEET UG is conducted for a total of 720 marks, the increased difficulty level is expected to affect the overall score distribution and admission cut-offs.

Speaking to DT Next, educationist Jayaprakash Gandhi said the May 3 examination was comparatively easier and the re-examination featured a tougher question paper. "The higher difficulty level could lead to a marginal reduction in MBBS cut-offs for both government and private medical colleges this year," he said.

Why depression hits girls harder than boys

Girls are twice as likely as boys to be diagnosed with depression, and researchers in London have now uncovered clues as to why. Girls' brains are more likely to use a common dietary amino acid called tryptophan in a way that is neurotoxic, or harmful to nerves, even though most people's brains use it to make a compound that is neuroprotective, or helpful to nerves. Girls whose brains tended toward this neurotoxic process also were more likely to have blood test results that showed their bodies were in an inflammatory state.



The Basics: Depression
Feel blue every day? What are the other tell-tale signs of depression, and what can you do to feel better?

The girls most likely to have these processes also scored highly on a depression risk assessment or had already been diagnosed with major depression.

"Depression during adolescence can significantly impact social and emotional development and increases the risk of suicide," said first author Naghmeh Nikkheslat, PhD, a senior research associate at King's College London. "Our findings offer a hopeful step toward personalized, proactive approaches that address the underlying biological factors of depression, particularly in girls." Tryptophan – the amino acid at the center of this research – is in many common foods like poultry, dairy, seeds, and nuts, and the body uses it for many essential pro-

cesses like supporting infant growth, and in making melatonin and serotonin, the latter of which is important in regulating appetite and mood. Dietary approaches and the use of or development of medications that can impact how the brain ultimately uses the byproducts of tryptophan warrant exploration as possible treatments, Nikkheslat said, noting that it also could be lifesaving to identify girls at highest risk before they develop depression.

The findings build on previous evidence showing that girls are more at risk of getting depression, highlighting the need for targeted prevention and treatment. An estimated 53% of teen girls reported persistent feelings of sadness or

hopelessness, compared to 28% of boys, according to a 2024 CDC report. Girls were also more likely to have suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The new study, which included 75 girls and 75 boys all around the age of 15 who lived in Brazil, showed that girls with depression, or at high risk of it, were more likely to have lower neuroprotective compound levels, compared to girls at low risk of depression. The differences were not seen among boys. The route these compounds take in the brain – either neuroprotective or neurotoxic – is called the kynurenine pathway. "Our study suggests that targeting the kynurenine pathway may offer a personalized treatment avenue for female adolescents with depression," said Nikkheslat. "By reducing inflammation or encouraging the pathway to produce more neuroprotective rather than neurotoxic metabolites, we may prevent depression from developing or becoming chronic."

Dry and Secondary Drowning: Know the Signs

The researchers also found that high neurotoxic compound levels three years later were linked to an increased likelihood of persistent depression, while those whose levels had fallen were more likely to have recovered. This suggests that the neurotoxic activity makes depression harder to overcome, said Nikkheslat, who is an expert in the field of psychoneuroimmunology (the study of how the

mind affects health and risk of disease).

Researchers are still working to understand why these chemical differences exist between boys and girls. But "we know that increased inflammation can potentially affect the levels of these chemicals," Nikkheslat said. Childhood trauma or sexual hormones can impact inflammation, so it's possible one or the other (or both) "could contribute to these chemical abnormalities in girls."

Potential treatments to be evaluated may include anti-inflammatory medications to see if their use helps push the brain away from using the neurotoxic pathway, Nikkheslat said. Stress management, exercise, and dietary interventions known to reduce inflammation should also be considered.

Tryptophan – the amino acid at the center of this research – is in many common foods like poultry, dairy, seeds, and nuts, and the body uses it for many essential processes like supporting infant growth, and in making melatonin and serotonin, the latter of which is important in regulating appetite and mood. Dietary approaches and the use of or development of medications that can impact how the brain ultimately uses the byproducts of tryptophan warrant exploration as possible treatments, Nikkheslat said, noting that it also could be lifesaving to identify girls at highest risk before they develop depression.

Why uncertainty makes us so anxious, and how to deal with it

Uncertainty is all around us. Layoffs loom; recession is possible. Will bird flu spread? Is your cough just a cold or something worse? Uncertainty can leave you worried, scared, and angry. And that's natural. It's also stressful, but experts say you can learn to deal with all the what-ifs and reduce that stress.

Fear of the unknown underlies anxiety, psychologists say. Our brain views uncertainty as danger since there's no way to know what's coming up. "Our ancestors needed to be cautious about being in unpredictable situations in order to stay safe," said Jacqueline K. Gollan, PhD, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. "But in today's world, this response can be overwhelming as we face all types of uncertainty."

Gollan tells anxious patients: "The anxiety response isn't a sign of something wrong with you. It's actually your brain acting like it's supposed to." The key, she said, is "learning to work with the natural responses rather than fighting them." We can't eliminate uncertainty, but we can build our capacity to deal with it. Thea Gallagher, PsyD, clinical associate professor of psychiatry at NYU Grossman School of Medicine in New York City, calls it "building that muscle of tolerating uncertainty."

To build your tolerance: Learn what you can control, calmly assess risk, and avoid imagining worst-case scenarios.

What's Your Reaction to Uncertainty?

Some people can tolerate uncertainty better



than others, Gollan said. Mental health providers have a scale to measure that. According to some research, the more uncertainty you're faced with, the higher the stress. In one often-quoted study, participants who were told they had a 50% chance of getting an electric shock were the most stressed, while those who were told they had either a zero chance or a 100% chance were the least stressed.

Take a moment to find calmness through your breath. This simple technique helps your mind focus and opens up your lungs. In a similar study, other researchers found participants who scored highest on the intolerance of uncertainty scale had worse pain intensity scores when given a shock.

Gallagher has observed two unhelpful reactions from patients who aren't tolerant of uncertainty: Some avoid situations where there is uncertainty; others become hypervigilant. A parent concerned about the possibility of a school shooting, for instance, might seek certainty that it won't happen

at her child's school. One approach would be to pull the child out of school and home-school. Another would be to be hypervigilant, asking about protocols and trying to control the possibility – which isn't entirely possible.

"We want some predictability and control," Gallagher said. "We are trying to make meaning of our world. But that's not how a lot of life works."

It's crucial to let go of what Gallagher calls the "illusion of control." A patient worried about contracting the norovirus, for instance, might obsessively wash his hands, avoid social gatherings, bleach down the walls at home, and avoid restaurants. What happens? "Your world gets smaller, your anxiety gets bigger," said Gallagher. And you may contract the highly contagious virus anyway.

One option: Shift your mindset, reasoning that if the sickness happens, you will handle it the best you can, she said. "When you start to avoid [situations], you actually teach your brain you can't handle things and you feel worse."

Gallagher had a patient who was worried about being laid off from her job. She suggested she ask herself: What can I control? What can't I control? "If it's not within our control, it becomes anxious rumination, and you end up being on a hamster wheel."

She advised the woman to do an appropriate risk assessment. The layoffs weren't imminent, so Gallagher suggested creating a plan for if the layoff happened and preparing for it by updating her resume and online professional presence. Then transition to a strategy Gallagher calls "planned worrying." That might mean devoting an hour a day to networking, reaching out and applying for positions, and not having the anxiety about the unknown take over your life. Staying in the Present

"The problem with tending to uncertainty is that it typically brings us into the future," Gallagher said. "Being in the present is such a good antidote to our anxiety." A Visual Guide to Generalized Anxiety Disorder Medically Reviewed by Poonam Sachdev on March 11, 2024 Faced with uncertainty, many people jump ahead to what they think or fear might happen, Gollan agreed. "I try not to 'write the script,'" Gollan said. Avoid predicting the outcome, Gallagher said, and getting stuck in that future script, which too often is about negativity, not positivity. "If you find you are only predicting negative outcomes, ask: 'What could go right?'" she said. The practice of mindfulness is one strategy to stay "in the moment," experts agree. Practicing it can be as simple as taking a walk without looking at your phone, but rather noticing the breeze and scenery.

EDITORIAL

Safe...For Now: Rohit Sharma And The Curious Art Of Delaying The Inevitable

By the time Rohit Sharma had walked out to bat in Chennai on Saturday evening, he would have known about the conversations surrounding him. Modern cricketers do not need to doom-scroll through their social media handles to know the buzz. Stars like Rohit Sharma move with an entourage, and they often act as the eyes and ears of the superstar. They are the 'F&Fs', or friends and family, cheering them on. The F&Fs know about the speculation, they know which way the wind is blowing, and they know the prevailing opinion.

But a character like Sharma does not mind that. He has lived with these questions for close to three years now. Except this time, the question was more immediate. Was the ODI against Afghanistan in Chennai his swansong? For now, it seems those conversations have been settled. As things stand, Rohit Sharma will board that flight to England next month. There are three ODIs scheduled in Birmingham, Cardiff and London between July 14 and 19, and India's old guard isn't being pushed aside just yet. It is unlikely he will go while there are still runs left in his bat. On Saturday against Afghanistan, the Hitman showed that there were plenty.

When you want to put a batter to the test, pit him against the No. 1 bowler. And that is what the BCCI did. Against him on the hot, sultry Chennai evening was Rashid Khan. Rohit treated him with the kind of disdain that only supreme confidence and years of muscle memory can produce. Eleven runs came off the 14th over — a six and a four — and suddenly social media had found its next highlight package.

The former captain may be in the winter of his career, but it did not look like the end was near. If anything, he resembled an actor reminding everyone that the stage belongs to him and that he belongs on it. That class doesn't disappear overnight. The pulls he brought out were crisp, the flicks were effortless, and his touches against spin carried the same kind of authority with which he has ruled white-ball cricket for over a decade. Rohit started slowly but at one stage overtook Jaiswal, whom he kept guiding during the youngster's century in the final ODI. For 102 minutes, Rohit batted like a man who had heard every question over the last two days and chosen to answer them with the sound emanating from the middle of his bat.

He made 79 from 69 balls, a strike rate of 114. It was Rohit's 62nd ODI half-century — a fine innings, but not the hundred everyone had been waiting for. That was surely enough to quieten the doubters for the evening, but not enough to end the debate. It almost felt as though he had been struck by the commentator's curse. As soon as the man on the microphone said, "He needs a hundred here," fate intervened. Mohammad Nabi induced one pull shot too many, and substitute fielder Sediqullah Atal held on.

Rohit Sharma still sits among the elite but is constantly being judged against his own past. The fifties have been coming, and the elegance remains too. He is the ICC's No. 4-ranked ODI batter, with only Virat Kohli ahead of him among Indians. Yet what everyone points to is how the centuries have dried up. His last ODI hundred was that unbeaten 121 in Sydney in 2025.

WHY IS CASTEISM MIXED IN THE WATER FIGHT?



Priyanka Saurabh

The demand for water is justified, but an officer should be judged by his actions, not his caste. The ongoing protest over the water crisis in Chainat village, in the Hansi region of Haryana, raises an important social and administrative issue. In any civil society, the fact that people are forced to take to the streets for a basic necessity like drinking water is a matter of concern for the government. Water is not just a resource, but the very foundation of life. Therefore, the villagers of Chainat raising their voices about their problems is completely justified and in accordance with democratic rights. However, during this protest, some comments surfaced in which personal and caste-based derogatory terms were used against a senior administrative officer. This situation forces us to wonder whether the limits of social decorum and constitutional values can be crossed to secure a legitimate demand? The Constitution of India guarantees every citizen the right to live a life with dignity. The Supreme Court has also clarified on numerous occasions that the right to life includes access to clean drinking water. If people in a village are deprived of adequate water, it is not merely a local problem but a matter of civil rights and administrative responsibility. The suffering of villagers is real, and addressing it is the primary responsibility of the government and administration. Water scarcity not only

causes inconvenience but also adversely impacts health, education, employment, and social life. Women and children often have to work extra hard to secure water, disrupting their daily routine and opportunities. The problem of water scarcity is not new in a country like India. Rising population, overexploitation of groundwater, uneven distribution of rainfall, lack of conservation of water sources, and unplanned urbanization have exacerbated the water crisis in many areas. In an agricultural state like Haryana, this challenge becomes even greater, as water resources are under increasing pressure due to agriculture, domestic use, and industrial needs. In such a situation, if the people of a village are protesting their problems, it is the responsibility of the administration to listen to them and find a solution. In a democracy, protest and agitation are legitimate rights of citizens. When the public feels that their problems are not being addressed, they submit memorandums, hold demonstrations, and draw the attention of the administration. This is a healthy process in a democratic system. But democracy is not just about rights; it is also about responsibilities. The right to protest is as important as maintaining social decorum and mutual respect. If the dignity of language is lost during a protest and personal or caste-based comments are made, the moral basis of the movement is weakened. Criticizing an official, public representative, or public figure is part of democracy. However, criticism should be based on their decisions, actions, and policies. When criticism focuses on a person's caste, clothing, language, or social background, it ceases to be a democratic debate but



instead takes the form of prejudice and discrimination. This situation not only hurts the individual but also fosters division and distrust in society. The fundamental spirit of the Indian Constitution is based on equality. The framers of the Constitution envisioned a society where a person would be judged not by their caste, religion, language, or birth, but by their abilities and actions. To this end, the Constitution guaranteed the right to equality and made special provisions to eliminate untouchability and caste discrimination. Despite this, caste-based thinking and prejudice still persist in many parts of society. When comments are made about an official or individual based on their caste, it not only insults the individual but also disrespects the fundamental spirit of the Constitution. It is important to understand that reaching any administrative position involves years of hard work and struggle. Officers selected for the Indian Administrative Service, State Administrative Service, or other high-ranking positions undergo a lengthy competitive process.

They pass rigorous examinations, undergo training, and prepare themselves for public service. Therefore, an officer should be evaluated not by their social or caste affiliation, but by their work and performance. Dignity is of paramount importance in public life. If a tendency to criticize individuals based on their birth status grows in society, it impacts the quality of democratic discourse. In such a situation, even capable and talented individuals may hesitate to enter public life. This could also undermine public trust in the administrative system and democratic institutions. It is equally true that the administration must be sensitive to the public's feelings and concerns. Often, delays in resolving problems or a lack of communication contribute to public discontent. Therefore, the administration's responsibility should not be limited to issuing orders. It must communicate with the public, listen to their complaints, and make transparent efforts toward resolution. If villagers feel heard and that sincere efforts are being made to find solutions, tensions and conflicts will be reduced. In the case of Chainat, it's

essential that the administration and villagers strengthen their dialogue, rather than confronting each other. Solving a water crisis cannot be achieved through mere blame game. It requires administrative will, technical planning, and community participation. Immediate relief can include the provision of water tankers, additional water supplies, and temporary solutions. However, long-term solutions require measures such as water resource conservation, rainwater harvesting, pipeline network expansion, increased water storage capacity, and groundwater recharge. The role of rural communities is also crucial. Water conservation is not solely the government's responsibility. Society must also play an active role in judicious water use, rainwater harvesting, and the conservation of local water sources. If communities and the administration work together, permanent solutions to problems like water scarcity are possible. Education and social awareness also play a crucial role in this regard. Schools, colleges, social organizations, and the media must foster a mindset

that promotes equality, respect, and constitutional values. Laws alone are not enough to eliminate caste prejudices; the development of social consciousness is also essential. Unless there is a mental transformation within society, the constitutional ideals of equality will not be fully realized. If casteist or derogatory remarks are made on a public platform, they must be addressed within constitutional and legal frameworks. In a democracy, the rule of law is paramount. Any discriminatory or derogatory behavior is unacceptable. It must also be ensured that such incidents are not used to divert attention from the underlying problem. The water crisis is real and must be addressed on a priority basis. Today, the need is to reconnect the Chainat movement to its original purpose. The movement's goal should be to ensure water availability, not to foster an atmosphere of hatred against any individual or community. The villagers' demands are legitimate, and they deserve justice. At the same time, upholding social decorum and constitutional values is equally important. Ultimately, the Chainat incident offers us an important message. In a democracy, the protection of rights and social respect go hand in hand. Citizens have every right to raise their voices to address their problems, but this voice should pave the way for dialogue and resolution, not division and hostility. Water is every citizen's right, and respect is the foundation of every person's dignity. Only if we can protect both these values will we be able to build a society that is just, sensitive, and truly democratic. Solving the water problem is the responsibility of the administration, but addressing casteism is the responsibility of society as a whole.

BUILDING SAFER FUTURES:

REIMAGINING CHILD PROTECTION WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In January 2026, two young sisters went missing from Ranchi, Jharkhand, triggering an urgent search. With limited leads and vast geographies to cover, Ranchi Police sought support from Just Rights for Children's Raksha AI tools. Drawing on years of child protection data, trafficking patterns, migration trends, GIS mapping and machine learning, Raksha AI responds to the critical question: If the children had been trafficked, where were they most likely to be found? The tool identified a high-risk trafficking corridor spanning Lohardaga, Khunti and Gumla. Despite massive manhunt, the girls were not in these hotspot districts. It appeared that the prediction had failed. The tech experts of Raksha AI urged, "The model is not predicting a single village or building. It is identifying the most likely operational geography. Continue searching within the surrounding radius." The police expanded their efforts to nearby locations within the same movement corridor highlighted by the analysis. Then came the breakthrough. On 14 January 2026, the two sisters were safely rescued from the Chitarpur area of Ramgarh district, Jharkhand, within the radius identified by Raksha AI. The information generated through technology aided search and rescue operation, further led to the rescue of another 52 missing and kidnapped children, the



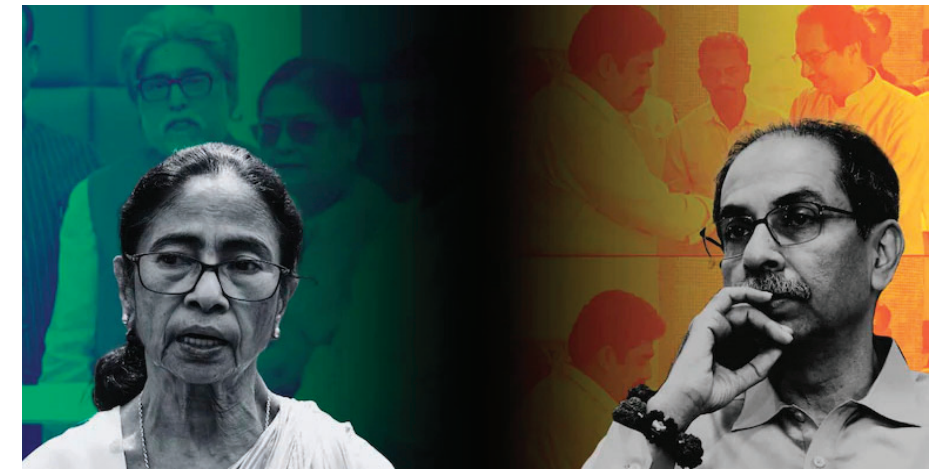
arrest of 21 traffickers/kidnappers, and the dismantling of an organised crime network. This technology aided police and civil society intervention demonstrates how technology, data and partnerships can make child protection systems smarter, faster and more effective. Technology is the amplifier in timely interventions to prevent crimes against children and ensure their protection. However, more often than we would like, we are only able to reach the child after harm has occurred. According to the Crime in India 2024 report by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the crimes against children increased by 5.85 percent in 2024 compared to the previous year. Today, the real and the virtual world are intertwined in unprecedented ways. Criminal networks operate across states and countries, online platforms create new avenues

for exploitation, and millions of data points are generated every day. Yet much of this information remains fragmented across departments, institutions, and jurisdictions, limiting its potential to inform swift response. Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Material (CSEAM) is being created, shared, and circulated at unprecedented speed across online platforms, encrypted channels, and digital networks. AI-generated deepfakes and synthetic CSEAM, sometimes based on images of real children, compound real harms at scale. Meanwhile, offenders increasingly use technology to operate across jurisdictions and conceal their identities in ways unimaginable a decade ago. Artificial intelligence presents a paradox, a Pandora's box of boons and harms. The same technology misused by offenders can also help protect children by enabling prevention

rather than merely improving response mechanisms. At its best, AI can uncover trafficking routes by analysing historical data and movement patterns, identify emerging and dominant hotspots of child labour, child marriage, and exploitation. It can monitor online environments for indicators of child sexual abuse and can predict vulnerabilities and risks before they escalate into crimes. This reality makes it imperative that AI be developed and deployed responsibly, with child rights, safety, transparency, and accountability at its core. From Reaction to Prevention The global child protection ecosystem has traditionally been structured around rescue, rehabilitation, and justice. Every rescue represents a child who has already suffered. Prevention, the most important pillar of all, remains least developed.

Uddhav Sena, Trinamool Crises: A Grim Reminder And Mockery Of Voter Choices

The parallel defection dramas playing out in West Bengal and Maharashtra should worry us as voters. They not only serve as a grim reminder of the growing crisis in an electoral democracy but also make a mockery of our choices in the polling booth. Defections are not new. But the rate at which political parties have been splitting and regrouping in recent years — as MPs and MLAs scurry around like headless chickens looking for new sanctuaries — turns the spotlight on the anti-defection law. There are too many loopholes in the law, having been mutilated to further the interests of a self-seeking political class. Beyond the law, however, shenanigans of resort politics and horse trading that accompany every defection episode pose a deeper and more fundamental question: should defections be allowed at all? Can we, in all conscience, as a democracy that is supposed to reflect the will of the people, sanctify the movement of MPs or MLAs from one party to a rival party after showering it with abuse the other day? Consider the sordid saga unfolding in West Bengal. Within days of the defeat of Mamata Banerjee and her Trinamool Congress, 20 of her 28 MPs elected to the Lok Sabha just two years ago under her name and on her party symbol are preparing to jump ship. The BJP doesn't want them in the party, but is ready to accommodate them in the NDA. The defection formula that has been worked out for them is a master class in creative interpre-



tation of a supposedly law. The MPs will merge into a little-known party born in 2023, the Nationalist Citizens Party of India. It is registered with the Election Commission as an 'unrecognized' party, does not have a symbol of its own, and has fought only one election, the Tripura assembly polls in 2023, in which it bagged just 0.03 percent of the votes. The NCI neither contested the 2024 Lok Sabha elections nor the recent assembly polls in West Bengal, despite being registered in Howrah. With the merger of 20 Trinamool rebels, the party will transform overnight from anonymity into one of the largest blocs in the Lok Sabha. This is unprecedented in parliamentary history. On the other side of the country in Maharashtra, Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena is splintering. Two years after they fought a bitter battle with Eknath Shinde's faction in 2024 to determine which Sena is the real inheritor of Balasaheb Thackeray's mantle, six of Thackeray's nine

MPs are in the process of crossing the floor to merge with the rival Sena. The danger to electoral democracy from unprincipled about-turns is two-fold. One is the debasement of the mandate MPs and MLAs receive. Every defection invalidates the choice of voters. We vote for one party only to wake up one morning and find that our elected representative has decided to shift to a party we did not vote for. This is not just betrayal. It is the erasure of our choices as voters. The other is the breakdown of the party system. Political parties are fundamental building blocks of our parliamentary model of democracy. When leaders sent by recognized parties to Parliament or state assemblies switch horses mid-stream for personal gains or whatever other reasons they offer to justify their decision, they pave the way for institutional erosion. In West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool received 41% of the popular vote and won 80 seats. Today, 60 MLAs are

poised to flee. If the Trinamool is reduced to nothing but a rump, that vote share becomes a meaningless number as the party faces extinction, not through the ballot but because of the narrow interests of a few. The irony is that the anti-defection law was passed in Parliament in 1985 through a constitutional amendment. The purpose was to protect and stabilize the party system which had become vulnerable to erosion through defections. Studies have shown that between 1967 and 1983, there were more than 2,700 defections in state assemblies, leading to chaos as parties disintegrated overnight and many simply disappeared from the political map. The most famous defection was that of a Haryana MLA named Gaya Singh in 1967. He switched parties three times in two weeks, leading to the coining of the notorious phrase 'Aaya Ram Gaya Ram'. By 2003, it was evident that the anti-defection law needed further tightening.

Fuel sales halted in occupied Crimea as Ukraine targets oil facilities

Russian-backed authorities have suspended fuel sales to the public in the occupied region of Crimea as Ukraine continues its attacks on the peninsula. Fuel had already been rationed due to shortages caused by Ukraine's recent campaign against supply routes in Russian-occupied territories. Governor Sergey Aksyonov said individuals and businesses would be turned away from petrol stations, and fuel would only be sold to government agencies ensuring Crimea's "functioning and security". Earlier, he said four people had been killed and 28 injured by a Ukrainian drone attack on an oil depot in Kerch overnight - which President Volodymyr Zelensky called a "just response to Russia's brutal attacks". Crimea - which Russia illegally annexed in 2014 - has been experiencing logistical difficulties and shortages, but this appears to be its most significant fuel restriction so far. "Further decisions regarding the current situation in the republic's fuel market will be announced at a later date," Aksyonov said. Zelensky said Kyiv



had also hit a logistics facility for oil transportation in Russia's Krasnodar region, which lies adjacent to Crimea across the Kerch Strait. Local authorities said one person had been killed on a passenger ferry. Military logistics facilities and radar systems were also struck, the president said, without specifying where. "Russia understands only strength, and our long-range strength is certainly working for peace," he said in a statement posted on X. Zelensky added at least seven people had been killed in Russian attacks over the weekend,

with children among more than 30 injured. Russia's defence ministry said 239 Ukrainian drones had been shot down overnight. Crimea is a strategically important location from which Moscow's forces have launched strikes towards the rest of Ukraine. It is also a popular summer holiday destination for Russians - some of whom have reported struggling to find petrol to return home. Both sides have escalated attacks in recent months as progress towards a ceasefire has stalled more than four years on from Russia's full-

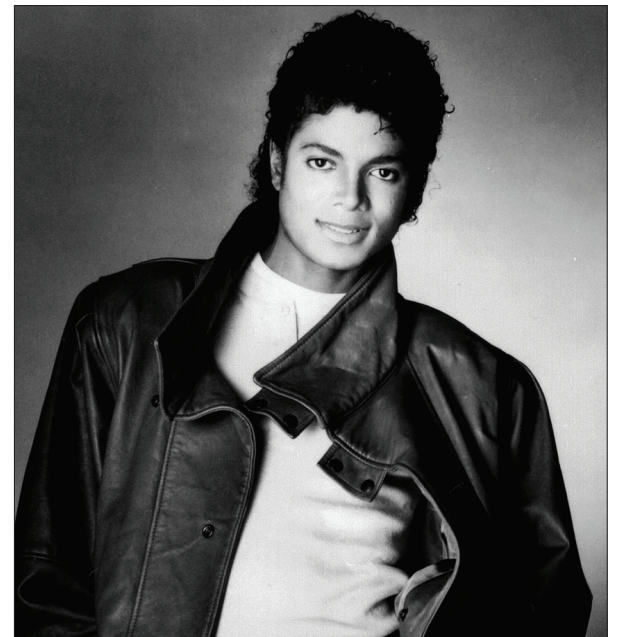
scale invasion. Kyiv's focus has been to choke off revenue for Moscow's war chest by hitting its fuel export. But it also wants to undermine the Russian war effort and maximise disruption for its population, in the hopes of applying pressure on President Vladimir Putin and bringing him to the negotiating table. So far, however, there is little sign he is ready to talk, having rebuked Zelensky's request for face-to-face talks in early June. In the four years since Russia's invasion began, Ukraine has

Highlights
■ Russian-backed authorities have suspended fuel sales to the public in the occupied region of Crimea as Ukraine continues its attacks on the peninsula. Fuel had already been rationed due to shortages caused by Ukraine's recent campaign against supply routes in Russian-occupied territories.

developed a booming defence sector. It has rapidly developed its mid- and long-range drone capabilities and is now offering advice and expertise to allies around the world. But this success is a double-edged sword. For every strike that gets through - and embarrasses Putin - there is an inevitable reply. Specks of black oil rained down on Moscow on Thursday after Ukraine struck an oil refinery in its largest attack of the full-scale war so far. The people of Kyiv and beyond are now bracing themselves for Russia's response.

The Weeknd just made a huge statement on Michael Jackson

Hyderabad: As streaming records continue to fall and global music stars reach new heights, comparisons between today's biggest artists and past legends have become common. Recently, singer The Weeknd found himself at the centre of one such debate when fans began comparing his success to that of the late Michael Jackson. However, The Weeknd quickly put an end to the discussion with a statement that has gone viral online.



"Never ever compare me to the GOAT Michael Jackson. Spotify numbers don't mean you've reached Michael Jackson's level in his prime. Nobody alive is touching that man, not even me," he said. Paying Tribute to a Legend The comment surprised many fans, especially as The Weeknd continues to dominate streaming platforms worldwide. Despite his record-breaking numbers and massive fan following, the singer believes Michael Jackson's influence remains unmatched. Over the years, The Weeknd has openly spoken about his admiration for the King of Pop, calling him one of his greatest inspirations. He has often said that he would rather

be known as the first The Weeknd than be viewed as Michael Jackson's successor.

More Than Charts and Streams

The singer's remarks have sparked conversations across social media about how greatness should be measured. While streaming numbers, chart positions and monthly listeners are important, many fans agree that cultural impact cannot be measured by statistics alone. Michael Jackson's influence extended beyond

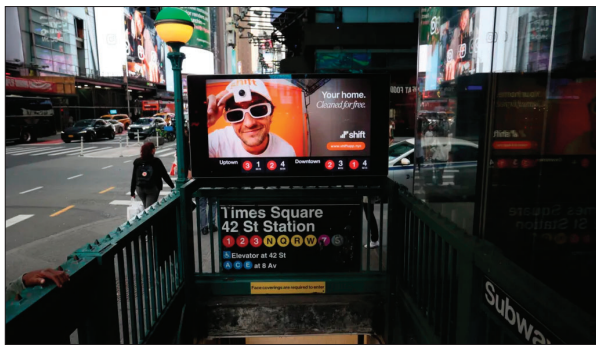
music. His performances, fashion, dance moves and global appeal transformed pop culture and continue to inspire artists decades after his peak.

A Debate That Lives On

The Weeknd's humble response has earned praise from fans worldwide. While he remains one of the most successful artists of his generation, he believes some legacies stand above comparison. For many music lovers, Michael Jackson remains the gold standard of global stardom.

WHY AN AI COMPANY CLEANED MY NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT FOR FREE

Picture this: a team of camera-clad cleaners and a private chef to boot, all wired with high-tech recording apparatus show up at your home. You are not part of a reality TV show, and have not woken up in an Aldous Huxley or Margaret Atwood novel. Instead, you are a resident of New York City, where AI companies are sending free cooking and cleaning staff straight to people's doors. But, there is a catch: this AI company is gathering data to train the next generation of cooking and cleaning robots, and every inch of your apartment is now being recorded. The initiative, dubbed Shift by AI firm Micro AGI, is part of a growing number of companies developing the next generation of autonomous robots, which tech bosses hope will be able to do everything from the washing up to serving as live-in personal carers. At my apartment on New York's Upper East Side, I am greeted by two mid-twenties college graduates who have bounced around the start-up world and were looking for



work. Because demand for the free cleans is so high, they are stationed in New York indefinitely, cleaning around five apartments a day, five days a week. The only difference between these guys and a regular cleaner is they have built-in cameras attached to their caps, connected via a lead to their mobile phones. The main aim of the offer is to perform tasks requiring dexterity, to train the robots of the future to use their hands. As a result, the cleaners were intensely focused on their hands while carrying out the job. 'Tonnes' of data Bercan Kilic, Shift's founder, told the goal of the data-gathering exercise is "to advance humanity". He

pointed to existing AI models such as ChatGPT, which are able to create sentences based on previously written passages of text available online. But he said every kitchen, living room and tool is slightly different, so robots will need to be trained to adapt to being in different spaces and using different items. The biggest difficulty, Kilic said, is that to work, its cleaners will need to collect "tonnes" of data. "In the real world, every object is different, the lighting is different and nothing is the same as it was a couple of hours earlier. Models need to learn how their hands, cameras and environments work together," he said. "The company's

business model relies on it being able to sell the valuable data it gathers from inside people's homes, anonymised, to robotics and other AI companies to train robots. Eventually, Kilic said Shift could offer free or discounted services covering "any skill humanity can demonstrate", noting that as well as cleaning apartments in New York, the company also has mechanics fixing cars in Turkey. There appears to be no limit to what humanoid robots will one day be able to do, and the BBC has also reported on the development of robots to help human soldiers on the battlefield. Privacy concerns Data and privacy experts warned consumers to be wary of offering up their data - especially access to their homes - in exchange for purportedly free services. Rory Mir, director of open access and tech community engagement at campaign group the Electronic Frontier Foundation, said it has seen a "concerning increase in 'pay-for-privacy' and 'data-bribing' practices from companies".

KING CHARLES TO REVEAL PERSONAL TAX BILL FOR FIRST TIME AS MONARCH

King Charles will become Britain's first monarch in modern times to reveal his personal tax bill. His tax payments will be shared on Thursday as a new element in the annual royal financial accounts, with the decision said by Palace sources to have been a personal one by the King. Buckingham Palace says the move is part of a modernising drive for greater transparency and to "encourage wider understanding of our accountability". It also follows calls for more openness with regard to royal finances following scandals surrounding Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor. The move will make public the King's tax payments for the previous year - 2024-25 - and will include tax on his income such as profits from the Duchy of Lancaster, any personal investments and earnings from the King's private estates, such as Sandringham and Balmoral. A Buckingham Palace spokesman said this was part of a wider drive to be more open with the public. "To put it simply, we continue to modernise and evolve," they said, with a commitment to an annual publication of the King's taxes. When he was Prince of Wales, Charles also revealed how much tax he was paying. Monarchs are not obliged to pay income tax, inheritance tax on what they receive from a previous monarch or capital gains tax - but the King voluntarily pays income tax and capital gains tax on any sale of private assets. And the total amount paid will be revealed for the first time - including tax on the

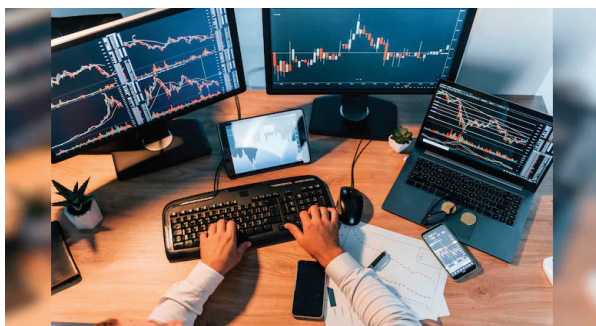


Duchy of Lancaster's profits, which were about £24m last year. That property business, including estates in the north of England and property in central London, provides much of the monarch's personal income. The decision to shift in the direction of more transparency seems to have tuned in to the public mood. In the wake of the Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor scandals, MPs were among those demanding more openness about the financial dealings of the royals. Next week's financial report should see a broader account of the royal finances. "Our aim is to explain all elements of royal finances in a way that further enhances clarity and accessibility," said a Palace spokesman.

The King's tax bill will be published alongside details of the Sovereign Grant, which is the annual public funding for the Royal Household, and covers costs such as staff, the upkeep of buildings and travel on official engagements. The Sovereign Grant has risen to a record £137.9m, with a temporary increase used to pay for renovations to Buckingham Palace. Since it was introduced in 2012, the grant has never gone down, but a first reduction is expected to be announced soon as part of a review being carried out by the Treasury, Downing Street and the Royal Household. MPs will have a chance to debate the Sovereign Grant when legislation comes before Parliament. Also increasing the scrutiny on royal finances this year will be the Public Accounts Committee, which is going to hold an inquiry into royal property and leases from the Crown Estate. An initial report from the National Audit Office revealed the daughters of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, who are not working royals, had properties in St James's Palace and Kensington Palace. The rent for their accommodation was paid by the King from his private income. The Palace says there is already Parliamentary oversight of the Sovereign Grant, but adding personal tax information can "enhance this transparency still further" and in a way "in keeping with our public service priorities".

The Week Ahead: IPOs, Crude Oil Action, A Fragile Middle East Ceasefire, And More

Indian equity markets head into the week of June 22 carrying a mixed signal. The Nifty 50 closed Friday at 24,013, having snapped a five-session winning streak on a double dose of bad news - Accenture's guidance cut rattled IT stocks, and a diplomatic delay in the US-Iran peace process revived geopolitical nerves. Despite Friday's fall of 154.90 points, the index still ended the week up 1.65%, suggesting the underlying structure remains intact even as sentiment turns cautious. Markets Recap Benchmark indices ended last week on a split note. The Nifty 50 rose 390.20 points or 1.65% on a weekly basis, closing at 24,013.10 on Friday despite a 154.90-point fall on the last session as IT stocks bore the brunt of selling. The Sensex closed at 76,802.90, down 607.08 points or 0.78% on Friday, dragged lower by HDFC Bank, Infosys, Reliance Industries, TCS and



Mahindra & Mahindra. Gains were limited to Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Larsen & Toubro and ITC. FIIs remained net sellers through June, offloading shares worth Rs 47,903 crore on a month-to-date basis. Domestic institutions provided support, absorbing the outflows with net buying of Rs 66,215 crore over the same period. On June 18, FIIs sold a net Rs 1,025 crore in the cash segment while DIIs bought Rs 3,516 crore, a pattern that has largely defined market direction through the month. Crude Oil Action For Indian markets this

week, the most consequential variable is the US-Iran ceasefire and what it means for crude oil prices. Brent crude settled at \$79.85 per barrel on Thursday after comments from US Vice President JD Vance raised fresh concerns about the stability of the ceasefire framework. WTI crude fell below \$80 per barrel on Friday, heading for a weekly loss of about 8% after Israel and Hezbollah agreed to a separate ceasefire. Brent had surged past \$120 per barrel earlier this year when Iran shut the Strait of Hormuz, before

pulling back sharply as ceasefire talks progressed. Several key issues remain unresolved, including Iran's nuclear programme, and Tehran has said vessels crossing the Strait of Hormuz will require mandatory insurance. For India, which imports the bulk of its crude from the Gulf, any renewed disruption to Strait of Hormuz flows would feed directly into inflation, the current account deficit, and the rupee. Every dollar move in Brent has a direct read-through to D-Street sentiment, and markets will watch geopolitical developments closely through the week. FII Activity In Focus Foreign institutional investor flows will remain closely tracked. FIIs have been persistent net sellers in June even on days when they bought in the cash segment - their futures and options positioning tells a more cautious story, with index call short-

ing and put buying suggesting protective hedging layered onto whatever cash buying is happening. Until that positioning shifts meaningfully, any sustained rally above 24,200 on the Nifty will remain contested. The Fed Rate Hike Overhang Global rate expectations shifted materially last week after new Fed Chair Kevin Warsh's first FOMC meeting delivered a hawkish surprise. While rates were held steady at 3.50-3.75% in a unanimous 12-0 vote, nine of 18 officials projected at least one rate hike by end of 2026. The dot plot had previously called for rate cuts. The rates market is now pricing in a full 25 basis point hike by October 2026. Higher US rates strengthen the dollar, pressure the rupee, and make emerging market assets relatively less attractive to foreign investors - adding another layer of complexity to an already cautious FII stance on India.

Sundaram Finance Celebrates 25 Years of Service at Khammam branch

Khammam, June 2026 - Sundaram Finance marked a meaningful milestone today as its Khammam branch completed 25 years of continuous service. More than a celebration of time, the event recognized the enduring partnership with customers, the dedication of employees, and the support of their families who have shaped the branch's legacy in Khammam. "At Sundaram Finance, what sustains us is not just longevity, but the spirit of truth, fairness, and service that defines our relationship with people. This branch has endured because of the values it lives by—and the community it serves and belongs to," said Mr. S. Balasubramanian, Vice President & Head of Andhra region - Sundaram Finance. "Established in 2000, the Khammam branch has played a vital role in expanding financial access in Khammam, often serving customers who were out-

■ More than a celebration of time, the event recognized the enduring partnership with customers, the dedication of employees, and the support of their families who have shaped the branch's legacy in Khammam.

side the reach of mainstream finance. Small business owners, first-time borrowers, self-employed professionals, and transport operators have all found a dependable financial partner in this branch" said Mr. Kasi Murali Krishna, Senior Branch Manager, Khammam retail branch. The branch has stood for more than financial support—it has stood for transparency, dignity, and a human touch, helping generations of customers build livelihoods and live with confidence. The strength of the Khammam branch lies in its people. Many employees have spent significant parts

of their careers here, serving not just with competence, but with honesty, empathy, and purpose. Their bond with customers goes beyond transactions—it is built on mutual respect and shared progress. This milestone also honours the families of employees, who have quietly stood behind every achievement. Letters of heartfelt appreciation personally signed by Mr. S. Balasubramanian, Vice President & Head of Andhra region, Sundaram Finance were presented to family members acknowledging their role in making this journey possible. As Sundaram Finance prepares to celebrate 75 years in 2029, this branch milestone serves as a reaffirmation of the company's founding philosophy—to serve with integrity, grow with humility, and remain rooted in community. The Khammam branch is not just a place of work or finance—it is a symbol of continuity, character, and commitment to doing what is right.

US AND IRAN BEGIN TALKS ON INITIAL PEACE DEAL IN SWITZERLAND

US and Iranian officials have started direct talks in Switzerland after signing an initial agreement to end the war last week. The deal includes a commitment to reach a final agreement within 60 days, as well as an end to fighting on "all fronts" - including in Lebanon - and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

But more clashes between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon prompted Iran to announce it had shut the shipping route on Saturday - though tracking data shows vessels have continued to pass through it. After talks started, President Donald Trump said on social media that Iran "must immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES in Lebanon from causing trouble". He threatened to "hit Iran very hard again" if they did not. Before the talks began, Vice-President JD Vance had said the US hoped for progress on "the nuclear issue" and Lebanon, while Tehran said it



would be "demanding that the other side fulfil its commitments". At the Swiss resort of Bürgenstock, Vance said Trump had asked negotiators to "turn over a new leaf". He added that if Iran's leadership was willing to give up being a "driver of regional instability" and "nuclear weapons ambitions for the longer term", then the US "is willing to fundamentally transform our

relationship with that country". Iran has insisted its nuclear programme is peaceful. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said in a statement that negotiations for a final deal were contingent on enforcing existing commitments - including stopping all military operations. Sunday's talks were focused on implementation, he said. Vance was joined by

Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and special envoy Steve Witkoff. For the Iranians, parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Switzerland late on Saturday. The delegations were joined by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the head of the country's armed forces, Field

Marshal Asim Munir. Pakistan has acted as a mediator throughout the war, and hosted a previous round of negotiations between the US and Iran. The US and Iranian presidents signed the initial agreement earlier this week, aiming to end the war with immediate effect.

Under the deal, Iran was to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the key shipping channel through which 20% of the world's oil and natural gas travels. Its effective closure had driven up fuel prices and disrupted the global economy. The US also agreed to lift a military blockade on ships going to and from Iranian ports. The initial deal also included a \$300bn (£224bn) plan for Iran's "reconstruction", and the US terminating "all types of sanctions" on it. But the issue of Iran's nuclear programme, the main reason stated by the US for the conflict, is still to be negotiated. In Trump's first term, he withdrew the US from an Obama-era nuclear deal with Iran

and reimposed economic sanctions. Under this week's initial deal, fighting was also supposed to stop on all fronts, but deadly conflict continued between Israel and Hezbollah, the Iran-backed group, despite the deal and a ceasefire agreed by the two sides on Friday. Since the deal was signed, Israeli air strikes have killed at least 67 people, while Hezbollah attacks have killed five Israeli soldiers. Iran accused the US and Israel of violating the ceasefire, and said it would close the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday in response. However, some vessels appeared to be entering, exiting and transiting the strait on Sunday, according to location data on the maritime tracking website MarineTraffic. Three ships exited on the strait's eastern side in the morning, while three other vessels looked to be heading east in the afternoon. Tracking data may not capture all movements as some vessels may have turned their trackers off.

Tight security as Indian students resit medical exam after alleged paper leak



Millions of hopeful medical students across India are resitting a crucial exam under unprecedented security, after the first paper was cancelled following allegations that the questions had been leaked. Nervous students were met with biometric identification checks, metal detectors, armoured patrols and frisking at exam centres on Sunday morning. Leaving nothing to chance this time, the Indian Air Force transported the new test papers to some regions, while police and paramilitary officers were deployed at the 5,440 exam centres across the country. The National Eligibility cum

Entrance Test (Undergraduate), known as NEET-UG, is required for students to join medical colleges in India. Of the millions who take the exam every year, only a small percentage do well enough to secure a coveted college placement. Nearly 2.28 million candidates sat the exam on 3 May, having studied for months - in some cases years - for the notoriously difficult paper. The news that it had been scrapped was devastating for many students, and the scandal sparked widespread protests and demands for Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to resign.

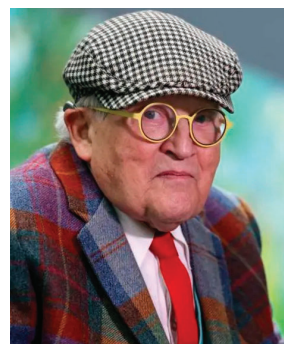
Nobel Peace Prize winner triumphs at Ethiopian polls but fears grow of new conflict



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is the big winner following the country's general election as his party has retained its overwhelming parliamentary majority, despite the poll being overshadowed by conflict, accusations of repression and little participation by opposition parties. The Prosperity Party, which has 438 out of the 501 seats declared, will form the new government with Abiy set to be sworn in for another term at the beginning of October. It is a boon for Abiy's supporters, who believe he will continue with the economic gains he has overseen. But others fear the internal divisions and security challenges facing Africa's second most-populous country are only going to get worse with Abiy at the helm. The 49-year-old first came to power amid anti-government protests in 2018, and he was at first hailed for his campaign to heal divisions - though he upset politicians from the northern region of Tigray who had dominated the government for more than two decades. Just a year later he won the Nobel Peace Prize, mainly for his efforts in ending hostilities with Ethiopia's northern neighbour Eritrea. But security

experts fear the country could be heading back to war, while the violent and deadly insurgencies in Ethiopia's Amhara and Oromia regions show no sign of ending. On election day, 143 polling stations failed to open in the country's two most-populous regions because of safety concerns caused by armed groups fighting the government. The Fano militias in Amhara and the proscribed Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in Oromia, which both want greater autonomy, rejected the election and its results. The situation is also troubling in Tigray, which is still recovering from a two-year civil war that only ended in 2022. The region and its six million inhabitants, comprising 36 constituencies, were completely excluded from the poll amid rising fears that fighting could break out once more. Tigray borders Eritrea and during the war, its troops were allied with Ethiopian government forces. They were accused of widespread atrocities against Tigrayan civilians, which were denied. But since the conflict ended, relations between Addis Ababa and Asmara have sharply deteriorated.

Low-key funeral held for giant of the art world David Hockney

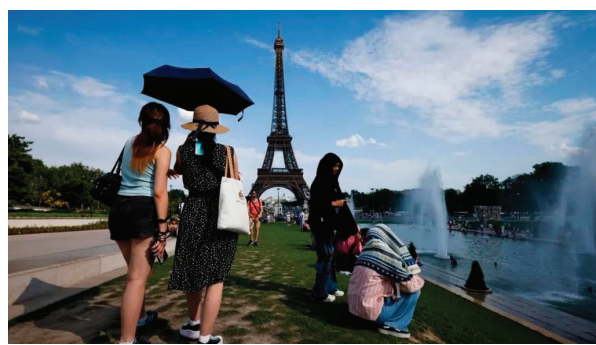


The funeral of David Hockney, widely regarded as Britain's best-known artist, has already taken place, his publicist has confirmed. As per his wishes, his partner Jean-Pierre Goncalves de Lima and his great-nephew Richard Hockney were the only two mourners to attend his funeral, Hockney's publicist Erica Bolton said. A series of memorial services for the painter are set to take place next year, with the

first being held in London in the spring, she added. This will be followed by further memorials in Los Angeles and Paris, both cities David Hockney called home at different times in his life, and Yorkshire - where he was born. It has also been confirmed that most of Hockney's works will now be given to foundations and public institutions around the world to preserve his legacy. Over his seven-decade career, Hockney was famous for his vibrant and innovative artworks, including landscapes of his native Yorkshire, sun-drenched paintings of Los Angeles swimming pools, and iPad portraits of friends and family. A defining figure of the pop art movement in the 1960s, he maintained huge popularity throughout his life.

Half of France under red heat alert as alcohol banned at street music festival

France has issued red heatwave alerts for around half the country including Paris for Monday as a heatwave pushes temperatures towards record levels. On Sunday temperatures in the south-western city of Bordeaux hit 40C (104F). Earlier, French authorities banned alcohol consumption in public places during the annual Fête de la Musique, a national music festival that draws millions to the streets across the country. "For all events organised by the state and its agencies, instructions have been given not to offer alcohol," the office of Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu said. The limits on alcohol consumption aim "to preserve emergency and healthcare services and allow medical staff to focus

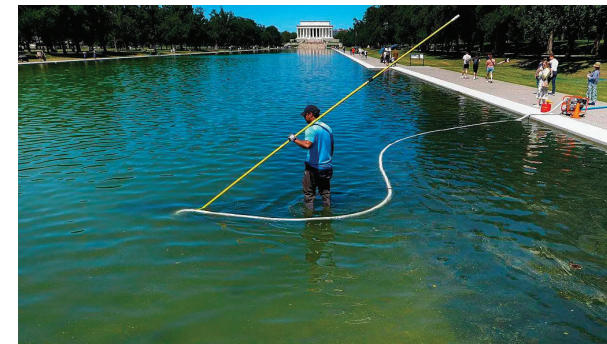


on caring for the most vulnerable", the government said. Temperatures have been forecast to peak on Monday, and authorities have warned they could match historic highs. The red alert covers much of western and central France, while many other regions are under an orange alert. The rising temperatures are being driven by hot air mov-

ing north from the Sahara desert, which is in turn trapping hot air over western and central Europe. Italian authorities have issued red alerts for eight cities for Sunday, including Bologna, Florence, Milan, and Turin, while Spain's weather agency has also issued red and orange alerts in several regions and warned of temperatures hitting 40 degrees across large parts of the country. The heatwave has been building for days and has disrupted some government services in France, forcing the cancellation of dozens of trains and the suspension of classes. France's weather service Météo-France said it was "uncertain" how long the heatwave, which has been estimated to affect about three quarters of the population, would last. To help Parisians and tourists cope with the heat, authorities are keeping parks and gardens in the French capital open through the night. Fête de la Musique has been going for more than 40 years, and is always held on the summer solstice. Last year, about two million people attended events in Paris.

FORMER OLYMPIAN DENIES VANDALISING WASHINGTON REFLECTING POOL AFTER ARREST

A former US Olympian arrested for allegedly vandalising the Reflecting Pool in Washington DC is denying he did anything wrong. David "Davey" Hearn, 67, was detained by the pool's edge on Friday as he was finishing a long bike ride. Hearn told BBC News that he had removed his cycling glove to simply touch a long strip of rubbery material which appeared to have "delaminated" from the bottom of the pool, when he was stopped by US Park Police and National Guard troops. The champion canoeist is now facing a misdemeanour charge of destruction of government property. The Reflecting Pool has just



undergone a multi-million dollar resealing and painting project, but already the paint appears to be peeling off. President Donald Trump has championed the pool's makeover as part of his bid to beautify the US capital ahead of America's 250th birthday celebrations. The

historic Reflecting Pool, stretching 2,030ft (619m) between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, has long been beset by leaks, structural deterioration, faulty pipes, algae growth and bird droppings. But despite the refurbishment,

which cost an estimated \$13m (£9.8m), the pool has continued to be plagued by algae and more recently the paint problems, which have seen media and park visitors document pieces of the new blue paint peeling off from the bottom of the pool. Trump said in a post on Truth Social on Saturday that US Park Police had "arrested multiple individuals for vandalizing our Nations magnificent Reflecting Pool". "Who would do such a thing? These are very serious crimes having to do with the destruction of National Monuments," he continued, adding that "work will begin immediately on its repair".

Colombia's escalating, brutal internal conflict is defining its presidential election



"My brother was murdered for not paying an extortion payment...in front of his children." Edilma Martinez Flores said at a support centre for displaced people in Bogotá. She fled her home on the outskirts of Cali, in the south-west, after armed criminal groups handed out leaflets ordering residents to leave or face violence. "We had no choice but to leave our things behind. They started placing bombs along the routes people travel." Edilma is far from alone, and experiences like hers are why insecurity is dominating voters' minds in Sunday's key presidential election. Colombia's six decades of conflict between armed groups, the state and cartels has killed hundreds of thousands of people. It isn't new, but illegal armed groups have roughly doubled their membership in the last five years. These include Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) dissident factions,

the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Clan del Golfo, who have expanded their control of rural areas key to drug trafficking and illegal mining. A brutal offensive between the ELN and FARC dissidents near the Venezuela-Colombia border last year displaced tens of thousands of people. The two presidential candidates have starkly different visions for tackling this violence, in a campaign marked by the assassination of a presidential candidate, homicides, kidnappings and bombings. Left-wing senator Iván Cepeda is seen as the "architect" of the current president Gustavo Petro's "total peace" strategy, prioritising negotiation with armed groups. Critics say it has failed and let armed groups exploit ceasefires to expand their control. Supporters argue it prevents a larger loss of life. He also played a key role in the 2016 peace deal which disarmed thousands of FARC fighters.



AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN NATIONS CALL FOR FORMAL APOLOGY FOR TRANSATLANTIC SLAVERY



African and Caribbean countries have called for a formal apology and reparations from countries that benefited from the transatlantic slave trade. The demands come at the end of a three-day conference in Ghana which looked to advance the push for reparatory justice. It follows a landmark UN resolution in March which recognised transatlantic slavery as the "gravest

crime against humanity", urging UN member states to contribute to a reparations fund. Around 12-15 million African men, women and children were captured and trafficked to the Americas to work as slaves from the 15-19th Centuries. A 19-point reparations plan has been endorsed as part of the "Next Steps" conference in the Ghanaian capital, Accra.

Israeli strikes kill six people in Gaza including Al Jazeera cameraman, officials say

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 PRIZE MONEY:

How Much More Will The Champions Earn Than Argentina In 2022?

FIFA has confirmed the prize money structure for the 2026 World Cup, and the number attached to the trophy itself tells the clearest story: \$50 million for the champion, up from the \$42 million Argentina collected after beating France on penalties in the 2022 final. The \$8 million increase is the largest dollar jump between any two editions in World Cup history. How the Total Pool Has Grown FIFA initially announced a prize pool of \$727 million for the 2026 tournament in December 2025, a 65 percent increase on the \$440 million distributed at Qatar 2022. The figure was revised upward again at the FIFA Council meeting in May 2026, where stronger-than-expected broadcasting, sponsorship and ticketing revenue across the three host nations pushed the total financial distribution to \$871 million, including prepara-



tion fees and the Club Benefits Programme. The performance-based prize pool specifically, the money tied directly to how far a team progresses, sits at \$655 million, compared to the \$440 million teams shared in Qatar. With 48 nations now competing instead of 32,

more federations are sharing in the growth, but the increase at every single stage of the competition is real. What Every Stage Is Worth Every one of the 48 teams receives a \$2.5 million preparation grant regardless of performance, plus a \$10 million qualification payment,

guaranteeing a minimum of \$12.5 million even for a team that loses every group match. From there, the figures climb fast. A group stage exit pays \$9 million. The Round of 32, a stage that did not exist in previous tournaments, pays \$11 million. The Round of 16 pays

\$15 million, and the quarter-finals pay \$19 million. Fourth place earns \$27 million, third place \$29 million, the runner-up \$33 million, and the champion takes the headline \$50 million. Why the Growth Curve Keeps Accelerating The champion's prize has grown every single edition since FIFA began publicly disclosing the figures in 1982, when Italy won \$2.2 million. The biggest jumps came between 2002 and 2006, when the payout more than doubled from \$9 million to \$20 million, and now again between 2022 and 2026. Prize money is paid to national federations rather than directly to players, with typical player shares ranging between 20 and 30 percent depending on each federation's own bonus structure. Whoever wins on July 19 will collect more than any champion in the tournament's history.

Mumbai Indians Eye Mega IPL Trade Deal Involving Hardik Pandya, Identify Huge Target: Report

The Mumbai Indians are looking to part ways with Hardik Pandya, and Rajasthan Royals opener Yashasvi Jaiswal has emerged as the top pick for the trade deal, according to a report by Revsportz. There has been a lot of chatter over Hardik's future with the franchise after they finished ninth in IPL 2026, following an extremely disappointing campaign for the all-rounder. The report claimed that MI team management is scheduled to hold a critical review meeting next week, where the futures of several senior players as well as coaches could be decided. It added that Hardik's entourage is already in advanced talks with the RR. Jaiswal provides a lucrative option for the Mumbai Indians, who are reportedly looking for a long-term prospect to take Rohit Sharma's place. The report also claimed that the five-time champions may look to release Suryakumar Yadav



as well. Coming to the captaincy options, the Mumbai Indians are looking to appoint a new leader with the future in focus, and Tilak Varma has emerged as a clear frontrunner. Pandya was at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence in

Bengaluru to get clearance for his back spasm injury which he sustained in the IPL while playing for the Mumbai Indians. It is learnt that the new injury could be a result of him bowling the full quota of 10 overs at the CoE during the assessment.

Harmanpreet Kaur Achieves Stunning Feat. Not Even Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli Have Done It

India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur became the first cricketer (male or female) ever to play 200 T20Is as she took the field during the Women's T20 World Cup 2026 encounter against South Africa on Sunday. New Zealand's Suzie Bates is second in the list with 184, Danni Wyatt-Hodge third with 183 followed by Ellyse Perry with 177 appearances. For India, Smriti Mandhana has played 169 T20Is. When it comes to men's T20Is, Ireland's Paul Sterling (163) leads the way, followed by Rohit Sharma (159). Meanwhile, Harmanpreet Kaur won the toss and opted to bat first against South Africa in their Women's T20 World Cup match. "We want to bat. I think it's a good pitch and if we bat first, we could get a result that will help us to win the game. [On the pitch at Old Trafford] I think it's a very good pitch. The only thing is we have to give some time in the middle and then we can take the game ahead. [On becoming the first player to play 200 T20 Internationals] 200 games, I think, honestly, it's been an amazing

journey. I never thought I'll come that far, but I think God has been kind and I'm really thankful to him and to my family, friends, BCCI, all my teammates. They've been really supportive." [On playing in front of a sellout crowd] I think they've been our biggest support. Hopefully we'll entertain them. [On team changes] Shreyanka is missing because of her injury. In place of her, Prema is going to make her debut. And we have one more change. Kranti is resting today. Arundhati is playing. [On her message to debutant Prema] Just to enjoy. I think I'm more nervous playing 200th game and she is someone who looks very calm and hopefully she'll enjoy the game." Harmanpreet said at toss. In the Indian XI, Prema Rawat came in for the injured Shreyanka Patil, while Kranti Gaud has been rested and Arundhati Reddy is playing in her place. Dane van Niekerk and Tazmin Brits are playing in place of Sune Lusk and Kayla Reyncke respectively in the South African side.



Who Is Jordan Spieth Wife Annie Verret? Her Career, Presence On The PGA Tour And Family Foundation Role

Jordan Spieth and Annie Verret met as high schoolers in Dallas, Texas, attending different campuses: Spieth at Jesuit College Preparatory School, Verret at Ursuline Academy, an all-girls school across town. The relationship survived college, where Spieth played golf at the University of Texas while Verret studied business at Texas Tech, and survived the early years of his rise to the top of the PGA Tour. He proposed on Christmas Eve in 2017. They married in a private ceremony in Dallas in November 2018. Her Career Before and Alongside Verret was born in 1994 and grew up in Coppell, Texas, graduating from Texas Tech's Rawls College of Business with a degree in business, earning



a spot on the President's List for a perfect GPA along the way. Her early career was built in nonprofit and event management. She worked with First Tee Greater Dallas, an organisation that uses golf to teach life skills to young people, and later served as director of development for The Birthday Party Project, a Dallas non-

profit that organises birthday celebrations for children experiencing homelessness. That professional background fed directly into the work she does today. She is a key leader within the Jordan Spieth Family Foundation, helping run an organisation built around four causes: children with special needs, junior golf, military fami-

JYOTI STRIKES GOLD, INDIA WIN THREE MORE SILVER MEDALS AT WORLD BOXING CUP

Jyoti delivered a standout performance to clinch India's lone gold medal at the World Boxing Cup 2, defeating Uzbekistan's Farzona Fozilova in the 48kg final on Sunday. Jyoti outclassed Fozilova, the reigning World Boxing Cup Brazil gold medalist, with a 5-0 unanimous decision. India added three silver medals through strong final appearances. Minakshi (51kg), the World No. 1 in 48kg competing in a higher weight category, settled for silver after going down 0-5 against China's Wu Yu in the final. Prachi (57kg) also finished with a silver medal, losing 0-5 to Uzbekistan's Nigina Uktamova in her title bout, following an otherwise impressive run in the tournament. In the men's category, Deepak (70kg) secured a silver medal after a 0-5 loss to Kazakhstan's Abilaikhan Zhussupov in the final. Earlier, India had already confirmed two bronze medals through Jugnoo (85kg) and Nikhil (55kg), taking the country's overall tally to six medals (1 gold, 3 silver, 2 bronze).



Asian Relays Championships: India Wins Women's 4x100m Team Gold - Video



The Indian quartet of Srabani Nanda, SS Sneha, Sudeshna Shivankar and Tamanna clinched the gold medal in the women's 4x100m relay on the final day of the second edition of the Asian Relays Championships on Sunday. The Indian gold medal women's 4x100m relay team clocked 43.85 seconds, a season best. The Indian contingent also won silver in mixed 4x400m and bronze in mixed 4x100m relay. The

mixed 4x400m relay team added silver to the medal tally with Theerthesh Shetty, Poovamma MR, Bharath Sridhar and Neeru Pathak clocking 3:17.06 seconds. Earlier, the Indian mixed 4x100m team won bronze (41.27 seconds). The members of the Indian team were Pranav Gaurav, Tamanna, Animesh Kujur and SS Sneha. Thailand won gold (41.14 seconds) while silver went to China (41.29 seconds). The men's 4x400m

relay finished fifth with a time of 3:05.33 seconds. The team members were Theerthesh Shetty, Avinash Krishna Kumar, Suraj A Raja, Barath Sridhar. Vietnam (3:02.60 secs), China (3:03.23 secs) and Sri Lanka (3:03.33 secs) finished in that order. The women's 4x400m relay team finished fourth with a time of 3:34.88 seconds. Team members were Saloni Nagar, Poovamma MR, Ansa Babu and Rashdeep Kaur.

Suspense Ends On Lamine Yamal Ahead Of Spain's Match Against Saudi Arabia - Latest Injury Update



Lamine Yamal is starting for Spain in their FIFA World Cup 2026 match against Saudi Arabia on Sunday, with his side still searching for their first win of the tournament. The 18-year-old is seemingly yet to complete 100% recovery from his hamstring injury, and may not play the full 90 minutes. Ahead of the Saudi Arabia game, Yamal had said that it is "not necessary" for him to play the whole match, but that he will be ready to play whatever minutes Spain manager Luis de la Fuente asks of him. De la Fuente had hinted that Yamal could play for an hour. "It's very early, it's unnecessary." Lamine Yamal had told Spanish public broadcaster RTVE about his readiness to play an entire game. "It's not the time to play a whole match, but I can play whatever minutes the coach wants," he had added. Yamal came on after the 70th-minute mark but was unable to help Spain break the dead-

lock in a 0-0 draw against underdogs Cape Verde in their opening Group H game. Manager Luis de la Fuente had hinted ahead of the match that Lamine Yamal could start and play close to an hour. "We're seeing the real Lamine Yamal, his fitness. Playing time is just a number, 55, 58, 63 (minutes), we'll see," he had said in a news conference on Saturday. "He is fine, it is the best news. We will observe his conditions, the best plan will be made before the match. We always prioritise players' health. Lamine should bring positive impact if he takes the field. Our goal is to win as a team." De la Fuente had further said. Along with Yamal, there is also uncertainty over wing partner Nico Williams' fitness and how long he may play. After a draw in their previous match, Spain are eyeing wins in their remaining two group games against Saudi Arabia and Uruguay.

India Beat Netherlands 3-2 In Men's FIH Pro League Encounter

Indian men's hockey team produced another superb show to notch up a 3-2 win over the Netherlands in their last match of the FIH Pro League Rotterdam leg on Sunday. Goals from Jugraj Singh (18), Abhishek (27), and Rajinder Singh (56) helped India secure their second outright victory of the leg against the Dutch side at Hockey Club Rotterdam. Pepijn van der Heijden (19) and Koen Bijen (59) scored for the hosts. Stand-in captain Hardik Singh was named Player of the Match for his exceptional leadership and midfield display. The Netherlands started the match strongly in the first quarter, showcasing



impressive passing and putting the Indian backline under early pressure. Though India had a slightly shaky start, the defenders quickly found their rhythm and contained the Dutch

attackers. India created a few entries into the opposition circle but could not find the final pass, leaving the first quarter goalless. India increased the intensity in the second quarter and

immediately won their first penalty corner. Three minutes into the second quarter, Jugraj fired a powerful drag-flick to the left of Dutch goalkeeper Derk Meijer to open the account for India. The

Netherlands responded instantly, equalising through a penalty corner goal by van der Heijden. The hosts continued to press, testing the Indian goalkeeper, but the Indian defence held firm. Jarmanpreet Singh set up a brilliant pass for Abhishek, who smashed a backhand shot into the net to restore India's lead at 2-1 before halftime. In the second half, India looked to control the game through neat passing, while a determined Dutch side kept making inroads into the Indian circle. The Netherlands won a penalty corner in the 41st minute, but Amit Rohidas comfortably deflected van der Heijden's shot. Another

penalty corner opportunity for the hosts was wasted due to a mistake by the stopper, allowing a composed Indian side to sustain their 2-1 lead at the end of the third quarter. The final quarter saw the Netherlands pushing hard for an equaliser, but errors in the penalty corner setup continued to frustrate the hosts. India remained composed, avoiding unnecessary risks. In the 56th minute, a quick counter-attack by Dilpreet Singh and Mandeep Singh created a dangerous two-on-one situation. While Dutch player Joppe Wolbert made an extraordinary save, he was handed a yellow card for a foul during the play.

Father's Day special poster release from Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja, Shiva Nirvana, Mythri Movie Makers' 'Irumudi'

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja and director Shiva Nirvana have teamed up for the film 'Irumudi', which is being produced by the famous pan-India production house Mythri Movie Makers. With the excellent response to the glimpses of this film 'The Heart of Irumudi', huge expectations have already been set on the film. This film, which is being made as a blend of devotion, family emotions and action elements, is going to impress the audience of all sections. The glimpses that have already been released have received an excellent response. On the occasion of Father's Day, the team of 'Irumudi' has released a beautiful special poster. In this poster, Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja is seen kissing his daughter's forehead lovingly. This poster, which has revealed the bond, love and affection between a father and daughter in a very heartfelt way, has touched the audience emotionally. This Father's Day special poster is going viral on social media and is particularly impressive. Ravi Teja, who has entertained the audience with energetic commercial entertainers, will be seen in a completely different and emotional role in 'Irumudi'. His performance as a man from a middle-class family will give the audience a great experience. Shiva Nirvana has crafted this story in a way that is appealing to the mind against the backdrop



of family emotions. At the same time, he has also balanced commercial aspects. Saikumar, Ajay Ghosh, Ramesh Indira, Swasika, and Baby Nakshatra will be seen in key roles in this film. Producers Naveen Erneni and Y. Ravi Shankar are producing this film on a grand scale and GV Prakash Kumar is providing music. Vishnu Sharma is the cinematographer, Sahi Suresh is the production designer,

Praveen Pudi is the editor. Shiva Nirvana has provided the story, screenplay, and dialogues, while Naresh Babu P is acting as the script coordinator. 'Irumudi', which is being made by coordinating action, devotion, family bonds, and emotions, is going to be one of the most unique films in Ravi Teja's career. Irumudi will have a grand worldwide release on August 21st, on the auspicious occasion of Varalakshmi Vratam.

SHRUTI HAASAN GOES BOLD IN BLACK RUFFLES



Shruti Haasan has had a strong run on the big screen lately. Her Telugu film Peddi, alongside Ram Charan, released earlier this month; she has amazed in the special song, adding to a string of successful projects that includes Coolie and Salaar: Part 1 - Ceasefire. The actress now has Salaar 2 in the pipeline, keeping her firmly in the spotlight across South Indian cinema. In her latest pictures,

Shruti embraced a bold, edgy look. She wore a green corset top with subtle printed detailing, paired with black ruffled flared pants and chunky platform boots. Layered choker necklaces and statement bracelets added to the rocker-chic vibe, while her loose curled hair completed the dramatic styling. From back-to-back hits to fearless fashion choices, Shruti Haasan continues to carve her own space in the industry.

Victory Venkatesh, Nandamuri Kalyan Ram's Veera Thilakam To Anil Ravipudi, #VenkyAnil5 #NkrAR2 Regular Shoot From Tomorrow



Victory Venkatesh, Nandamuri Kalyan Ram, and blockbuster director Anil Ravipudi collaborate for the much-awaited entertainer, tentatively referred to as #VenkyAnil5 and #NkrAR2. Backed by Sahu Garapati under the Shine Screens banner, the film enjoys the support of some of the biggest names in the industry. Suresh Productions, Smt. Archana, and Zee Studios are presenting the project, while has partnered as a co-producer. Keerthy Suresh and Krithi Shetty have been cast as the leading ladies opposite Venkatesh and Kalyan Ram respectively. The project was formally launched amid much fanfare with a grand pooja ceremony a couple of days ago. Meanwhile, the team announced to commence the film's regular shoot from tomorrow in Hyderabad. The announcement came

through a fun-filled video. In an era where film promotions have become increasingly competitive, Anil Ravipudi continues to set new benchmarks with his inventive marketing approach. Every announcement from the filmmaker comes wrapped in creativity, humor, and a sense of anticipation, ensuring that even regular updates become talking points among audiences. The new video features Anil Ravipudi interacting with his team and humorously recalling how fans often praise his promotional skills. According to him, he even presented him with a sword and a ceremonial turban as tokens of appreciation, acknowledging his reputation as a master promoter. The humorous narrative takes an unexpected turn when Venkatesh uses the sword to make a tiny cut on Anil's thumb and applies a Veera Tilakam.

Kalyan Ram repeats the act, followed by Keerthy Suresh, Krithi Shetty, and music composer GV Prakash Kumar. The promotional video is executed with a light-hearted tone and serves as an entertaining metaphor for the team officially embarking on the film's journey. Perhaps the most significant takeaway from the video is the confirmation regarding the film's back-drop. While the story is set in Rayalaseema, the makers stressed that the movie will be thoroughly entertaining. On the technical front, the film brings together an accomplished crew. GV Prakash Kumar will score the music, Sameer Reddy will crank the camera, Tammiraju will oversee editing responsibilities, and AS Prakash will handle production design. S Krishna serves as the executive producer. The movie is scheduled for Sankranthi release, 2027.

Excited to Watch Okkadu in 4K Again" – Director Gunasekhar on the Re-Release

Produced by M.S. Raju under the Sumanth Art Productions banner and directed by acclaimed filmmaker Gunasekhar, Okkadu starring Superstar Mahesh Babu was originally released in 2003 and went on to become one of the biggest blockbusters in Telugu cinema. Nearly 23 years later, the iconic film is all set to return to theatres in stunning 4K quality across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and other parts of India. Widely regarded as a landmark film in Mahesh Babu's career, Okkadu created a massive impact at the box office and established a unique place in Telugu cinema history. The



film's association with the famous Kurnool Buruju remains unforgettable among movie lovers. Presented by Radha Madhavi Film Distributors, the film will be re-released worldwide on June 26 by Ramakrishna. The film features Bhumika Chawla as the female lead, while Prakash Raj delivered one of the most memorable antagonist performances in

Telugu cinema. The cast also includes Mukesh Rishi, Telangana Shakuntala, Ajay, Geetha, Dharmavarapu Subramanyam, Rajan P. Dev, Achyuth and others in pivotal roles. Speaking on the occasion, Director Gunasekhar said: "Okkadu continues to grow in popularity with every passing year. Though the film has been re-released several times, it is now coming back once again in 4K quality on June 26.

High Expectations Surround Sukumar Writings–Bunny Vas Works Film as Team Meets Sukumar and Seeks His Blessings



The much-talked-about collaboration between ace filmmaker Sukumar and successful producer Bunny Vas has already become one of the most exciting announcements in Telugu cinema. With their banners, Sukumar Writings and Bunny Vas Works, coming together for a family drama with all the elements starring Priyadarshi, expectations have naturally soared among

audiences and industry circles alike. Both Sukumar and Bunny Vas have earned a reputation for backing unique and content-driven films, making this project one to watch closely. Adding to the excitement, the entire team recently met Sukumar and sought his blessings as the film prepares to go on floors. The interaction turned into a memorable occasion, reflecting the positive energy surrounding the

project. Sukumar, known for encouraging fresh talent and innovative storytelling, extended his best wishes to the cast and crew, further boosting confidence in the venture. The film marks the Tollywood debut of popular Telangana folk dancer Naga Durga as the female lead opposite Priyadarshi. Having won widespread recognition through her folk songs and commanding presence and dance in music videos.

Ranveer Beats Vijay, Shah Rukh, Rajini & Allu Arjun?



Ranveer Singh is the toast of the town in Bollywood after his spy thriller Dhurandhar ripped apart numerous box office records and set a new benchmark for Indian box office. Both parts of this Aditya Dhar directional emerged as huge money spinners for the producer and turned out to be one of the biggest hits of all time. While Ranveer's commendable performance earned him worldwide plaudits, his staggering take home salary for this entire project has now become a talking point in the industry and the media circles. Trade estimates indicate that Ranveer walked away with an unprecedented ₹325 crore, making it one of the most lucrative single-film earnings in the history of Indian

cinema. Unlike the traditional flat-fee model preferred by most of the Bollywood stars, Ranveer chose to bet on the film's ultimate box-office potential and entered into a backend profit-sharing agreement with the producer. Reportedly, he even invested his own capital into the project to share the burden of rising production costs. This gamble has ultimately paid off in the form of massive profits. Bollywood sources now claim that Ranveer Singh's total revenue combines a cut of the direct theatrical ticket sales alongside lucrative payouts from the movie's digital streaming, satellite television, and music rights. While the figure that is being circulated is speculative in nature.



Disha Patani Shines Brighter Than Ever

Disha Patani is gearing up for one of her busiest phases yet. Her ensemble comedy Welcome To The Jungle, featuring Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty, and Jackie Shroff, is set to release on June 26. She also has Awarapan 2 with Emraan

thriller Holiguards, directed by Kevin Spacey. In her latest pictures, Disha kept things sleek and party ready. She wore a sparkly silver and black animal print halter top, paired with a black satin micro skirt. Strappy black heels and tousled, wind-blown hair completed the bold, glamorous look. With two big releases lined up and an international project on the horizon, Disha Patani is having her biggest year in recent memory. Her style game continues to match her growing career momentum. Disha Patani just turned 33, and she celebrated in the most heartwarming way, starting her special day with a spiritual temple visit alongside her BFF Mouni Roy, followed by a cozy birthday brunch with close friends including Krishna Shroff. Singer Stebin Ben performed live, with Disha joyfully singing along, a moment that melted everyone's

hearts. But while the celebrations were intimate and sweet, these brand new pictures tell a completely different story! Disha stepped out in a stunning leopard-print halter dress, bold, fierce, and absolutely breathtaking. The deep neckline, effortless pose, gold bangles, and that million-dollar smile made sure every eye was on her. This is Disha at her most raw and powerful best! On the work front, she's all set to set the screens on fire with Welcome to the Jungle, releasing June 26, 2026, and we simply cannot wait! Mouni Roy has finally addressed ongoing media speculation surrounding her close friendship with fellow actress Disha Patani. Recent reports and social media discussions had sparked rumors suggesting that the two stars were involved in a romantic relationship. However, Mouni has firmly

dismissed such claims and clarified the nature of their bond. According to Mouni, the rumors are completely unfounded and stem from misunderstandings about their strong friendship. She emphasized that Disha is simply a close friend who has stood by her through various phases of life. "Disha Patani is simply just a girl-friend who supports me in good, bad, and ugly times," Mouni reportedly stated while addressing the speculation. The actress expressed disappointment over how certain sections of the media interpreted their public appearances and social media interactions. She noted that close friendships should not automatically become the subject of sensational headlines or assumptions. Mouni further clarified that she is not gay and urged people not to draw conclusions based on photographs, videos, or public outings.