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CENTRE TARGETS \$100 BN TEXTILE EXPORTS BY 2030, SAYS GIRIRAJ SINGH

NATION PAGE

MAN, 21, PULLED ALIVE from Venezuelan rubble after being trapped for 106 hours

WORLD | NEWS

NABHA NATESH: MY ROLE IN 'NAGABANDHAM' WILL SURPRISE EVERYONE

CINEMA | PAGE

SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

28-06-2026

Total pilgrims - 91,793
Tonsnes - 31,221
Hundi kumbh - 4,90 CR
Laddu sale - 4,38 Lac
Annasprasadam - 3,13 Lac
Medical treatment - 3,515
Waiting Compartments - Out side line at Sila thoranam.

Approx. Darsan Time for Saravadashtanam (with out SSD tokens) - 18 - 24 H.

India strongly condemns Pakistan air strikes on Afghan territory



New Delhi (TSIT): The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Monday stated that India strongly condemns Pakistan's air strikes on Afghan territory that have resulted in several civilian casualties, including women and children. "India strongly condemns Pakistan's air strikes on Afghan territory that have resulted in several civilian casualties, including women and children. This blatant act of aggression by Pakistan is an assault on Afghanistan's sovereignty and a direct threat to regional peace and stability," stated the MEA. "It reflects Pakistan's persistent pattern of reckless behaviour and its futile attempt to externalise internal failures through desperate acts of violence beyond its borders. India conveys its condolences to Afghan families that have lost loved ones, prays for early recovery of those injured and reiterates its unwavering support for Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity," it added.

8 new RS members take oath; Kharge re-appointed LoP



VP & Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan with 8 newly-elected members of the Rajya Sabha who took oath on Monday....

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and BJP leader Tarun Chugh were among the eight newly-elected members of the Rajya Sabha who took oath on Monday. Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan administered the oath of office to the new members. Kharge was also re-appointed as the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha with effect from June 26. Holding a copy of the Constitution in his hand, Kharge took the oath separately in Radhakrishnan's chamber. The Congress chief later said that he will continue to raise the concerns, aspirations and the voice of people in the House with sincerity and conviction,

apart from holding the government accountable. Radhakrishnan congratulated Kharge and said the Upper House would benefit from his long experience. Radhakrishnan later administered oath/affirmation to seven other newly elected/re-elected members in the Rajya Sabha chamber - Mansingh Meraman Parmar, Tarun Chugh, Alka Singh, Jitendra Meghijibhai Kanzariya, Rajendra Hiralal Jain, M Nagaraja and Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi. Four members took oath/affirmation in Hindi, one in Kannada, one in Punjabi and one in Manipuri. While two members are from Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur and

Rajasthan sent one member each to the Upper House. Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, general secretaries K C Venugopal, Mukul Wasnik, Jairam Ramesh and Naseer Hussain were present during Kharge's oath-taking. Kharge's wife, daughter and granddaughter along with her spouse were also present, sources said. Health Minister J P Nadda, who is also the Leader of the House, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Hariwansh were also present on the occasion, along with Praful Patel and Rajya Sabha Secretary General P C Mody.

CM Vijay tells TN officials to act without political interference

**Chennai (TSIT)**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Monday directed district collectors and superintendents of police to effectively tackle crimes by identifying the root cause and maximise public safety. Stressing the need to crack down on drug trafficking and protect natural resources from plunder, he said no wrongdoer, regardless of their standing, should escape swift and impartial punishment. Addressing the first two-day joint conference of collectors, SPs and senior police officials since his TVK government assumed office in May, Vijay said the officials "could act without political interference." "District collectors

and Superintendents of Police should actively monitor and take action against drug trafficking and smuggling of mineral resources," Vijay said at the Secretariat here. "Collectors and SPs should take steps to prevent criminal incidents by identifying the root cause. A change should be brought about in the behaviour of those who disturb law and order," he said in his opening remarks. Women's safety should be ensured without any compromise and special arrangements should be made for their protection. Special attention should also be given to the safety of students and children, he said. "Shops near schools should be continuously monitored. Periodic checks should be conducted if necessary. Those involved in drug-related crimes should be immediately arrested and punished," the CM said.

Dipke slams Centre's 'apathy' towards student suicides; Wangchuk's fast enters day 2

**NEW DELHI (TSIT):**

The protest by the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) at Jantar Mantar in Delhi entered its tenth day on Monday, with CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke highlighting the recent cases of student suicides and criticising the government's alleged lack of response to the families affected. In a series of posts on X, Dipke named students - Pradeep Meghwal, Aakansha Chaturvedi, Amaira Kumar and

CJP PROTEST:

Kahaan Patel, saying their families were being made to "beg for justice". He alleged that no government representative had contacted them to express regret over the deaths of their children. "I really don't understand how people in power can be not just so indifferent, but so arrogant that they don't even feel the need to reach out to families who have lost their children," Dipke said. "You can't bring their children back, but the very

least you can do is express regret and apologise to their families. Is that too much to ask?" he added. Dipke also shared a video of his interaction with the father of NEET aspirant Kahaan Patel, who died by suicide on June 18. Patel's father travelled from Gujarat to Jantar Mantar to voice his concerns with Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. In the video, Patel's father questioned how his son was being portrayed and emphasised that the family wanted people to truly understand who he was. Activist Wangchuk, who is on the second day of his hunger strike, called on people to join the fast in support of the CJP and the pressing issues in Ladakh. "This is the second day of my fast in support of CJP and Ladakh. You can also join us. Come here for a day-long fast.

Chandrababu Naidu orders simplified govt services

DIRECTS COMPLAINTS TO BE RECEIVED THROUGH MANA MITRA PLATFORM**Visakhapatnam (TSIT)**

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday directed officials to simplify government services and make them more accessible to the public. During a review meeting at the RTGS Centre in the State Secretariat, he stressed the need to streamline service delivery, with officials informing him that procedures for 11 public services are being simplified in the first phase. The Chief Minister instructed officials to strengthen the public grievance redressal system by

enabling citizens to register complaints through Mana Mitra WhatsApp, including voice messages. He also directed officials to resolve mobile network connectivity issues in around 3,000 locations across the state within three months and asked senior officials to undertake regular field visits to identify and resolve public issues promptly. The meeting also reviewed the Navachetana child development programme, the PGRS grievance redressal mechanism, RTGS operations, and the use of Artificial Intelligence and other technologies in governance.

Ram temple donations case: All eight accused sent to 14 days judicial custody

The accused were produced before Special Judge, Anti Corruption Court, Rajat Verma through video conferencing after their earlier judicial custody expired, Special Prosecution Officer Umesh Dubey said.

AYODHYA (TSIT):

All eight accused arrested in connection with the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple were on Monday remanded to 14 days judicial custody by a local court, case officials said. Poor roads despite toll is deficiency in service, says consumer panel; asks NHAI to pay to motorist. The accused were produced before Special Judge, Anti Corruption Court, Rajat Verma through video conferencing after their



earlier judicial custody expired, Special Prosecution Officer Umesh Dubey said. Police did not apply for the custody of the accused, he added. The eight had earlier been remanded to three days' judicial custody till Monday by a special remand magistrate.

PM Modi salutes Indian diaspora in Seychelles

New Delhi (TSIT):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hailed the Indian community in Seychelles as a "living bridge" connecting the two countries, applauding its contribution to the island nation's development while preserving India's rich cultural heritage, as he wrapped up a landmark three-day State Visit marked by major diplomatic achievements and enhanced people-to-people engagement. Interacting with members of the Indian diaspora in Victoria, Modi highlighted the community's pivotal role in strengthening the longstanding historical and cultural relationship between India and

Seychelles at a time when the two countries are expanding cooperation in maritime security, sustainable development, digital connectivity and regional stability in the Indian Ocean. The Prime Minister received a rousing welcome upon his arrival at his hotel in Victoria, where members of the diaspora greeted him with traditional Kutch folk dances, sacred mantra chants and the waving of the Indian Tricolour, reflecting the community's enduring emotional and cultural ties with India. Addressing the gathering, Modi praised the diaspora for keeping Indian traditions alive despite living far from their ancestral homeland. He noted with appreciation that festivals



such as Deepavali and Navratri continue to be celebrated enthusiastically in Seychelles and remarked that the community's fondness for Indian cuisine, including samosas, symbolised its strong cultural connection with India. He said the Indian community had

served as a vital link in reinforcing the friendship between the two countries and acknowledged its contribution to Seychelles' development over the years. Later, in a series of posts on social media platform X, the Prime Minister wrote, "Had a wonderful interaction with

members of the Indian community in Seychelles. They are making effective contributions to Seychelles' progress. At the same time, their connection with India is still very strong." The diaspora outreach was one of the highlights of Modi's State Visit, which witnessed several historic milestones in bilateral relations. The Prime Minister attended the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Seychelles' Independence as the Guest of Honour, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties between India and the Indian Ocean nation. In another landmark moment, Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to address an Extraordinary Sitting of the National Assembly of Seychelles,

underlining the growing strategic importance of the partnership and India's commitment to the Indian Ocean region. During the visit, the Prime Minister was also conferred the 'Guardian of the Blue Horizon', Seychelles' highest honour for leadership in environmental conservation and sustainable development, adding another prestigious international recognition to his global efforts on climate action and sustainability. During bilateral talks with Seychelles President Patrick Herminie, the two leaders reviewed the full spectrum of cooperation and discussed expanding collaboration under India's Vision MAHASAGAR initiative.

EDITORIAL

330 Million: Why The Biggest Number In India's AI Boom Is The Most Useless One

Every few weeks a new number arrives to tell us that India has won the artificial intelligence race before it has properly begun. That we are the largest market for this X, or the fastest growing for that Y, and the second-largest base of users for nearly every model that matters. The figures are real. The story made with them is unreal. Markets exist to price things, and the market for Indian AI has the price wrong in both directions at once. The visible side is overpriced. The durable side is underpriced. We are sold a supply side story while the demand side waits in the shade, holding both the real opportunity and the real danger.

Let me start with what is overpriced. According to Sensor Tower's State of AI 2026 report, ChatGPT counts roughly 330 million monthly users in India and Gemini around 229 million. Those figures get offered as proof of demand. They measure footfall. Appetite shows itself only when there is a price to pay, and the price in India today sits close to zero, because the frontier labs are subsidising access in a land grab for the world's largest pool of users. The narrow gap between the two leaders gives the game away. It exists because Android's installed base does the distribution work that genuine preference does elsewhere. The top of our market has been won by distribution and subsidy wearing the costume of demand. Early in my career, putting a new dishwasher liquid product into Indian kitchens, I watched free samples by the tons flowing off retailers in a week. The number that mattered arrived a month later, when a home-maker reached for it again and paid with her own money. The first number flattered the internal review. The second one paid the salaries.

WhatsApp owns near total reach in this country and has spent a decade in search of the commerce that was meant to follow. Vast usage, thin value. The capital now flooding into AI infrastructure rests on the same head-count story, on a subsidised price that still awaits its first real test. The day a real price appears, we will learn how much of that 330 million was appetite and how much was a free sample.

Turn the picture over, because the underpriced side is the richer one. Value in this technology is born at the point of use, in the hands of someone solving a real problem. Models commoditise by the quarter. The last-ing surplus lives in deployment against the messy, multilingual, high-friction problems that fill Indian life be it credit for the borrower with a thin file, advice for the small farmer or public services in a dozen languages that a model trained abroad meets as strangers.

This is the terrain where India is strong and where capital, mesmerised by the supply side, keeps its eyes elsewhere. The abundant thing draws the attention. The scarce thing sits unpriced. That gap is the textbook shape of a mispricing. The clearest evidence hides inside the same data everyone celebrates. The positions worth watching grow on session depth, paid conversion and word-of-mouth, far from the headlines that cheer downloads. One cohort that opens its wallet tells you more about this market than three hundred million who only opened the app. That wallet reports demand. The download reports distribution.

The Post-War Middle East May Already Be Splitting Into Two New 'Camps'

A fragile US-Iran detente is in place with the possibility that it may hold. Qatar and Pakistan are the two mediators. In an interview recently to Financial Times, Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, said regional countries are seeking to establish a new regional security framework with Tehran aimed at restoring long-term stability. Qatar is one of the Arab Gulf states that has usually had a more accommodative and conciliatory position regarding Iran, with which it also shares the Pars gas fields. Qatar is almost entirely dependent on the Strait of Hormuz for its exports and imports. But Qatar also hosts the US military's Central Command. This position, therefore, propelled it into the role of a mediator in the current conflict in West Asia. Mediation is also one of the tools of Qatar's official foreign policy. That is why the Prime Minister's words matter. A regional security makeover will surely be one of the outcomes of this war. The US has till now been a key security partner of the Gulf states, with Iran being a major threat perception for these countries. There has, however, been an increasing perception, at least since the outbreak of the Arab Spring, that the US was not as invested in Gulf security and was increasingly pivoting to the Indo-Pacific to contain an assertive China. If the current administration of US President Donald Trump allayed these concerns for a while, then the Iran war has helped reignite them. American bases and military equipment in the Gulf countries, for instance, became a liability for these countries as Iran repeatedly targeted them during the war. Moreover, reports emerged that the US, in fact, moved some equipment out of these



states to Israel. Influences and analysts the Gulf states openly criticised the US for failing to protect its Gulf allies in the manner they needed. Now, The Wall Street Journal, quoting American officials, has again published a report that amidst the damage suffered by its base in Bahrain, the Pentagon is considering reducing its military footprint in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and shifting some of its operations to Israel. In any case, the current detente, if it endures, speaks of a drawn down US presence in the region as well as highlights the limits of American power. A resilient Iran, with sanctions lifted, able to sell its oil and gas freely on the global market, the unfreezing of its assets and funds running in the billions of dollars, as well as a \$300 billion fund for its reconstruction, in charge of the Strait of Hormuz (together with Oman), will emerge stronger from the war than

any other country in the region, even if weakened economically and militarily. Most Gulf states will thus look for alternatives - as they have for a while - even as they continue their security partnership with the US. While most, if not all of them, will try to work out some kind of agreement with Iran to deter any future attacks, the mistrust now runs deep. In such a scenario China becomes a natural choice for many of the GCC states, as well as for Iran, of course. Over the years, China has strengthened its partnership with Iran, reflected in the support it offered in the current war, as well as with the GCC states, both at an individual level and as a bloc. China sources most of its energy needs from this region - in fact, more from the GCC than from Iran. Hence, China's role in the region is certain to expand. But while China is a major economic partner and may export

arms, it is doubtful that it will enter into any military alliance with any of them, which, in turn, will make the countries look for a regional security architecture. Here, two distinct groups may emerge. Qatar, which has already faced Israeli attacks on its territory last year and also has an uneasy relationship with many of the other Gulf states, may well choose to deepen ties with Iran. In any case, Qatar has pursued close ties with Iran, which made it a trusted mediator for the Iranians, as opposed to Pakistan, which actually represented US interests. Qatar has had its own share of run-ins with countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Sharing the Pars gas fields with Iran as well as its dependence on Hormuz will be incentive enough to pursue closer relations with the Persian state, together with Oman. This will also neutralise any threats from Iran

should conflict reignite there. Therefore, we may see a closer Qatar-Oman-Iran trilateral partnership emerging in the coming days. As opposed to this, another grouping already in the making will be of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt. The Saudi-Pakistan partnership goes back decades but received a new lease of life with the mutual defence pact signed last year. Ironically, this was driven by Israel's attack on Qatar, reflecting that the Saudis saw a challenge in Israel, too, along with the Iranian one. Even though the Saudis had entered a 'truce' with Iran in 2023 brokered by China, the current war has laid bare the huge trust deficit between them. This is also reflected in the joint statement issued after the GCC meeting with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Bahrain last week. Iran's nuclear programme still poses a threat to GCC countries and will continue

to do so till any definite resolution is achieved. The Saudis, also suffering from Iranian attacks and by the closure of Hormuz, will try to hedge strategically through defence alliances, like that with Pakistan, which, for all practical purposes, is largely one-sided. For instance, while Pakistan moved fighter jets and military personnel to Saudi Arabia during the war in preparation for any potential military activity, no Saudi effort was witnessed during Pakistan's recent conflict with Afghanistan. Egypt is also dependent on the Saudis economically, as is President Al Sisi for his presidency, which gives the Saudis enormous leverage over it; so, a formal alliance between the two is quite possible. This grouping may be favorable to Kuwait too, which shares a border with Saudi Arabia and is closely aligned with it both economically and security wise.

Is Haryana Sahitya and Sanskriti Academy living up to the expectations of the litterateurs?

— Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

(Dignity of honour, stagnation of literary activities and questions raised on the system)

Literature is the purest voice of a nation's soul, and writers are tireless seekers of that voice. They write the history of time in words, shape emotions into culture, and provide direction to society's consciousness. Their pen not only creates but also cultivates the thoughts of generations. Therefore, honoring a writer is not a formality of a government program, but a public declaration of society's cultural maturity and sensitivity. In this context, the current functioning of the Haryana Sahitya and Sanskriti Academy appears to be surrounded by many questions. Long-awaited literary figures were finally honored, but the manner in which this process was conducted caused more disappointment than joy. The experiences that emerged during conversations with several honored literary figures were not merely expressions of personal dissatisfaction, but rather pointed to a system where formality seems to prevail over empathy, and administrative procedures over intimacy. The value of an honor is measured not by the amount of money it carries, but by the respect it carries. A citation isn't just a paper document; it's a public tribute from society to a creator's years of dedication. Therefore, every word, every signature, and every formality carries symbolic significance. Some of the honor letters circulating on social media surprised many literary figures. They

lacked the signature of any competent official. Simply printing a name and designation may fulfill administrative requirements, but it cannot replace the intimate dignity of the honor. Signatures are not mere lines of ink; they are living symbols of an organization's acceptance, responsibility, and respect. When these are absent, the dignity of the honor appears incomplete. If there were any administrative or legal reasons behind this, the Academy had a responsibility to clarify them with the literary figures. Institutions build trust not only through decisions but also through dialogue. Lack of dialogue often breeds distrust, and distrust is the biggest challenge for any cultural institution. Haryana's literary community still remembers the occasions when literary figures were honored in the august atmosphere of the Raj Bhavan. Awards were not merely presented there, but the prestige of literature was celebrated. Each literary figure on stage felt like a respected representative of the state's cultural consciousness. Today, more than the grandeur, there is a lack of intimacy, and this pain is what stirs the hearts of literary figures. The concern isn't limited to the awards ceremony. Over the past four years, numerous questions have been raised about the academy's literary activities. For the years 2023, 2024, 2025, and the current year, 2026, there has been no regular process for awards and honors, no consistent invitation for manuscripts, no extensive literary workshops, no planned programs for young writers, and no strong environment for

statewide literary dialogue. If the flow of creative activity slows down within the premises of any literary academy, it's natural for the literary community to express concern. The Sahitya Akademi is not merely an institution that distributes awards. Its true essence is that of a vibrant cultural university, where ideas are exchanged, new talents find direction, the experiences of senior writers reach the new generation, and language and culture are constantly cultivated. If this role is limited, the institution's usefulness itself comes into question. Another serious question arises regarding the participation of literary figures. Many writers have felt that the active participation of literary figures in the Academy's decision-making process is not at the expected level. The soul of any literary institution is its writers, poets, critics, researchers, and translators. If these individuals begin to feel excluded from decision-making, the institution's literary character gradually begins to shrink into an administrative form. This article is not an attack on any particular individual, but a humble plea for introspection within the system. The strength of democratic institutions lies in accepting and learning from criticism. If writers are raising questions, they should be viewed not as disagreement but as an opportunity for improvement. It is essential that the Academy establish a timely process for awards and honors, restore the dignity of the awards ceremonies, establish regular dialogue with literary figures, and publicize a well-thought-out calendar of liter-

ary activities throughout the year. Literary workshops, book discussions, young writers' conferences, folk literature festivals, research seminars, and literary campaigns at the school and college levels should be organized in every district. This is the hallmark of a strong literary academy. A writer doesn't seek recognition. They only expect respectful treatment for their labor, dedication, and creativity. Their greatest reward is society's trust, and their greatest honor is their dignity. If this is hurt, it becomes not just an individual's pain, but the pain of the entire literary community. Haryana's literary tradition is incredibly rich and glorious. This land has produced numerous writers whose writings have elevated national literature to new heights. It's natural to expect the same level of respect from a literary institution with such a glorious tradition. The Academy needs to rise above administrative formalities and understand the soul of literature, prioritize the respect of literary figures, and establish itself not just as an office, but as a powerful center of cultural consciousness. The need today is not to stir up controversy, but to revive trust. Respect isn't just bestowed, it's also experienced. Unless writers feel honored, even the most lavish events will feel empty within. It is hoped that the Haryana Academy of Literature and Culture will embrace these questions positively and, through introspection, develop a work culture in which the self-respect of the writer, the dignity of literature, and the respect for culture reign supreme.

— Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

The imperative of expanding the UN Security Council in a multipolar world order India's permanent membership bid and the structural challenges of the reform process When the United Nations was established in 1945, after the end of World War II, the world's political, economic, and strategic circumstances were completely different from today. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was formed in accordance with the global power structure of that time, granting permanent membership and veto powers to five countries—the United States, Russia (then the Soviet Union), Britain, France, and China. At that time, this arrangement was considered appropriate for ensuring global peace and security. But nearly eight decades later, the world has completely changed. Colonialism has ended, many new nations have emerged, the center of the global economy is shifting towards Asia, and international politics is moving from a unipolar to a multipolar system. The pressing question is: if the world has changed, why is the structure of the UN Security Council still based on the realities of 1945? Today, the demand for Security Council expansion is not merely an attempt to rectify historical injustices, but has become an essential requirement to maintain its legitimacy, representativeness, and functional credibility. Global challenges such as the Russia-Ukraine war, the Gaza crisis, terrorism, climate change, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence have made it

clear that the current Security Council appears incapable of making effective and timely decisions on many issues. At such a time, the question of India's permanent membership has become not just a matter of national prestige, but an issue of democratization and balance in the global governance system. India's claim rests on several solid foundations. Representing the world's largest population and largest democracy, India has today become a major center of global politics, economics, and diplomacy. India's role in the global economy is steadily growing, and it is projected to be among the top three economies in the coming years. India has made significant progress in areas such as digital innovation, space science, green energy, healthcare, and artificial intelligence. India has emerged not only as a regional power but also as an active and responsible participant in global decision-making. India's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations further strengthens its credibility. For decades, India has contributed thousands of soldiers, medics, and police personnel to various peacekeeping missions. Many Indian soldiers have made the supreme sacrifice in the service of world peace. This contribution is not merely a military presence, but a testament to India's commitment to international responsibility. Ironically, the country that has been the most committed to implementing the UN's objectives remains deprived of permanent membership on the Security Council. India's foreign policy

also strengthens its claim. Ideas like "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas," and "One Earth, One Family, One Future" are not mere slogans but a reflection of India's global vision. During its presidency of the G20, India gave prominence to the voices of the Global South and played a key role in securing permanent membership for the African Union in the G20. The "Vaccine Maitri" program during the COVID-19 pandemic and humanitarian assistance during natural disasters further strengthened India's image as a responsible global power. Although India's case is strong, the process of Security Council reform is beset by several structural challenges. The primary challenge is the amendment of the UN Charter. This requires a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly, as well as the approval of all five current permanent members. This means that the consent of the beneficiaries of the system to be changed is also essential. This is the greatest irony of the reform process. The second major challenge is the veto system. If new permanent members are granted veto power, decision-making could become more complex. If they are not granted veto power, permanent membership would cease to have equal rights. No global consensus has yet emerged on this dilemma. The Security Council's inaction due to veto power in issues such as Russia-Ukraine and Gaza have highlighted the limitations of this system. Regional politics also hinder the reform process. India's bid is

opposed by Pakistan. Japan's bid is opposed by China and South Korea, while Germany and Brazil also face opposition in their respective regions. 'This is why the Uniting for Consensus group opposes the expansion of permanent membership and advocates only for an increase in the number of temporary members. This clearly demonstrates that reform is not merely a matter of merit, but also of geopolitical competition. The current five permanent members also support reforms tailored to their own strategic interests. None wants changes that would diminish its power or influence. This is why, despite decades of recognition of the need for reform, no concrete progress has been made. This situation also calls into question the credibility of the United Nations. However, it must be understood that simply adding new permanent members will not be a sufficient solution. Transparency, accountability, and democratic representation are also essential to the functioning of the Security Council. Reform will remain incomplete without curbing the abuse of veto power; effective participation of developing countries, and greater balance in the decision-making process. If only members are added and the functioning remains unchanged, the fundamental problems of the Security Council will persist. The world today is not the world of 1945. The center of global power has shifted, the role of developing countries has increased, and the global South no longer seeks to be mere spectators but policy-makers.

May IIP Growth Surges To 5.1% As Power Output Spikes, Manufacturing Stays Strong

India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) growth in March stood at 5.1% in May, bolstered by high electricity and gas production. Notably, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has revised the base year for Index of Industrial Production (IIP) from 2011-12 to 2022-23. This is the second set of data under the revised base year. Manufacturing production increased 5.5% year-on-year, compared with 6.1% month-on-month.

On the other hand, mining production declined 1.6% year-on-year in May, though the contraction narrowed compared with a 3.8% month-on-month decline. Manufacturing production grew 5.5% year-on-year in May Electricity output increased 9.9%, improving significantly from 4.6% in April, while water supply output rose 5.5% against 6.6% month-on-month. The top three positive contributors for



the month of May 2026 under manufacturing were – Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers (14.5%), Manufacture of electrical equipment (20.8%) and Manufacture of basic metals (4.6%). Among use-based sectors, capital goods production remained a key growth driver, rising 12.9% compared with 12% month-on-month, signalling continued strength in investment activity. Consumer

durables output growth accelerated to 7.2% from 5.6% in the previous month, while consumer non-durables production increased 3.6% compared with 0.2% earlier. Primary goods output growth improved to 2.6% from 0.8% month-on-month, whereas intermediate goods production growth moderated to 5.8% from 10.3% in the previous month. Infrastructure goods output rose 5.9%

year-on-year, reflecting steady momentum in core industrial activity. "The Quick Estimate of IIP stands at 122.7 against 116.7 in May 2025. The indices of Industrial Production for Mining & Quarrying, Manufacturing, Electricity & Gas Supply and Water Supply, Sewerage & Waste Management for the month of May 2026 stand at 112.9, 122.6, 129.6 and 145.1 respectively," an official government press release stated.

US Stock Market Today:

Nasdaq Up 1.2% As Big Tech Stocks Jump; Meta, Amazon, Alphabet Gain Over 2%

Wall Street indices recovered from a rocky week as tech shares gained and America and Iran agreed to pause hostilities and let traffic pass through the Strait of Hormuz. S&P 500 opened 0.55% higher at 7,394.38, tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite jumped 0.8% to open at 25,484.94, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average opened 0.35% higher at 52,056.30.

Nasdaq jumped over 1% minutes after the opening bell to trade at 25,586.20 as big tech stocks lifted sentiment. Nvidia shares broke their five-day long losing streak and surged over 1% to \$194.78, whereas Micron Technology extended losses to slide over 4% to \$1,085.65. All was green on the magnificent seven front as Meta Platforms Inc., Amazon.com Inc.,



Google-parent Alphabet and Tesla Inc. gained over 3%. Apple Inc. and Microsoft Corp also rose 0.24% and 1.44% to \$284 and \$378.63, respectively. "We continue to believe strongly that the action in the tech sector will continue to be the main driver in the stock market going forward," Matt

Maley at Miller Tabak told Bloomberg news. Advanced Micro Devices declined sharply after opening in the green by over 1% to \$513.81 and Sandisk Corp. slumped over 5% to \$1,981.

The Dollar Spot Index was little changed, while the euro rose 0.2% to \$1.1405, British pound

rose 0.3% to \$1.3243, and the Japanese yen fell 0.1% to 161.93 per dollar. Oil prices edged higher with Brent crude trading 1.07% up at \$72.76 per barrel and the West Texas Intermediate up 1.37% to \$70.21 per barrel. Bitcoin, the largest traded cryptocurrency, rose 0.8% to \$60,025.57.

Ai+ Smartphone announces next sale of Nova 2 Neo and Nova 2 Pro following complete sell-out during first sale

June 2026: Ai+ Smartphone has announced the next sale of its recently launched Nova 2 Neo and Nova 2 Pro after both smartphones witnessed a complete sell-out during their first sale on Flipkart on June 26. The devices were unveiled on June 22 at India's Got Nova, the brand's flagship launch event hosted by renowned Gadget Guru Rajiv Makhni featuring comedian & Youtuber Samay Raina alongside Madhav Sheth, CEO, Ai+ Smartphone. The event also brought together leading technology creators, reviewers, members of the media and consumers as part of Ai+ Smartphone's Open Review Program, reinforcing the brand's commitment to transparency and community-led product development. The strong consumer response marks another milestone for the growing Nova Series. The next sale of the Nova 2 Neo and Nova 2 Pro will commence on June 30 at 12pm on Flipkart. The Nova 2 Neo and Nova 2 Pro have been developed to cater to a broad spectrum of consumers from first-time 5G smartphone users to those seeking a more performance-oriented everyday smartphone. Combining



dependable hardware with Android 16-based NxtQuantum OS, the devices deliver a clean software experience, reliable performance and long-lasting battery life across their respective price segments. Commenting on the response, Madhav Sheth, CEO, Ai+ Smartphone and Founder, NxtQuantum Shift Technologies, said: "The response to the Nova 2 Neo and Nova 2 Pro has been extremely encouraging. Seeing both devices sell out during their very first sale reinforces our belief that consumers are looking for smartphones that deliver dependable performance, thoughtful design and a clean soft-

ware experience at accessible price points. Earlier this year, the Nova 2 and Nova 2 Ultra also received an exceptional response, and we're pleased to see the Nova Series continue building strong momentum. With the next sale beginning on June 30, we look forward to bringing the Nova experience to many more consumers across the country." The Nova 2 Neo is powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 6300 5G processor and features a 120Hz HD+ display, a 6000mAh battery and Android 16-based NxtQuantum OS. The Nova 2 Pro, powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 7100 processor, offers a 144Hz

FHD+ display. Both the devices have 48MP SonyIMX582 Camera with fast charging and a premium design for users. The successful debut of the Nova 2 Neo and Nova 2 Pro further strengthens the momentum of the Nova Series as Ai+ Smartphone continues to expand its portfolio with products focused on delivering dependable performance, thoughtful design and a clean software experience for a wider range of consumers. About Ai+ Smartphone Ai+ Smartphone is a next-generation brand built in India, delivering reliable and high-performance mobile experiences.

Powered by NxtQuantum OS, India's first sovereign mobile operating system. The brand focuses on delivering a clean design, ensuring long battery life, and maintaining trusted software performance, all while keeping prices accessible without compromising the user experience. From redefining smartphones to pioneering AIoT products as part of the company's Connected Ecosystem, Ai+ Smartphone is creating a new standard for trust, immersive experience, and accessibility. Rooted in a privacy-first architecture and a commitment to equitable access, Ai+ Smartphone stands for more than specs – it stands for India's next era of user-owned, future-ready technology. AboutNxtQuantum Shift Technologies NxtQuantum Shift Technologies is a deep-tech Indian company building secure, sovereign digital platforms for a digital-first world. Founded by Madhav Sheth, the company develops NxtQuantum OS, India's first sovereign operating system, and is committed to building technology that is authored in India and globally competitive.

Asian shares are mixed as tech stocks fall in Japan, South Korea

Hong Kong: Asian markets were mixed on Monday, June 29, as selling of artificial intelligence-related shares pulled benchmarks in Japan and South Korea lower, though gains for other stocks helped offset those losses. US futures advanced and oil prices gained, though they remained close to the levels they were at before the Iran war began in late February.

Tensions between the US and Iran escalated over the weekend as Iran launched fresh drone and missile attacks on Bahrain and Kuwait in response to new US airstrikes, adding to uncertainties clouding the global economic outlook. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 shed 1% to 68,704.70, after falling 4.2% on Friday. SoftBank Group, the multinational investment holding company which invests in OpenAI, sank 5.9% following a 12.5% drop on Friday. South Korea's Kospi lost 2% to 8,246.50. It was down 5.8% on Friday. Samsung Electronics sank 6%, while memory chipmaker SK Hynix fell 4.5%. Taiwan's Taix, also a beneficiary of the global AI boom thanks to its many tech companies including chipmaker TSMC, gained 1.1% as it recovered some losses



from its 3.6% decline on Friday. Japan's and South Korea's markets have soared as many of their Big Tech firms were lifted by demand for computer chips and other high-valued components used in artificial intelligence. Recent worries over AI valuations have trimmed some of those gains. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 2.1% to 23,153.89, while the Shanghai Composite index edged 0.2% higher to 4,034.08. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 0.4% to 8,798.00. India's Sensex was nearly unchanged. On Friday, the worries over AI rolled through Wall Street, though shares ended mixed. The S&P500 lost less than 0.1% to 7,354.02 and the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite dropped 0.2% to 25,297.62. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell

0.1% to 51,876.11. Micron Technology's shares dropped 6.7%, Intel was down 3.4%, Nvidia fell 1.6% and AMD, or Advanced Micro Devices, fell 2.1%. In other dealings early Monday, Brent crude, the international standard, was up 0.7% to \$73.27 a barrel. It sold for about \$72 a barrel before the war began. Benchmark US crude gained 0.8% to \$70.02 a barrel. There's still plenty of risk facing the oil market over on US-Iran re-escalation, ING commodities strategists Warren Patterson and Ewa Manthey said in a commentary Monday, as more questions were raised about the safety of ships in the Strait of Hormuz following attacks on vessels. Oil traders have been "too optimistic" about the timeline for a recovery in Persian Gulf supplies.

MCAP OF 6 OF TOP-10 MOST VALUED FIRMS CLIMBS RS 88,678 CR

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of 6 of the top-10 most valued companies went up by Rs 88,678.1 crore in a holiday-shortened last week, with ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest winner. Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 297.57 points, or 0.38 per cent, and the NSE Nifty went up by 42.9 points, or 0.17 per cent. "Markets ended the holiday-shortened week with modest gains, advancing in three of the four trading sessions. Sentiment remained constructive, supported by easing crude oil prices, improving geopolitical developments in West Asia, and selective buying by foreign institutional investors (FIIs)," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. While Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro were the gainers, Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Life Insurance



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Corporation of India (LIC) and Hindustan Unilever faced erosion from their valuation. The market valuation of ICICI Bank jumped Rs 29,588.75 crore to reach Rs 9,95,610.74 crore, the most among the top-10 firms. HDFC Bank added Rs 24,718.3 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 12,25,981.44 crore. The valuation of Reliance Industries surged Rs 12,043.96 crore to Rs 17,83,926.92 crore and that of Bajaj Finance climbed Rs 11,580.28 crore to Rs

6,10,081.53 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of State Bank of India rallied Rs 9,322.93 crore to Rs 9,64,738 crore, and that of Larsen & Toubro edged higher by Rs 1,423.88 crore to Rs 5,80,550.83 crore. However, the mcap of

Bharti Airtel tumbled Rs 35,615.21 crore to Rs 11,27,348.09 crore. The valuation of LIC eroded by Rs 21,188.74 crore to Rs 5,35,537.56 crore, and that of TCS declined by Rs 11,143.71 crore to Rs 7,58,206.42 crore. The mcap of Hindustan Unilever dipped by Rs 5,321.83 crore to Rs 5,10,624.92 crore. In the ranking of the top-10 most valued firms, Reliance Industries retained the number one rank, followed by HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, TCS, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, LIC and Hindustan Unilever. Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 297.57 points, or 0.38 per cent, and the NSE Nifty went up by 42.9 points, or 0.17 per cent.

HDFC Bank Appoints Ex-Finance Secy Rajiv Kumar As Part-Time Chairman

HDFC Bank has appointed former finance secretary Rajiv Kumar as the part-time Chairman for three years, according to an exchange filing on Monday. The appointment comes after Atanu Chakraborty, the former part-time chairman quit citing practices that he said were not aligned with his personal values and ethics. In his resignation letter he clarified that his decision was based on matters of principle and that there were "no other material reasons" behind his exit, causing a stir in the banking world. Keki Mistry has been serving as the part-time chairman of HDFC Bank in the interim, after being appointed post Chakraborty's abrupt exit in March 2026. Mistry's appointment was always envisaged as a stop-gap arrangement rather than a long-term solution. The chairman's role is expected to remain independent, and Mistry's long association with the HDFC group



could potentially raise conflict-of-interest considerations if the arrangement were to continue indefinitely. Rajiv Kumar: New HDFC Part-Time Chairman, Ex-Finance Secy, Election Commissioner & More Kumar retired as Finance Secretary of India in February 2020. Post retirement Mr Kumar also briefly served as Chairman of Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB). An Ex IAS officer from the 1984-batch, Kumar also played a key role in the 2019 con-

solidation of 10 public sector banks into four, led banking reforms, bank recapitalisation and governance initiatives in the financial sector. Kumar also strengthened governance, risk management, and regulatory oversight across banks by institutionalising specialised monitoring for large exposures and implementing technology-driven risk assessment systems. He placed equal emphasis on depositor protection and financial stability, including enhancing deposit insurance coverage from

Highlights

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Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. Kumar has either sat on or chaired most of the bodies that touch the country's financial architecture including the Central Board of Reserve Bank, the Financial Stability and Development Council, the Financial Sector Regulatory Appointments Search Committee among others. Beyond the financial sector, the new HDFC part-time Chairman has also served as the 25th Chief Election Commissioner of India.

SUPREME COURT REJECTS
TRUMP'S APPEAL OF E
JEAN CARROLL'S SEXUAL
ABUSE CASE



The US Supreme Court will not hear an appeal requested by President Donald Trump to review the civil case that found he defamed and sexually abused writer E Jean Carroll. A New York jury awarded Carroll \$5m (£3.6m) in damages in 2023 over her civil claim that Trump sexually assaulted her in the 1990s, and then branded the incident a hoax on social media. Trump denied the allegations and repeatedly claimed that the judge who oversaw the civil trial improperly allowed evidence to be presented that affected how the jury viewed him. A federal appeals court agreed with the jury's verdict last year and said a new trial was not warranted. Trump then asked the highest court to intervene. The Supreme Court gave no details about their decision not to take up the case, as is customary. It was Trump's final hope of overturning the jury's unanimous verdict and means he will have to pay Carroll the damages she had been awarded. Carroll's attorney, Roberta Kaplan, said in a statement that the Supreme Court's decision "affirms once and for all the jury's unanimous verdict

that President Donald J Trump sexually assaulted and defamed E Jean Carroll". "His multiple efforts to appeal that verdict have all failed and today's ruling ends his quest to avoid accountability for his actions," she added. Carroll's counsel had not previously commented on the president's decision to bring a challenge to the Supreme Court. "The American People stand with President Trump as they demand an immediate end to all of the Witch Hunts, including the Democrat-funded travesty of the Carroll Hoaxes," a spokesman for Trump's legal team told CBS News, the BBC's US news partner. "President Trump will keep winning against Liberal Lawfare, as he continues to focus on his mission to Make America Great Again." In the petition, Trump's lawyers argued Carroll's lawyer should not have let jurors see the 2005 Access Hollywood tape that showed the president saying he groped and kissed women. Trump's comments about the jury's findings in the case led a separate jury to order him to pay Carroll \$83m for defaming her.



■ Pakistani strikes kill dozens in Afghanistan

Man, 21, pulled alive from Venezuelan
rubble after being trapped for 106 hours

The US is pledging more than \$300 million (£227 million) to help Venezuela - an increase from its previous commitment of \$150 million - the State Department says. "These funds will provide emergency medical care, food assistance, water and sanitation, shelter, protection, and logistics," the department says in a statement. "The money is being directed through partner organisations including Samaritan's Purse, Catholic Relief Services, the World Food Programme and the Red Cross. The US has also reopened the Simón Bolívar International Airport in Caracas to help with international relief operations. A US frigate, the USS Fort Lauderdale, is currently positioned off the coast of La



Guaria. Sailors and Marines are using landing and amphibious craft to deliver aid to the most affected coastal areas. Venezuela is located near the boundary of two tectonic plates, the Caribbean plate and the South American plate. Both tectonic plates try to pass over each other and sometimes they get stuck and energy builds up. When they finally

start moving again, enormous amounts of energy are released, making Venezuela prone to earthquakes. The displacement of the Caribbean plate to the east of the South American plate, at a rate of two centimetres per year according to scientists' estimates, explains the seismic movements in the country. Six search dogs from the UK have travelled to

Venezuela and are assisting the UK International Search & Rescue team (UK ISAR), the British government says. The Foreign Office says rescuers are also being supported by the Royal Air Force, with "specialist rescue equipment and drones" being used to support life-saving operations. UK ISAR, which has 68 specialists in the country, says its teams are now working across five different sites, with its search dogs being used to "detect signs of life within collapsed structures". Earlier, West Midlands Fire Service's Mark Leeson, who is in Venezuela as part of the UK-wide team, told the BBC that the window for finding survivors was shrinking, but adds "every now and then you will get that miracle rescue".

Supreme Court blocks
Trump's attempt to
fire Federal Reserve
governor Lisa Cook



The US Supreme Court has blocked President Donald Trump's attempt to fire a governor of the US central bank, in a ruling seen as affirming the Federal Reserve's independence. In a 5-4 decision, justices from the country's top court said the administration had not provided Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook sufficient "due process" for her to contest her removal. The decision sends the matter back to lower courts, where the administration will have to prove its allegations that Cook has committed mortgage fraud if it wishes to proceed with the firing and where Cook would have a chance to challenge the accusation. Cook has denied the allegations, which Fed defenders say are a pretext to allow Trump to assert more control over the bank. By law, a president can only remove governors of the Federal Reserve "for cause". That requirement was intended to shield the bank from political pressure and help ensure it sets policy to serve long-term economic goals, rather than short-term interests. Arguing before the court in January, Cook's lawyer, Paul Clement, said the administration's handling of the firing would make Congress' intended protection for

Highlights
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the Fed "kind of a joke". Trump announced his plan to remove Cook from the Fed in August on social media, citing claims that she had filed mortgage forms claiming two different principal residences at the same time. Banks typically offer lower interest rates for primary homes. Solicitor General John Sauer, who argued the case for the White House, told the court in January that the social media post provided sufficient notice and opportunity to respond. He said the issue, even if inadvertent, amounted to "negligence" that could undermine confidence in the Fed and said the courts should defer to the president's judgement when it comes to finding a cause.

US SAYS IT HAS AGREED TO 'STAND DOWN'
AFTER EXCHANGE OF STRIKES WITH IRAN

The US and Iran have agreed to "stand down" following an exchange of strikes over the past few days, media reports cite a US official as saying. It comes after several attacks in and around the Strait of Hormuz, with both nations accusing each other of violating their ceasefire. The US official told the BBC's US partner CBS News on Sunday that vessels would be able to move through the Gulf waterway "freely", and that talks on a deal to permanently end the war would continue. On Monday, Deputy Iranian Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi denied that there were plans for technical talks this week. But US President Donald Trump said a meeting would be held in Qatar's capital at Iran's request. "IRAN HAS REQUESTED A MEETING. IT WILL TAKE PLACE TOMORROW IN DOHA!" he wrote on Truth Social, without giving any details. Later, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told Fox News that US special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's



son-in-law Jared Kushner "will be flying to Doha for high-level meetings this week, as we continue to discuss the memorandum of understanding". On 17 June, the US and Iran signed a 14-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which included an "immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts". As part of the MoU, Iran agreed to use its "best efforts for the safe passage of commercial vessels with no

charge for 60 days". But the ceasefire agreed less than two weeks ago has been under threat in recent days because of renewed attacks by both sides. Strikes resumed on Thursday after an Iranian projectile hit a cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz. Over the weekend, the US retaliated with a series of strikes on Iran, hitting multiple targets in what US Central Command (Centcom) called a direct response to the "continued aggression" against com-

mercial shipping. On Saturday, Iran responded with strikes on US bases in Kuwait and Bahrain. The US has said none of these attacks reached their targets, and there were no casualties or damage. The Strait of Hormuz is a key waterway for oil and gas shipments, and was effectively closed by Tehran after the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran at the end of February. On Friday, the US also mediated the signing of a frame-

work agreement between Israel and Lebanon aimed at paving the way to a lasting peace. Due to ongoing fighting between Israeli forces and the Iranian-backed armed group Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, that ceasefire also looked shaky. The leader of Hezbollah rejected the agreement and accused the Lebanese government of undermining Lebanon's sovereignty. On Sunday, two days after the agreement was signed, the Israeli army said it had struck a 200m-long tunnel used by Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, which it said contained hundreds of weapons. The US was informed ahead of the attack, according to a statement from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Israel Katz. Tehran says hostilities in Lebanon must stop for a wider ceasefire deal to stick. Representatives from the US are set to meet with their Iranian counterparts in Doha, Qatar, tomorrow, according to a Truth Social

post today from US President Donald Trump. The announcement came after this weekend saw the two sides trade attacks, straining the already fragile ceasefire between them. Here's a look at what else Trump said over the weekend about the conflict: On Friday, the day after the US said that Iran had struck a vessel in the Strait of Hormuz, Trump posted to Truth Social, saying: "Obviously, this is a foolish violation of our Ceasefire Agreement." In a post on Truth Social Saturday, Trump also threatened Iran, saying the US may be forced to use more military action if Tehran continues to launch strikes. "It is very possible that they will never learn!" he wrote. "There may come a point when we are no longer able to be reasonable, and will be forced to militarily complete the job that we very successfully started. If that happens, the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist!" Earlier today, Trump posted about tomorrow's potential US-Iran meeting in Qatar.



Four women and man shot dead at youth welfare centre in northern Germany

DR Congo bans mass gatherings in the
capital to prevent spread of Ebola

Mass gatherings have been banned in the Democratic Republic of Congo capital, Kinshasa, as well as three other areas, in order to halt the spread of Ebola, the interior minister says. The current outbreak of the deadly disease has so far been detected in three provinces in the east - some 1,800 km (1,100) miles from Kinshasa - but the authorities fear it spreading to the city of 18 million people. The three other provinces affected by the ban - Tshopo, Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele - border those where Ebola has been confirmed. Prominent figures from DR Congo's opposition parties have criticised the order, alleging that it has been put in place to stifle a protest march scheduled for 8 July. Prince Epenge,



spokesperson for the opposition Lamuka coalition, said the government's decision was "political", as no cases have been confirmed in Kinshasa. He condemned the order, telling the BBC on Monday: "It is not legitimate. We cannot accept this decision". Rodrigue Ramazani, secretary-general of opposition party Envol, urged protesters to ignore the ban and

attend the march, saying the directive "reeks of a political manoeuvre rather than a public health measure". DR Congo's government has not responded to this criticism. The demonstration was organised by the C64 coalition, an alliance against a proposed law that, critics say, could see President Felix Tshisekedi stay in power beyond his two-term limit.

While no cases have yet been confirmed in Kinshasa, a doctor who has tested positive for Ebola in France, passed through the city as he returned home from one of the towns at the epicentre of the outbreak, where he had been working at an Ebola treatment centre. The day after his test was made public, the Congolese government ordered a 21-day quarantine for travellers going from Ebola-affected areas to other parts of the country. According to the health ministry, the Ebola outbreak is currently confined to three provinces - Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. Mass gatherings have been banned in these regions for weeks. Ituri is by far the worst affected, accounting for more than 90% of infections.

Oppressed, Ignored, Embarrassed: Iran's FIFA World Cup Journey Ends In Chaos

The FIFA World Cup 2026 might not have seen Iran earn a ticket to the knock-outs, but their journey will not be forgotten. Whilst it is normal to see the finalists and other top teams being remembered, Iran's exceptional case under extraordinary circumstances is sure to earn them a spot in fans' memories for a long time. The Asian giants came to the World Cup amidst hostilities between their country and the United States of America, the nation where they were scheduled to play their football. Political tensions back home ensured that Iran's participation in the World Cup remained uncertain until their eventual arrival. Despite the immense political and logistical pressures weighing on the squad, Iran remained competitive until the final moments of the Group G fixtures. In fact, the Asian side did not lose a single group game and remained in the hunt for a spot in the Round



of 32. Whilst their journey in the competition culminated in absolute chaos, the start was driven by pure adrenaline under unprecedented conditions. The 'Oppression And Embarrassment' Iran began their campaign with a 2-2 draw against New Zealand in Los Angeles. However, right after the final whistle, the squad was ordered to leave the United States immediately and fly

back to their base camp in Tijuana, Mexico. The team management and captain Mehdi Taremi blasted the decision, stating they had been denied permission to stay overnight for proper physical recovery. Furthermore, severe visa complications heavily restricted the travel of key team officials, media personnel, and administrative staff, leaving the team func-

tionally isolated without its standard federation support system on US soil. Due to extreme political uncertainty and immigration concerns, Iran had to completely abandon their initial base camp in Tucson, Arizona. They relocated to Tijuana, forcing the squad into exhausting five-hour travel bottlenecks at the border, as all three of their group games were scheduled to be

held on US soil. During official post-match press conferences, FIFA officials also repeatedly tried to stop captain Mehdi Taremi and midfielder Mohammad Mohebi from answering media questions regarding the Iranian team's treatment at the World Cup and the political hurdles they had to face. Taking on Egypt in their final group game, Iran conceded in the fifth minute to Mahmoud Saber, with the goal momentarily pushing the Asian side out of the qualification spots. Ramin Rezaeian scored a brilliant equaliser from a tight angle in the 14th minute. At 1-1, Iran found themselves back in the mix, but they needed a win to guarantee Round of 32 qualification. In intense stoppage time, Iran's Shojae Khalilzadeh fired the ball into the back of the net, sparking wild celebrations on the bench. For a brief moment, Iran had sealed a spot in the knockouts.

India Coach Ends Silence On Decision To Deny Vaibhav Sooryavanshi His T20I Debut

India assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate has declared Vaibhav Sooryavanshi ready for international cricket but also made it clear that the 15-year-old batting sensation will have to go through the same process that other players in the side have followed before being handed their debut. Sooryavanshi's omission from the T20 series against Ireland has become a major talking point after the T20 world champion Indian team ended up being white-washed 0-2, the second loss being by just one run here on Sunday. "He (Sooryavanshi) is absolutely ready to play international cricket, there is no doubt about that but also Sanju Samson is a guy who went a long way to win us the World Cup three months ago," Ten Doeschate said when the inevitable query on Sooryavanshi came up during the post-match press conference. "He has got a fairly good IPL, and it is



important to give players confidence and message to the players, we want to give guys a long run in the team. "We are all excited to see Vaibhav play, but he has to go through the same process, but certainly no question about how good he is," he asserted, echoing a view that was expressed by batting coach Sitanshu Kotak at the beginning of the series. Sooryavanshi finished as the top scorer in this year's IPL with a jaw-dropping strike rate of over 230. He amassed 776 runs to

be adjudged the Most Valuable Player as well as the Emerging Player of the season. The anticipation surrounding his inclusion in the playing XI is expected to grow further as India now head to England for a T20 series beginning July 1 in Chester-le-Street. If he makes his debut during this tour, he will become India's youngest international debutant, surpassing a record held by the great Sachin Tendulkar, who made his debut as a 16-year-old.

In Protecting Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Team India Exposed Its Biggest Flaws

The decision to shield a young prodigy often seems like a masterstroke of man-management. However, India's embarrassing defeats against Ireland in both T20Is have proved that protective parenting in international cricket can sometimes leave the rest of the family looking incredibly vulnerable. By keeping 15-year-old sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi on the bench, the team management didn't just delay a highly anticipated debut, they ended up highlighting structural cracks in India's top-order blueprint. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi arrived in Ireland with the cricketing world at his feet. Having just dismantled bowling attacks of the high-



est order in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season, scoring 776 runs to earn the Orange Cap and breaking Chris Gayle's record for the most sixes in a single season. These numbers made it almost impossible for the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee to keep him off the roster in the shortest format. But, when

the team sheets were handed out for the two T20Is, his name was nowhere to be found. The team management's logic was clear, protect the teenager. The green, damp pitches of Ireland offered significant swing, extra bounce, and seam movement, conditions drastically different from the true, batting-friendly tracks

of the IPL. The decision-makers might have felt that throwing a 15-year-old into the deep waters in these unfamiliar conditions could hurt his confidence. While trying to protect their youngest asset, India instead exposed the technical limitations of their established top three - Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, and Ishan Kishan. India chose to persist with this experienced trio, hoping their recent subcontinent exploits would carry over. Instead, the move backfired, illustrating a harsh truth. Abhishek, Samson, and Ishan have looked virtually unstoppable on true, bouncing, or spin-friendly home wickets where they can hit through the line.

Gautam Gambhir Not Spared After Ireland Loss. Slammed By Iceland Cricket, Sanjay Manjrekar

India head coach Gautam Gambhir has become the critics' favourite punching bag after the national team was swept in the two-match series against Ireland. India, who entered the series as heavy favourites, were beaten in both matches as Ireland completed a white-wash against Shreyas Iyer's men. The nature of the defeat has given critics plenty of ammunition to target the Indian team, from Iyer's elevation as skipper in place of Suryakumar Yadav to the decisions made by head coach Gambhir regarding team selection. As the reigning T20 World Champions suffered a humiliating series loss, Gambhir became the focal point of criticism on social media. Pouncing on



the trend, Iceland Cricket mocked the India head coach on social media, stating they would not want him on their coaching staff given the "results" he achieved in Ireland. "We can confirm that we do not wish to add Gautam Gambhir to our coaching staff. He clearly has talent, though. To take those Indian players and deliver

those results in Ireland takes truly remarkable gifts," Iceland Cricket wrote on X (formerly Twitter). Sanjay Manjrekar, the former India batter, took a more analytical approach to break down the deficiencies in Gambhir's strategy. He argued that India need a pure middle-order batter rather than overloading the team with

Cape Verde Rocked By Rape Allegations Against Captain Days Before FIFA World Cup 2026 Clash vs Argentina

Cape Verde, which has become the biggest underdog story of the FIFA World Cup 2026, will face defending champions Argentina in the Round of 32 on Saturday (IST). However, their inspirational campaign, which has captured the imagination of many, has been rocked by rape allegations against Cape Verde captain Ryan Mendes. The forward, who plays in Turkey, is being investigated by New Zealand police over an alleged rape in an Auckland hotel, according to NZ Herald. "The complainant was working as a FIFA-mandated team support worker, a role defined and overseen by the sport's world governing body," the report stated. Another news report by Globo, of Brazil, stated Mendes is accused of



allegedly sexually assaulting the woman-a Brazilian-who worked as a translator with the team in New Zealand during a FIFA series tournament in March this year. The publication stated that the woman alleged Mendes entered her room and sexually assaulted her. After the alleged incident, she underwent a sexual assault examination. The woman also reportedly

informed three Cape Verde officials about the incident. In a statement to USA TODAY, FIFA said it takes "any allegation of misconduct" seriously and was in contact with New Zealand authorities. "Please understand we cannot comment further at this stage," the statement said. The Cape Verde team did not respond to a request, the publication added.

Did Broadcaster Blur South Korea Coach's Face After World Cup Fiasco?

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup expanded to 48 teams, Asian giants South Korea were widely expected to go far in the tournament. However, the national team failed to progress past the group stage after missing out on a spot among the eight best third-placed teams. South Korea's elimination was confirmed following a decisive defeat to South Africa in their final group-stage game. As the team bowed out of the tournament, a video went viral on social media from head coach Hong Myung-bo's press conference, showing South Korea's flagship public broadcaster KBS blurring his face. The video showed Hong, addressing the media after the game, had his face blurred. It was also reported that KBS visited



the team's hotel in Monterrey to investigate whether their accommodation played a role in the poor showing against South Africa in their final group-stage match. However, the video seems to be fake as no such act of Hong's face being blurred was seen in the original broadcast video. Hong became the primary target of criticism after the South Korean team failed to secure a spot in the Round

of 32. The 57-year-old decided to resign after the team's swift elimination drew harsh condemnation from the country's president, Lee Jae-myung, who called the coach "incapable" and ordered a complete review of the national team programme. South Korea had won their opening match against the Czech Republic before losing their subsequent two Group A matches to South Africa and Mexico.

New Zealand Thrash England In 3rd Test To Deny Ben Stokes A Fairytale Finish



An injury-hit New Zealand overwhelmed England by 160 runs in the third Test at Trent Bridge on Monday as Ben Stokes's last match in international cricket ended with a thumping defeat. Victory meant New Zealand won a three-match campaign 2-1 - just their fourth series success in England in 20 attempts and only the second time they had triumphed after being 1-0 down following their 1999 success in England. This was also England's seventh defeat in nine Tests and a first series loss at home in three or more Tests since 2012. The Test was upstaged by England captain Stokes dramatically announcing his retirement from international duty on Sunday. The 35-year-old all-rounder said he felt "burnt out" after

four years as England skipper, although Stokes added he would continue to play for county side Durham. His decision came after he had returned to England action after being omitted from a crushing 253-run defeat in the second Test, having broken a midnight curfew following the hosts' win in the series opener. "It would have been great to go out with a series win, that's in a perfect world," Stokes told the BBC. "But I'm very happy with what I've managed to achieve as a player and a captain. "There's quite a few emotions knowing you're not going to be doing this anymore." New Zealand's win was just reward for their professional application, the Black Caps outplaying England in all departments in Nottingham.

Neymar Loves Facing Japan. The Numbers Behind Brazil Star's Incredible Record

For most footballers, a Round of 32 tie is just another knockout game. For Neymar, it's a reunion with his favourite opponent. As Brazil prepare to face Japan at the FIFA World Cup 2026, all eyes will once again be on the Selecao's record goalscorer, whose extraordinary record against the Asian giants borders on unbelievable. Nine goals. Five matches. No country has conceded more international goals to Neymar than Japan. In fact, he has scored more against them than he has managed against Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador or the United States.

The timing could hardly be better for Brazil. The 34-year-old only recently returned to the national team after an absence of nearly 1,000 days, making his first World Cup appearance of the tournament in Brazil's comfortable 3-0 win over Scotland. Now comes an opponent that has repeatedly brought out the very best in him. Japan have witnessed almost every version of Neymar's evolution. They faced the teenage Santos sensation in 2012, the newly-crowned Confederations Cup superstar in 2013, the Barcelona magician who

scored four goals in a single match in 2014, and later the experienced Paris Saint-Germain forward who continued finding the net against them in both 2017 and 2022. His four-goal demolition of Japan in Singapore remains one of the finest individual performances of his international career, while his spectacular volley in the 2013 Confederations Cup clash was later voted the greatest goal he scored for Brazil. Across 129 international appearances, Neymar has rewritten Brazil's record books, overtaking Pele to

become the country's all-time leading scorer with 79 goals. This World Cup also places him in elite company, alongside Pele, Ronaldo and Cafu as one of only four Brazilians to feature at four FIFA World Cups. History, though, offers Brazil one more reason to smile ahead of the knockout clash. Whenever Neymar has lined up against Japan, goals have almost always followed. With nine already to his name against the Samurai Blue, Brazil will hope their returning superstar has saved another big performance for the stage that matters most.



My Dream Came True, Everyone Is Wishing for the Success of Makutam: Hero Vishal at the Launch of the 'Nachchaake Vachera' Song

Makutam, starring and directed by Vishal, is the 99th production of the Super Good Films banner. Produced by the late RB Choudary, the film features Anjali and Dushara Vijayan as the female leads. The teaser and the first single, The Rise of Linga, received an excellent response from audiences. The makers unveiled the second single, Nachchaake Vachera, on Sunday (June 28). Speaking at the song launch event, the cast and crew shared their excitement about the film. *Vishal said:* "I am delighted to greet Telugu audiences with Makutam. This time, I am coming before them not just as an actor, but also as a director. Ever since I watched Shiva, I dreamt of becoming a director, and that dream has finally come true. Today, I deeply miss RB Choudary sir. He entrusted me with the responsibility of his 99th production. Due to unavoidable circumstances, I had to step into the director's chair,



and I hope I have lived up to the faith he placed in me. I am the 45th director to emerge from his prestigious banner. It is because of Subrahmanyam sir's trust in me that Makutam has reached this stage. For the past one year, I have set aside my personal life to focus entirely on this film. Sai Dhanshika stood by me throughout this journey

with immense support. The song Linga became a big hit, and GV Prakash took a risk by making me sing it," he joked. "Prabha has rendered Nachchaake Vachera beautifully. Every song she has sung has become a blockbuster. This is my directorial debut, and I sincerely thank every artist who believed in me and stood by me during this journey. I

have incorporated everything I learned from the directors I have worked with over the years. I have given my very best to this film. I don't want to speak much about it now—the audience will speak after watching it. My father, GK Reddy, is the reason I am standing here today. He insisted on releasing Pandem Kodi in Telugu, and

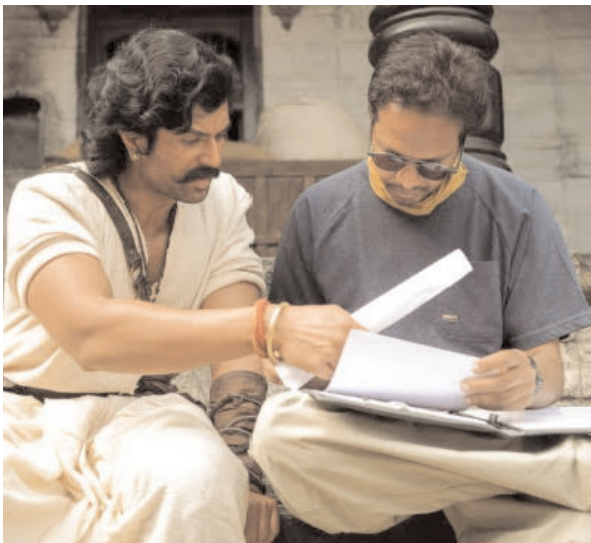
since then, Telugu audiences have continued to shower me with love. Now, I am coming before you as a director as well. I would like to thank Arjun sir and RGV sir, who inspired me immensely. In the last 22 years, I have acted in 35 films. I am grateful to the audiences who have supported me throughout this journey.

Wishing director Rahul Sankrityan on his birthday, actor Vijay Deverakonda shared heartfelt wishes for the filmmaker of the upcoming pan-India film Ranabaali

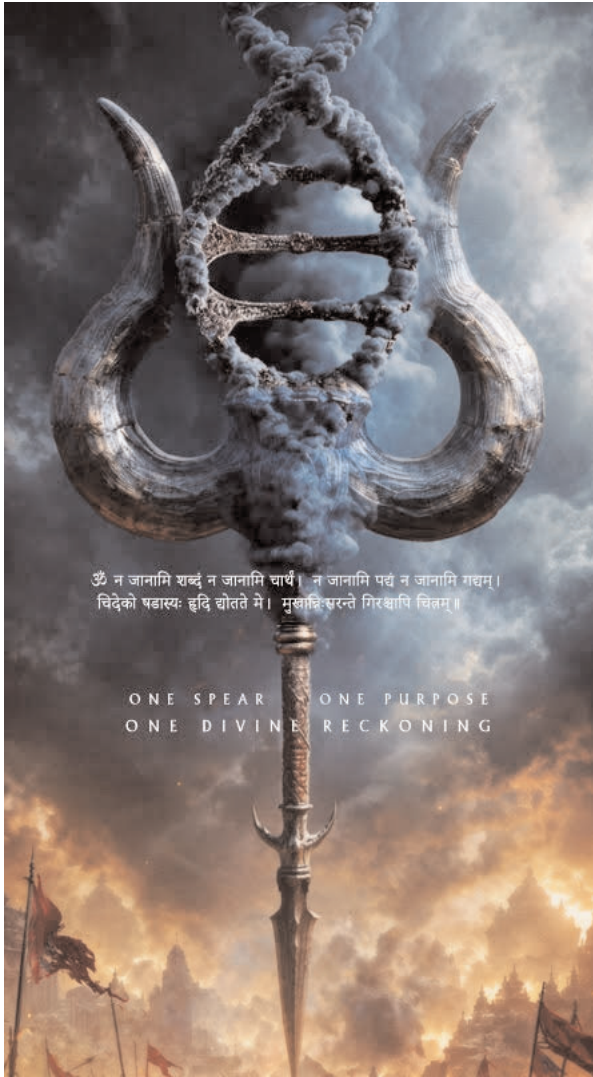
"Ranabaali" is being directed by Rahul Sankrityan and produced on a massive scale by Naveen Yerneni and Y. Ravi Shankar under the Mythri Movie Makers banner, presented by T-Series. Set against the backdrop of the 19th century, the film is based on real historical events that took place between 1854 and 1878 during British rule. The film is scheduled for a grand worldwide release on

September 11. On the occasion of Rahul Sankrityan's birthday, Vijay Deverakonda expressed his wishes through a social media post. He recalled that it has been nine years since they worked together on "Taxiwaala," noting how both of them have evolved over time. He appreciated Rahul's continued passion for telling meaningful stories and his dedication to presenting them beautifully

on screen. Vijay mentioned that although they have worked on only two films together, they have faced many struggles and also received immense love from audiences for their first collaboration. He expressed hope that "Ranabali" will bring them another success, wished Rahul all the best, and said he is happy to be a part of the film and is eagerly waiting for audiences to watch it.



NTR & TRIVIKRAM SRINIVAS REUNITE FOR A GRAND DIVINE CINEMATIC SPECTACLE



Raghava, the celebrated actor-director duo is set to embark on an extraordinary cinematic journey. Conceived on a grand scale and rooted in divinity, the film promises a powerful blend of mythology-inspired storytelling, intense emotions, breathtaking action and spectacular world building. The project brings together an exceptional creative team. Acclaimed Music composer Anirudh Ravichander comes on board to create a massive musical experience adding another exciting dimension to this magnum opus. The film will be jointly produced by S. Radha Krishna (China Babu) under the prestigious Haarika & Hassine Creations banner and Nandamuri Kalyan Ram under NTR Arts. With one of Telugu cinema's most successful actor-director collaborations joining hands once again backed by two powerhouse production houses, the film is set to become one of the biggest cinematic spectacles ever mounted. Further details regarding the cast, technical crew and production schedule will be announced soon.

The wait is finally over. After years of anticipation and countless conversations among fans, Man of Masses NTR and visionary filmmaker Trivikram Srinivas officially reunite for one of the most awaited films in Indian cinema. Following the blockbuster success of Aravinda Sametha Veera

NABHA NATESH: MY ROLE IN 'NAGABANDHAM' WILL SURPRISE EVERYONE



I have played a strong character in

Nagabandham that I have never played before. The film will be a visual wonder. The audience will definitely be surprised: Heroine Nabha Natesh Virat Karna is the hero of the epic adventure thriller 'Nagabandham' - The Secret Treasure' directed by Abhishek Nama. Kishore Annapureddy and Nishitha Nagi Reddy have produced this film on a huge budget under the banner of Nick Studios. The film stars Nabha Natesh, Aishwarya Menen, Jagapathi Babu, Mahesh Manjrekar, Rishabh Sawhney and other key roles. The promotional content that has already been released has created a sensation across the country. The film will be released worldwide on July 3. On this occasion, heroine Nabha Natesh shared the features of the

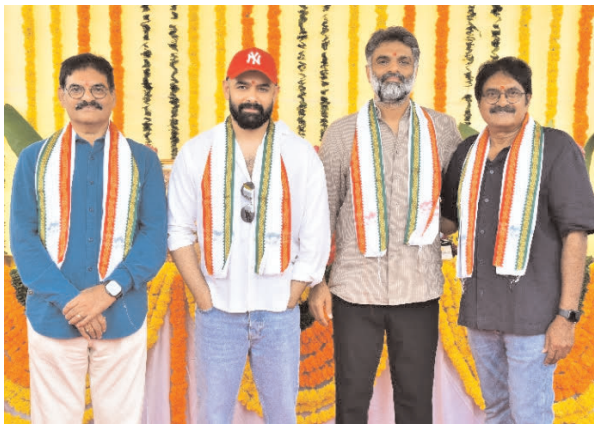
film in a press conference. **What is your role going to be in Nagabandha?**

-I have not played a role like this before. In this, I will be seen in the role of Parvati. She is a Vedic student. Her character will be very strong emotionally. She is a personality who will stand up for her family and love at any cost. My role in the story will be very crucial. Every decision Parvati takes will affect the story. The audience will definitely be surprised by my character.

There's a very grandly filmed dance number in this... Tell me about it?

-It was a truly amazing experience to do that song. The song was choreographed by master Ganesh Acharya with around 5,000 dancers. It also includes classical dance. The song really looks amazing on the big screen.

RAM POTHINENI LAUNCHES AMBITIOUS #RAPO23



Energetic Star Ram Pothineni's Most Ambitious Project #RAPO23. Produced By Krishna Pothineni On Rapo Cinematics. Launched Grandly With Pooja Ceremony; Regular Shoot Commences Energetic Star Ram Pothineni has finally begun his most ambitious project, #RAPO23, which reflects years of imagination, passion, and meticulous planning. Marking his directorial debut, the film is produced by Krishna Pothineni under the

newly established Rapo Cinematics banner on a massive scale, and this is the highest budgeted movie for Ram. The project was launched on a grand note today with a traditional pooja ceremony. Producer Krishna Pothineni ceremoniously handed over the script to Ram Pothineni. For the auspicious muhurtham shot on God's portrait, P Murali Mohan switched on the camera, while PV Ravi Kishore sounded the clapboard. Marking the beginning of his

filmmaking journey, Ram Pothineni directed the first shot himself. The film's regular shoot also commenced today at the outskirts of Hyderabad. Ram Pothineni has joined the shoot as the lead actor and is participating alongside the film's prominent cast. What makes #RAPO23 truly special is that it is driven by an original story conceived and written by Ram himself. He has envisioned it as a one-of-its-kind psychological action thriller set against an intense neo-noir backdrop. The story explores unexplored themes through gripping character arcs, making it one of the most distinctive concepts attempted in Telugu cinema. Apart from directing and writing the film, Ram also plays the lead role, taking on one of the most demanding performances of his career. His dual responsibility behind and in front of the camera underlines the scale of his commitment to bringing this unique vision to life.

Kalyanam Kamaniyam jeevitham movie poster unveiled by famous writer Vijayendra Prasad



Under the banner of Vivifi Media Film Factory, Khan Durani and Sahithi Avancha are the heroines under the direction of Ravi Lokireddy and Paila Prasad Rao Kishore Gundala is jointly producing the film Kalyanam Kamaniyam jee-

vitham. The first look poster of this movie was unveiled by famous writer Vijayendra Prasad. The makers are preparing for the release of this film, which has completed the post-production work. Rajvanshi is releasing this movie in Telugu states. On

this occasion, famous writer Vijayendra Prasad said: The title is very good. I was very impressed when I was told about the royal title. The producers have made a good effort. The director's vision is evident from the poster. All the best to the film team for the hero and heroine Producer Paila Prasad Rao said: I am happy to launch our poster as soon as Vijayendra Prasad asked. I am grateful to him. When the director told the story, I felt that this film must be made. He said that he made the film as the director said and everyone will definitely like the film Another producer Kishore Gundala said that Panworld star writer Vijayendra Prasad is very happy to unveil the poster and give blessings to the team. Director Ravi Lokireddy said: Vijayendra Prasad unveiled our poster and I am so happy that our movie has become a success. Thanks to the producers who believed in my story and gave me a chance.

RK Goud, Deeksha Team Stage Mega Protest at Film Chamber Demanding Reduction of Digital Charges



A massive protest was staged by RK Goud and the team of Deeksha at the Hyderabad Film Chamber, demanding a reduction in digital charges and an end to the hardships faced by small-budget films. The team alleged that small films are struggling to secure theatrical releases

and that the Virtual Print Fee (VPF) charged by digital content service providers such as Qube, UFO and PXD has become an unbearable financial burden. They appealed to both the government and industry leaders to intervene and protect the survival of small-budget cinema.

When the Bell of Dharma Rings, Someone Must Pay: Telugu ZEE5 Unveils the Trailer of 'Veerabhadruni Rahasyam – From the World of Marmadesam', set to premiere on July 3



A cult mystery phenomenon that captivated television audiences in the 1990s and continues to be celebrated as one of the highest-rated Telugu series on IMDb is returning for a new generation of viewers. The mysteries of Marmadesam are back with greater intensity, and this time, every ring of the temple bell carries the weight of judgment. Telugu ZEE5 has unveiled the gripping official trailer of its upcoming Original series, Veerabhadruni Rahasyam – From the World of Marmadesam, offering audiences an intriguing glimpse into a world where

unwavering faith, ancient traditions, and hidden truths collide. Set to premiere on July 3, the series promises a suspense-filled journey that blurs the line between divine justice and human deception. The trailer immediately establishes the show's central conflict by contrasting rational thought with unquestioned belief. As philosophical questions about science, creation, and God give way to the deeply rooted traditions of Veerabhadrapuram, viewers are introduced to a village where Veerabhadra Swamy is believed to personally punish anyone who commits a crime.