



PINARAYI SLAMS REVANTH OVER 'HITLER INSPIRATION' REMARK ON HYDRAA

NATION PAGE

IRANIAN MILITARY SAYS IT'S STOPPING STRIKES ON ISRAEL, BUT WILL RESUME IF ISRAEL ATTACKS LEBANON

WORLD | NEWS

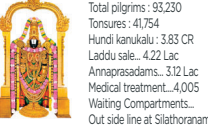


KAJAL CHOOSES LOVE OVER CONTROVERSY FOR SOUTH CINEMA

CINEMA | PAGE

SCAN FOR
E-PAPEROM NAMO
VENKATESAYA

07-06-2026

Approx. Darshan Time for Sarvadarshanam
(with out SSD Tokens) - 20-24 H

Internet suspended as Jaipur launches major anti-encroachment drive

Jaipur (TSIT): Internet services were suspended and more than 3,000 police personnel deployed across Jaipur on Monday as the Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) launched a large-scale anti-encroachment drive in the city's Jagatpura area.

The operation is part of a long-pending road-widening project on Nandpur Road, where authorities aim to expand a 1.5-km stretch running parallel to the railway line from its existing width of around 25-30 feet to the sanctioned width of 80 feet.

The Jaipur district administration said mobile internet services were temporarily suspended as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of rumours and inflammatory content on social media that could affect law and order during the demolition exercise.

The drive includes the removal of five religious structures located within the proposed road alignment, including a mosque, two temples, a satsang hall and a mazar. Officials said the structures had been obstructing the road-widening project for several years. Notices were issued well in advance, and occupants were given sufficient time to voluntarily remove the constructions before direct action was initiated.

8 candidates file nominations for seven K'taka MLC seats

BENGALURU (TSIT).

A total of eight candidates have filed nominations for the seven Karnataka Legislative Council seats from the MLAs' quota, setting up a closely-watched contest that will reflect the current strength of parties in the State Assembly. According to the Election Commission schedule, polling will be held on June 18, with counting beginning the same evening. The entire election process will be completed by June 20. The last date for withdrawal of nominations is June 11, while scrutiny will be held on June 9.

The seven seats will fall vacant upon the retirement of members, including Govinda Raju, Naseer Ahmed, N Nagaraju (MTB), K Prathap Simha Nayak, Tippannappa, Sunil Vallyapur and BK Hariprasad, whose terms end on June 30.

Sources said the ruling Congress, which holds a numerical advantage in the Assembly, is confident of securing a majority of the seats. However, the presence



of an extra candidate has introduced uncertainty over the final distribution, raising the possibility of a tight contest for the last berth depending on cross-voting and party discipline.

The Opposition BJP, which has fielded candidates as part of its strategy to consolidate its presence in the Upper House, is also banking on support from its alliance arithmetic. The Janata Dal (Secular) has also entered the fray with a surprise nomination, adding a fresh political dimension

to the contest and setting up a potential triangular contest in select voting rounds.

The elections are being seen as politically significant as they will determine the composition of the Upper House at a time when key legislative decisions are pending in the State.

Political observers say the outcome will be an important indicator of cohesion within party ranks, especially in a secret ballot system where cross-voting often plays a decisive role.

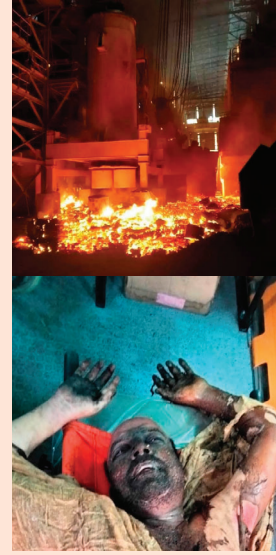
Tragedy at Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

8 Workers Killed as Molten Steel Spills; Several Others Seriously Injured

THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES,
VISAKHAPATNAM.

A major industrial accident at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant on Monday evening claimed the lives of eight workers and left six others seriously injured. The mishap occurred in the Steel Melting Shop (SMS) when a massive ladle carrying molten steel reportedly exploded, causing metal heated to nearly 1,600 degrees Celsius to spill onto workers. Eight workers died on the spot, while six others sustained severe burn injuries and are undergoing treatment in hospitals.

According to preliminary information, the accident took place during production operations in the Continuous Casting Department of the Steel Melting Shop. A ladle carrying hundreds of tonnes of molten steel reportedly collapsed due to a technical failure, causing the red-hot metal to spread across the shop floor. Workers on duty at the time were caught in the blaze, resulting



in heavy casualties. Following the incident, plant safety personnel and fire service teams rushed to the spot and launched rescue operations. The injured workers were initially shifted to the Steel Plant General Hospital and later moved to specialized hospitals in the city for advanced treatment. Doctors said the condition of several injured workers remains critical.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed deep grief over the tragedy and announced an ex gratia of Rs.2 lakh each for the families of the deceased and Rs.50,000 each for the injured. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu also expressed shock and sorrow over the incident and directed officials to ensure the best possible medical treatment for the injured. He also ordered a comprehensive inquiry into the cause of the accident.

Meanwhile, workers' unions have expressed serious concern over the incident, alleging that lapses in safety standards and inadequate maintenance were responsible for the mishap. They demanded adequate compensation for the families of the deceased and employment opportunities for their family members. Authorities have temporarily suspended operations in the affected section, and an investigation into the incident is underway.

Iran retaliates, fires missiles at Israeli airbases after attacks on Tehran



TEHRAN/TEL AVIV:

The Middle East edged closer to a wider regional conflict on Monday as Iran launched missiles at Israel in retaliation for Israeli strikes on Iranian territory, defying diplomatic efforts by US President Donald Trump to contain the crisis. The exchange of attacks has raised fresh concerns that months of fragile diplomacy is in tatters as fresh military confrontation is underway.

The escalation came after Trump reportedly told Netanyahu that "it's enough" and urged him not to retaliate immediately following Iran's missile attack on Sunday night.

It was the first direct exchange of strikes between Israel and Iran since a ceasefire halted the US-Israel war with Iran in April. Iran's attack followed earlier Israeli strikes on Beirut's southern suburb of Dahiyah.

The latest exchange of attacks threatens to deepen tensions across the region and comes after Trump spoke with Netanyahu, urging him not to respond immediately to Iran's missile barrage. According to media reports, Trump declared, "I call all the shots," suggesting that Netanyahu should refer to Washington's diplomatic efforts. Iranian state media reported explosions in Tehran, Isfahan, Karaj, and Tabriz.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards claimed that Israel used air-launched ballistic missiles during the attack. Iran subsequently closed the airspace around Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport, the country's main international gateway.

INDIA BLOC MEETING:

Opp leaders decide to write to CJI on SIR, SEEK PRADHAN'S RESIGNATION

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Leaders of 25 opposition parties met here on Monday and decided to send a letter to the chief justice of India on the SIR and the "vote loot" issue, besides demanding the immediate resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET-CBSE exams row. One killed, six injured as BEST electric bus crashes into multiple vehicles in Mumbai

Addressing a press conference after the INDIA bloc meeting here, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said the leaders also demanded that the Union government convenes an all-party



meeting to discuss the "precarious current economic situation" in the country, besides unemployment, price rise,

issues of farmers and oppressed sections of society. He said the leaders of the opposition grouping also decided to meet every

two months and the next meeting would be held in Hyderabad in August. He said the date would be fixed at a later date

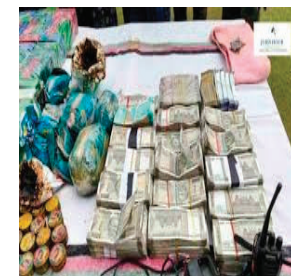
ED conducts raids in Rs 142-cr cross-border drug money laundering case

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Aizawl Sub-Zonal Office, is conducting searches at four locations along the Mizoram-Myanmar border, the Tripura-Bangladesh border, and in West Bengal in connection with a money laundering case on Monday.

The ED case is based on a case registered by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Agartala Zonal Unit, involving the seizure of 49.101 kg of methamphetamine and 40 grams of heroin in Tripura on August 21, 2025.

The locations searched in Tripura are situated just 200 metres from the Bangladesh border, while the location in Mizoram is approximately 500 metres from the Myanmar border. The investigation has



revealed the existence of an organised cross-border syndicate that sourced methamphetamine from Myanmar through the Champhai-Zokhawthar sector of Mizoram and supplied it to receivers in Tripura.

The proceeds of crime were allegedly layered through multiple bank accounts and shell entities. According to the ED, proceeds of crime amounting to more than Rs 142 crore have been identified so far. Search operations are currently underway.

AP tailoring skill program trains 60,000 women, Targets 2 lakh beneficiaries

AMARAVATI (TSIT):

The Andhra Pradesh Government has successfully trained more than 60,000 women from Backward Classes (BC) and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) under a major tailoring skill development initiative aimed at promoting self-employment and economic empowerment.

Implemented through the Andhra Pradesh BC Financial Corporation in coordination with various EWS Corporations, the program equips women with industry-relevant tailoring and garment-making skills, helping them build sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The initiative follows a structured 360-hour training curriculum covering



tailoring techniques, garment construction, machine operations, and entrepreneurship development. Participants who complete the training and meet attendance requirements undergo assessments aligned with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) standards and receive certification upon successful completion.

To support self-employment, eligible trainees are provided sewing machines and toolkits, enabling them to start tailoring services, boutique businesses, garment production units, and other income-generating ventures.

According to official estimates, trained beneficiaries have the potential to earn monthly incomes

exceeding Rs.20,000 through tailoring and related entrepreneurial activities.

The State Government has set a target of training 2 lakh women over the next three years, focusing on enhancing skills, financial independence, and women-led entrepreneurship across Andhra Pradesh.

Officials said the initiative reflects the Government's commitment to creating sustainable livelihood opportunities and strengthening the economic participation of women from BC and EWS communities. The program is being expanded across districts as part of the State's broader efforts to promote skill development and inclusive economic growth.

32 killed, buildings damaged, schools suspended after strong quake in Philippines

MANILA (TSIT)

At least 32 people were killed, numerous buildings damaged, and schools and flights were suspended after a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck Sarangani province in the southern Philippines on Monday morning, according to local authorities. Multiple countries had issued tsunami warnings, which were later lifted.

Junie Castillo, spokesperson for the Philippines' Office of Civil Defence, said 10 victims were reported in South Cotabato's General Santos, a port city with a population of over 700,000, and at least 12 people remain missing so far. The deaths were caused by falling debris, building collapse and landslides. The Philippine National Police



earlier said that no fewer than 134 people were injured, Xinhua news agency reported.

A two-storey school building in General Santos collapsed with students trapped inside, and authorities said they are verifying details of the incident. Online videos show university and restaurant buildings collapsed in disaster-hit areas. Some commercial facilities sustained structural damage,

with signs falling and window panes shattered. Local residents rushed outdoors to seek safety. The powerful earthquake hit shortly after schools across the Philippines started reopening following the summer break. Surveillance footage from several schools captured violent shaking during the quake. Teachers and students either evacuated urgently or took shelter under desks.

Sensex falls 719 points, Nifty drops over 1 pc as West Asia tensions spike

MUMBAI (TSIT):

Indian equity markets ended sharply lower on Monday as escalating tensions in West Asia triggered a risk-off sentiment across global markets, leading to a sell-off in domestic equities amid a



spike in crude oil prices. The benchmark index Sensex declined 719.08 points, or 0.97 per cent, to close at 73,524.26, tracking weakness in global equities and rising geopolitical uncertainty. Similarly, the 50-share Nifty index fell 243.70 points, or 1.04 per cent, to settle at 23,123.

Pinarayi slams Revanth over 'Hitler inspiration' remark on HYDRAA



Thiruvananthapuram, Jun 8: Former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday criticised Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy over his remarks linking the name of the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) to Adolf Hitler. In a post on Facebook, Vijayan described Reddy's statement as shocking and an insult to democratic society. "The Chief Minister of a democratic country said on the stage that Hydra was Hitler's favourite word and that his inspiration is a system capable of killing anyone like them. It is a shame that the Congress party has a Chief Minister who openly worships the biggest fascist the world has ever seen," Vijayan wrote.

He further alleged that it was unfortunate for the Congress to have a chief minister who appeared to glorify a fascist figure. The controversy stems from remarks made by Revanth Reddy during an event in Bengaluru on Saturday. While explaining the rationale behind establishing HYDRAA, he said he decided to create the agency after observing widespread encroach-

ments of lakes, nalas and other water bodies in Hyderabad. Speaking about the name, Reddy said, "Hydra was Hitler's favourite word. His core team, which can assassinate anyone, was called Hydra. So, I have taken inspiration from Hitler, and I have named it HYDRAA." He added that the agency, headed by a senior IPS officer, was tasked with protecting public assets and removing illegal encroachments. The Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency was established by the Telangana government in July 2024 to safeguard government lands, lakes and other public assets from encroachments and illegal activities. Since its formation, the agency has carried out several operations against alleged encroachments and demolished a number of structures said to have been built illegally. The remarks have triggered political reactions, with opposition leaders questioning the Telangana Chief Minister's reference to Hitler while explaining the agency's name and purpose.

Modi highlights poor welfare as NDA marks 12 years in power

New Delhi, Jun 8: A day after the NDA government completed 12 years in office, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday highlighted the government's achievements, saying the welfare of the poor and underprivileged had remained at the centre of its development agenda.

Reflecting on the journey since 2014, Modi said India had witnessed significant transformation over the past 12 years, guided by the principle of Antyodaya and a commitment to ensuring that the benefits of development reached those who had remained on the margins for decades.

"Over the last 12 years, India has witnessed remarkable change, and at the core of these developments has been the wel-



fare of the poor and the underprivileged. Inspired by the principle of Antyodaya, our constant endeavour has been to ensure that the benefits of development

reach those who had been left behind for decades," the Prime Minister said.

He noted that flagship initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri

Jan Dhan Yojana, Direct Benefit Transfer programme, Swachh Bharat Mission, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission and Ayushman Bharat were launched to provide dignity, opportunity and a better quality of life to citizens. In a post on social media platform X, Modi said technology had played a crucial role in improving the delivery of welfare benefits.

"It is also gladdening that technology has played a vital role in ensuring a better quality of life for the poor. Through Direct Benefit Transfer and digital platforms, support is reaching people directly and transparently. This has reduced leakages, improved efficiency and strengthened trust in govern-

ance," he said.

The Prime Minister added that the government's efforts towards Garib Kalyan had evolved into a broader movement focused on human empowerment and the vision of a developed India.

The BJP and its NDA allies marked the completion of 12 years of the Modi government under the theme "Garib Kalyan", using the hashtag #12YearsOfGaribKalyan on social media. A government publication released on the occasion stated that welfare of the poor had remained a key priority of the Centre over the past 12 years and described the approach as one based on genuine empowerment rather than appeasement.

CM inaugurates Bachupally flyover, launches Rs. 321 crore road projects

Hyderabad, June 8: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday inaugurated the Bachupally Flyover and laid the foundation stone for major infrastructure projects aimed at improving connectivity and easing traffic congestion in Hyderabad's western corridor.

Constructed by HMDA at a cost of Rs.65.53 crore, the 1.30-km-long Bachupally Flyover has been built at Bachupally X Roads to facilitate smooth traffic movement between Miyapur and Gandimaisamma. The four-lane flyover, along with slip roads, is expected to reduce travel time, improve road safety and enhance connec-



tivity in the rapidly growing area. The Chief Minister also launched the proposed construction of major bridges across the Musi River near ORR Exit No. 18A. The Rs.229-crore project includes service roads on both sides of the Outer Ring Road and a

new service road connecting the interchange to Narsingi Ring Road. The project aims to address flooding, traffic congestion and connectivity issues while ensuring all-weather access to Narsingi, Kokapet and the Financial District.

The vitality of press values was the lifeblood of that time

Hyderabad, June 8, TSIT: Jivagadda daily published in 1985 from Karimnagar under the editorship of B. Vijayakumar has been hailed by several speakers as the dynamism of journalistic values.

A meeting of Jivagadda Mitra was held under the chairmanship of Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani, Vice-Chancellor of Dr. BR Ambedkar Sarvathrika University at Somajiguda Press Club, Hyderabad on Sunday evening, June 7.

Jivagadda has worked together for 41 years before this meeting the friends met with emotion. Telangana Legislative Council Deputy Chairman Banda Prakash, who was the chief guest in the meeting, said that Jivagadda is a newspaper with high values in the history of Telugu press. The founder of that magazine, B. Vijay Kumar, started the magazine after facing many difficulties with a social perspective.

He said that the journalists who worked in it were trained with the best personalities in various fields. Journalists of this generation should study Vijay Kumar.

His friends said that whatever programme is done by him, his cooperation will be there.

Another guest in the programme, the editor of the press, Tankashala Ashok, said that Vijay Kumar had run a literary magazine called 'Vidyullatha' before Jivagadda and had published a collection of poems called March, which was banned by the government.

He said that Jivagadda magazine came after that. Devulapalli Amar, editor of 'Mana Telangana' magazine, said that Vijay Kumar was a friend of Jivagadda



from before and shared his memories that during his four years of working in Karimnagar, he had seen Jivagadda who faced hardships.

Jivagadda Editor Vijay Kumar Sahachari Sabita and KN Chari Sahachari who worked as Jivagadda news editor gave suggestions in the meeting. The arrival reminded everyone of the old days. In the meeting, senior journalists Avunuri Sammaiah along with Pittala Ravinder, who took up journalism career in Jivagadda in the early days, YS Sharma, Elagandala Ravinder, Annavaram Devender, Manda Bhimreddy, Immadi Sampath Kumar,

Podishetti Venkatarajam and Rahul participated and gave a speech recalling their experiences and connections.

He said that the statue of Vijay Kumar should be installed at a suitable place in Karimnagar.

He said that Jivagadda is a center of consciousness and with its spirit, they are sustaining themselves in different fields and creatively folding their lives.

To keep the soil alive it was planned to organize spiritual gatherings in Karimnagar and Huzurabad.

3. Resolutions were

World Brain Tumor Day: From Silent Symptoms to Scarless Treatment

Dr. Subodh Raju, Director & HOD, Neurosurgery, AIG Hospitals group

Hyderabad: Every year, World Brain Tumor Day observed on 8th June reminds us that early recognition, timely diagnosis, and advanced treatment are paramount for management of brain tumors. In India, the burden of brain and central nervous system tumors is steadily becoming more visible. According to GLOBOCAN 2022 estimates, India recorded over 32,000 new brain and CNS cancer cases and nearly 28,000 related deaths, making this an important public health concern. The overall cancer burden in India is also projected to rise significantly in the coming years, which makes awareness and access to specialized care even more critical. Brain

tumors can affect people across all age groups. They may be benign or malignant, slow-growing or aggressive, but even a benign tumor can become dangerous if it presses on critical areas of the brain. The challenge is that early symptoms are often ignored or mistaken for stress, migraine, ageing, or lifestyle-related fatigue.

There are certain red flags that should never be ignored. A headache that is new, persistent, worsening over time, or more severe in the morning needs medical evaluation. A first-time seizure in an adult is always a warning sign. Repeated vomiting without a clear stomach-related cause, blurred or double vision, hearing loss, imbalance, weakness or numbness



on one side of the body, difficulty speaking, memory problems, personality changes, or unexplained drowsiness should prompt urgent consultation. The key is not to panic, but not to delay evaluation either. Modern MRI and CT imaging can identify brain lesions early and

help specialists decide the right treatment.

The encouraging news is that treatment of brain tumors has changed dramatically. Earlier, many patients feared brain surgery because it meant opening the skull, longer hospital stay, and prolonged recovery. Today, neurosurgery is increasingly precise, minimally invasive, and personalized. Depending on the type, size, and location of the tumor, patients may benefit from microsurgery, endoscopic surgery, image-guided navigation, focused radiation, or a combination of treatments.

A major advancement is stereotactic neuro-radiosurgery using platforms such as ZAP-

X® NeuroRadiosurgery. This technology delivers highly focused radiation to the tumor with sub-millimeter precision, without any incision and without opening the skull. For selected patients with brain tumors, brain metastases, skull-base tumors, AVMs, trigeminal neuralgia, and certain neurological conditions, it can offer non-invasive, day-care treatment with faster recovery.

On this World Brain Tumor Day, the message is simple: recognise symptoms early, seek expert care promptly, and remember that modern technology is making brain tumor treatment safer, more precise, and less traumatic than ever before.

Not All Brain Tumours Are Cancerous, Says Dr. Raghavendra

Hyderabad: Not all tumours that develop in the brain are cancerous, but headaches occurring in the early hours of the morning or immediately after waking up should not be taken lightly, said Dr. Raghavendra, Chief Consultant Neurosurgeon and Spine Surgeon at KIMS Hospitals, Gachibowli.



Marking International Brain Tumour Day, KIMS Hospitals Gachibowli organised a Brain Health Walk to raise awareness about brain tumours and neurological health. The walk was flagged off by renowned Chief Joint Replacement Surgeon Dr. A.V. Guruva Reddy from the hospital premises and proceeded through Malkam Cheruvu and Raidurgam before concluding at KIMS Hospitals.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Raghavendra stressed the importance of

consulting a doctor in cases of persistent headaches. He noted that while there is no single established cause for brain tumours, genetic factors may play a role in some individuals. Exposure to radiation can also be a contributing factor. Patients undergoing radiation therapy for cancers of the mouth, tongue, or throat may, in some cases, experience incidental radiation exposure to the brain, potentially increasing the risk of developing brain

tumours several years later.

He said the walk was organised to create greater public awareness about brain tumours and brain health. Benign brain tumours, he explained, typically grow very slowly, often by only about 2 mm per year. Dr. Sandhya said, Brain tumours are sometimes detected incidentally during scans conducted following accidents or when patients present with symptoms such as sei-

zures or hearing impairment. Malignant brain tumours, however, behave differently. They tend to grow rapidly and can cause significant damage to surrounding brain tissue.

Dr. Guruvareddy pointed out that advanced treatment options for brain tumours are now widely available. Early diagnosis and timely treatment can significantly improve patient outcomes and help prevent serious complications. Among those who participated in the walk were Dr. Ankita Chawla, Medical Director of KIMS Hospitals Gachibowli; Dr. Sandhya, Consultant Neurosurgeon, Dr. Naveen kumar, Dr. Shyam kumar, Dr. vijay kumar and Dr. Shashidhar Neurologists from the department of neurosciences and hospital staff; and a large number of local residents.

Railways approves Rs.285 crore traction upgrade on Mahbubnagar-Secunderabad-Medchal route

Hyderabad, June 8: Indian Railways has sanctioned a major infrastructure project to upgrade the electric traction system on the Mahbubnagar-Secunderabad-Medchal section of South Central Railway at an estimated cost of Rs.285.01 crore.

Under the project, the existing 1x25 kV electric traction system will be upgraded to a modern 2x25 kV electric traction system across the approximately 141-km rail section. The initiative is aimed at enhancing capacity and improving operational efficiency on one of the country's important High-Density Network (HDN) routes.

The Mahbubnagar-Secunderabad-Medchal



section forms part of the Dharmavaram-Dhone-Mahbubnagar-Secunderabad-Medchal-Mudkhed-Indore-Ajmer rail corridor, which handles significant passenger and freight traffic. Railway officials said

the upgraded 2x25 kV system will provide a more stable and efficient power supply, enabling smoother, safer and more reliable train operations. The modernization is expected to improve train handling capacity

and support faster movement of both passenger and freight services.

Upon completion, the project will significantly boost freight transportation efficiency, increasing the speed and carrying capacity of goods trains. The improved rail infrastructure is also expected to support trade, industry and economic activity across the region.

The project is part of Indian Railways' broader efforts to develop a modern, future-ready rail network and strengthen infrastructure on busy rail corridors, benefiting passengers as well as industries that depend on rail transport.

TN CM Vijay plays chess with Praggnanandhaa, awards Rs 50 lakh for Norway Chess triumph



Chennai, June 8 : Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Monday felicitated chess prodigy R. Praggnanandhaa for his historic triumph at the Norway Chess tournament and presented him with a cash award of Rs 50 lakh. The meeting took an engaging turn when CM Vijay and the 20-year-old Grandmaster sat down across a chessboard for a friendly game.

Praggnanandhaa created history in Oslo by becoming the first-ever Indian to clinch the Norway Chess title. His campaign included a rare feat; defeating home favourite and World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen twice in the classical format, alongside a crucial victory over reigning World

Champion D. Gukesh. Lauding the youngster's exceptional intellect and composure on the global stage, CM Vijay handed over the Rs 50 lakh cheque as a token of appreciation on behalf of the Tamil Nadu Sports Development Authority, along with a memento for bringing laurels to both Tamil Nadu and the nation. Minister for Public Works and Sports Development Aadhav Arjuna, Member Secretary of the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu J. Meghanatha Reddy, I.A.S., Praggnanandhaa's parents and high-ranking government officials were present during the felicitation. Pragg, who had slipped to

No. 16 in the world rankings in the last list released on June 1, came up with a brilliant performance in Norway Chess as he stormed back from the brink to win the prestigious title.

He was sixth and last in the standings after the sixth round but won four games in a row, including his second win over Carlsen and a penultimate round victory, and compatriot Gukesh, which propelled him into contention for the title. This was the first such winning streak in the event since Carlsen's in 2021. Entering the round half a point behind Wesley So, Praggnanandhaa knew that a victory would put him in a strong position to overtake the leader.

Seeman slams Maridhas arrest as abuse of power

CHENNAI: Naam Tamilar Katchi chief coordinator Seeman on Monday strongly condemned the arrest of YouTuber Maridhas by the State Police, alleging that the action was a clear case of fascism by the ruling TVK government. He accused the government of attempting to suppress dissent and intimidate critics.

In a strongly worded statement, Seeman said the arrest of Maridhas, who has been consistently critical of the government's functioning, reflected the "arrogance of power" and an intolerance towards opposing views. He argued that if the authorities considered Maridhas' remarks defamatory, they should have pursued legal remedies through due process instead of resorting to immediate arrest.

Questioning the government's priorities, Seeman said that stringent action often appears to target political critics, while serious criminal offenders continue to operate freely.



He further alleged that ruling party supporters regularly engage in personal attacks, defamatory campaigns, and abusive content online without facing similar legal scrutiny.

Referring to Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay's earlier remarks encouraging criticism of his administration, Seeman accused the government of contradicting its own stated commitment to democratic values. He claimed the arrest signalled a continuation of practices that curb freedom of expression and warned against the misuse of State power to silence political opponents. Demanding Maridhas' immediate release, Seeman urged the TVK government to abandon what he termed a "revenge-driven approach" and uphold democratic principles and the right to free expression.

Annamalai warns against parallel outfits

CHENNAI: Chief servant of the We The Leaders movement K Annamalai on Monday urged supporters and volunteers not to float parallel organisations using his name or photograph, asserting that such activities had no connection with his revived political movement.

In a statement, Annamalai said the organisation, relaunched with the objective of ushering in a political transformation in the State, was rapidly expanding and was nearing 17 lakh members within three days of its relaunch.

"This is only a small beginning. Together, we will certainly create a political change in Tamil Nadu," he said, while thanking volunteers and supporters for the overwhelming response to the membership drive.

Clarifying the organisational structure of the movement, Annamalai said that no posts or responsibilities, including



his own, had been formally assigned so far, and that appointments would be made shortly based on merit. He reiterated that the movement would not have permanent positions and said its immediate focus over the next month would remain on membership enrolment.

Against this backdrop, the former IPS officer said some volunteers had launched separate outfits and announced district-level office-bearers using his name and photographs. "Such activities are not proper and those organisa-

tions have no connection whatsoever with We The Leaders," he said, cautioning that such actions could dilute the larger objective of the movement.

Annamalai also said notices had already been issued months ago to organisations functioning under names such as "Annamalai Anbu Koottam" and "Annamalai Narpani Mandram", asking them not to use his name. He urged supporters willing to join the movement to register only through the official We The Leaders platform.

Would slap the official with slipper if he were here: TVK Minister lashes out at electricity board official

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Forest Minister RV Ranjithkumar sparked a controversy on Sunday (June 7) evening after publicly threatening to transfer an electricity department official and stating that he would "slap him if he was present here". The incident occurred during a voter thanksgiving event in Narappakkam, near Kanchipuram, where the Minister was thanking constituents for his recent election victory.

When local residents complained of frequent power



cuts, Ranjithkumar promptly called a supervisory engineer of the electricity board on speakerphone, ensuring the crowd could hear the conversation.

During the call, the engineer explained that an officer under him was not performing properly and that multiple complaints had already been filed against

him. The Minister then warned, "I will transfer that officer immediately. I will shift him to Kanyakumari." He further added, speaking directly to the public, "If that officer were present here, I would hit him with a slipper." The Minister's strong remarks have drawn widespread attention and mixed reactions from the public. Ranjithkumar, who contested from the Kancheepuram assembly constituency as a TVK candidate, is currently serving as Tamil Nadu's Forest Minister.

DMK divorced Congress, no scope for reunion, says Bharathi

CHENNAI: DMK organising secretary RS Bharathi on Sunday launched a sharp attack on Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) and its campaign management general secretary Aadhav Arjuna, asserting that the latter lacked the stature to challenge former Chief Minister MK Stalin or Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin.

Seeman slams Maridhas arrest as abuse of power Addressing reporters at Anna Arivalayam, the DMK headquarters in



Chennai, Bharathi threw down a challenge to TVK ahead of the local body elections, saying he would shave off one side of his moustache if the party managed to win even a sin-

gle mayoral post. He also blamed Aadhav Arjuna for creating problems for TVK president Vijay, stating that if any political danger arose for Vijay, Aadhav himself would be responsible.

Bharathi further ruled out any possibility of the DMK reuniting with parties that had "betrayed" it and left. "We will never again accommodate those who stabbed us in the back and walked away. There will be neither a political association nor a

relationship with them. DMK cadres will not accept them either," he said, in an apparent reference to the Congress.

On the party's alliance prospects, Bharathi said the DMK would not be part of any alliance that included the Congress.

India's falling fertility rate sparks global attention as Elon Musk flags demographic shift

New Delhi, Jun 8: Billionaire entrepreneur and SpaceX chief Elon Musk has spotlighted India's rapidly declining birth rate, drawing attention to a demographic trend that experts say could reshape the country's future population dynamics.

Responding to recent fertility data on social media platform X, Musk noted that India's birth rate has now fallen below the level required to sustain long-term population stability. He further observed that fertility rates among the country's highly educated population had dipped below replacement levels years ago. The comments came after statistics shared by media outlet AF Post indicated that India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has dropped to 1.9 children per woman, falling beneath the replacement threshold of 2.1 for the first time in the nation's history. Over the past decade, the country's fertility rate has declined significantly from 2.3 births per woman to 1.9.

The report also highlighted sharp regional variations, noting that the national capital, Delhi, has recorded a fertility rate of just 1.2 children per woman—lower than that of several developed nations, including Finland.

The demographic shift was further examined in a recent analysis published by The Economist, which suggested that India's population growth may slow



more rapidly than previously projected and could eventually enter a phase of decline in the coming decades. Similar findings were outlined in the latest State of World Population Report released by the United Nations Population Fund. According to the report, India's fertility rate has now fallen below the replacement level needed for each generation to maintain the size of the population in the absence of migration.

While a lower fertility rate is often associated with improvements in healthcare, education and economic development, demographic experts note that sustained declines can eventually lead to ageing workforces and increased pressure on social support

systems. Despite the slowdown in birth rates, India remains the world's most populous country, with a population exceeding 1.46 billion people. The nation surpassed China in 2023 to become the most populous country globally. The UNFPA report acknowledged India's progress in expanding access to education and healthcare services but also pointed to persistent social and economic disparities. Issues such as gender inequality, maternal health challenges and uneven development continue to affect millions of people across different regions of the country.

The agency also identified early marriage and adolescent pregnancies as significant contributors to maternal mortality among

younger women, particularly those under the age of 24. Demographers have long linked declining fertility rates in India to several structural changes, including rising levels of education, rapid urbanisation, greater participation of women in the workforce and shifting attitudes toward marriage and family size. Increasing living costs and evolving lifestyle preferences have also encouraged many families to have fewer children than previous generations. As India navigates this demographic transition, policymakers and researchers are closely monitoring how lower birth rates may influence the country's economic growth, labour markets and social welfare systems in the decades ahead.

Fatty liver reversible if detected early, say experts

New Delhi, Jun 8: Fatty liver disease, once considered a minor health concern, is rapidly emerging as one of the most common liver disorders in India, driven by rising obesity, diabetes, unhealthy diets, sedentary lifestyles and poor sleep habits. Medical experts warn that while the condition often develops silently, early intervention can help reverse liver damage and prevent serious complications.

Doctors say fatty liver disease occurs when excess fat accumulates in liver cells, affecting the organ's ability to perform vital functions such as processing nutrients, filtering toxins and regulating metabolism. According to studies published in the Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hepatology, nearly one in three urban Indians may be affected by some form of fatty liver disease. Most cases are detected incidentally during routine health check-ups, blood tests or ultrasound scans, as the condition often produces no obvious symptoms in its early stages. Dr Shalene Agarwal, Head of Liver Transplant and HPB Surgery at Amrita Hospital Faridabad, said the liver has a remarkable capacity to heal itself when harmful factors are addressed in time.

He noted that weight loss remains one of the most effective ways to reverse early-stage fatty liver disease. Research indicates that losing around 5 per cent of body weight can significantly reduce liver fat, while a weight reduction of 7 to 10 per cent may help decrease liver inflammation and even reverse early fibrosis, or liver scarring. For an individual weighing 80 kilograms, losing approximately four to eight kilograms could lead to measurable improvements in liver health,

experts say. However, doctors caution against rapid weight-loss methods, stressing that gradual and sustainable lifestyle changes yield the best results. Dr Agarwal warned that fatty liver disease should not be dismissed as a harmless finding on an ultrasound report. If left untreated, simple fatty liver can progress to more serious conditions, including steatohepatitis, fibrosis, cirrhosis, liver failure and even liver cancer.

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EDITORIAL

Rs 1 Lakh Crore Gone, And Counting: Worse May Be Coming For India's Oil Shock

The Al Hamra, a liquefied natural gas tanker operated by ADNOC Logistics, slipped out of the Strait of Hormuz late last month, bound for western India. The vessel had switched off its tracking signal on April 19, idling near the eastern entrance of the strait, and was loaded quietly at Abu Dhabi National Oil Company's Das Island export terminal during the silence. Its reappearance on Kpler's ship-tracking data was the first confirmed LNG shipment to India through Hormuz since the Iran war began three months ago. India received over half its LNG from Qatar and the UAE before the war. Those flows had essentially halted. And one tanker does not undo three months of disruption. The economic toll of the disruption has accumulated, meanwhile, in places that do not appear on news tickers. The Finance Minister, speaking at a SIDBI event in Mumbai on May 25, said the Centre is set to absorb over Rs 1 lakh crore in revenue forgone from the cut in central excise on petrol and diesel. The figure, however large, is only part of the bill. Brent crude futures traded near \$98 a barrel on May 26, having touched \$114 earlier in the month and peaked at \$126 in early March after the US-Israel strikes on Iran. The Indian basket has surged some 57% from below \$70 a barrel in early January. India imports about 85% of its crude requirement, and the pass-through is visible at every joint of the economy. Inflation Is Coming For Common Households Wholesale price inflation reached 8.3% in April, a forty-two-month high, against 3.88% in March. The fuel and power component rose 24.71% on the year, with petrol WPI at 32.40%, diesel at 25.19%, and LPG at 10.92%. Retail inflation, by contrast, stood at a deceptive 3.48%, fuel and electricity carrying a much smaller weight in the consumer basket. The divergence is the story. The wholesale number records what the economy has actually absorbed. The retail number records what households have so far been allowed to see. The gap closes over time. The pump price has, since May 15, begun to move. Four hikes in two weeks have lifted diesel in Delhi from 87.67 to 95.20, an aggregate increase of 7.53 a litre. A Business Standard survey on May 25 found that one in two respondents reported a rise in transport, product or service costs in consequence. Petrol crossed 100 in Delhi on May 25 and was at 102.12 by May 26. In Andhra Pradesh, it is above 115 across the state, touching 118 in Chittoor. The Prime Minister appealed for travel restraint and a preference for the metro. The exchequer has paid in several currencies. Cuts in central excise on petrol and diesel cost the Centre roughly \$1.18 billion a month in forgone revenue. The fertiliser subsidy, budgeted at 1.71 lakh crore for FY27, is now expected to swell by about 20% as urea and phosphatic inputs grow scarce and pricier. The Union Cabinet has already approved a 41,534 crore non-urea fertiliser subsidy for this year's kharif season, 12% above last year's. The Strait of Hormuz disruption hit, at once, 40% of India's crude imports, over 50% of its urea, and 90% of its LPG. The fiscal deficit target for FY27 is 4.3% of GDP. ICRA has flagged "sizeable upside risks" to that number. The Ever-Falling Rupee The rupee has carried the rest. It fell to 96.34 against the dollar on May 19, a record low, taking its decline this year to 7.04%, more than the full-year falls in 2025 (4.9%) and 2024 (2.9%) individually.

How A Photograph in Delhi Says Something Important About Trump's America

During her visit to New Delhi this week, Venezuela's acting president, Delcy Rodriguez, met US Ambassador Sergio Gor. Had the meeting taken place in Washington or Caracas, it would have attracted little attention. In Delhi, however, it carried a different significance. Rodriguez had come to India seeking investment, energy cooperation, and commercial partnerships. Yet the image suggested a deeper reality. Venezuela's leaders may travel the world in search of opportunities, but the country's economic future increasingly operates within a framework shaped by Washington. For example, recent US sanctions have restricted Venezuela's access to international financing and targeted the state-owned oil company PDVSA, dramatically limiting the government's ability to generate revenue and engage with global markets. The photograph captured more than a diplomatic encounter. It revealed a changing relationship between a weakened state and a dominant power. It also revealed something troubling about America itself. For decades, successive American administrations justified their policies towards Venezuela using the language of democracy, human rights, and constitutional governance. Critics often questioned those motives, but the rhetoric remained consistent. American power was presented as an instrument of universal principles. Donald Trump has adopted a strikingly different approach. The Return of Colonial Logic Rather than disguising the centrality of oil, he has repeatedly emphasised it. He has spoken openly about Venezuela's vast energy reserves, described Venezuelan oil in terms suggesting American entitlement, and supported arrangements under which the future of Venezuelan oil production and revenue flows would be shaped under strong American influence. The remarkable feature is not that a great power pursues its interests. Great powers have always done so. The remarkable feature is the disappearance of embarrassment. Trump appears willing to say aloud what previous administrations preferred to imply. While leaders like Obama or Bush focused their public statements on the promotion of democracy, human rights, and con-



stitutional order, often framing interventions in terms of universal values, Trump has spoken with unusual directness about oil, power, and strategic advantage. Where past rhetoric wrapped interests in the language of democratic idealism, the priorities now are openly transactional. Oil matters. Power matters. Strategic advantage matters. The language of democratic idealism has increasingly given way to the language of ownership and control. That shift is important because it exposes the underlying logic of the relationship. No American governor resides in Caracas. No American flag flies over Venezuelan government buildings. Venezuela remains a sovereign state in the formal legal sense. Yet colonial relationships have evolved. They no longer require occupation or direct administration. They operate through financial leverage, market access, licensing arrangements, sanctions regimes and influence over strategic resources. The question is, therefore, not whether Venezuela remains independent on paper. The question is whether meaningful sovereignty can survive when a nation's most important economic decisions increasingly depend

upon the approval of another state. Yet the most important consequence of this development may not be Venezuelan. It may be American. The Freedom Exception The United States occupies a unique place in modern history because it was founded in opposition to an empire. The American Revolution transformed resistance to external control into a defining national principle. Liberty, self-government and sovereignty became central elements of American identity. Generations of Americans were taught that freedom was not merely a national possession but a universal ideal. That is what makes the current moment so revealing. If a foreign government exercised similar influence over American oil production, energy exports, or resource revenues, the reaction would be immediate and furious. Americans would rightly regard such interference as an assault on national sovereignty. Politicians would denounce it. Commentators would condemn it. Citizens would reject it. Yet many of the same people appear remarkably unconcerned when comparable principles are applied elsewhere. This is particularly evident among Trump's politi-

cal base. Few political leaders speak openly unless they believe their supporters will tolerate or even reward them for doing so. Trump's confidence reflects the knowledge that many of his most enthusiastic supporters will view such rhetoric not as imperial overreach but as evidence of national strength. That fact should trouble Americans far more than it troubles Venezuelans. Many of those supporters present themselves as the strongest defenders of freedom, sovereignty and self-government. They condemn foreign influence in American affairs and invoke the nation's anti-colonial origins with understandable pride. Yet when another country's sovereignty becomes constrained by American power, the principle suddenly appears less important. The contradiction is difficult to ignore. The issue is not simply hypocrisy. Political hypocrisy is as old as politics itself. The issue is habituation. A society that repeatedly makes exceptions to its principles eventually ceases to regard them as principles at all. Freedom becomes something claimed for oneself rather than defended universally. Sovereignty becomes a right for the powerful and a privilege for the

weak. Liberty remains celebrated in speeches while becoming increasingly conditional in practice. History suggests that this process carries dangers far beyond foreign policy. The founders of the American Republic understood that imperial power could corrupt republican institutions. Their concern was not merely what power would do to foreign peoples. It was what the exercise of power would do to Americans themselves. A republic depends upon citizens who believe that principles apply consistently. Once exceptions become routine, cynicism follows. The language of freedom survives, but its substance gradually weakens. The photograph from New Delhi will soon be forgotten. Diplomats will move on. Oil contracts will be negotiated. Venezuela's future remains uncertain. Yet the image captured something larger than a diplomatic meeting. It showed a republic founded in opposition to an empire that was growing increasingly comfortable exercising imperial influence over another nation's most valuable resource. More troublingly, it suggested that millions of Americans no longer regard that contradiction as particularly troubling.

After Bengal Defeat, Is Mamata Banerjee Preparing For National Politics?

Mamata Banerjee has always been known as a leader who carefully calculates her political timing. She does not take steps impulsively, especially after a major electoral setback. That is why her recent shift toward more Delhi-centric politics is now becoming one of the most discussed developments in national opposition politics. The question many people are asking is simple: why is Mamata Banerjee suddenly giving so much importance to national opposition coordination and the INDIA alliance after the 2026 West Bengal Assembly election? There are several reasons behind this political repositioning. For a long time, Mamata Banerjee had maintained a certain distance from formal INDIA alliance meetings. But now she is regularly attending these meetings again and is showing renewed interest in opposition coordination at the national level. What makes this more politically significant is the fact that during the 2026 West Bengal assembly election, there was no alliance between the Trinamool Congress and the Congress party. In fact, Congress state president Subhankar Sarkar himself later admitted publicly that he personally wanted some kind of seat adjustment or tactical understanding with Mamata Banerjee. According to him, the Congress leadership in Bengal had been willing to explore an alliance framework, but Mamata Banerjee ultimately did not show interest at that time. Perhaps she did not anticipate that the political out-



come would unfold in the way it eventually did. Now, after the election setback, the political situation has changed considerably. The first and most immediate reason behind Mamata Banerjee's Delhi-focused politics is the post-election reality inside West Bengal itself. After the 2026 defeat, there is no immediate assembly election ahead, nor is there any realistic possibility of an instant change of government in Bengal. But at the same time, the BJP's political campaign against the Trinamool Congress has intensified almost every single day. Corruption allegations against Trinamool leaders continue to dominate political discourse. Several MLAs have left the party. In many ways, the legislative structure of the Trinamool Congress has weakened internally. Inside the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, too, several councillors have either resigned or openly revolted against the leadership. In such a politically

defensive situation, Mamata Banerjee appears to be trying to shift the centre of political debate away from Bengal-specific anti-incumbency and toward larger national issues where the BJP-led central government can be targeted more aggressively. That is a strategic political move. At the all-India level, the opposition still believes there are several issues on which the Narendra Modi government remains vulnerable. Unemployment, rising prices of cooking gas and fuel, economic uncertainty, foreign policy criticism, and delays in key international trade agreements, especially with the United States, are all issues being raised repeatedly by opposition parties. Questions are also being raised over what many opposition leaders describe as inconsistency or "topsy-turvy" trends in foreign policy management. Mamata Banerjee now appears to be repositioning herself within this broader anti-BJP national campaign narrative.

Another important factor is the experience of Bengal itself during the recent election. There is now a growing feeling within sections of the opposition that whatever administrative, electoral, and political challenges Bengal witnessed during the election period, including controversies surrounding voter management, administrative handling, and electoral processes, should be presented nationally as a larger democratic concern. Until now, opposition parties across India had not fully used the Bengal experience as a common reference point. But discussions have now started about turning Bengal into a "model case" to strengthen coordinated opposition attacks against the BJP nationally. At the same time, Mamata Banerjee's relationship with the Congress party is also entering a new phase. During the Bengal Assembly election, there was a visible political distance between the Congress and the Trinamool. But after the election, Mamata Banerjee has gradually started rebuilding communication with Congress leaders and other opposition parties. At this moment, Mamata Banerjee is not aggressively trying to project herself as the undisputed leader of the entire opposition bloc. Earlier, there had been intense debate within opposition circles over whether Mamata wanted to lead the anti-BJP front nationally. That debate had also created tensions among several regional parties. Now, at least for the time being, Mamata appears to be avoiding that direct leadership contest.

The engine of growth, but the insecure middle class

The challenge of the 'missing middle' and the question of economic security



PRIYANKA SAURABH

India is today one of the world's fastest-growing major economies. Its growing economic power, large youth population, digital revolution, and expanding consumer market are constantly being discussed on the global stage. At the heart of this development journey, if any socio-economic class plays the most important role, it is India's middle class. This class drives consumption, saves, invests, pays taxes, invests in education and skills, and sustains economic activity. In any modern economy, the middle class is considered the engine of growth because its income and aspirations drive both production and the market. In India, too, the middle class is considered the foundation of future economic growth, social stability, and democratic strength. Yet, ironically, a large segment of the Indian middle class itself is not financially secure. While it has risen above poverty, it has not achieved lasting prosperity and security. This phenomenon is identified in economics as the "missing middle," or the "vanished or vulnerable middle class." The "missing middle" refers to a situation in which the middle class, situated between the rich and the poor, is not strong enough or economically stable enough to withstand a crisis. Millions of families in India are considered middle class based on income, but lack adequate savings, social security, access to quality healthcare, or long-term financial stability. As

a result, they can quickly fall into financial crisis in the face of illness, job loss, business losses, or economic recession. The COVID-19 pandemic brought this reality to a stark conclusion. During the pandemic, millions of families who considered themselves part of the middle class suddenly found themselves in financial difficulties due to the loss of income, rising medical expenses, and unstable employment. This made it clear that despite being large in numbers, India's middle class is vulnerable in terms of security. The greatest strength of the Indian middle class is its consumption potential. This class accounts for a significant portion of the country's demand for housing, vehicles, electronics, education, health, insurance, tourism, and digital services. As middle-class incomes rise, they purchase more goods and services, leading to industry expansion, increased investment, and the creation of new jobs. This is why a strong middle class is considered a key factor in the economic success of developed countries. If India, too, wants to progress towards becoming a developed nation, it must strengthen and secure its middle class. However, this class is currently faced with numerous challenges. The primary challenge relates to the quality and stability of employment. A large proportion of employment in India remains in the unorganized sector. Those employed here do not receive regular salaries, provident funds, pensions, health insurance, or other social security benefits. A significant number of educated youth are also working in jobs that are not commensurate with their qualifications. While employment opportunities are increasing, many are temporary, contract-based, or low-paying. The gig economy and platform-based employment have created new opportunities, but they too lack long-term security. This makes it difficult for the middle class to plan their future financially. Another major challenge is the rising cost of

health and education. In India, the limited availability of quality government health and education services forces the middle class to rely on private institutions. Expenditures on children's education, coaching, higher education, and healthcare consume a significant portion of a family's income. Years of savings can be wiped out in the event of a serious illness or accident. Numerous studies show that personal health expenditure in India remains high. This situation makes the middle class economically insecure and puts them under constant financial pressure. The third challenge is inflation and the rising cost of living. In metropolitan areas and large cities, prices of housing, transportation, energy, food, and other essential services have steadily risen. Although incomes are rising, they often do not keep pace with inflation. As a result, real income and purchasing power are affected. The middle class has to take on more debt to maintain their standard of living. The increasing burden of home loans, vehicle loans, education loans, and consumer loans also increases financial insecurity. A significant aspect of the "missing middle" problem relates to social security. India offers numerous welfare programs for the poor, such as free rations, health insurance, housing assistance, and other social benefits. Higher-income groups, on the other hand, have private resources and investments that can help them cope with risks. However, the middle class is often caught in the middle. They are not eligible for government assistance programs, while also finding it difficult to afford the full cost of private security and services. This is why they can quickly slide into economic instability in the event of an unexpected crisis. The limited growth of small and medium enterprises in India also exacerbates the problem of the "missing middle." Small businesses often lack adequate access to finance, technology, and markets, preventing them from scaling up.

Stock market jitters remain amid tech fears and renewed Middle East attacks

US stock markets recovered some of Friday's sharp losses on Monday, but other markets have fallen amid a sell-off in technology shares. In Asia, South Korea's stock market was forced to halt trading for 20 minutes, with its Kospi index shedding nearly 9% within minutes of opening. It eventually closed 8.3% lower, with Japan's Nikkei index falling 3.9% and European markets also trading lower - though suffering much smaller falls than those seen in Asia. But in the US, the tech-heavy Nasdaq index rose 1.2%, the S&P 500 opened 0.7% higher and the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 0.2%. All had suffered steep drops on Friday following a strong US jobs report, which raised the prospect of interest rates staying high, or even climbing further this year. On Monday, markets were also rattled by a rise in oil prices, fuelling concerns of inflation, after Iran and Israel exchanged strikes for the first time since a ceasefire was agreed between the sides and the US in April. Traders are nervously watching a "messy mix" of several shocks to the market mainly tied to the tech sector and accelerated by rising energy prices, said chief investment



strategist Charu Chanana from Saxo. Tech stocks have seen a strong run in recent weeks, but investors are "repositioning" over fears the investments into artificial intelligence may be overvalued, she said. Markets like the Kospi and Nikkei are particularly exposed to such shocks given their exchanges are dominated by tech stocks. The Kospi's halt on Monday was part of a circuit breaker mechanism designed to prevent panic trading and was triggered for the third time this year following the plunge in tech stocks. Wall Street's sharp drop on Friday saw the sell-off in tech stocks wipe about 4% off the Nasdaq

- its biggest drop in more than a year. Part of the decline on Friday followed fears of a hike in US interest rates, due to a lower-than-expected US unemployment rate in April as well as persistently high inflation linked to the war in the Middle East. Most European markets were lower on Monday, although the UK's FTSE 100 reversed early losses to trade slightly higher. Earlier, major South Korean tech companies had fallen sharply, including those of chipmakers Samsung, which closed down 10%, and SK Hynix. South Korean President Lee Jae-myung said the stock market was expected to experience

volatility but he believed domestic shares were still "slightly undervalued". Overall, the tech-heavy Kospi has seen huge gains in recent months due to a wave of investment in the country's tech companies. Investors are more looking for clear signs that AI demand has translated into "real revenue", Chanana said. "The burden of proof has gone up." Other Asian stock exchanges, like the Hang Seng Index and the Shanghai Composite, all closed lower. Taiwan's Taix was also down sharply after shares of semiconductor giant TSMC fell by 3%. The chipmaker is a key supplier to Nvidia,

whose boss Jensen Huang said the recent slide in tech stocks presented a buying opportunity for investors. Investors are opting for tech companies "with more reliable income streams and dividends", said Susannah Streeter, chief investment strategist at Wealth Club, adding there were "undercurrents of worry about the surge in tech stock prices". The price of the global benchmark Brent jumped by 4.6% to \$97.34 (£73.05) a barrel in Asia, after strikes were exchanged between Iran and Israel. Tehran warned the attacks were the start of a full week of strikes and were a response to a "repeated violation" of a ceasefire agreed on 17 April between the US, Israel and Iran. Israel later hit back with attacks on military targets in Iran. However, the price of oil then fell back after Iran said it would stop striking Israel, with Brent dropping back to around \$94 a barrel. Associate Professor Jiajia Yang from James Cook University in Australia said traders were again pricing in risks to global oil markets. The strikes show that many political issues remain unresolved and oil prices are expected to be volatile unless diplomatic efforts succeed, Yang said.

AI+ SMARTPHONE TURNS LAUNCH INTO OPEN TRIAL: NOVA2 NEO & PRO REVIEWED BEFORE RETAIL

New Delhi, India - 8th June, 2026: In a first-of-its-kind move for the Indian smartphone industry, Ai+ Smartphone today announced that it will send its upcoming Nova2 Neo and Nova2 Pro smartphones to reviewers, creators, journalists, and members of the technology community across India before we open sales for trusted consumers - critique and review the devices without restrictions. In an industry built around launch events, Ai+ Smartphone is choosing something different - A conversation before a campaign. Feedback before a sale and Consumers before marketing. "At a time when product launches are often accompanied by carefully controlled narratives, Ai+ is taking a different approach: putting consumer interest ahead of launch-day marketing. We don't want validation. We want unbiased feedback for user benefits," said Madhav Sheth, CEO of Ai+ Smartphone and Founder of NxtQuantum Shift Technologies. There will be no embargo, no review guidelines, no scripted messaging and no curated launch experiences and most important-



ly, the devices will not go on sale until reviewers have had seven days to share their feedback. Reviewers are being encouraged to test every aspect of the devices— from hardware and software performance to cameras, battery life, data transfer, reliability, and overall user experience. "As a young brand, we are still learning, still improving, and still earning consumer trust every day. If there is something we've missed, we'd rather hear it from reviewers before consumers spend their money. That's why Nova2 Neo and Nova2 Pro will not go on sale until this feedback window is complete," added Madhav Sheth. Reviewers will be free to publish their opinions immediately at their own will once they receive the device within 7 days. Positive feedback, critical feedback, and everything in between will be welcomed by the brand as part of its commitment to transparency and continuous improvement. The reviews will be available realtime on the brands website for everyone to view the feedback. The initiative reflects Ai+ Smartphone's belief that the future of technology must be built through Accountability, Transparency, and a willingness to listen. The Nova2 Neo and Nova2 Pro represent the next expansion of the Nova Series portfolio positioned under the Nova2 Ultra bringing the Nova experience to a wider audience while continuing Ai+'s mission of making technology more accessible, transparent, and trustworthy.

Arnya Realestates Fund Advisors Commits INR 1,000 Cr Across Residential Projects Through Maiden Debt Fund and Direct Investments; Targets Final Close by June 2026

Mumbai, June 8, 2026: Arnya Realestates Fund Advisors, an independent real estate-focused investment management firm, today announced that it has committed INR 1,000 Cr across residential real estate projects in India through its maiden debt fund and direct investments, marking a significant milestone in the firm's growth journey and reinforcing its strong conviction in India's residential real estate sector. Since its first close in September 2024, the maiden debt fund - Arnya Real Estate Fund - Debt, including direct investments - has successfully closed transactions worth INR 1,000 Cr across 11 deals spanning 5 key geographies in India. The portfolio includes partnerships with leading developers such as Casagrand, MAIA Estates, Gami Group, and Vaishnavi, among others. Several projects are at advanced stages of approvals and execution, with select projects already launched in key residential markets including Bengaluru. The fund

remains on track for its final close by June 2026 with expected total deployment commitment to reach INR 1200 crores including direct investments. Arnya is also planning the launch of Series 2 of its debt strategy in Q2 of this financial year. Registered with SEBI as a Category II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF), Arnya Real Estate Fund-Debt focuses on providing growth capital to Tier 1 developers across India's top 8 cities. The fund has attracted a diverse base of limited partners, including high-net-worth individuals and family offices, highlighting the broad appeal of its investment strategy. In parallel, Arnya recently announced the first close of its maiden residential equity fund at INR 1,030 Cr through a platform partnership with Supreme Universal. The equity strategy is expected to deploy its initial capital across redevelopment opportunities in Mumbai during the current quarter. This fund is also expected to announce its final close by

June 2026. With the combined scale of its debt and equity strategies along with direct investments, Arnya expects assets under management (AUM) to reach approximately INR 2,500 Cr by June 2026. Building on this momentum, the firm aims to evolve into a full-stack real estate asset management platform over the next few years, offering a diversified suite of investment solutions across credit, equity, rental asset strategies, among others. Commenting on the milestone, Sharad Mittal, Founder and CEO, Arnya Realestates Fund Advisors, said: "We thank our investors, distribution partners and developer ecosystem for their trust and continued support in Arnya's journey. Over the past two years, we have focused on building a differentiated and institutionally governed real estate AMC, supported by a strong leadership team and disciplined investment approach. As we look ahead, we are excited to expand our platform with newer products and strategies in the

coming financial year. India's real estate sector continues to offer compelling long-term opportunities and Arnya remains committed to strong partnerships, disciplined capital allocation and delivering sustainable value to all stakeholders." Kiran Kumar, CIO, Arnya Realestates Fund Advisors, added: "Over the last 18 months, we have built a diversified residential portfolio across 11 transactions and 5 geographies, with a strong focus on projects demonstrating healthy absorption, execution visibility, and cash flow strength. The INR 1,000 Cr commitment milestone reflects both the scale of opportunity in the residential credit market and our ability to identify projects with attractive risk-adjusted return potential. We continue to see strong demand across mid-income, premium and redevelopment-led housing segments, supported by improving developer fundamentals and disciplined supply across key urban markets.

Yezi Scrambler 350 and BSA Scrambler 650 now available in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, June 08, 2026: Yezi and BSA announce the retail launch of their new scramblers, now available at their authorised dealerships across Hyderabad. The brands with original scrambler lineage bring two distinct motorcycles at different price-points for the rider seeking a machine that is at ease in cities, poised on highways and exciting on trails. The Yezi Scrambler 350 and the BSA Scrambler 650 feature purpose-built powertrains and rugged, magnetic design. India's lightest 350cc scrambler, the restless Yezi Scrambler is engineered for both urban commutes and weekend escapes. The new liquid-cooled Katar (pronounced 'ka-taar') engine is the functional and structural core of the motorcycle. With a strong torque-to-weight ratio and responsive performance, it starts at an introductory price of Rs 1,99,950. The BSA Scrambler 650, powered by India's only 650cc single-cylinder engine in the segment, combines authentic British scrambler styling with strong low- and mid-range torque delivery. It draws its bespoke



design from historical icons such as the Gold Star Catalina, A10 Spitfire, and A65 Firebird, BSA's world-famous scramblers. The motorcycle is available at an introductory starting price of Rs 3,24,950. Mr. Anupam Thareja, Co-founder, Classic Legends, said, "Scramblers have the potential to become the SUVs of motorcycling, changing the expectations riders have from their motorcycles forever. We hope these machines built for confident city-riding and beyond and bearing the design signatures of Yezi and BSA,

will inspire Hyderabad to explore terrain beyond roads on the weekends. The Yezi Scrambler is a taut and restless storm in stance and performance while the BSA Scrambler channels its British lineage that originally inspired the format across continents." Today's launches extend Yezi and BSA's commitment to scramblers with two new motorcycles built around the format's original demands: Lightweight, torque-led, and responsive. Customers can now visit their nearest dealership in

Hyderabad to experience the brand-new scramblers as well as the complete range of Yezi and BSA motorcycles. All the dealerships offer sales, service, and after-sales support under one roof, and are backed by the company's Customer Assurance Programme, designed to support long-term ownership with reliability and peace of mind, including: 4-year/50,000-km standard warranty Extended warranty options up to 6 years One year of roadside assistance Support across 400+ sales and service touchpoints nationwide.

India auto sales hit record high in May; EV share tops 11 pc

New Delhi: India's automobile retail sales grew 9.55 per cent to a record 25,31,067 units in May, while EV penetration crossed 11 per cent for the first time, as dealers saw a surge in enquiries for fuel-efficient and green vehicles after last month's fuel price hikes amid the West Asia crisis, FADA said on Monday, May 8. The cumulative automobile retail sales in India stood at 23,10,451 units in the same month last year. According to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), the figures reflect the best May performance ever recorded across commercial (CV), passenger vehicle (PV) and the overall EV penetration. "A notable feature of the month was the consumer response to May fuel-price revisions: dealers reported a visible rise in enquiries for fuel-efficient and alternative-powertrain options, reflected in the two-wheeler EV share climbing to 9.25 per cent from 6.11 per cent a



year ago," FADA stated. Passenger vehicles retail sales were at a record 4,02,591 units last month as compared to 3,26,656 units in May 2025, a growth of 23.25 per cent, data showed. Two-wheelers also clocked best-ever monthly numbers at 18,44,947 units in May this year as compared to 17,15,581 units in the same month a year ago, a growth of 7.54 per cent. FADA further said three-wheeler sales stood at 1,11,526 units last month as compared to 1,07,688 units in May 2025, up 3.56 per cent. Commercial vehicles also

witnessed a growth of 5.29 per cent to a record 83,823 units last month as compared to 79,614 units in May 2025, it added. "Overall, the outlook for June 2026 appears measured but cautiously optimistic, with monsoon progress and rural cash flows expected to provide the structural support even as near-term cost pressures persist," FADA stated. Looking ahead to June 2026, dealer sentiment is measured: 50.52 per cent of dealers expect growth, 39.90 per cent anticipate a flat market, and only 9.59 per cent foresee a decline.

Centre has coal reserves for 80 days, says Union Coal Minister Kishan Reddy

Hyderabad: Union Minister G Kishan Reddy on Monday, June 8, said that the Centre has adequate coal reserves to meet the requirements of power generation for 80 days. Speaking to reporters about the achievements of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government since 2014, Reddy also said that exploration has begun in the critical mineral blocks acquired in Argentina, and production should commence as early as possible. "Earlier, there used to be a shortage of coal. Now, the Government of India has coal reserves sufficient for 80 days of power generation. Since the monsoon season has begun, coal production could face disruptions due to heavy rainfall," the Union Coal and Mines Minister told reporters here. "Following the directives of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we have maintained coal reserves for 80 days," he added. Highlighting the importance of critical minerals, Reddy said that the Centre is identifying critical mineral reserves and undertaking exploration activities. He added that auctions have also begun in areas where exploration has been completed. The Centre is encouraging private players to import either processed or semi-processed critical minerals into



Argentina, he said. Alleging that scams in the coal sector used to make headlines during the previous UPA regime, he said that the country is now producing a record 1,040 million tonnes of coal annually. He added that auctions have also begun in areas where exploration has been completed. Union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy on Monday said India has adequate coal reserves to support power generation for the next 80 days, ensuring energy security even during the monsoon season when mining operations may face

disruptions. Speaking about the achievements of the NDA government since 2014, Reddy said the Centre has built sufficient coal stocks following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's directions to prevent any shortage in electricity generation. He added that despite potential monsoon-related challenges, the country is well-prepared to meet its energy requirements. The minister highlighted that India is actively exploring critical mineral reserves and has initiated exploration work in mineral blocks acquired in

Argentina. He said production from these overseas assets is expected to begin at the earliest. The government has also started auctioning explored critical mineral blocks and is encouraging private companies to import processed and semi-processed critical minerals. Reddy noted that the government has identified 143 abandoned coal mines for scientific closure, with the process expected to be completed by 2028. He also said reforms introduced over the past 12 years have helped India achieve record annual coal production of 1,040 million tonnes. According to the minister, India is now the world's second-largest producer and consumer of coal and possesses the fifth-largest coal reserves globally. He added that nearly 70 per cent of the country's electricity is generated using coal and asserted that there is currently no power shortage anywhere in India. Reddy further said the results of ongoing coal gasification projects are expected within the next two years. The Centre recently approved a ₹37,500-crore incentive scheme to promote coal gasification, a technology that converts coal into syngas for producing cleaner fuels, fertilisers, chemicals and hydrogen, while reducing dependence on imports.

Iranian military says it's stopping strikes on Israel, but will resume if Israel attacks Lebanon

In a televised statement, he describes Iran and Hezbollah as weaker than ever, but suggests a fight with them is not yet over. He says if there are further attacks on Israel from Iran then his government will respond forcefully, and they will exercise a right to self-defence. Netanyahu also mentions his conversations with US President Trump, who he is known to have spoken to since strikes began on Sunday. Israel's defence minister Israel Katz says that the country's military will continue to operate in Lebanon, after exchanging strikes with Iran over the last day. Katz says that the IDF will continue to operate against Hezbollah and Israel rejects threats from Iran. Earlier Iran said that it had ceased its attacks on Israel, but would resume them if Israel continued strikes in Lebanon. One was filmed from the port in Tyre and shows a large cloud of smoke rising up from else-



where in the city. Buildings and other features on a jetty enabled us to confirm the location it was filmed from. Another video was filmed in Burj al-Shamali, east of Tyre, which shows extensive damage to buildings along one of its main streets. We matched some of the buildings to satellite imagery on Google Earth.

As well as checking where the footage was filmed we also confirmed the videos were taken and uploaded today. It comes after Iran launched missiles towards central and southern parts of Israel, which Israel says were intercepted. A White House official has confirmed to the BBC that President Trump called

Netanyahu to discuss the Iran-Israel exchanges of fire. No further details have been provided. Earlier, Israel's Channel 12 news outlet reported that Israel would stop attacks on Iran "at Trump's request", citing a senior Israeli official. The IDF says a projectile struck an area in southern Lebanon where its soldiers

are operating. The strike triggered sirens in the nearby area of Zar'it, close to the border in northern Israel, but no injuries were reported, it added in a statement on Telegram. After the exchange of strikes between Iran and Israel reports are emerging that both countries will halt attacks against the other. Meanwhile, a semblance of normality is present in daily life in Tehran, as these pictures from today show: One person says that Iranians are "exhausted" as they ask "both sides to end the war". "People will suffer greatly in all this, whether they support it or oppose it," another adds. "But the reality is that Iran, our homeland, is becoming a victim of greed and excessive ambitions." One man says he is "constantly worried" the internet will be cut off - "and we don't know where this war is heading". Another person says: "The country's situation is already chaotic, and

people are paying an even greater price for this endless conflict between Iran and America. Most people just hope it ends as soon as possible so the country can return to some degree of stability." Pakistan's prime minister Shehbaz Sharif is urging "all sides" to exercise restraint in the pursuit of peace, especially when "the final objective is just about to be achieved", in a message on social media. Iran's military said it would stop strikes on Israel earlier, but warned that if attacks on Lebanon continue that it would respond more severely than before. Israeli media has also reported that Israel would stop attacks on Iran "at Trump's request". In a post on X, Shehbaz says: "The recent surge in violence in the Middle East is a stark reminder of the dangers associated with a tenuous ceasefire and the unbearable consequences it may lead to.

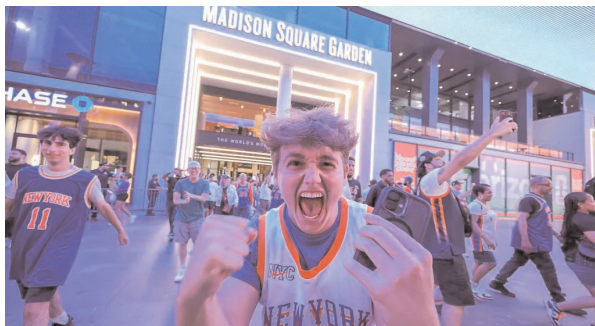
MALAWIANS REPATRIATED FROM SOUTH AFRICA AMID XENOPHOBIA CONCERNS



A group of 150 Malawians repatriated from South Africa amid growing worries about xenophobia are due to arrive by road in their home country on Monday, the Malawian authorities have said. The repatriation follows violence in South Africa's Western Cape Province where there were reports just over a week ago of door-to-door intimidation, as well as the deaths of two Mozambicans in Mossel Bay. The Malawians were "among a number of foreign nationals" who had "sought refuge in temporary camps" in Mossel Bay, according to a statement from Lilongwe. Ghana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe have also organ-

ised repatriation flights and transport after raising concerns about xenophobia in South Africa. Anti-migrant groups are demanding undocumented migrants leave the country - and have set 30 June as a deadline. In a national address on Sunday aimed at easing tensions, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced a raft of new measures to crackdown on illegal migration. But he also warned South Africans not to take the law into their own hands. He said there was "no space for xenophobia, racism, sexism, Afrophobia or any other forms of intolerance" in the country.

KNICKS' LONG-AWAITED NBA RUN ELECTRIFIES NYC, WITH TRUMP SET TO ATTEND KEY GAME



Heightened security, a strict no-bag policy and airport-style screening will greet fans, as US President Donald Trump attends a pivotal NBA Finals game on Monday evening in New York City. The New York Knicks will clash with the San Antonio Spurs for game three of the finals - the first on their home turf of Madison Square Garden (MSG). The Knicks, appearing in their first finals since 1999, hold a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven series, fuelling championship fever across the city. The hottest ticket in town is drawing Mayor Zohran Mamdani as well as Trump. A parade of celebrities have been spotted at other recent games, including actors Timothée Chalamet and Ben Stiller, and filmmaker Spike Lee. This season has represented a stunning reversal of fortunes for the Knicks after decades as one of the worst teams in the league. Now with a 2-0 lead in the finals, they need to win just two more games, out of a possible seven, to win the national championship for the first time since 1973. And the mood across New York City is electric. From the Empire

State Building to One World Trade Center, skyscrapers have been lighting up the city's skyline orange and blue - the Knicks' team colours. A subway station near Madison Square Garden has been given a Knicks-themed makeover, and businesses across New York City's five boroughs are offering meal deals and special orange-and-blue ice cream and bagels. On game nights, throngs of supporters donning Knicks gear have been spilling out of packed bars, projecting the game onto the sides of buildings, and holding impromptu watch parties. Thousands of fans have taken over the streets near the arena on game nights - even though their team were playing the first two games at their opponents' arena in Texas - leading to dozens of arrests as fans climbed lampposts, jumped onto food carts, and blocked traffic. But many of the team's devoted fans will not have been able to afford tickets to the first home game of the series on Monday, with the cheapest online resale tickets currently going for more than \$10,000 (£7,468) and running up to more than \$100,000.

'No dead ends': What the Dutch can teach us about tackling youth unemployment

A landmark report last month found Britain is grappling with a youth engagement crisis - with nearly one in eight 16 to 24-year-olds not in education, employment or training (Neet). Alan Milburn, the former health secretary who authored the report, warned one in six young people could become Neet within five years unless urgent action is taken. What does Neet stand for and why does the UK have so many? He identified that the Dutch approach was one the UK could learn from. The Netherlands has one of the lowest Neet rates in the world, at 4.9% among 18 to 24-year-olds. The equivalent figure in the UK is 15.1%. So can the UK learn from a Dutch system that is designed around a simple principle? "No dead ends" is



the philosophy which underpins Dutch education and youth employment policy - every stage of a young person's journey is designed to lead somewhere. Under Dutch law, it is compulsory for children between five and 16 to attend school - then they must stay in education or training until they either secure a qualification or turn 18.

ARMENIA'S PRO-WEST GOVERNMENT WINS ELECTION DESPITE RUSSIAN PRESSURE

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's party has won a crucial election billed as being key in deciding whether the country continues to move closer to the West. Pashinyan's centrist Civil Contract Party secured 49.8% of the vote, with the Strong Armenia Alliance coming in second with 23.2%. The Armenia Alliance was third with 9.9%. Sunday's vote was the first general election since Armenia, a small South Caucasus country of three million people, suffered a crushing military defeat by Azerbaijan in 2023. It was viewed as a test of the prime minister's push to deepen ties with the West while facing mounting economic pressure from Russia, its largest trading partner and traditional ally. Pashinyan, who has been in power since 2018,



declared victory on Monday after early results showed his party had secured more than 50% of the vote. "Armenian people voted for peace, regional prosperity and cooperation," he said. The election drew significant international attention to the country. On Monday, France and the EU were among European powers that congratulated Pashinyan, praising Armenia's closer ties with the

West. Russia's foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova was quoted by the Tass news agency as saying "unprecedented pressure" had been put on opposition parties and alleged there had been "interference" from the West. Zakharova also said the election had demonstrated that Armenian society was "extremely polarised". Civil Contract's success came despite Pashinyan's domestic

support falling from 54% in 2021 to around 30% today, according to polls. A total of 19 parties and alliances took part in the election but few of these earned enough votes to gain a seat in the national assembly. Turnout was 59%, the electoral commission said. The conservative Prosperous Armenia party, led by businessman Gagik Tsarukyan, came fourth with 4% of the vote. It, like the Strong Armenia Alliance - led by Russian-Armenian billionaire Samvel Karapetyan, and the Armenia Alliance - led by former President Robert Kocharyan, are pro-Russian. "We will continue the course of rapprochement with the West, but we will also continue our participation and membership in the Eurasian Economic Union," Pashinyan also said on Monday.

Zelensky's close European allies set out five conditions for peace talks

The leaders of Ukraine and its close European allies - the UK, France and Germany - have set out five conditions for reaching a "just and lasting" deal to end the war with Russia. In a joint statement after talks in London, Volodymyr Zelensky, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said they would "stand firmly with Ukraine". The five conditions include a stop to the fighting, starting negotiations from the current position in the field as well as "robust" security guarantees for Ukraine. The leaders reiterated the



need for the US to be part of the process at a time when US President Donald Trump's focus has shifted to the war with Iran. Back in December, the US pushed Russia and Ukraine to sign up quickly to a plan to end the war, which began with Russian

President Vladimir Putin's decision in February 2022 to launch a full-scale invasion of its neighbour. The warring sides have recently intensified attacks against each other, with Russia using missiles and drones to attack Ukrainian cities - and

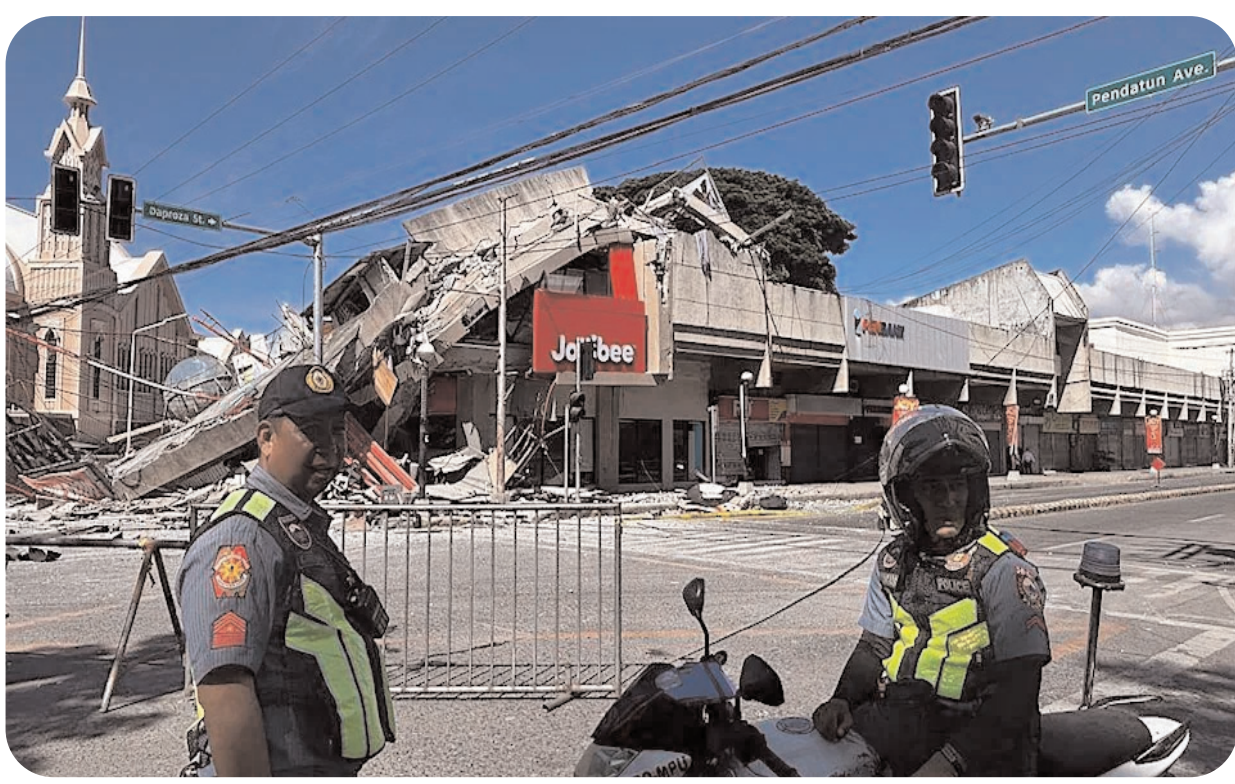
Ukraine displaying increased abilities to reach deep into Russian territory with new technology. On Saturday, Ukrainian drones hit Russia's second-largest city, St Petersburg, as it hosted the final day of a major economic forum - an attack described as "unprecedented" by Russian authorities. Days earlier, Kyiv had attacked the outskirts of the same city - some 1,000km (620 miles) from Ukraine - as Putin's flagship forum was getting started. On the eve of the event, Zelensky sent an open letter to Putin calling for direct negotiations to end the war - an offer repeatedly rejected by the Russian leader.

Peru election result close as vote counting continues



Peru's presidential election is stuck in a statistical tie, according to an early tally by the pollster Ipsos, echoing previous elections that have dragged on for days or even weeks. It put the left-wing Roberto Sánchez on a marginal lead of 50.3% of the vote, compared with the right-wing Keiko Fujimori on 49.7%. While not an official count, the tally has been an accurate indicator of the final result in previous polls. Official results confirm the race is extremely tight with more than 91% of votes counted. The election pits Fujimori, a mainstay of Peruvian politics, against Sánchez, who is promising broad economic reforms. Concerns over crime and political instability have dominated the race. Recounts will likely be needed to confirm the winner, a process that could take weeks. Ipsos showed Fujimori dominating the capital Lima, carrying the urban vote and the coast, while Sánchez swept the rural vote and the mountainous Andes regions. Sánchez is expected to gain ground as ballots from rural areas are

tallied. Sánchez told supporters the early count was an "important lead that reaffirms the will of the people, who want democracy and justice." Fujimori, on the other hand, said the result showed a "dead heat" and that there will be long "days ahead" to declare a winner. She said it would be "irresponsible" to determine the result on early samples and that "every single tally sheet must be counted". Sánchez also reiterated that he would seek a "presidential pardon" that would free the former left-wing president Pedro Castillo. In 2021, Castillo also ran against Fujimori and finished with a similarly close result, which led to the declaration dragging on for weeks. Castillo was eventually jailed after trying to illegally disband Congress and govern by decree, and Sánchez served as a minister in his government. Fujimori is one of the most well-known figures in Peruvian politics, and this is her fourth time running for office. Her late father, Alberto Fujimori, was formerly the president of Peru and was eventually jailed for crimes against humanity.



At least 32 dead after major earthquake strikes southern Philippines

Hundreds of captives freed from Boko Haram mountain hideout

At least 360 people kidnapped by Boko Haram jihadists from a mainly Muslim community in Nigeria's north-eastern Borno state in March have been freed from a remote mountain hideout. The circumstances of how they were freed are disputed. The army says it had launched an unprecedented intelligence-led operation that had been weeks in the planning and taken the Islamist militants by surprise. But a local group, the Borno South Youth Initiative, says it mediated the unconditional release, putting the number of those freed at 416. Mass abductions by armed groups for ransom have become a common tactic in Nigeria in recent years - and though it is illegal to pay ransoms, it does happen. Boko Haram infamously kidnapped more

than 200 schoolgirls from the village of Chibok in 2014 - around 90 of whom remain missing. At the time the group forced its captives into sexual slavery, domestic servitude or used them as suicide bombers. But a range of groups across Nigeria now use kidnapping to raise funds, focusing on soft targets such as schools, churches, mosques and remote villages. Analysts say ransom payments by desperate families, intermediaries or, in some cases, state authorities have fuelled the abductions. Military spokesperson Lt-Col Haruna M Sani described the assault on Boko Haram's Mandara mountain hideout, "under cover of darkness", as one of the military's "most significant hostage rescue operations" in the north-east.



LEWIS HAMILTON KISSES KIM KARDASHIAN AT MONACO GP

Lewis Hamilton celebrated his second-place finish in the Monaco Grand Prix by kissing Kim Kardashian. The reality TV star and entrepreneur and the seven-time Formula 1 champion have been seen in public together at various events in recent months, including the Super Bowl, although neither has commented in detail on the nature of their relationship. Kim was in attendance throughout the race on Sunday, wearing Ferrari-branded headphones as she supported the Briton from the trackside. When Hamilton was asked about having a "high-profile supporter" at the track after the race, he said it was amazing to have "good people" around. "It's amazing to have her come this weekend and have the support," he said in reply, without mentioning her by name. "With my friends, it was an incredible turnout, just overall with people. I don't really know what else to



say. It's amazing to have good people around you and good people supporting you, and she does that for me every day." Hamilton also blew a kiss from the podium after receiving his second-place trophy, a result which matched his best finish in any Grand Prix since he joined Ferrari ahead of the 2025 season. After securing his podium finish, Hamilton let his guard down, greeting

Kim with a kiss on the cheek and a hug. Immediately afterwards, he escorted her closer to the celebrations, right before the podium ceremony was about to begin. Hamilton, a seven-time F1 champion, appeared to confirm that his Ferrari contract runs until 2027 when asked about next year following an up-and-down start to his second season with the Italian team. "I'm still in contract, so

everything's 100% clear to me. I'm still focused, I'm still motivated, I still love what I do with all my heart, and I'm going to be here for quite some time, so get used to it," he had said before the Canadian Grand Prix last month. "There's a lot of people that are trying to retire me, and that's not even in my thoughts. I'm already thinking of what will be next and planning for the next five

years. But yeah, I still plan to be here for some time." Kimi Antonelli's rise to the top of Formula 1 continued in bizarre circumstances as the 19-year-old Mercedes driver won a much-delayed Monaco Grand Prix on Sunday. Antonelli was on course for victory with 10 laps remaining when the race was red-flagged after parts of the asphalt broke away and two cars crashed in quick succession, one of them third-placed Charles Leclerc. After the race resumed from a standing start, Antonelli took his fifth Grand Prix win in a row and extended his already vast standings lead. He's the youngest F1 winner in Monaco. "Thank you so much guys, the car was a beast today," he told the Mercedes team. Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton crossed the line second and Alpine's Pierre Gasly third. Red Bull's Isack Hadjar was moved up to third due to a penalty for Gasly.

Suryakumar Yadav's Social Media Wipe Triggers Mumbai Indians Exit Rumours

It is tough being Suryakumar Yadav at the moment. The batter, who was recently sacked as India's T20I captain and dropped from the team, is staring at a new challenge to reconstruct his career at a tricky phase. While getting back into the Indian team is going to be a monumental task, Suryakumar's time at Mumbai Indians might also have come to an end. On Monday morning, fans struggled to spot a single Mumbai Indians-related picture or mention on Suryakumar's Instagram profile, triggering intense speculation over a potential exit from the franchise. Suryakumar has been with the Mumbai Indians since 2018, when he joined the side from Kolkata Knight Riders. Over the years, he became pivotal to the team's success in the Indian Premier League (IPL), but a horrendous 2026 season seems to have prompted the management to consider alternative options. When a search was conducted on the accounts Suryakumar is following on



Instagram, Mumbai Indians and Hardik Pandya's accounts could not be found. The only photo of the MI team Suryakumar had on his Instagram account was one in which he featured alongside Rohit Sharma and MS Dhoni, two of the biggest stalwarts in Indian cricket. Suryakumar scored just 270 runs for Mumbai in the IPL 2026 campaign, at an average of 20.77. He managed only two half-centuries as MI finished ninth in the ten-team points table. Suryakumar Yadav's SKYfall Since the decision to replace Suryakumar Yadav with Shreyas Iyer in India's T20I team was announced, reac-

tions have been pouring in thick and fast. Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has expressed reservations over the decision. Ashwin said he could understand the disappointment Suryakumar might be feeling after being left out of the side. "Look, I think it's a very interesting precedent. I just want to put myself in Suryakumar Yadav's shoes and, for an instance, think how he would be feeling at this point in time. I'm sure every player has got the right to be gutted about being left out of the side, and that's fair if he's feeling bad about it," Ashwin said, as per ESPNcricinfo.

Taylor Swift's Courtside Chair From Cavaliers-Knicks Date Night With Travis Kelce Up For Auction

A courtside chair linked to Taylor Swift is drawing thousands of dollars in bids after being listed at auction. The seat, which was reportedly used by the singer during an NBA Eastern Conference Finals game, had reached a bid of a whopping \$6,000 already. The chair is being sold through auction platform The RealDeal and is being marketed as a piece of celebrity memorabilia connected to one of the world's biggest pop stars. Bidding is scheduled to close on June 14 at 8 pm. Taylor Swift's NBA Seat Turns Collector's Item According to the listing, the chair came from the courtside section of Rocket Arena in Cleveland, where Taylor Swift attended a playoff game alongside NFL star Travis Kelce. The pair were in the



crowd as the Cleveland Cavaliers faced the New York Knicks during the Eastern Conference Finals. While courtside seats are usually removed and replaced after games, this particular chair has attracted attention because of Swift's appearance at the event. The listing pres-

ents it as a collectible tied to both a major NBA playoff series and one of the most recognisable names in entertainment. The auction house argues that Swift's presence at the game transformed an ordinary courtside seat into a unique keepsake. It also points to the crossover

between sport and popular culture, a combination that has frequently followed Swift and Kelce's public appearances together. Taylor Swift And Travis Kelce's NBA Date Night In Spotlight The game itself became a talking point among fans, with photos and videos of the couple going viral online. Their appearance generated a lot of buzz both inside the arena and across social media platforms. Travis Kelce later reacted to the outing on the New Heights podcast. According to reports, he described the evening as a date night and shot down the idea that he was trying to turn fiancée Taylor Swift into a Cleveland sports fan. The auction is the latest example of the demand for Taylor Swift memorabilia.

Inside The Adidas Trionda: The Sensor Equipped 2026 World Cup Ball That Must Be Charged Before Kickoff

There is a ritual happening at every 2026 World Cup venue before each match that would have sounded absurd ten years ago. The official match ball, the Adidas Trionda, is placed on a charging pad for approximately 90 minutes before kickoff. Without that charge, the sensor inside it will not work. With it, every touch, pass, shot and deflection across 90 minutes of football will be tracked 500 times per second and transmitted in real time to the VAR room. This is the ball that referees, coaches and broadcasters will be relying on across all 104 matches of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Here is what is actually inside it and why it matters. The Technology Inside the Ball At the core of the Trionda is a 14-gram motion sensor chip, embed-



ded inside one of the ball's four panels with counterbalances across the other three to preserve flight stability. The chip is an inertial measurement unit operating at 500Hz, meaning it captures data 500 times per second covering ball speed, spin rate, trajectory, direction of movement and the exact point of

contact when a player strikes or touches it. That data is transmitted wirelessly in real time to the VAR system and combined with player-tracking cameras installed at each stadium. The primary application is Semi-Automated Offside Technology, which uses the ball's contact data alongside

player skeletal tracking to identify the exact moment a pass is played and resolve tight offside decisions in seconds rather than minutes. The sensor can also help identify individual ball touches, which has implications for handball reviews and any incident where pinpointing the precise moment of contact matters. A full charge takes around 90 minutes and powers the sensor for up to six hours, comfortably covering warm-ups and a full match including extra time. When not in motion, the sensor enters hibernation mode automatically to conserve battery. The Design and What It Represents The Trionda's name translates to three waves in Spanish, referencing the three host nations.

Who Is Manav Suthar? Meet India Spinner Who Claimed 6 Wickets On Test Debut



The rich talent pool of Indian cricket has unearthed another gem in the form of Manav Suthar. Earning his debut cap for the one-off Test against Afghanistan in Mullanpur, Suthar stood tallest for India with the ball, claiming six wickets in his debut innings. Suthar had received India Test cap No. 319 from Kuldeep Yadav, and was greeted with hugs and congratulations from teammates and support staff as he stepped onto the field. What followed was a dream start to his career in whites for the Indian national team. With India batting first, Suthar scored a brisk 28 off 41 balls, including two magnificent sixes. However, it was with the ball that he truly showed why the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee trusted him. IPL Debut In 2024 Born in Rajasthan's Ganganagar, Suthar is a left-arm orthodox bowler who can also bat. In domestic cricket, he plays for his home state of Rajasthan, but he is also contracted by the Gujarat

Titans in the Indian Premier League (IPL). He was bought for Rs 30 lakh by GT in the IPL 2025 mega auction. He played a total of four games for GT in IPL 2026, picking up two wickets. His IPL debut, however, had come in the 2024 season, when he played a solitary match. He first caught the selectors' eye during the 2022/23 Ranji Trophy season, when he finished the campaign with a whopping 39 wickets in just six matches. To date, he has taken over 120 first-class wickets. The Rahul Dravid Advice Long before Suthar was picked by the BCCI selection committee for the Afghanistan Test, the left-arm orthodox spinner had already caught the attention of one of India's finest cricketing servants, Rahul Dravid. According to his coach, Dheeraj Sharma, Dravid was impressed by Suthar's all-round abilities but advised him to focus more on his bowling if he wanted a long and rewarding cricket career.

R PRAGGNANANDHAA TAKES ON CHIEF MINISTER VIJAY IN A GAME OF CHESS

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay played a friendly game of chess with Grandmaster R. Pragnanandhaa at the Tamil Nadu Secretariat and presented a special incentive of Rs 50 lakh following the chess star's historic triumph at Norway Chess 2026. During the brief game, Pragnanandhaa checkmated the Chief Minister in a few moves. However, the Grandmaster later praised Vijay's performance, saying the Chief Minister played well and that it was a memorable experience for him. Visuals released by the Department of Information and Public Relations showed the Chief Minister and Pragnanandhaa sharing smiles while playing chess. CM Vijay also handed over a cheque for Rs 50 lakh to



Pragnanandhaa, who created history by becoming the first Indian to win the Norway Chess title. Speaking to reporters after meeting the Chief Minister, Pragnanandhaa described the experience as an unexpected and happy moment. "We played one game with the Chief Minister. We didn't expect this. It was a surprise and a happy moment. The cash incentive is also inspir-

ing. I was not aware that the Chief Minister used to play chess. They asked us to bring the chessboard, and we played a game on his table. He played well and told me he used to play chess with his friends. I won the game, but he played it well," Pragnanandhaa said. Pragnanandhaa scripted history on Friday by claiming the Norway Chess 2026 crown in Oslo after defeating Germany's Vincent Keymer

in the tenth and final round. The victory completed a remarkable late surge by the Indian star, who registered four consecutive classical wins to secure one of the biggest titles of his career. The Chennai-born Grandmaster finished ahead of a star-studded field that featured World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen, reigning world champion Dommaraju Gukesh, Alireza Firouzja, Wesley So and Vincent Keymer. Pragnanandhaa's title-winning campaign gathered momentum in the closing stages of the tournament, with crucial victories over Firouzja, Carlsen, Gukesh and Keymer. His triumph over Carlsen was particularly significant as he completed a rare double victory over the Norwegian legend during the event.



Why Hull's US Open near-miss shows major win is close

All-out attack is rarely a winning recipe in US Opens, but at the Riviera Country Club it very nearly paid off for Charley Hull. She is surely on course to break her major duck sometime soon and in California last Sunday it was only the brilliance of a dominant world number one that bettered the British star. In an exhilarating US Women's Open at Riviera Country Club, Hull posted a record-equalling weekend charge while finishing a shot shy of Nelly Korda's winning total. It is a familiar tale for Hull. She is no stranger to slow starts and rapid finishes in the game's biggest tournaments and there were echoes of Pebble Beach three years ago when she was joint runner-up to Allisen Corpuz. That was when the 30-year-old from Kettering adopted the mantra of "shy girls don't get

sweets" and she ended up three shots behind. This time it was a more blunt, less family-friendly phrase that drove her "go for it" mentality. Hull followed her third-round 65, the lowest score of a thrilling week in Pacific Palisades, with an adrenaline-fuelled closing 67 that began with an eagle and a birdie inside the first three holes. "Just go for it," she said. "I love playing golf like that. I feel like sometimes, the first two days, I'm in a keep my head in the game. You can't go for everything because it's just early on, but now I have nothing to lose. I can just go at everything and play free golf like I do at home and it's more fun." Her weekend total of 132 matched Meg Mallon's championship record set in 2004 and was largely down to a vastly improved performance on the greens.

Roger Federer Will Return To US Open, Set To Play Exhibition Event Ahead Of 'Hall Of Fame' Induction



Roger Federer will play in an exhibition at the U.S. Open this year, returning to the Grand Slam tournament that he is the only player to win five consecutive times. Days before being enshrined in the International Tennis Hall of Fame, Federer will play in New York on Aug. 25. The event, titled "Roger Federer: An Icon Returns to New York," also will include Andy Roddick, John McEnroe and Andre Agassi. It was announced Monday by the U.S. Tennis Association. Roddick won the 2003 U.S. Open, the year before Federer started dominating the event. He won every one from 2004-08 as part of his 20

Grand Slam singles titles. Federer last played the U.S. Open in 2019. "So many unforgettable moments of my career happened in New York, and Arthur Ashe Stadium is a place that means a great deal to me," he said in a statement. "I've missed being part of that atmosphere and feeling the incredible energy that the fans bring every year." The Hall of Fame induction ceremony is scheduled for Aug. 29 in Newport, Rhode Island. The USTA said there will be further announcements about the lineup for the event, which is during the week before singles play in the tournament begins.

3K FOR HOLLYWOOD MOVIE TICKET IN INDIA: NOT AN ALARMING SIGN?



Advance booking for Christopher Nolan's 'The Odyssey' opened in India at 10:00 am on June 8, there's been a sudden demand for the tickets. No one expected that the film would attract a big demand since it is a Hollywood film due for release only next month. Interestingly, the film's ticket prices are going to touch 3000 rupees in one of the North Indian cities. Universal Pictures has announced plans for only two shows, both on IMAX screens: one early morning and one at night or evening. Nolan's last film, 'Oppenheimer', also attracted a big craze, but then there were no exorbitant prices for the film. In the recent past, we have seen this crazy demand only for 'Dhurandhar: The Revenge'. Pune will be the city to host a costly screening

for the film. The film starts at around 1400 rupees and goes up to 3000 rupees, which is shocking. In Mumbai, the film's ticket is priced affordably, at less than 1000 rupees. Only at PVR Lower Parel, the rates are slightly higher, as the starting price is 700 rupees and it goes up to 1400 rupees. At most, the film's ticket is available for 2000 rupees in the city. Now, coming back to reality, the Indian audiences are always ready to embrace foreign movies. But at the same time, if these foreign films are sold at high prices, compared to our films, it will surely lead to a debate. Having said that, a lot of genuine moviegoers will not be able to afford such prices even when they want to watch the film. Surely, this is not a healthy trend in Indian market and we have to see the outcome of it.

MEGA PRODUCER NIHARIKA KONIDELA LAUNCHES VIJAY ANTONY'S VANDA DEVULLU TRAILER

Vijay Antony Film Corporation and Sarvanth Ram Creations are gearing up for the release of Vanda Devullu, presented by Fatima Vijay Antony and produced by Ramanjaneyulu Javvaji. Starring Vijay Antony, Swasika, Ajay, Kavya, Shakthi, Padhini, Karnas, Balaji Sakthivel, Divakar, Arul Das, Bucks, Vinodhini, Munishkanth, Kodangi Vadivelu, and others, the film is all set for a grand theatrical release on June 19. The film has already generated strong buzz with its intriguing glimpse, teaser, songs, and posters. Adding to the excitement, Mega Producer Niharika Konidela officially unveiled the trailer on social media. The trailer opens with a thought-provoking dialogue: "Everyone born into this world has basic needs - to eat, to sleep, and to find companionship." It then moves into refreshing romantic moments between the lead pair, while also highlighting the emotional depth of marital relationships and the bond between a mother and son. Packed with emotions, relationships, action, and compelling storytelling, the trailer promises a wholesome cinematic experience. The striking visuals,



impactful background score, and intense action sequences further elevate the narrative.

Sharing the trailer, Niharika Konidela wrote:

"I'm delighted to release the trailer of Vanda Devullu. Swasika looks wonderful and seems to have done complete justice

to her role. Wishing director Shashi all the very best for bringing such a heart-warming story to audiences. Vijay Antony looks set to deliver a blockbuster this time. It is evident that the film beautifully blends emotions and relationships into a compelling narrative. Best wishes to the entire team."

Grand Trailer Launch & Pre-Release Event of I Am Handsome

I Am Handsome (Since 2009), an emotional family drama centered on the bond, sacrifice, love, and emotions between a father and son, is gearing up for its worldwide theatrical release on June 12. The film stars Durga Dev Naidu in the lead role, who has also written the story, screenplay, and directed the movie. Produced by Kedar Nath under the K Films banner and presented by Mahesh Gudaru, the film features Anvisha as the female lead. Ahead of its release, the makers organized a grand trailer launch and pre-release event at Prasad Labs in Hyderabad. Renowned producer K.L. Damodar Prasad attended the event as the chief guest and extended his best wishes to the team. Speaking at the event, K.L. Damodar Prasad said, "Content is the real strength behind a film's success. Movies with strong stories and deep emotions always remain in the hearts of audiences. Durga Dev Naidu deserves appreciation for handling both acting and directing responsibilities. His talent will undoubtedly take this film to the next level. The film industry always recognizes genuine talent, and I wish this movie great success." Director and lead actor Durga Dev Naidu expressed his happiness,



saying, "I come from Eluru, and my father is a banana merchant. Standing here today after coming from a small town is a proud moment for me. That's why I proudly say that I am my own star. I have made a film that audiences will enjoy. Even if they don't, I promise to make an even better film in the future. I have complete confidence in this project. Every member of the team worked with dedication and passion without worrying about money. Producer Kedar Nath and K.L. Damodar Prasad have supported us immensely. I am confident that not only Telugu audiences but all lovers of good cinema will appreciate this film." Producer Kedar Nath said,

"We believed in a strong story and produced this film. Director Durga Dev Naidu has beautifully portrayed the emotional bond between a father and son. Every viewer will connect emotionally with the narrative. Our entire team worked with great commitment, and we hope audiences will support the film when it releases on June 12." Music director N.S. Prasu shared, "It was a pleasure composing music for this film. We created music that complements the emotional depth of the story. I believe the songs and background score will resonate well with audiences, and I hope the film brings recognition to everyone involved."

SRIKANTH LAUNCHES THE TEASER OF 'OKA COURT CASE'

While Telugu cinema has explored themes like love, heartbreak, and betrayal in numerous films, 'Oka Court Case' brings a fresh and unique perspective. The film revolves around a young man who, after being cheated in love, approaches the court seeking justice for the wrong done to him. Produced under the Open Eyes Entertainment banner, the film is presented by Nagesh Pudi and Mukesh Pudi. The teaser of the movie, written, directed, and produced by young Andaman-based filmmaker Ganesh Pudi, who has also provided the story and screenplay, was officially launched by popular actor Srikanth. Speaking on the occasion, Srikanth said, "The teaser is very interesting. The director has attempted to present

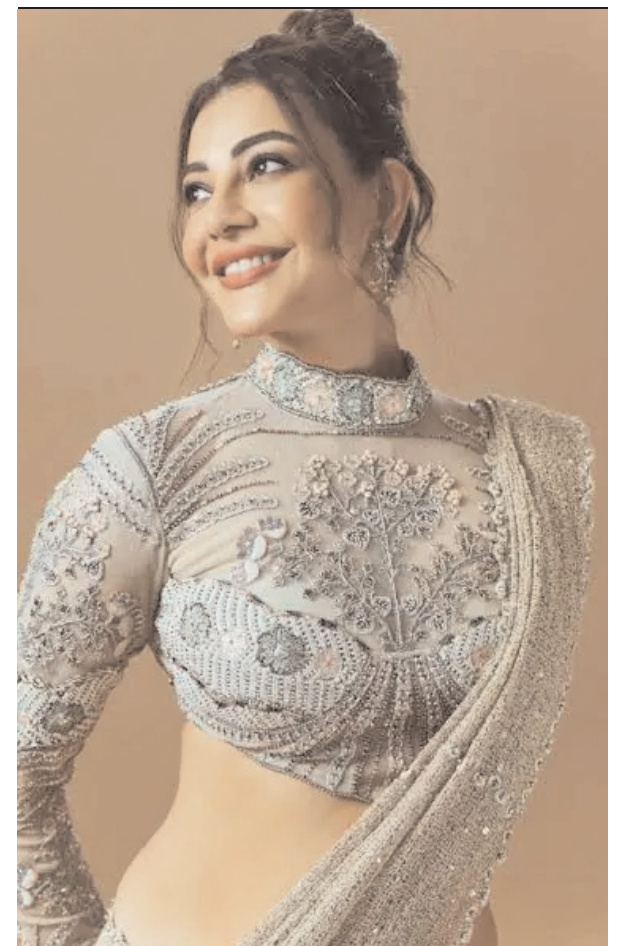


a subject that is relatable to today's youth from a fresh perspective. Turning incidents that occur in a love story into a legal drama is quite fascinating. Every shot in the teaser builds curiosity and suspense among the audience. My congratulations to Ganesh Pudi and the entire team. I wish the film great success." Director and Producer Ganesh Pudi said,

"We are delighted that Srikanth garu launched our teaser and appreciated the film team. We sincerely thank him for his support. The teaser, released with the caption 'Every lover has the right to fight for love,' has already received an excellent response. We have presented the struggle of a man seeking justice after being betrayed in love as an entertaining

and emotionally engaging legal drama, the movie basically shows the Post breakup RETALIATION. We are confident that the audience will experience something new through this film." Hero Suryansh said, "Oka Court Case is a very special film in my career. The story revolves around a young man's fight for justice after being deceived in love."

KAJAL CHOOSES LOVE OVER CONTROVERSY FOR SOUTH CINEMA



Kajal Aggarwal, one of the most celebrated stars in South Indian cinema, has once again expressed her admiration for the industry that played a major role in her successful career. Speaking about the strengths of South cinema, Kajal said, "When it comes to professionalism, the South is far superior. We've got great technicians, we've got phenomenal directors and storylines and creativity. Look at South cinema's reach now. It's doing far, far better than most Hindi films." Her comments come at a time when discussions around the Janhvi Kapoor-Peddi controversy have created tension among sections of the Bollywood ecosystem and Tollywood supporters. While some voices have been critical of Tollywood over a single issue, Kajal chose a different path.

Instead of remaining silent or aligning with the criticism, she openly acknowledged the achievements and strengths of South cinema especially Telugu Cinema. Kajal's remarks highlight the factors that have helped South Indian films achieve nationwide and global recognition in recent years. From innovative storytelling and technical excellence to strong performances and visionary filmmaking, South cinema has consistently raised the bar for the Indian film industry. Many Telugu fans have warmly welcomed Kajal's words, viewing them as an honest and courageous acknowledgment of Tollywood's growth and influence. Having earned the status of a former Tollywood queen, Kajal's appreciation has resonated strongly with audiences.

Jangaa Birthday Special: Thrigun Shows Rage In Motion Poster

The makers of Jangaa have unveiled a special poster and a motion poster to mark the birthday of its lead actor Thrigun. Presented by Smt. Vanitha Kilari and produced by Ramya Kilari and Jayachandra Naidu Kilari under the RK Film Factory banner, the film stars Thrigun, Neha Pathan, Varalaxmi Sarathkumar, Shravan Raghavendra, Madhu Nandan, Gagan Vihari, Chandu Goud, Sameer, Naga Mahesh, Bhupal Raju, Raghu Karumanchi, and Racha Ravi in prominent roles. Kevin Gaddam is directing the project while also providing the story and screenplay. Released as a birthday treat for Thrigun, the motion poster offers a glimpse into the film's intriguing world. The visuals, background score, and Thrigun's striking makeover have instantly grabbed attention. Known for his lover-boy image, Thrigun appears in a



rugged, raw, and rustic avatar this time, sporting a messy and intense look. With long unkempt hair, a thick beard, piercing eyes, and a fierce expression, he exudes rage, determination, and an unstoppable sense of power. A trident-like weapon placed alongside the title adds to the film's mystique, while the tagline, "When Love Burns, Shiva Awakens," hints at a narrative fueled by love, revenge, and divine fury. Overall, the motion poster suggests a gritty action drama rooted

in strong cultural and spiritual elements. The film's shoot is currently in its final stages, and the makers are gearing up to unveil more exciting updates in the coming days. Krishna Saurabh is composing the music for the film, while Venkat C Dileep handles cinematography. Dialogues are penned by Prasad Varma and Prem Raj, with lyrics written by Kasarla Shyam, Poornachari, and Kalyan Chakravarthy. Editing is being handled by Prawin Pudi.

"THE STORY HAS UNEXPECTED TWISTS, TRUE TO ITS TITLE"

Akash Goparaju, son of popular playback singer Sunitha, is all set to entertain audiences with his second film, Kotha Malupu. Directed by Shiva Varaprasad Kesanakurthi, the romantic love-and-suspense entertainer is slated for release on June 12. Set against the picturesque backdrop of Konaseema, the film has already generated considerable buzz among movie lovers. As part of the film's promotions, Akash interacted with the media and shared insights about the movie, his role, his mother Sunitha's support, and his career journey. Q: How is 'Kotha Malupu' different from your debut film 'Sarkaru Noukari'? Akash: Sarkaru Noukari was a period drama, whereas Kotha Malupu belongs to a completely different genre. It is a village-based romantic love-and-suspense entertainer set in the beautiful backdrop of Konaseema. Along with love, comedy, and emotions, the film carries an intriguing suspense element that keeps the story moving. I believe it will offer audiences a fresh cinematic experience. Interestingly, veteran director A. Kodandarami Reddy garu suggested the title, which perfectly suits the story. Q: Tell us about your character in the film. Akash: My character is very energetic and relatable to today's youth. It reflects their emotions and mindset. Compared to my first film, I worked harder to improve my performance. I paid special attention to my body language and expressions. With guid-



ance from senior actors and valuable suggestions from my mother, I learned a lot and enhanced my acting skills. Q: What attracted you most to this story? Akash: When director Shiva Varaprasad narrated the story, the twists impressed me immensely. The character itself was something I immediately connected with—it is fun, lively, and entertaining. True to the title Kotha Malupu (New Twist), the story contains several unexpected turns that audiences won't be able to predict.