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BIHAR CM SAMRAT CHOUDHARY CHEAP MINISTER: TEJASHWI

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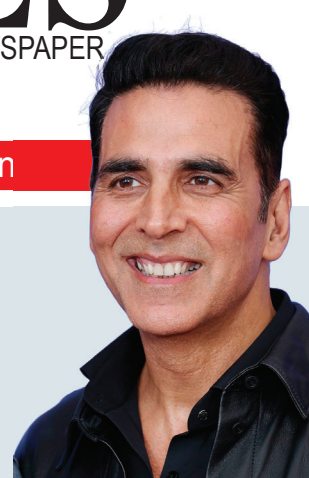
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7 burnt alive in fire at cracker godown in Jaipur



Jaipur (TSIT) Seven people were burnt alive in a fire that raged after a blast at an "illegal" cracker godown in Khoh Nagoriyan area here on Tuesday morning, officials said. The fire erupted in a small house in Ayesha Nagar Talai colony, where firecrackers were allegedly kept, they said. Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and Congress leader Ashok Gehlot offered their condolences over the incident. Assistant Commissioner of Police Vinod Sharma said seven people had died in the blaze. Of them, five died during treatment at SMS Hospital while one, whose identity was yet to be ascertained, was brought dead. One died at a private hospital. Five of the seven deceased were identified as Sameer, Aabid, Nasir, Abdul Wahid and Bilal. Jaipur Collector Sandesh Nayak said that according to preliminary information, combustible material stored inside the premises likely caused the fire. "There was some inflammable material in the house, while the exact cause will be established after a detailed investigation," Nayak said.

PM Modi pays tribute to Birsa Munda on Martyrdom Day,

HAILS HIS LEGACY OF COURAGE AND TRIBAL PRIDE

NEW DELHI (TSIT) |

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday paid rich tributes to tribal freedom fighter and icon Bhagwan Birsa Munda on his martyrdom day, recalling his courageous struggle against British colonial rule and his lifelong commitment to protecting the rights, culture and identity of India's tribal communities. In a post on X, Modi described Birsa Munda as a symbol of resistance and sacrifice whose legacy continues to inspire generations of Indians. "On the martyrdom day of Dharti Aaba, Bhagwan Birsa Munda, I pay my heartfelt tributes to him. He fought with indomitable courage against foreign rule to protect water, forests, and land. His entire life was dedicated to safeguarding the dignity, culture, and rights of the tribal community," the Prime Minister



said. Highlighting the enduring relevance of Birsa Munda's ideals, Modi added, "His saga of sacrificing everything for the motherland will continue to inspire patriotism in every generation of the nation."

Birsa Munda, revered as "Dharti Aaba," is one of

Tumult," in the late 19th century sought to protect tribal land rights and challenge colonial policies.

Munda was arrested by the British and died in custody at Ranchi Jail on June 9, 1900, at the age of just 25. Despite his short life, he emerged as a lasting symbol of tribal pride, social reform and resistance against oppression.

The Narendra Modi government has repeatedly highlighted Birsa Munda's contribution to the freedom movement and tribal welfare. In 2021, the Centre declared November 15, Birsa Munda's birth anniversary, as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas (Tribal Pride Day) to commemorate the contributions of tribal communities and freedom fighters to the nation-building process. Leaders across the political spectrum and tribal organisations also paid homage to Birsa Munda on the occasion.

Focus on your studies, we will conduct re-NEET smoothly: Pradhan

NEW DELHI (TSIT) |

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday, June 9, said that measures have been put in place to ensure the smooth and error-free conduct of the NEET-UG re-test on June 21, and appealed to the candidates to focus on their studies.

He also asserted that the government is taking extra precautions this time, from question paper setting to delivery at the examination centres.

After reviewing the preparations at the headquarters of the National Testing Agency (NTA), Pradhan said meetings have been held under the Cabinet secretary, and all the states have been asked to cooperate.

"The NTA is going to conduct the re-NEET on June 21. We have reviewed its preparations several times. I visited the NTA



headquarters today to review the preparations," Pradhan told reporters.

"From the preparation of question papers to ensuring that they reach the examination centres on time, we have taken additional precautions this time," the minister said. On May 12, the NTA cancelled the National Eligibility cum Entrance

Test (Undergraduate), or NEET, held on May 3 for medical admissions amid allegations of paper leak.

A re-examination has been scheduled for June 21.

"I have written to the chief ministers of all the states requesting their cooperation. Their support was there earlier as well, and I have requested them to pay even more attention this time," Pradhan said. Several states have already held review meetings involving chief secretaries, DGs, district collectors and SPs, with the NTA DG participating in the discussions, the minister said. Pradhan cited meetings in Bihar and Maharashtra, including one chaired by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, and said he also discussed the matter with Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma.

India eyes more FDI, to speed up divestment, asset monetisation as economy faces external risks

NEW DELHI (TSIT) |

The government plans to push ahead with reforms, including further measures to boost foreign investment, speeding up divestment and asset monetisation, as it seeks to preserve India's growth momentum in the face of rising fuel and fertiliser import costs triggered by the West Asia crisis, government sources said on Tuesday.

They said that the country's GDP growth momentum remains intact, with domestic consumption holding up. "Growth is not under stress, but there are external challenges... Quarter after quarter, growth is showing momentum. Domestic economy is doing good, consumption are not coming down....," sources said.



The stress that India is facing currently in terms of high oil and fertiliser import bills due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz are "not just the normal kind of uncertainties", they said. Sources said the government would continue to pursue financial-sector reforms aimed at deepening capital markets and attracting long-term foreign capital. There are steps required, and India will be taking them up steadily on boosting FDI flows into the country, sources said.

Confusion over portfolio delays Bengaluru development minister from assuming charge

BENGALURU (TSIT) |

Five days after being appointed Bengaluru Development Minister, Krishna Byre Gowda is yet to assume charge, with uncertainty persisting over the scope of his responsibilities and control over key agencies involved in the city's development.

The delay stems from the Karnataka government's portfolio allocation, under which Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar retained charge of important bodies such as the Bangalore Development Authority and the Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority. Questions also remain over administrative control of the town planning wing under the Greater Bengaluru



Authority.

The portfolio allocation initially triggered dissent from senior Congress leader Ramalinga Reddy, who had sought the Bengaluru Development portfolio after being assigned the Irrigation Department. However, Reddy later clarified that he would continue with the irrigation port-

folio and was no longer seeking additional responsibilities.

Sources within the party said the Congress leadership selected Krishna Byre Gowda for the Bengaluru Development portfolio after consultations with various stakeholders. However, the continued retention of key urban development agen-

cies by the Chief Minister has reportedly created uncertainty over the minister's role. Political observers note that effective urban governance in Bengaluru requires coordination among multiple departments and agencies. Without administrative control over major institutions such as the BDA and BMRDA, implementing development projects and ensuring accountability could become challenging.

Leaders close to Gowda argue that all major agencies linked to Bengaluru's growth should function under a unified framework led by the Bengaluru Development Minister to ensure better coordination, faster decision-making, and effective implementation of projects aimed at transforming the city.

6 WOMEN DEVELOP COMPLICATIONS AFTER C-SECTION DELIVERIES AT BIKANER HOSPITAL; PROBE ORDERED

BIKANER (TSIT) |

Six women developed serious health complications including kidney-related issues after undergoing caesarean deliveries at the PBM Hospital in Rajasthan's Bikaner, prompting authorities to constitute an inquiry committee, officials said. All the affected patients have been admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) where they are being closely monitored, they said. Principal of Sardar Patel Medical College, Dr Surendra Verma, said that some women reported health complications following delivery and are currently under treatment by specialist doctors.

India defends UN, Afghanistan against Pakistan attacks at UNSC

UNITED NATIONS (TSIT) |

India came to the defence of Afghanistan and the UN from attacks by Pakistan and condemned Islamabad's "unconscionable" violence against its neighbour.

"Pakistan in its statement earlier today questioned the intent of UNAMA (UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan) and the veracity of UNSG's (Secretary-General Antonio Guterres) report", India's Permanent Representative P Harish said on Monday at the Security Council. "We would like to stress that support for multilateralism and the United Nations is not an ala carte menu", he said at a discussion on the situation in Afghanistan. He said Pakistan's air strikes on Afghanistan during the holy month of Ramadan, while "espousing high principles of



international law and Islamic solidarity", is the "perfect example of hypocrisy". "We reiterate the Secretary-General's deep concern at civilian casualties caused by air strikes, cross-border firing and targeted killings as detailed in UNAMA reports", he said.

"We support the Secretary General's call urging compliance with obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and ensuring protection of civilians", he said. "We also support UNAMA's earlier calls for investigation to ensure accountability, prevent recur-

rence and uphold victims' rights. For investigation to ensure accountability, prevent recurrence and uphold victims' rights," he added.

The secretary-general's report recorded that 372 Afghans were killed and 392 injured between January 26 and March 31, and most civilian casualties were from air strikes, with some from cross-border firing. One of the air strikes was against the Omid Drug Rehabilitation Hospital in Kabul on March 16, which killed at least 269 people and injured 122, mostly patients, the report said. Pakistan's Permanent Representative Asim Iftikhar Ahmed alleged the secretary-general's report externalised responsibility for Afghanistan, while there were "serious questions on the credibility of UNAMA's reporting from Afghanistan and the nature of their engagement with the Taliban".

12 years of NDA rule marked by service, development and good governance: PM Modi

NEW DELHI (TSIT) |

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the NDA government's 12 years in office have been defined by dedication to nation-building, public welfare and inclusive development, asserting that continuous efforts guid-



ed by the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" have placed India firmly on the path towards becoming a strong and self-reliant nation. In a series of posts on X marking 12 years of his government at the Centre, Modi highlighted the achievements of his administration and reiterated its commitment to the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India).

CM Vijay inaugurates 'Singapenn rapid response force', says crimes against women can't be tolerated

Speaking at the event in Rajarathinam Stadium in Egmore, he outlined details of the special police force

CHENNAI (TSIT) |

Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Tuesday (June 9) officially inaugurated the 'Singapenn rapid response force', the exclusive team of personnel to address crimes against women, which will function under the direct supervision of the chief minister. Speaking at the event in Rajarathinam Stadium in Egmore, he outlined details of the special police force.

"The 'Singapenn' (Lioness) Special Task Force initiative is a cause very close to my heart. Atrocities against women cannot be tolerated," Vijay said. He added that a total of Rs 354 crore has been allotted for the initiative, and 2,500 job vacancy will



be set up across the State.

At the event, the chief minister personally drove the special commando unit vehicle assigned to the Singapenn task force. Vijay also unveiled the insignia for the special force tasked to prevent crimes against women and children.

Tamilaga Vетtri Kazhagam president Vijay

has said that crimes against women are not a new phenomenon and stressed that individual and social discipline are as important as law and order in preventing such offences. Speaking about women's safety initiatives, Vijay said atrocities against women have been occurring for generations and cannot be addressed

through policing alone. He emphasised the need for greater personal responsibility and social awareness to curb such crimes.

He said action against those committing offences against women would henceforth be expedited, adding that filing of charge sheets by the police would be carried out more swiftly to ensure faster legal proceedings. Vijay also announced that patrol services using drones would be introduced as part of enhanced surveillance measures. He said the newly formed "Singapenn Athiradi Pada" has been created to tackle offences such as stalking women, sexual harassment, targeted intimidation, and molestation in buses and crowded public places.

Indians travel abroad today with greater confidence, stronger sense of pride: EAM Jaishankar on 12 years of Modi govt



New Delhi, June 9 : Hailing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar said on Tuesday that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and India's foreign policy have undergone a transformation in the past 12 years and highlighted the initiatives introduced by the government.

EAM Jaishankar stated that passport issuance and attestation of documents have become a seamless experience for people, and the MEA has provided full support to Indians living abroad through Embassies and increased use of the Indian Community Welfare Fund.He mentioned that digital platforms for grievance redressal and feedback have been set up.

The EAM noted that India has effectively responded to crisis situations in the world, including the evacuation of Indians from conflict-hit Ukraine, Afghanistan, Sudan and Israel.

According to the External Affairs Minister, the MEA has facilitated Indians accessing the global workplace and mentioned that 21 mobility partnerships have been made to date. He stated that

Indian businesses have been supported in getting market access abroad and enhancing exports. In the statement posted on X, EAM Jaishankar stated, "Enabled entry of Indian products and services into new markets through development projects. Instituted welfare measures for Indian students abroad. Promoted Indian culture and enhanced appreciation of our heritage and traditions in other nations."

"Opened 44 Embassies and Consulates to address the needs of Indians living and going abroad. Indian diplomacy works 24/7 for the nation. Indians travel abroad today with greater confidence and a stronger sense of pride," he added.

"Indian diplomacy works 24/7 for the nation. Indians travel abroad today with greater confidence and a stronger sense of pride," EAM Jaishankar added. PM Modi is set to complete 12 years at the helm of the Union government on June 10. From his first swearing in ceremony in 2014 to securing successive mandates in 2019 and a historic third consecutive term in 2024, PM Modi has emerged as one of India's longest-serving leaders.

Bihar CM Samrat Choudhary cheap minister: Tejashwi Yadav

Patna: Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) working president Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday described CM Samrat Choudhary as a "cheap minister" for asking his mother Rabri Devi to vacate her government bungalow and downgrading the security cover of several of his family members.

Yadav, who is the leader of the opposition in the state assembly, fulminated against the BJP-led government when journalists approached him with queries at the airport about the controversies surrounding Rabri Devi's bungalow and the downgrade of security cover.

"Let me tell all of you that Samrat Choudhary is not the chief minister. He is a 'cheap' minister. His diatribe about the



bungalow and our security cover is a cheap tactics to divert public attention from the failings of his government, which is rocked by corruption scandals and plagued by empty coffers", alleged the

young RJD leader. "She had been allotted the bungalow in her capacity as a former CM. Can that status change? And what is the fuss about a separate house having been allotted to

me? I am the leader of the opposition. Is the ruling dispensation doing me a favour?" Yadav said.

Notably, the opposition party has been riled since the building construction department, on May 27, passed an order allotting 10, Circular Road, situated right across the street from the Chief Minister's residence, to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and minister Nand Kishor Ram. The elderly former CM threw a fit upon learning about the order, saying she would not vacate the house and dared Choudhary, whom she keeps reminding that he had served in her cabinet, to "evict me by force".

The government has stuck to

its guns, pointing out that way back in November, Rabri Devi had been allotted the 39, Hardinge Road bungalow in her capacity as the leader of the opposition in the legislative council.

More recently, another order, passed by the state home department, downgraded the security cover of Rabri Devi and her husband Lalu Prasad, both of whom had been 'Z plus' protectees, and a number of other members of their family.

Yadav did not say anything about reports in a section of the media that his mother has finally agreed to vacate her government bungalow and was likely to shift to a private mansion owned by the family within a week.

Kerala steps up hygiene drive after Shigella cases reported in Wayanad

KOZHIKODE: Kerala Health Minister K Muralaeeharan on Tuesday urged local bodies to strengthen hygiene and sanitation measures following reports of Shigella infections in Wayanad district.

Speaking about the situation at a function in Kozhikode, the minister said poor sanitation and contaminated food or water can increase the risk of disease transmission. He stressed the need for strict cleanliness standards in public places, including roadside eateries and food stalls. Muralaeeharan also said that unhygienic roadside eateries (thattukadas) would be shut down.

"Many people, including



prominent personalities, eat from street food stalls. But hygiene must be maintained at all times. Safe drinking water and clean food preparation are essential to prevent the spread of infections," he said.

The minister noted that illnesses linked to contaminated food and water can sometimes lead to serious health complications. He called on panchayats and municipal corporations to carry out regular cleaning

activities and ensure proper waste management.

Arrested TMC leader Jahangir Khan remanded to 5 days police custody by court Health authorities in Wayanad have stepped up containment measures after Shigella infection was confirmed in two students of a school in Sulthan Bathery.

The cases have put the health department and district administration on alert, prompting extensive surveillance, sanitation drives and public health interventions in the affected areas. Officials said the situation is under control and are closely monitoring developments to prevent any further spread of the infection.

Bengal CID conducts parallel raid at Trinamool leader Abhishek Banerjee's office in Kolkata



Kolkata, June 9 : While one team of the sleuths of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the West Bengal Police have started conducting raid and search operations at a Trinamool Congress party office adjacent to the residence of former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Kalighat in Kolkata on Tuesday, another team of CID sleuths have started a parallel raid and operations at an office at the Camac Street in the city from where the Chief Minister's nephew and the party's General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee used to oper-

ate.At the party office adjacent to Mamata Banerjee's residence at Kalighat, the CID officials faced initial resistance as the former Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha member Subhasish Chakraborty, who claimed to be voluntarily and temporarily in charge of the party office, refused entry to the sleuths.However, later after a huge joint forces contingent of Kolkata Police and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel arrived at the spot following which the CID sleuths entered the party office ignoring the resistance from Chakraborty and

several of his aides.

Similarly, the officials of the CID team who arrived at the Camac Street resistance somewhat at the same time on Tuesday afternoon, also faced an initial resistance there to enter from the staff of the said office.

However, soon a team from the local Shakespeare Sarani Police Station arrived at the spot and thereafter, the CID officials entered the Camac Street office of Abhishek Banerjee.

At the time, the report was filed, parallel raids and search operations were being conducted both at the Trinamool Congress' party office at Kalighat as well as at the Camac Street office of Abhishek Banerjee. Incidentally, Abhishek Banerjee was supposed to appear at the CID's office at Bhabani Bhavan in South Kolkata by 5 p.m. on Tuesday for questioning in an ongoing case of mismatch of signatures of some Trinamool Congress legislators in a crucial resolution pertaining to important positions in the West Bengal Assembly, which are reserved for the Opposition bench.

Medicover Hospitals Financial District, Doctyn Academy Join Hands to Advance Clinical Excellence and Healthcare Workforce Development

Hyderabad, June 9, 2026: In a significant initiative aimed at strengthening healthcare education and advancing clinical excellence, Medicover Hospitals, Financial District, has entered into a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Doctyn Academy. The collaboration seeks to empower healthcare professionals with advanced clinical skills, industry-relevant training, and globally aligned learning opportunities, ultimately enhancing the quality of patient care.

With healthcare evolving rapidly through technological advancements, changing disease patterns, and rising patient expectations, the demand for highly skilled healthcare professionals has never been greater. Recognizing this need, Medicover Hospitals and Doctyn Academy have



joined hands to create a robust platform for continuous learning, professional development, and clinical competency enhancement.

As part of the partnership, a wide range of structured academic programs, certification courses, workshops, observerships, simulation-based training mod-

ules, and continuing professional education initiatives will be offered to nurses, allied healthcare professionals, technicians, and other healthcare personnel. These programs are designed to equip participants with practical expertise and evidence-based knowledge required to

excel in today's dynamic healthcare environment.

A major focus of the collaboration will be on developing specialized competencies in Emergency Medicine, Critical Care, Nursing Excellence, Patient Safety, Healthcare Quality, Leadership Development, and Healthcare Technology. The initiative will not only enhance clinical capabilities but also prepare healthcare professionals for leadership roles and global career opportunities. Speaking on the occasion, representatives from both organizations highlighted that the partnership reflects a shared commitment to nurturing a highly competent healthcare workforce capable of delivering world-class patient care. They emphasized that continuous upskilling and lifelong learning are essential to meeting the growing health-

care needs of society and ensuring excellence in clinical outcomes.

The MoU signing ceremony was attended by Dr. Srivastava, Regional Medical Head; Dr. Kishore, Medical Superintendent; Mr. Harsh from Doctyn Academy; Dr. Nayan, Regional Head - Emergency Medicine; and Dr. Swaroop, Centre Head, Medicover Hospitals Financial District.This collaboration marks an important milestone in healthcare workforce development and underscores Medicover Hospitals' commitment to fostering innovation, education, and professional excellence in healthcare. By investing in the growth of healthcare professionals, the partnership aims to contribute meaningfully to the future of healthcare delivery in India and beyond.

HDFC Mutual Fund launches 'Naari Nivesh Yatra' to boost financial awareness among women

Mumbai, June 9: HDFC Mutual Fund has launched the 'Naari Nivesh Yatra', a first-of-its-kind nationwide investor education and awareness campaign aimed at encouraging women to take charge of their financial future through informed investing and long-term financial planning.

The initiative was flagged off at Chetana College and seeks to strengthen financial literacy among women across India. Recognising the growing role of women in household financial decision-making and wealth creation, the six-month outreach programme will take investor education directly to communities through extensive on-ground engagement.

As part of the campaign, two specially designed vehicles will travel across



the country in different directions, covering several cities and towns. At each destination, the fund house will conduct community engagement programmes featuring street plays and

interactive investor awareness sessions to simplify financial concepts and promote informed investing.

A major focus of the Yatra will be direct engagement with women at the

grassroots level. The campaign plans to conduct 60 dedicated sessions with Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs), highlighting the importance of financial planning, goal-based investing, disciplined savings, and long-term wealth creation.

Speaking on the occasion, Navneet Munot said the initiative aims to make investing accessible and understandable for women by taking financial education directly to communities. The Naari Nivesh Yatra is an extension of HDFC Mutual Fund's "Barni Se Azadi" investor awareness programme and reaffirms the organisation's commitment to promoting financial inclusion and empowering women to achieve their financial goals through informed investing.

Kamineni Hospitals Uses a Man's Leg Bone to Rebuild His Jaw Ravaged by 12-Year Gutkha Habit

Hyderabad, June 9, 2026: In a powerful demonstration of how modern medical intervention can reverse the devastating consequences of long-term substance abuse, a team of specialists at Kamineni Hospitals, Hyderabad, has successfully salvaged the life and future of a 39-year-old daily wage labourer. The patient's ordeal serves as a sobering cautionary tale regarding the systemic destruction caused by a 12-year addiction to gutkha chewing and smoking.

What began as a habitual indulgence eventually manifested as a painful, non-healing ulcer in the right lower gingivobuccal sulcus, accompanied by a debilitating condition where the patient could barely open his mouth more than 1.5 finger breaths. Upon reaching



Kamineni Hospitals, clinical evaluations and subsequent biopsy confirmed the worst: Cancer of right inner aspect of cheek that had already aggressively invaded jawbone.

Faced with a locally advanced stage of cancer

that threatened both his life and his ability to work, Dr. D. V. Vineeth, Consultant Surgical Oncologist at Kamineni Hospitals, spearheaded a multidisciplinary strategy to ensure total cancer clearance. The surgical team performed a complex

composite resection, which included wide excision of tumor along with segmental mandibulectomy and Modified Radical Neck Dissection to remove the cancer-affected portion of the jaw. To ensure the patient was not left with a permanent disability or significant facial disfigurement, Dr. B. Krishna Chaitanya, Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon, Kamineni Hospitals performed a sophisticated microvascular procedure known as a free fibula osteocutaneous flap. By harvesting bone and tissue from the patient's leg and meticulously shaping it to recreate the mandibular contour, the surgeons were able to restore the structural integrity of his face in a single, high-stakes operation.

EDITORIAL

Why Trump's Attention Is Quickly Becoming Pak's Biggest Headache

I think it was April or May 1993 when the United States was seriously considering and publicly threatening Pakistan to place it on its list of state sponsors of international terrorism after concluding that Islamabad had failed to adequately address American concerns over Kashmir. It coincided with my trip to Washington DC. At the time, I was a reporter with a leading Indian newspaper and had arranged an off-the-record meeting with a senior State Department official handling South Asia to gauge how serious the American threat really was. I began by asking whether Washington genuinely intended to back its warnings with action. Quite unlike a typical diplomat, she was blunt. Her answer was an emphatic no. She then explained why the US could not afford to sanction Pakistan. Drawing an imaginary crescent on a map, she said the arc stretching from Central Asia to the Middle East formed an "Islamic crescent" because most of the countries were Muslim-majority states and Pakistan sat right in the middle of it. "It disrupts that crescent," she said, arguing that Pakistan, as an old American ally, was more useful to Washington than any other Muslim country in the region. "Then why threaten Pakistan? Was it only for India's consumption?" I asked. She replied that repeated American warnings had forced Pakistan to shut down some militant camps in Muzaffarabad, something she said was confirmed by satellite imagery. "The threats did work," she added. According to her, Pakistan had also cut ties with certain suspected militants and removed a senior intelligence official linked to operations in Kashmir. Yet she admitted, doubts lingered, particularly over 'possible Pakistani involvement in the March 1993 Bombay bombings'. Pakistan thus escaped the immediate threat of sanctions and a serious rupture in relations with the US. But the episode revealed an unpalatable aspect about the nature of US-Pakistan ties: the US called the shots, and Pakistan acted not like an ally but a client state; it also revealed that Washington was simultaneously pressuring Pakistan, distrusting Pakistan and yet refusing to completely abandon Pakistan because of its geopolitical usefulness

Sycophancy As Diplomacy

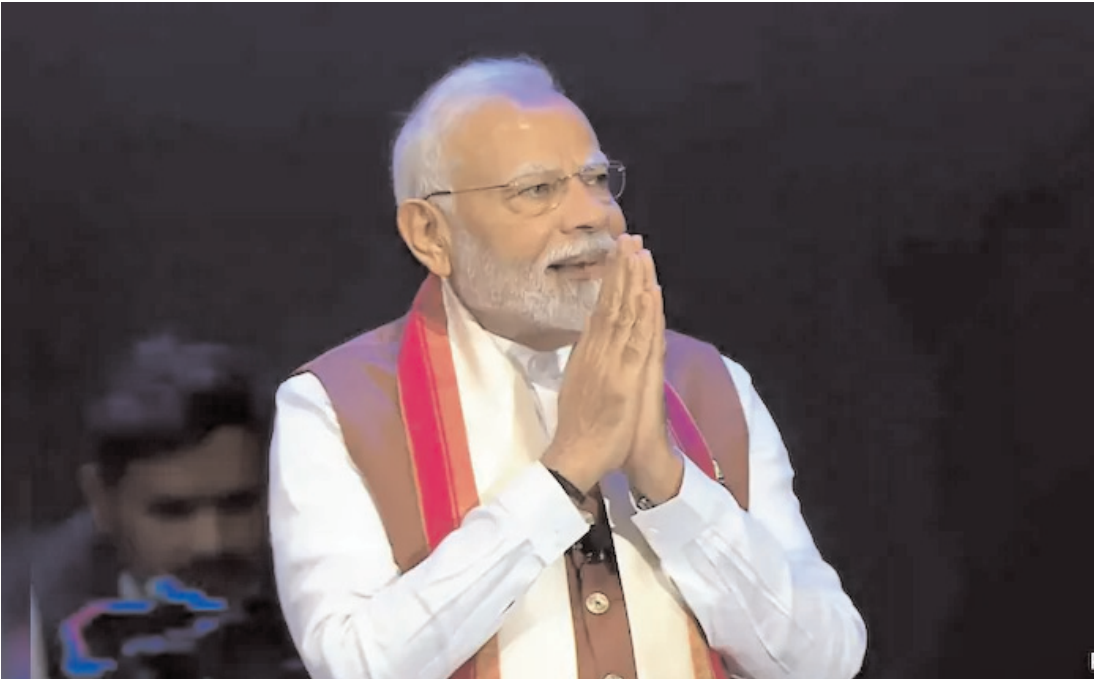
More than three decades later, much has changed, and yet very little has. Pakistan has once again found a diplomatic sweet spot, courted simultaneously by the US, EU, China and key West Asian powers, even as India has tried hard to isolate it internationally, which, during President Trump's first term, almost came true. But since the President's return to the White House, Islamabad has skillfully exploited his idiosyncrasies and shifting geopolitical tensions to regain relevance. The May 2025 India-Pakistan ceasefire was announced by Donald Trump, who often claims credit for stopping wars around the world. Pakistan cunningly seized the moment. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif publicly praised Trump's role and later even backed him for a Nobel Peace Prize. So what if it smacked of cheap sycophancy? Before him, even British Prime Minister Keir Starmer had appeared to indulge Trump's appetite for flattery. Abraham Accords And Pak's Other Challenges But Pakistan's renewed relevance comes with familiar dangers.

A Life Pledged To India: PM Modi's Historic Democratic Milestone

On the morning of June 10, 2026, a new benchmark is etched into the democratic history of India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi completes 4,399 uninterrupted days in office, surpassing Jawaharlal Nehru to become India's longest continuously serving elected Prime Minister. Whatever accolades are bestowed upon him on this historic day, he is likely to mark it as he marks every milestone, by returning to work and focusing on the next national mission. For, PM Narendra Modi's story has never been about power. It has been about purpose: a life dedicated to the service of India and its 140 crore citizens. For more than a quarter century, first as the head of a state and then of the nation, PM Modi has been guided by a simple conviction: public office is not a privilege to be enjoyed, but a duty to be discharged. The eighteen-hour workdays, relentless travel and rigorous personal discipline that have become part of political folklore all spring from that belief. The significance of this milestone lies not in the number itself. Records are counted in days; leadership is measured in trust.

Three Elections. One Verdict of 140 Crore Indians.

In a democracy, there is no endorsement more authentic than the verdict of ordinary citizens. Headlines change. Narratives rise and fall. Political fashions come and go. The ballot box alone endures. PM Narendra Modi sought the people's mandate in 2014, renewed it in 2019 and secured it again in 2024. Three times, the world's largest democracy entrusted him with its leadership. At a time when incumbents across much of the democratic world from London to Washington have struggled to retain public confidence, that achievement carries significance far beyond electoral arithmetic. Though Nehru assumed office in 1947, his elected tenure began in 1952 and lasted until 1964. Modi's entire record rests on mandates won at the ballot box. Every one of his 4,399 days in office has been validated by the sovereign will of the people. That is more than a political achievement. It is a rare and sustained expres-



sion of public trust, a national verdict, renewed across three elections, on a style of leadership, a model of governance, and a vision of India's future that millions have repeatedly chosen to endorse.

The Economy: From Drift to the Fastest Climb on Earth

A mandate is worth only what is built with it. In 2014, India was the world's eleventh-largest economy. Today, it stands at the threshold of the third, the fastest-growing major economy expanded by close to 90%, while the world managed barely 35. Nearly 25 crore Indians have walked out of poverty, certified by the world's own agencies and not merely by New Delhi, and have turned from claimants on the State into contributors to its rise. The GST, called impossible for a generation, was passed and then simplified. Article 370 was folded into history. And the everyday face of it: new highways and airports, a railway remade, a vegetable seller in a village taking payment on her phone through a homegrown marvel the world now copies.

The Reformer Who Cleared the Path

Above all, he has been a reformer of rare appetite, across every sector at once. He has gone after the deep social and economic ailments

that plagued the country for generations, and gone after them methodically, unshackling the potential of the individual Indian. More than 1,500 archaic laws, many of them colonial relics, have been struck off, and some 40,000 needless compliances lifted from the backs of citizens and enterprise. The criminal codes once written by rulers for subjects have given way to laws written by Indians for Indians. The aim runs through it all: easier living for the family, easier business for the enterprise, easier justice for the wronged. A state that once stood in the citizen's path has learned, statute by statute, to step aside.

A Nation Learns to Say, I Can

The deepest change cannot be weighed or counted, for it happened inside the mind of the ordinary Indian. A country that once apologised for itself learned to say, aloud, I can. A startup ecosystem grown from a few hundred ventures to more than 2.3 lakh, throwing up some 24 to 25 lakh jobs, half of them in towns the big cities forgot, a third led by women. Space and drone sectors, once sealed behind a single official door, now teem with thousands of young companies. And on the night Chandrayaan touched the dark south of the Moon, a girl in a small

town understood, without being told, that the ceiling she had been promised was never there.

The Last Indian in the Queue

There is one Indian this era set out, above all, to find: the one always left at the very end of the line. He reached her through the largest digital public infrastructure on earth, the trinity of Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and mobile, which put a bank account, an identity and a payment gateway in the poorest hand. With it, the old leakage, where a rupee left Delhi and reached the poor as a few paise, ended; the whole rupee now reaches the hand it was meant for. A free sack of grain through the pandemic, a health card under Ayushman Bharat, a tap in the courtyard, a clean flame, a roof of one's own. To the woman who finally received them, these are not statistics. They are the distance between fear and dignity. That confidence now travels with the nation abroad. For decades India entered the world asking to be understood; today it walks in carrying proposals. Its G20 turned a club of the rich into a megaphone for the Global South and seated the African Union for good. A country once the world's largest buyer of arms now builds them on its own soil, as self-reliance hardens from

slogan into supply chain. And when terror struck, Operation Sindoor replied with the cold precision of a state that has stopped pleading and started deciding. The old powers no longer ask what India will accept. They ask what India proposes.

Before He Led India, He Lived It

To understand the Pradhan Sevak, know the journey that made him. Born in 1950 in a small Gujarat town, as a son who helped at his father's railway platform tea stall before he left school. As a young man he did what few leaders would dare: For years he wandered across India, from the Himalayan shrines to the ashrams of Bengal to the southern coasts, sleeping rough, learning the nation not from books but from her dust and her people. Long before he governed a state, he knew her districts and villages, her faiths and her poor more intimately than almost anyone who has held his office. When such a man speaks of serving 140 crore Indians, he is not reaching for a phrase; he is naming the country he has lived among all his life, and whose pulse he carries like no one else.

The Vow That Never Broke

No government in a vibrant democracy should be beyond scrutiny, and this one has never sought to be. But on the measures it chose to be judged by, the strength of the economy, the dignity of the poor, the ease of everyday life, and India's standing in the world, the years since 2014 will rank among the most consequential in the history of the Republic. Where Nehru's innings ended in 1964 with a republic still searching for its voice, Modi leads one the world now strains to hear, brick by deliberate brick, he is laying the foundation of a Viksit Bharat. These 4,399 days were never one man's possession. They were a trust, given by the people and held in their name. And the lesson these 4,399 days carry is that in the world's largest democracy, power is not a prize to be possessed but a responsibility to be honoured, and the only way to retain the trust that confers it is to never stop serving the people.

THE MANY MEANINGS OF A 'BANANA REPUBLIC'

The phrase 'Banana Republic' has had a good run. And I am no longer sure we can use it to describe how the modern republic works, no matter how much decay you think it emotes. The genesis of the term itself no longer serves the outcome it sought to describe. Let me tell you why. The term, once coined by the American writer O. Henry in his 1904 book Cabbages and Kings, was used to describe a fictional Central American country, 'Anchuria', a "small, maritime banana republic" whose government bent to the interests of a powerful foreign corporation. Over time, the phrase escaped literature and entered political vocabulary as shorthand for a state where power was increasingly concentrated, institutions were weak, and the idea of democracy existed more on paper than in practice. For more than a century, the term has faithfully served journalists, academics, and largely disappointed citizens. It was a useful phrase because everyone immediately knew what it meant. A Banana Republic was where institutions went to die, where narrative-building often became a government's most effective tool of governance. While we always imagined that we would know exactly the moment a republic began to lose its way - larger than life political figures, carefully choreographed displays of institutional strength, constitutions that served more as optional reading material and less as foundational documents - but maybe it is more subtle than we can hypothesise. The modern republic has developed



subtler habits and has become increasingly difficult to detect. Decline in the modern republic is perhaps more polite with its entry, and equally harsh in its outcome. Institutions do not collapse anymore, but are simply less inclined to stand tall against authority. The media remains very much alive, though increasingly preoccupied with delivering pre-approved narratives under the comforting label of news. Nobody shuts down Universities anymore, no public institution is formally abolished, no political leaders resign or even apologise for mistakes. Public debate continues, the range, however, narrows down into acceptable boundaries. And, this, dear reader, may be one of the most defining political innovations of our time. The old model, which relied on coercion, now relies on participation. The new model elevates the enthusiastic supporter as a model citizen, the one that embraces political fidelity as a civic duty. And the sceptical citizen, once

regarded as essential to the health of a republic, now becomes a source of irritation. The transition from coercion to participation gets simpler when politics ceases to be about administration and becomes increasingly concerned with emotion. Where questions about employment, healthcare and education are never truly abandoned, but almost forced to compete with 'sentiment'. Therefore, in modern politics, the art of spectacle holds more value as a political resource. It helps shift the public's attention and builds perception. And, perhaps the most remarkable achievement of the modern republic is its ability to keep citizens permanently occupied. Public life increasingly resembles a never-ending national group project in which everybody is passionately engaged, and nobody is entirely sure what the assignment was in the first place. Of course, none of this is unique to any one country. The temptation is universal, and so is its critique. Every government

prefers applause, every movement demands loyalty, and every generation imagines itself uniquely qualified to correct the mistakes of history. The problem, however, is that the idea of Banana Republic belonged to an era in which democratic decline was expected to be 'visible'. It described governments that appeared adverse with the notion of democracy itself. Everything was visible, therefore it was obvious - there were obvious villains, obvious misuse of power and obvious violations. But the modern republic presents a more complicated challenge. It may be because modern republics have become extraordinarily skilled at preserving democratic forms while steadily altering democratic culture. Democracy was never just a mere tool through which power could be acquired, but also something that, through the same power, remained answerable. So, where did it go wrong? The most revealing feature, in my humble opinion, of the modern republic is that every criticism now arrives with a disclaimer. It is as though critics have learned to place an invisible asterisk at the end of every sentence, a self-warning of sorts, that disagreement need not be mistaken for disloyalty. Therefore, the question arises: should we retire the term Banana Republic, because, in hindsight, no such visible decay of the republic really exists? Democracies are wealthier now, economies are larger, infrastructure is better, scientific capabilities have expanded, the militaries are stronger.

The Chinese Are Using LinkedIn 'Jobs' To Spy On Countries. Is India Prepared?

A joint statement issued by the Five Eyes intelligence partnership last week is significant not merely because of its content, but because of the unprecedented unity it reflects. The public warning by the domestic security agencies of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand points to growing concerns over what they describe as an increasingly sophisticated Chinese intelligence effort to exploit professional networking and recruitment platforms for espionage purposes. The bulletin, titled Safeguarding Our Secrets, alleges that Chinese military intelligence services have adopted an aggressive online recruitment strategy, leveraging platforms such as LinkedIn, Indeed, and Upwork to identify, cultivate, and recruit individuals with access to sensitive information. According to the Five Eyes agencies, operatives frequently disguise themselves as representatives of private consultancies, research institutions, or human resource firms, posting seemingly legitimate opportunities for foreign policy, defence, and strategic affairs experts. Who Is Targeted The methodology is notable for its subtlety. Initial engagements often revolve around innocuous professional exchanges, but gradually evolve into requests for non-public information, strategic assessments, or privileged insights. Financial incentives ranging from modest consulting fees to substantial payments are reportedly used to sustain these relationships. The primary targets include current and former government officials, military personnel, intelligence professionals, diplomats, defence analysts, and individuals possessing access to sensitive political, economic, or technological information. The strategic objective is clear: to secure tactical and long-term advantages for China through intelligence collection. The Five Eyes agencies have framed these activities as part of a broader pattern of Chinese statecraft that integrates military, intelligence, commercial, and technological



capabilities in pursuit of national objectives. What makes this warning particularly noteworthy is its collective nature. While individual governments have previously issued alerts regarding Chinese espionage activities, a coordinated public intervention by all Five Eyes members sends a powerful signal regarding the scale and persistence of the perceived threat. It reflects an emerging recognition that intelligence challenges can no longer be addressed solely within classified channels. In an era where professional networking platforms blur the boundaries between public and private domains, societal resilience has become an essential component of national security. A Comprehensive Chinese Strategy The warning must also be situated within the broader geopolitical context. Across Western capitals, concerns about Chinese cyber operations, intellectual property theft, influence campaigns, and strategic technology acquisition have intensified over the past decade. Increasingly, security agencies view these activities not as isolated incidents but as components of a comprehensive state strategy designed to enhance China's global influence and strategic competitiveness. The specific emphasis on the Indo-Pacific region further

underscores the geopolitical dimensions of the challenge. As competition intensifies over issues ranging from the South China Sea to Taiwan and regional security architectures, intelligence gathering assumes even greater importance for all major actors involved. For India, although it remains outside the Five Eyes framework and continues to pursue a policy of strategic autonomy, the warning carries considerable relevance. India faces many of the same vulnerabilities identified in the bulletin. Reports over the years have highlighted attempts to engage Indian academics, researchers, policy experts, and individuals with government or military affiliations through professional networking platforms and purported academic collaborations. Given the continuing tensions along the Line of Actual Control and the broader strategic rivalry between India and China, Indian expertise relating to defence, foreign policy, technology, and Indo-Pacific affairs is likely to remain an attractive target. How To Stay Safe The implications are, therefore, both immediate and long-term. At the operational level, greater vigilance is required among government officials, military personnel, researchers, and academic communities.

AI giants' race to raise funds heats up as ChatGPT-owner plans stock market debut

OpenAI, the company behind popular chatbot ChatGPT, has become the latest artificial intelligence (AI) giant to reveal plans to sell shares to the public through a stock listing. Its decision had been expected for months, but the company's announcement comes exactly one week after rival AI firm Anthropic said it was planning to go public, too. OpenAI said on Monday it had made a confidential filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission to pursue an initial public offering (IPO) at some point in the future. Its plans are the latest in a wave of heavyweight IPOs, alongside Anthropic and billionaire Elon Musk's rocket company, SpaceX, which is set to debut on the Nasdaq on Friday. SpaceX is targeting a share price which would value the company at \$1.75tn (£1.3tn). Announcing its IPO plans on Monday, OpenAI said: "We have not decided on timing yet; it may be a while because there are things we want to do that are likely easier as a private company." The three firms all have a "vast need for cash", said Sunil Krishnan from Aviva Investors, and "no-one wants to be last" in the game to go public, he told



the BBC's Today programme. He said that the firms are making huge investments in their AI infrastructure including on chips, and training their AI models, which all come at massive expense. OpenAI and Anthropic, the maker of the chatbot Claude, are focused on AI work and have been fierce rivals essentially since Dario Amodei co-founded the latter company five years ago. He did so after leaving OpenAI over disagreements with Sam Altman, the co-founder and chief executive of OpenAI. Today, the companies compete for users, corporate customers, investors, and have in

recent months been jockeying with private valuations inching toward \$1tn. OpenAI's most recent valuation from private investors came in at \$852bn. Anthropic's most recent valuation hit \$965bn. The companies now will be competing as to who might debut on the public stock market first - as neither have said exactly when this could occur. Investors are closely tracking the listings of these two generative AI firms, as their performance will help shape expectations for others to follow, said assistant professor Richard Crowley from the Singapore Management University. "We might typi-

cally think of OpenAI and Anthropic as competitors, but the fate of their financing is intrinsically intertwined through the public's perception of the generative AI space," he said. Last week, Altman said in an interview with CNBC that he was in no rush to take OpenAI public, and that he would do it "when it makes sense". In its statement on Monday, OpenAI said it was revealing its IPO plans because "we expect it to leak". The company noted that revealing its plans and its decision to go public "is a complicated set of trade-offs". Having filed the necessary paperwork for review with the SEC, the company

says it now has "the option to go public sooner if that ends up being best". By listing on the stock market, OpenAI will need to become more transparent about its financials and product pipeline. IPO listings can also deter private funding and make deals slower or less appealing because companies must disclose more information, Crowley said. For OpenAI, Anthropic and SpaceX, which also owns the controversial AI chatbot Grok, selling shares to the public is likely to give them billions of dollars in capital. One of the most costly aspects of running an AI company is what is referred to as "compute," which typically describes the infrastructure and processing power required to build, train, test and then make available its offerings to the public, such as a chatbot. OpenAI's compute costs are estimated to be over \$100bn a year, while its revenue, the money it actually makes from its business, is a fraction of that. SpaceX is also far from a profitable business. Anthropic, however, has told investors that it expects to turn a profit in the first half of this year, as it says sales of its Claude product and related services have grown significantly.

NDR SMART SPACES INAUGURATES ~0.6 MILLION SQ FT FACILITY AT KONGARA KALAN, HYDERABAD

Hyderabad, une 2026: NDR Smart Spaces (part of NDR Warehousing group), one of India's leading developers of Grade A industrial and logistics real estate, today announced the inauguration of its approximately 0.6 million sq ft warehousing facility at Kongara Kalan, Hyderabad — marking a landmark milestone in the company's continued expansion across one of India's fastest-growing logistics and industrial markets. With this addition, NDR Smart Spaces' total operational footprint in Hyderabad grows to approximately 1.4 million sq ft, reinforcing its position as a key enabler of modern supply chain infrastructure in the region. Strategically located near Exit 13 of the Hyderabad Outer Ring Road (ORR), the facility is designed to provide seamless and efficient connectivity to the city's key industrial corridors and consumption hubs. The location ensures faster last-mile delivery timelines, reduced logistics costs, and direct access to major arterial routes - making it ideally positioned to serve the evolving demands of modern supply chains and indus-

Highlights

- TOTAL PORTFOLIO IN HYDERABAD EXPANDS TO 1.4 MILLION SQ FT, REINFORCING NDR'S GROWING PRESENCE IN THE CITY

trial occupiers operating across the region. The facility is fully leased across the park, reflecting strong occupier demand for Grade A warehousing infrastructure in Hyderabad. Key clients include leading players across third-party logistics (3PL), FMCG, quick commerce and manufacturing — underscoring the park's appeal as a best-in-class logistics destination for occupiers across diverse and high-growth sectors. Speaking on the occasion, Amrutesh Reddy, Managing Director, NDR Smart Spaces, said: "Hyderabad is at the heart of India's next phase of logistics growth, and Kongara Kalan is a testament to the confidence

occupiers are placing in Grade A infrastructure. As we cross 1.4 million sq ft in the city, our focus remains on delivering spaces that don't just meet today's supply chain demands - but anticipate tomorrow's." Built to the highest-Grade A specifications, the facility offers flexible layouts and future-ready infrastructure, purpose-designed for the evolving needs of occupiers across sectors. The development is a reflection of NDR's long-term vision to create institutional-quality logistics real estate that powers India's next wave of supply chain and industrial growth. Ramachandran Rajaram, Regional Business Head, NDR Smart Spaces, said: "Hyderabad is no longer just an emerging logistics market — it is a fully arrived one. The diversity of occupiers at Kongara Kalan, spanning 3PL, FMCG, quick commerce, manufacturing, aerospace and renewable energy sectors, speaks to the breadth of demand this city is generating. Its strategic location on the ORR puts occupiers right at the intersection of connectivity and commerce, and we see this momentum only accelerating from here."

Blenders pride packaged drinking water introduces ‘blenders pride reserved experiences’: redefining flavour through multi-sensory discovery

9th June 2026 - Blenders Pride Packaged Drinking Water unveils 'Blenders Pride Reserved Experiences', a new cultural platform designed to reimagine how flavour is experienced – across the senses. At a time when consumers are gravitating towards more meaningful and elevated experiences – ones that reflect their own evolving tastes and choices, 'Blenders Pride Reserved Experiences' responds to this shift by transforming flavour into something more expressive. Rooted in the idea of 'Reserved in Every Sense', the platform presents flavour as a multi-dimensional journey - one that can be seen, heard, felt and experienced, not just tasted. Curated with Chef Kunal Kapur, the experience brought this vision to life through an intimate, exclusive showcase. At the heart of the evening was a live gastro-performance, where flavour was orchestrated alongside music in real time, blending texture, aroma, and rhythm into a seamless sensory expression. What set the experience apart was its interpretation of flavour beyond the palate — through a series of immersive spaces, each interpreting flavour through a distinct lens, from dynamic visual environments and aroma-led installations to tactile explorations and a curated tasting experience. Envisioned as an evolving cultural platform, Blenders Pride



Reserved Experiences continued its journey in Kolkata after Chandigarh, Gurgaon, and Jaipur, with 10+ activations set to unfold across key markets—creating new ways for consumers to engage with flavour beyond the expectations. Speaking on the experience, Chef Kunal Kapur said, "Flavour, in its truest form, is layered and evolving. With Reserved Experiences, we've interpreted flavour beyond the plate — bringing it to life through different forms, so people can engage with it in a far more immersive and unexpected way." Debasree Dasgupta, CMO, Pernod Ricard India, added, "Consumers today are seeking more intentional

and elevated experiences, ones that go beyond functional and feel truly distinctive. With Blenders Pride Reserved Experiences, we are building a cultural platform that responds to this shift, translating the depth and complexity of flavour into immersive, multi-sensory expressions. It's a natural extension of how our audiences want to engage today, where discovery is richer, engaging, and reserved in every sense." With Blenders Pride Reserved Experiences, the brand continues to build a distinctive cultural narrative, one that elevates flavour into a refined, multi-sensory exploration designed for a new generation of discerning consumers.

Zepto Limited files UDRHP-I with SEBI for an Initial Public Offering (IPO)

UDRHP-I Link: <https://www.axiscapital.co.in/contents/Zepto%20Limited%20-%20UDRHP-I-1780938548.pdf> Zepto Limited, fastest growing quick commerce platform in India in terms of order volume between Fiscal 2024 and Fiscal 2026 amongst scaled quick commerce platforms has filed its UDRHP-I with SEBI. The offer comprises of a fresh issue aggregating up to ? 8,010 crores and an offer for sale of Equity Shares aggregating up to 11,34,66,566 of face value of ? 5 per equity share. Zepto proposes to utilise the net proceeds from the fresh issue towards:

1. Expansion of the dark store network through setting up new dark stores in existing and new geographies
2. Lease rentals of existing dark stores
3. Investment in technology and cloud infrastructure

4. Investment in Zepto Marketplace Private Limited for marketing and business promotion expenses to enhance brand awareness and visibility

5. Funding inorganic growth through unidentified acquisitions and general corporate purposes. Zepto is the fastest growing quick commerce platform in India in terms of order volume between Fiscal 2024 and Fiscal 2026 amongst scaled quick commerce platforms; and during this period, Zepto's order volume grew at a CAGR of approximately 119.50%, significantly outpacing industry growth, per the Redseer Report. Zepto is focused on the quick commerce business, and its target is to provide quick delivery to users. In Fiscal 2026, an average of 46,623 SKUs (ranging from fruits and vegetables to household electronics and cosmetics) were listed on its platform (at a dark store geography level) and sold by Merchant Partners

through an intuitive digital interface and a network of 1,139 dark stores, as of March 31, 2026. The company's network of dark stores is powered by a backend supply chain infrastructure that enables its Merchant Partners to offer fast moving consumer goods products from manufacturers and brands. This supply chain is automated, with an average of 3,999,192 units per day processed through automated infrastructure during the three months ended March 31, 2026, and operates on in-house software for manpower productivity management, inventory forecasting and tracking, among other features. Zepto's delivery network comprises an average of 286,670.33 active delivery partners on a "gig economy" model, delivering an average of 2,333,488 orders per day ("OPD") in the three months period ended March 31, 2026. The delivery partners are managed through an in-house delivery platform

that matches demand forecasts with shift timings, digitizes cash collection for order payments, and gives delivery partners visibility into their earnings and weekly payouts. For Fiscal 2026, Zepto reported Net Revenue of ₹22,623.58 crore and Net Revenue Value (NRV) of ₹24,815.54 crore. The company served 47.97 million annual transacting users during Fiscal 2026. Advertisement revenue stood at ₹1,635.73 crore in Fiscal 2026.

The equity shares are proposed to be listed on the BSE and NSE. Axis Capital Limited, Morgan Stanley India Company Private Limited, Goldman Sachs (India) Securities Private Limited, Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors Limited, HSBC Securities and Capital Markets (India) Private Limited, JM Financial Limited, and IIFL Capital Services Limited are the book running lead managers to the issue.

Enforcement Directorate summons Zepto founders over FEMA probe

New Delhi: Zepto co-founders Aadit Palicha and Kaivalya Vohra received summons from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in April this year, seeking information and documents related to foreign investments, financials, and the company's business, in connection with proceedings under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). The IPO-bound quick commerce firm has disclosed in its updated Draft Red Herring Prospectus (UDRHP). The disclosure appears in the section on risk factors of the latest document. According to the updated DRHP, the ED sought details including foreign and overseas investments, audited financial statements, shareholding patterns, information on loans and guarantees, income tax returns, bank accounts, immovable properties, and a note on Zepto's business model. The summons, dated April 8, 2026, required the founders to appear before the ED to furnish relevant documents and



information. "Two of our promoters, namely, Aadit Palicha and Kaivalya Vohra had received summons, each dated April 8, 2026, from the Directorate of Enforcement, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, requiring them to appear before the ED, to produce certain documents and/or provide information in relation to our company and/or themselves..." it said. Information sought pertained to "details of foreign investments and overseas investments; audited balance sheets since Financial Year 2020-2021; owned immovable properties; shareholding pat-

tern; details of loans/guarantees; income tax returns and bank accounts; note on our business model, in relation to proceedings under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999". Zepto further said that complying with the summons, Vohra appeared before the ED on April 17, 2026 and April 22, 2026, and Palicha on April 20, 2026 and May 15, 2026, respectively. "As on the date of this Updated Draft Red Herring Prospectus-I, they have provided relevant information and documents as requested by ED pursuant to the summons.

FITCH CUTS FY27 GROWTH PROJECTION; WAR TO SLOW DOWN ECONOMY

New Delhi: Fitch Ratings on Tuesday, June 9, lowered its GDP growth projections for the current fiscal to 6.4 per cent from the earlier estimate of 6.7 per cent, saying that the US-Iran war will slow down the economy in the September and December quarters. Fitch said it expects a slowdown in economic growth in FY27 from the 7.4 per cent clocked in FY26 as rising prices erode real incomes and dampen consumer spending, amid a resilient capital expenditure. "We expect GDP growth to ease to 6.4 per cent in FY27, a downward revision of 0.3pp from March. Domestic demand will be the main driver of growth, but lower imports in real terms imply positive contributions to growth from net external demand," Fitch Ratings said in its June Global Economic Outlook. Last week, the RBI had cut its growth forecast for the current fiscal to 6.6 per cent and upped its inflation projection to 5.1 per cent. The rating agency said the slowdown in the economy will be most apparent in the second and third quarter of FY27, as rising prices due to the US-Iran war erode real incomes and dampen consumer spending. Fuel prices have both risen by 4-5 per cent in recent weeks. For FY28, Fitch



expects GDP growth to pick up as the energy shock unwinds, with stronger consumer spending and investment translating to a growth rate of 6.7 per cent for the full financial year, and ease towards trend growth of 6.4 per cent in FY29. Fitch has also lowered its 2026 forecast for global growth by 0.2pp to 2.4 per cent as world growth prospects have been hurt by the oil crisis prompted by the US-Iran war. "The oil price shock is hitting world growth prospects and increasing downside risks. But we are also amid a very pronounced boom in global spending on IT and that is cushioning the impact on

activity in the near term, particularly in Asia," said Fitch, Chief Economist, Brian Coulton said. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has now lasted 14 weeks and we assume it will not start to reopen until July. Fitch has revised its 2026 average price assumption for Brent crude oil to USD 87 per barrel (bbl), up from the USD 70/bbl estimated in March. The oil shock is a strong headwind to world growth, but its base case is far less severe than the pernicious oil shocks of the 1970s. Real oil prices reached USD170/bbl in 1979 (measured in current prices) and OPEC played a very different role then. Oil

consumption as a share of world GDP has halved since 1980. Fitch said India's consumer price inflation has not yet risen significantly, but price pressures are mounting; wholesale prices rose by 8.3 per cent y/y in April and CPI inflation to 3.5 per cent. "We expect inflation to rise steadily over the months ahead, reaching 5.3 per cent by the end of the (calendar) year. This reflects a combination of base effects and higher energy prices. Forecasts for below-average monsoon rains and the current heatwave in parts of India raise the risk of even stronger price rises," Fitch said. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its policy rate at 5.25 per cent in April. But Fitch expects RBI to change course and increase rates once this year to 5.5 per cent to address the rising price pressures from the adverse supply shock. "We do not expect a further, significant depreciation in the Indian rupee over the rest of the year," Fitch said. The global rating agency expects the exchange rate to average 97.50 to a dollar in current fiscal. Fitch has also lowered its 2026 forecast for global growth by 0.2pp to 2.4 per cent as world growth prospects have been hurt by the oil crisis prompted by the US-Iran war.

Israeli air strikes hit Lebanese city of Tyre after Iranian warning to stop attacks

Antonio Guterres says he is "deeply alarmed by the renewed escalation in the Middle East." In a post on X, the UN secretary general calls for "all attacks" to stop "immediately", saying that ceasefires in Lebanon, Iran and Gaza "must be fully respected". "There is no military solution to the conflicts in the Middle East," he continues. "The only way forward is through dialogue and negotiations." He ends the post urging "all concerned to work towards diplomatic solutions that advance regional & international peace & security." What is the state of each ceasefire? A ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon was agreed last week, though this was rejected by Hezbollah - the Shia Muslim militia which operates inside the country with the support of Iran. Meanwhile on Sunday, Iran and Israel exchanged fire for the first time since a ceasefire was agreed between the two countries in April - both



sides agreed to halt attacks on Monday. Major fighting in Gaza ceased in October 2025, though there have been clashes between Israel and Hamas inside the Palestinian territory since then. UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper says the strikes carried out by Israel, Iran and Hezbollah over the last few days mark "one of the most

dangerous moments since the fragile ceasefire was agreed". "The resumption of conflict is in no one's interest and I spoke to the Iranian foreign minister on Sunday evening to convey this directly," she tells the House of Commons. Cooper welcomes the pause in strikes between Iran and Israel, but condemns the attacks carried

out by the IDF in southern Lebanon this morning, describing them as "disproportionate". She also "strongly condemned" the attacks carried out by Hezbollah against the Israeli military, urging both parties to uphold the fragile ceasefire brokered by the US. It is worth remembering how this conflict was viewed when it began on 28

February. Both Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu framed the military action in historic terms. Netanyahu said he had been waiting his entire political life for the opportunity to confront what he sees as Israel's greatest enemy, and finally had a US president willing to support him. Trump appeared to believe a swift victory was possible, telling Iranians that the moment was approaching when they could reclaim their country. But none of that has happened. Instead, Iran has emerged with a new leadership. This is not the regime change Trump has claimed. However, with many senior figures killed, a new generation has taken their place. They remain deeply ideological but appear less cautious than the old guard. Their confidence has been boosted by developments during the conflict, not least the impact of disrupting shipping through the Strait of

Hormuz. That shift is helping reshape the region. The trajectory now looks difficult, perhaps impossible, to reverse. The consequences extend far beyond Iran and Israel, affecting countries across the Gulf. States such as the UAE, whose economies depend on stability, have already seen significant damage from the disruption caused by the conflict. Iranian outlets have been publishing more details about the funeral processions for Iran's late Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, quoting organisers. Khamenei was killed when Israel and the US attacked Iran on the first day of the war, 28 February. Iran is yet to hold funeral processions and burial for him. His son Mojtaba Khamenei succeeded him in early March. The organisers have said that the processions will be held after the 10th day of the first month in the Islamic calendar, which is expected to fall on 25 or 26 June.

ARIANA GRANDE AND ETHAN SLATER SPLIT AFTER THREE YEARS



Ariana Grande and Ethan Slater have ended their relationship after nearly three years together, according to US reports. The couple separated "quietly" and in an "amicable" manner several months ago, a source told US magazine People. "They gave lots of time and careful consideration and decided to go their separate ways," the source told the publication. "They are still friends and very supportive of one another." The performing pair met while starring together in the modern film adaptation of the stage musical Wicked. BBC News has asked Grande and Slater's representatives for

comment. The singer and actress, 32, first met Slater, 34, in 2023 while they were shooting the Wizard of Oz spin-off in the UK. Grande starred as Glinda the good witch in the two films, while Slater portrayed Boq Woodsman, who is later turned into the Tin Man. After going Instagram official in real life in 2024, the couple appeared together at promotional events for both Wicked and its sequel, Wicked: For Good. Both stars finalised divorces from their former partners during their time together. Last weekend, Grande began her long-awaited Eternal Sunshine tour - her first since 2019.

KENYAN POLICE FIRE TEAR GAS AT PROTEST AGAINST US EBOLA QUARANTINE CENTRE PLAN



Police in Kenya have fired tear gas to break up a protest in the central town of Nanyuki against the construction of an Ebola quarantine centre for US citizens. Small groups of demonstrators, who were waving Kenyan flags, carrying placards and holding a coffin with the word "Ebola" written on the side, were demanding the plan be reversed. Last week, two people died after being shot as police dispersed similar protests. The US plan has sparked public concern about cross-border infection risks and the lack of transparency from the government about the treatment centre. Last month, the High Court said the opening of the facility should be halted after a rights group opened a case alleging it posed "grave and imminent risks" to public health. Protester Priscilla Imani told the Reuters news agency that the US plan has affected Nanyuki and the wider Laikipia county with people being afraid to visit. "My message is this, Laikipia is not a dumping site and our voices must be heard," she said. The proposed 50-bed isolation centre is to be staffed by US

medics and is intended to treat Americans affected by the current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A US official told the BBC that Kenya was selected due to "proximity, airports in the region having limited capability, and to ensure Americans can be treated in a timely manner". The Congolese city of Bunia, the epicentre of the outbreak, is 780km (485 miles) from Nanyuki, with Uganda separating DR Congo and Kenya. DR Congo has so far recorded some 600 confirmed Ebola cases and 100 deaths. Kenya has not recorded any cases. President William Ruto defended the plan saying he had received a request from the US to establish the centre and a refusal would be "inhuman". He called on Kenyans not to politicise a matter "so serious" as Ebola, asking politicians to avoid "reckless" talk about it. Satellite imagery seen by the BBC show that construction has continued at the airbase despite the court halting it. The US official last week said the administration was aware of the court case but "optimistic we can resolve objections".

ICC SUSPENDS TOP PROSECUTOR AFTER INVESTIGATING MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS

The International Criminal Court's (ICC) chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, has been suspended with immediate effect while an investigation into misconduct allegations continues. The decision was made by a group within the ICC's management oversight body, which has also referred the matter to the court's 125 member states. Those states will vote on Khan's future during a special session that will be convened "as soon as possible". The oversight Bureau stressed that the suspension does not prejudice the outcome of the case. Khan has repeatedly denied all allegations of sexual misconduct, with his lawyers describing the decision as "unlawful, procedurally unfair and unsupported by evidence". Previous media reports



have cited a document outlining accusations against Khan, which are understood to include unwanted sexual touching and "abuse". A two-thirds majority would be required to uphold any finding, followed by a separate vote on whether Khan, should be removed from office. Khan, a prominent British lawyer, has been on voluntary leave to fight the allegations since May 2025.

300 MIGRANTS BOUND FOR UK KIDNAPPED AND THREATENED WITH KIDNEY REMOVAL

More than 300 migrants heading to the UK last summer were kidnapped, tortured and threatened with forced organ removal, the BBC has learned. The young men, all from Iraqi Kurdistan, were captured in Libya by a militia who demanded a ransom of \$5,000 (£3,700) from each of their families, and threatened to harvest the captives' kidneys if payment was not made promptly. We have spoken to some hostages who have since been released, and seen photo evidence suggesting that forced operations did take place. The former captives showed us evidence of torture, and said they had been kept in cramped conditions, with nearly 180 people sharing a cell. At least one hostage is known to have died, and it is unclear how many remain captive. The militia was supposed to be guiding the



migrants through Libya to the Mediterranean coast. However, a dispute over payment had broken out with the Iraqi Kurd people-smuggler, Noah Aaron, who had organised the migrants' journey. Aaron is now serving a 10-year prison sentence in France for separate money laundering and smuggling offences. Details of the kidnappings emerged during a recent BBC investigation into

another smuggler, Kardo Jaf, which led to his arrest last month. The two smugglers are believed to have worked together in the past. Both are from the town of Ranya in Iraqi Kurdistan - a region 'riddled with active smuggling networks', according to a report by the UK think tank, Chatham House. In February, a BBC investigative team was making inquiries about Jaf in Ranya, when they were

approached by a local man who said his son had been one of the men held. The man told the BBC that Aaron's smuggling gang had charged his family thousands of dollars for organising the journey to the UK, which would involve travelling through northern Africa, then across the Mediterranean into Europe. The route would pass through Libya, a country with a "huge vacuum of government", according to Anthony Dunkerley, a UN adviser who has investigated human trafficking there. Much of Libya is controlled by rival militias, and smuggling networks rely on their co-operation. We learned that, during the summer of 2025, successive groups of migrants who had flown into Libya from Iraqi Kurdistan were taken to a guarded compound and imprisoned.

Sea drone rescues US army helico

Two crew members of a US army helicopter that crashed near the Strait of Hormuz on Monday were rescued by an American sea drone, US officials have told CBS News, the BBC's media partner. It was the first such operation carried out by US forces, the officials added. US Central Command (Centcom) earlier said the two "soldiers were safely rescued within approximately two hours and are in stable condition" after their AH-64 Apache helicopter went down "near the coast of Oman while patrolling regional waters". It was not immediately clear whether the aircraft had developed a



mechanical or any other technical problem, or had been downed by Iranian fire. The incident is being investigated. In its statement on Tuesday, Centcom said the two crew members had been rescued at 19:33 EDT (23:33 GMT) on Monday. "Rescue efforts were led by US

Naval Forces Central Command and the 82nd Airborne Division, with support from US Air Force and Navy units including US 5th Fleet's Task Force 59," the statement added. The military officials who spoke to CBS News said the pair had been rescued by an uncrewed surface

drone that was operated by Task Force 59. In 2024, Task Force 59 launched a new unit focusing on "the operational deployment of unmanned systems teamed with manned operators to bolster maritime security across the Middle East region". It was not immediately clear what type of drone was used in the rescue operation, but a US official told ABC News that it had a speed boat-like design. The BBC has approached Centcom for comment. US President Donald Trump earlier told reporters the two crew members were "fine", and that a report into the incident would be issued later.

XI JINPING AND KIM JONG UN VOW STRONGER TIES



Chinese President Xi Jinping has wrapped up a two-day visit to Pyongyang, his first official trip to North Korea since 2019. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un pulled out all the stops for Xi when he arrived on Monday, from a red-carpet welcome to elaborate acrobatic performances. While no concrete deals emerged from the trip, its significance was recognised by Kim, who said that Xi's choice of Pyongyang for his first state visit of the year showed the "utmost importance" placed on bilateral ties, said a report by state news outlet KCNA. The trip also comes as Beijing is trying to reassert sway over its strategically vital yet deeply unpredictable partner that has drawn closer to Russia. With this visit, President Xi will feel he has done enough

to remind Kim that his main benefactor is China. For Kim, he will feel such that having such a VIP on his doorstep, just a few weeks after Xi has held meetings with US leader Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin will show that he has important friends despite continued international sanctions. At an evening banquet on Monday, Xi praised relations between both countries, saying that China and North Korea are "linked by mountains and rivers and share a common destiny", state outlet Xinhua reported. Kim echoed this, saying that North Korea would continue to uphold its friendship with China as a top priority and reaffirmed his support for Beijing's "One China" principle.



Hundreds of aftershocks jolt Philippines as officials say death toll could rise

Man accused of killing mother-in-law with poison-laced satay

A man in Indonesia has been arrested for allegedly murdering his mother-in-law using satay laced with rat poison. Police say Purwadi Wahyudi ordered chicken skewers on 18 May, dipped them in toxic chemicals, then couriered them to the alleged victim's house because he felt disrespected by her. He tried to frame his sister-in-law, who discovered the 57-year-old woman's body, covered in vomit, at her home in Central Java the next day, detectives added. Purwadi, 40, has been made a suspect and detained, but has not been formally charged with murder, which in Indonesia attracts the death penalty or at least 20 years in prison. Police say the family contacted them after the woman - identified only as Aminah - was buried, suspi-

cious that she had not died of natural causes. The woman's youngest daughter, Luriyanti Putri, told investigators the alleged victim had reported receiving a delivery of chicken satay from an unknown person the day before her body was discovered. Putri said it wasn't from her, and told her mother not to eat the food. Aminah's neighbour also reported seeing dead chickens near her coop. Her body was exhumed and forensic testing found signs of poisoning in most of her major organs, as well as traces of toxic chemicals. The head of the Boyolali police's criminal investigation unit, Indrawan Wira Saputra, added that the killing was carefully planned, according to Indonesian media outlet Kompas.

FIFA 2026: TICKETS FOR IRAN FANS REVOKED

Iran's allocation of fan tickets for the group stage of the World Cup has been revoked just days before the start of the tournament, says the country's football federation. The World Cup, co-hosted by Canada, Mexico and the United States, begins on Thursday, with Iran scheduled to play New Zealand on 15 June and Belgium on 21 June - both in Los Angeles - before facing Egypt in Seattle on 26 June. Iran's governing body says Fifa regulations state each federation involved in the World Cup receives 8% of the tickets for each of their matches, to distribute to supporters. It added that it had already begun selling tickets but can no longer provide them to fans, some of whom have already made travel arrangements. "Depriving Iranian supporters of access to their lawful and official allocation of tickets



is an action contrary to the spirit of governing international competitions and the principle of equality among participating countries," the FFIRI statement said. "This development raises serious questions about the interference of non-sporting and political considerations in the organisation of

the world's biggest football event." The FFIRI also called on Fifa "to uphold the principles of neutrality, fairness, and established regulations". Iran's involvement in the World Cup has been plagued with uncertainty, linked to the ongoing war in the Middle East and related security concerns.

On 25 May, Iran moved their training base from Tucson, Arizona to the Mexican city of Tijuana, claiming the US were unwilling to host them. Under the conditions of their visas, they will have to fly in and out of the United States on matchday for each of their three group games.

Less than a fortnight later, on 6 June, they accused the US of denying visas to "integral" members of the national team's backroom staff, with 15 administrative officials denied entry. The FFIRI had previously presented Fifa with a list of 10 conditions for their participation in the World Cup, including allowing players, coaches and officials who have completed military service with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). US secretary of state Marco Rubio has said Iran's players will be welcome at the tournament but individuals with links to the IRGC could face entry restrictions. Iran were the only country not present at Fifa's annual congress in Vancouver in April after a delegation of FFIRI officials, including president Medhi Taj, were turned away at the Canadian border.

Mohammed Siraj Withdrawn From England, Ireland Tour

Mohammed Siraj has been rested as part of workload management, with Prasidh Krishna named as his replacement for Ireland and England tours, the BCCI said on Tuesday. The Indian Cricket Board described the move as a "precautionary measure" to ensure quick recovery ahead of the long international season. Siraj was named in the squad for the Ireland and England series consisting two and five T20Is respectively but was not picked for the Asian Games in Japan. "Fast bowler Mohammed Siraj has been withdrawn from India's squads for the upcoming T20I series against Ireland and England," the BCCI said in a statement. "Following discussions between the BCCI Medical Team and the Team Management, Siraj has been advised a period of rest as part of his workload management programme. "The decision has been taken as a precautionary measure to ensure adequate recovery



ahead of a long international season. The Men's Selection Committee has named Prasidh Krishna as Siraj's replacement for both T20I series," the BCCI added. Siraj was a late addition to the Indian squad in their last T20I assignment — the T20 World Cup — while he played in each of the 17 matches for Gujarat Titans in the IPL 2026, taking 19 wickets. The right-arm pacer was also a part of the one-off Test against

Afghanistan which ended inside three days on Monday. Updated squad for Ireland and England tours Shreyas Iyer (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (vc), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakaravathy, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Prasidh Krishna.

Bianca Belair Shares Major Health Update After WrestleMania 41 Injury And Pregnancy Announcement

Bianca Belair has finally given fans a reason to smile after months away from WWE action. The former Women's Champion recently posted a new health update showing progress in her recovery, offering a closer look at where things stand after the injury that has kept her out of the ring since WrestleMania 41. The update comes at a time when Belair's future remains a major talking point. While she is still recovering, her return is tied to more than just medical clearance. The EST is also preparing for a huge personal milestone after announcing that she and Montez Ford are expecting their first child. Bianca Belair shows progress months after surgery Belair's latest update came through an Instagram



Story video. In the clip, she showed that her injured finger is now bending and flexing successfully while she continues therapy. That progress marks an important step in a recovery process that has been far longer than originally expected. What many initially believed was a

finger injury turned out to involve damage to both her knuckle and finger joint, creating a much more complicated situation. The setback eventually led to surgery in February 2026. Before making that decision, Belair underwent extensive therapy, but the injury failed to

heal properly. Surgery became the option that finally moved her recovery forward. Her WWE comeback remains without an official timeline Even though her recovery is moving in the right direction, WWE has not announced when fans can expect to see her back on television or competing again. Belair's most recent WWE appearance came at WrestleMania 42, but it wasn't for a match. She surprised the crowd by interrupting John Cena's promo and used the moment to reveal that she and Montez Ford are expecting their first child. That announcement added another layer to her absence. Any in-ring return will depend not only on her continued rehabilitation but also on her pregnancy timeline.

Bat Blocked By Keeper's Foot: Priyansh Arya, Ruturaj Gaikwad Involved In Bizarre Run Out

An extremely bizarre run-out took place on Tuesday in the first innings of the Sri Lanka A vs India A tri-nation series opener. After the early departures of Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Prabhsimran Singh, the onus was on Priyansh Arya and Ruturaj Gaikwad to steady the Indian ship. However, the duo was involved in a shock run-out that ended Priyansh's stay in the middle prematurely. What left fans scratching their heads was the fact that the third umpire overlooked that Priyansh's bat was blocked by the wicket-keeper's foot. The dismissal took place in the 13th over of the innings. Ruturaj played the ball towards long-off and called Priyansh for a double. While the Punjab Kings batter initially agreed, he hesi-



tated later on. In the end, both Priyansh and Ruturaj ended up at the same end of the pitch, though the latter made his crease ahead of his partner. Priyansh, however, could not make it back to his crease in time as his bat got stuck under the wicket-keeper Niroshan Dickwella's foot while he was attempting to

beat Ruturaj in the race to reach the striker's end. Some fans on social media objected to the dismissal, saying Priyansh would've made the crease before Ruturaj, had his bat not gotten stuck under the wicket-keeper's foot. Earlier, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi failed to fire for India A, departing for a score of 14. He started off

very well, hitting three fours, but was undone by Sri Lankan pacer Mohammed Shiraz. Right after Sooryavanshi's dismissal, his opening partner, Prabhsimran Singh, also departed, scoring just 2 runs off 11 balls. India A captain Tilak Varma had said before the start of the series that the tour will be a good challenge for Sooryavanshi in the longer format. "Everyone has seen how good he is. Everyone has seen him as well in U19 (World Cup), how he played in the finals, especially in one-day format," said India A skipper Tilak Varma on the eve of the match. "We are quite excited to see him, how he plays in this format. For him, I feel coming in Sri Lanka and slower wickets.

PV Sindhu Eyes Title Breakthrough, Ayush Shetty Leads Men's Challenge At Australian Open



Two-time Olympic-medalist PV Sindhu will look to end a prolonged title drought, while rising star Ayush Shetty will spearhead India's men's singles campaign at the Australian Open Super 500 badminton tournament beginning on Tuesday. Sindhu, seeded third, enters the tournament with a favourable draw as she searches for her first BWF World Tour title since winning the Syed Modi International in 2024. The former world champion's best result this season remains a semifinal finish at the Malaysia Open in January. The 30-year-old will open against Peru's Ines Lucia Castillo and is likely to face the winner of the first-round clash between fellow Indian Isharani Barua and China's Han Qian Xi. Sindhu comes into the event after a round-of-16 finish at the Indonesia Open, where she lost to Paris Olympics champion and old

nemesis and world No.1 An Se-young of South Korea. If she progresses as expected, Sindhu could run into Japan's world No.3 Akane Yamaguchi in the semifinals. The Indian enjoys a slender 15-13 head-to-head advantage over the Japanese star. A potential final could pit her against second seed and world No. 8 Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand, against whom Sindhu leads 7-5. India will have a sizeable presence in the women's singles draw as Tanvi Sharma faces fifth-seeded Chiu Pin-Chian of Chinese Taipei, while Malvika Bansod takes on Malaysia's Goh Jin Wei. Anmol Kharb has been handed a tough opener against former world champion and fourth seed Nozomi Okuhara of Japan. Aakarshi Kashyap faces Malaysia's Wong Ling Ching, while Tanya Hemanth takes on USA's Ishika Jaiswal.

D Gukesh Can Take Inspiration From R Praggnanandhaa's Perseverance And Script Turnaround: Viswanathan Anand

Legendary Viswanathan Anand hailed R Praggnanandhaa's highly competitive style of play, and urged the struggling world champion D Gukesh to take a leaf out of the book of newly-crowned Norway Chess champion to script a turnaround. Praggnanandhaa recently became the first Indian chess player to annex the Norway title, but Gukesh finished sixth in the tournament. "I am delighted that Praggnanandhaa has won Norway Chess in an impressive style. I am very happy at the spectacular turnaround (he made) in the last four rounds. He is playing the game with some amazingly impressive concepts and style," Anand, told PTL.Anand advised Gukesh, who is scheduled to face Javokhir Sindarov in his



title defence later this year, to take "inspiration" from Praggnanandhaa. "At this moment, Praggnanandhaa is playing better than Gukesh but anything can change. I think there will be form swings repeatedly. Gukesh seems to be stuck a bit. I think he can take inspiration from Pragg. "He can see that if you persist with hard work then at some point things will change," he added. The five-time world champion

said Praggnanandhaa is always "ready for a fight" on the board, and the attitude helps him produce some interesting concepts while playing. "Actually, it's the same Pragg in the last one and half years. Sometimes he plays hard and comes out with interesting concepts, and he is always ready for a fight. The results might not always work out. "In fact, after the first six rounds, you can't see much difference

from the last 8 or 9 months (as in how Praggnanandhaa plays). But then there was this great turnaround and that was really nice to see because he played very interesting chess," he noted. On the healthy challenge between three Indian GMs Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Arjun Erigaisi, Anand said: "We have never had three players at the top and they are pushing each other's game to the highest level. And how far they are from what I did, I don't know. "I have not given it a thought. Chess is changing dynamically. Careers may not last the same duration because the game itself is changing." Anand was delighted to see the upward curve of Indian chess with several GMs making their mark at the highest level. "India is definitely in the top three.



Raducanu makes winning start to grass-court season

Emma Raducanu began her Wimbledon preparations with a promising straight-set victory over Anna Blinkova in a rain-disrupted match at Queen's. British number one Raducanu was dominant for most of the contest, winning the first eight games without reply before going on to complete a 6-0 6-3 victory over the Russian qualifier. It was the 23-year-old's first win since 6 March, when she beat qualifier Anastasia Zakharova in the Indian Wells first round. Raducanu's season has since been disrupted by a post-viral illness that kept her off the WTA Tour for more than two months, and she lost her only two matches on clay on her return - in Strasbourg and at the French Open. But Raducanu appeared comfortable as she opened her grass-court season in London - and delighted to be competing in front of

her home support. "I'm so happy to have come through that match. To be back here playing at Queen's... I haven't actually won a match for a few months and there isn't a place I would rather have done it. I'm really grateful for all the support," Raducanu told the crowd. "I have people who mean a lot around me. I'm doing the best I can each day. Being part of the atmosphere is something that I really enjoy - I don't see it as added pressure, I really thrive off it. I'm just happy to be back." Raducanu had looked far from her best in her past two matches following illness but, 16 days after her first-round exit at Roland Garros, the Briton made afresh on Andy Murray Arena. The 2021 US Open champion held a commanding 3-0 lead before rain halted play - but that would not disrupt her rhythm.

How Alexander Zverev Beat Type 1 Diabetes To Become French Open Champion



For Alexander Zverev, the French Open 2026 is perhaps the biggest milestone in a long career. At 29, Zverev is older than current generation's superstars Carlos Alcaraz (23) and Jannik Sinner (24). Despit being predicted to be the next superstar in world tennis, the top prize eluded the German tennis star for long. He entered the 2020 US Open final - his first Grand Slam title clash. His next Slam final happened in the 2025 Australian Open. Zverev had to wait one more year to taste his first Grand Slam - at the 2026 French Open. Zverev's triumph is not just the validation of a passionate athlete, but it also holds significance for those who struggle with physical ailments. Zverev was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at four. He has been photographed taking insulin shots in between matches. A large part of his challenges involves balancing his performance with blood glucose man-

agement. "When I was younger, not so much now, I remember going into the doctor's office and getting told that professional sports with this type of illness is impossible. Being 7-8 years old only, it was frustrating and it was upsetting, but luckily I was told by my parents, 'we will prove it otherwise.' They have achieved that. We have achieved that goal in a way," Zverev said in an interview. "To be honest, if any parent walks into the doctor's office and if they are getting told that achieving their dreams with diabetes is not possible, well, there are perfect examples. Not only me, there are great examples in football and other industries." Zverev's mother Irina said diabetes had a big role to play in him becoming a successful athlete: "Because of diabetes, he was always disciplined. He played a lot of sports. He used to run around a lot instead of getting injections." "

AKSHAY KUMAR REPORTEDLY DROPS HIS FEE BY 97%



Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar seems to be playing the long game with Welcome To The Jungle. While the superstar reportedly charges around Rs 70 crore for a film, latest reports suggest he has taken just Rs 1.8 crore as upfront remuneration for the upcoming comedy. That means Akshay has reduced his immediate fee by nearly 97.4%. But this is not exactly a simple pay cut. According to reports, Akshay has opted for a profit sharing model instead, where he is expected to receive 72 percent of the film's IPR revenue after release, while the producer keeps the remaining 28 percent. The makers have also reportedly recovered around Rs 120 crore through OTT, satellite, audio and other secondary rights. What makes this move more interesting is the timing. Akshay has faced his share of box office setbacks, flops and losses in recent years, but instead

of loading the film with a massive upfront star fee, he has reportedly chosen a structure that gives the project breathing space. The idea is simple: let the film recover, let the other actors and technicians get paid fairly, and then earn from the profits if the film works. For a film with a huge ensemble cast, including Suniel Shetty, Paresh Rawal, Johnny Lever, Arshad Warsi, Tusshar Kapoor, Shreyas Talpade, Aftab Shivdasani, Raveena Tandon, Lara Dutta, Jacqueline Fernandez and Disha Patani, this move could help balance the budget better. At a time when Bollywood budgets are under heavy scrutiny, Akshay's decision is being seen as a smart and producer friendly move. He may have skipped the big payday for now, but if Welcome To The Jungle clicks with the audience, the profit sharing model could turn out to be a much bigger win.

Enjoy The Fun Ride - Hilarious Teaser Of DJ Tillu Fame Vimal Krishna, Chilaka Productions' Anumana Pakshi Starring Rag Mayur & Merin Philip Unveiled

After delivering a sensational hit with DJ Tillu, writer-director Vimal Krishna is returning with yet another unconventional entertainer. This time, he joins hands with promising young actor Rag Mayur for Anumana Pakshi, a quirky comedy being produced under the Chilaka Productions banner. The film is being bankrolled by Rajiv Chilaka, Rajesh Jagtiani, and Hirachand Dand. Merin Philip stars as the female lead opposite Rag Mayur. The film's first single Gulab Jam crooned by Ramana Gogula has already become a chartbuster. The makers have today unveiled the film's teaser. The teaser introduces Rag Mayur's character, a man whose habit of suspecting everyone around him, including his parents and girlfriend, triggers a chain of bizarre, hilarious, and increasingly chaotic events. From the very first glimpse, the film appears to steer clear of conventional genre formulas, embracing a quirky, off-beat narrative style that feels fresh, distinctive, and delightfully unpredictable. Vimal Krishna's signature flair for crafting unconventional comedy is evident



throughout the teaser. From the unique characterizations to the witty situations and organic humor, the director once again showcases his knack for creating memorable entertainment. Rag Mayur delivers what looks to be a thoroughly entertaining performance as the chronically suspicious protagonist. His impeccable comic timing and expressive screen presence add significantly to the teaser's appeal. Merin Philip looks charming as the female lead, while Prince Cecil, Raasi, Ajay, Anannayaa, Charith, Brahmagi, and

Mast Ali make strong impressions in their respective roles. Cinematographer Sunil Kumar Nama lends the film a distinctive visual identity, while Sri Charan Pakala's energetic and refreshing score amplifies the fun quotient. JK Murthy's production design complements the film's quirky world, and editor Chota K Prasad keeps the teaser crisp and engaging. Enjoy a fun-filled ride like never before, as the teaser alone promises plenty of laughs. The film is gearing up for its theatrical release on July 10.

Vijay Sethupathi, Puri Jagannadh's Highly Anticipated Action-Drama Slum Dog Gritty & Power-packed Teaser Unveiled



The most anticipated pan-India project Slum Dog: 33 Temple Road marks the coming together of maverick filmmaker Puri Jagannadh and versatile performer Vijay Sethupathi for the very first time. Positioned as an intense action drama laced with mystery and emotion, the film has already generated considerable curiosity among audiences across languages. Having successfully wrapped up production, Slum Dog: 33 Temple Road is currently in the final stages of post-production, with work progressing at a brisk pace for all versions. Ever since the makers revealed the intriguing title and striking

first-look poster, the project has remained a hot topic among cinephiles. Produced by Puri Jagannadh and Charmme Kaur under the Puri Connects banner in association with JB Narayan Rao Kondrolla's JB Motion Pictures, the film carries substantial expectations. Adding to the excitement, the makers have now unveiled the film's teaser.

The teaser opens on a powerful note, with the protagonist speaking about the harsh and often overlooked lives of beggars while delivering a stern warning to those who exploit or mistreat them. What follows is a gripping montage of action, emotion, and mystery, introducing

the film's principal characters one after another. While the teaser offers several glimpses into the world of the film, it cleverly leaves its biggest question unanswered—is Vijay Sethupathi's character genuinely blind, or is there a deeper secret behind his appearance? Known for crafting distinctive character arcs and presenting stories in his own style, Puri Jagannadh has once again created a fascinating character for Vijay Sethupathi. The mystery surrounding the lead character instantly becomes the teaser's biggest strength, adding an extra layer of intrigue to the narrative.

Actress Indraja Appointed as Jury Chairperson for TFCC Short Film Festival Awards 2026 – Announces TFCC Chairman Dr. Prathani Ramakrishna Goud

TFCC Chairman Dr. Prathani Ramakrishna Goud, who recently announced the TFCC Short Film Festival Awards 2026 with the objective of encouraging and promoting emerging talent in the film industry, revealed that the festival has been receiving an overwhelming response from aspiring filmmakers. Speaking at a press meet held in Hyderabad, he announced that renowned actress Indraja has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Jury Committee for the awards. Dr. Ramakrishna Goud stated that awards will be presented to the top five winners across nearly 30 categories, with cash prizes being awarded to the top three winners. He also invited Telugu filmmakers residing in states



such as Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to participate by submitting their short films. Dr. Prathani Ramakrishna Goud said every day, many talented youngsters enter the industry with dreams and aspirations. However, many of them lack the right platform to showcase their creativity and talent. To support such emerging talent, we are organizing the TFCC Short Film Festival Awards 2026. Since the announcement last month, we have received a tremendous number of entries. To encourage more

participants, we are recognizing the top five winners in each category. The top three winners will also receive cash prizes—₹10,000 for first place, ₹7,500 for second place, and ₹5,000 for third place. There are nearly 30 categories covering both men and women. Participation is completely free, and no entry fee is being charged. The last date for submissions is June 13th. The awards ceremony will be held on June 21st at Prasad Labs, Hyderabad. We are delighted to appoint actress Indraja as the Chairperson of the Jury Committee. Having entertained audiences with numerous successful films, her popularity and credibility will certainly add value and prestige to the awards. Telugu filmmakers from other states are also welcome to participate.

BIG B TALKS ABOUT LIFE BEFORE MODERN CONVENIENCES, ADAPTING TO CHANGES



Bollywood's "Shahenshah" Amitabh Bachchan has written a note talking about witnessing the dramatic evolution of technology across generations. "...An enlightened day .. filled with the knowledge unknown to me, simply because we came from the era of the 1942's, when due to the circumstances we grew up in, due to limited means .. and the ignorance of inventions and its making ... (sic)." "When you have lived through that period of the unknown, or the limitations that it produced, it is difficult for the new generation to assimilate what we mean .. at times .. they are right .. but so are we .. (sic)." The megastar took to his blog and looked back at a time when telephones, refrigerators, and air-conditioners were luxuries beyond reach. He also spoke about the wonder and excitement that accompanied

each new invention. "When you don't know what a telephone is and you do not possess one .. when you do not know what a frigidair is and do not have one .. when you do not know what air-conditioning is and do not have one .. and when the possession comes after your means improve, it is baffling and perplexing for this generation to wonder our excitement and exclaim, if we are sane or not..." Acknowledging the gap in understanding between generations, he noted that while today's youth may find such excitement hard to relate to, they too will one day experience similar amazement as technology continues to advance. "But soon, and that can happen most shortly, the way tech progress storms its way through, this very generation shall be facing similar astonishment to new and fresh adventurous discoveries ..(sic)."

Film Celebrities Launch the Teaser and Trailer of 'Siddhugadi Love Story' in a Grand Event

A beautiful youthful love story is all set to grace the Telugu silver screen. Siddhugadi Love Story, starring Manoj Kumar, Mohana Siddhi, and Shruti Shankar in the lead roles, is being directed by Ramesh Cherukuri and produced by Savitramma. The film is being presented under the leadership of Executive Producers V. Sambasiva Rao and Venu Gopala Chary. The teaser and trailer of Siddhugadi Love Story were grandly unveiled in the presence of prominent film directors, producers, and actors. The trailer launch event, held at Prasad Labs, was attended by renowned directors A. Kodandarami Reddy, B. Gopal, Damodar Prasad, Telugu Film Directors Association President V.N. Aditya, directors V. Samudra and Ram Prasad, actor-producer Ashok Kumar, Producers Council



Secretary Prasanna Kumar, Rajender Prasad, and several other distinguished

guests, who extended their best wishes to the film team.

ANOTHER MEATY ROLE FOR BHUMIKA CHAWLA

The much-awaited second season of Dhootha is progressing steadily, with Naga Chaitanya not only reprising his lead role but also stepping into the shoes of a producer for the Amazon Prime Video series. Directed by Vikram Kumar, the supernatural thriller has already generated significant buzz following the success of its first season. The latest update is that Bhumika Chawla has been roped in for a key role in the new season. While details about her character are being kept under wraps, sources indicate that she will play an important part in the narrative. The talented actress was last seen in Euphoria, where she portrayed a mother, and has increasingly gravitated towards content-driven projects in recent years. Apart from Bhumika, the series also features acclaimed actresses Parvathy Thiruvothu and Priya Bhavani Shankar in pivotal roles, adding further



depth to an already impressive cast. Dhootha marked a successful OTT debut for Naga Chaitanya, with audi-

ences appreciating its gripping storyline and atmospheric storytelling. Expectations are naturally