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CHENNAI I BENGALURU I HYDERABAD I VIJAYAWADA I KOCHI

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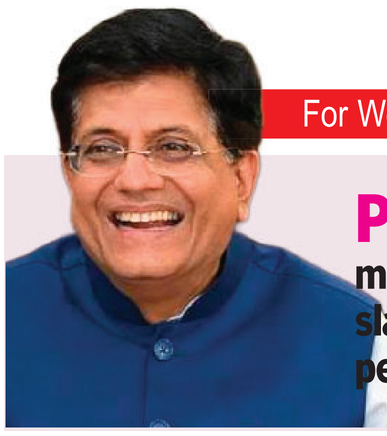

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SCAN FOR E-PAPER

OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

14- 07-2026

Total pilgrims : 75,485
Tonsures : 30,939
Hundi kanukalu : 4.36 CR
Laddu sale... 3.70 Lac
Annaprasadams... 2.99 Lac
Medical treatment...3,928
Waiting Compartments...Out side line at Silathoranam.

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

Delhi court restores Umar Khalid's two weekly e-mulakats with family

NEW DELHI (TSIT): A Delhi court has allowed jailed activist Umar Khalid to have two video meetings (e-mulakats) with his family every week after his counsel claimed it was reduced to one from May 2026 without any reason.Additional Sessions Judge Sameer Bajpai noted that he had been availing the facility for the past six years without violating prison rules.The court passed the order on an application moved by Khalid, who has been facing trial in the larger conspiracy case related to the 2020 northeast Delhi riots.In the order dated July 13, the court said, "Since the applicant has been using two e-mulakats in a week for the last six years and has not violated any rule of the Delhi Prisons Rules, the applicant is allowed to have two e-mulakats per week for the purpose of talking to his mother and other family members".

Trump to feature on new US $1 coin

Washington (TSIT): The US Mint will begin striking a new $1 coin featuring President Donald Trump to commemorate 250 years of American independence, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Wednesday. The coin carries a portrait of Trump on one side. The word "Liberty" appears above the portrait, while the dates 1776-2026 are engraved below it. The words "In God We Trust" appear beside Trump's portrait. Two stars flank the image. The reverse features an eagle with outstretched wings, holding an olive branch in one talon and arrows in the other. A shield bearing the number 250 appears at its centre.

■ Jantar Mantar protest

Tharoor appeals to Wangchuk to end fast, urges govt to initiate dialogue

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday appealed to activist Sonam Wangchuk to end his fast at Jantar Mantar over alleged irregularities in the NEET exam, and urged the government to engage in dialogue, asserting that such a move is not a sign of weakness but that of statesmanship. In an open letter to the Jantar Mantar protestors, Tharoor said that with Parliament in session again from Monday, there will be an opportunity to raise the students' issues at the highest forum of democracy.

"That's where the problem should be addressed, not by fasting unto death. Please heed my plea," he said. "My dear young friends, I address you today not as a politician or an MP, but as someone deeply troubled by what is happening to your generation of young Indians. This is personal for me. I

was born to a middle-class family: my father was a salaried newspaper employee, my mother a homemaker, with three children to educate on one income," he said.

"For a family like ours, merit was not a slogan. Scholarships, fair examinations, honest results - these were the only way one salary could carry three children's dreams," the MP from Thiruvananthapuram said.

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has been holding a protest at Jantar Mantar demanding Pradhan's resignation over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination.

Wangchuk joined the agitation on June 28 and has been on an indefinite fast since then. The organisation has also announced a march to Parliament on July 20. Tharoor said that he went to school in Mumbai and Kolkata, to college in Delhi, topped the university and earned admission into IIM, but chose instead to follow his passion for international affairs, in the US, on a scholarship.

Education shapes Telangana's future: CM Revanth Reddy

Govt schools being strengthened with better infrastructure & teacher reforms

Hyderabad TSIT:

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday said education alone determines the future of individuals, enhances self-respect and brings happiness to parents, asserting that the future of Telangana is being shaped inside classrooms.

Speaking after inaugurating the newly constructed building of the Government Girls' High School at Kothakota, the Chief Minister said his government had accorded top priority to strengthening public education and improving infrastructure in government schools across the State."Education fills our lives with light, strengthens our self-respect and brings joy to our parents. I firmly believe that Telangana's future lies in its classrooms, which is why I have retained the Education portfolio with

me," Revanth Reddy said.He alleged that the previous government had neglected the Education Department and failed to provide adequate infrastructure in government schools. After the People's Government assumed office, senior officials were appointed to the department and several long-pending administrative issues were addressed, he said.

Chief Minister said teacher promotions and transfers were completed on priority to resolve problems in the school education system. He added that the decline in enrolment in government schools was largely due to a lack of basic facilities.

Appreciating local MLA Madhusudhan Reddy for taking the initiative to construct the school buildings and provide necessary amenities, Revanth Reddy said the problems in the education sector could not be resolved without strengthening government schools.

He said Telangana was currently ranked 18th in education and called upon teachers, students, parents and officials to work collectively to place the State among the top two in the country.

The Chief Minister said the government was also focusing on equipping students and youth with technical and employment-oriented skills. Industrial Training Institutes had been upgraded into Advanced Technology Centres to improve technical education and create better employment opportunities.He said countries such as Germany and Japan offered significant opportunities in blue-collar and skilled professions and that Telangana youth should be trained to benefit from such global employment prospects.Revanth Reddy announced that Young India Kits would be distributed to nearly 27.5 lakh students by Independence Day.

Bengaluru should become heart of India: Shivakumar

Bengaluru (TSIT):

Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Wednesday said the State Government is committed to protecting the rights of apartment owners by ensuring complete ownership of their properties through the proposed Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Act, 2026.

Addressing representatives of Apartment Associations, the Chief Minister said the proposed legislation has been drafted to safeguard the interests of property buyers and resolve long-pending issues related to apartment ownership, registration and management. He invited apartment owners and other stakeholders to submit suggestions on the draft law before August 6.

Shivakumar said the government has launched an e-Khata revolution by bringing property services to citizens' doorsteps. Of Bengaluru's nearly 40 lakh properties, around 26 lakh have already been issued e-Khatas, making it one of the largest digital property record initiatives in the country.

The Chief Minister said the government is also addressing problems related to the transfer of property documents and will engage with developers to ensure a smooth and hassle-free process for apartment owners. He added that reforms have been introduced to improve drinking water supply through the Cauvery Phase-V project, groundwater recharge initiatives and underground drainage facilities in apartment areas.Emphasising decentralisation, Shivakumar said the government has created five city corporations to improve civic administration and ensure faster resolution of local issues.

Iran's IRGC claims attacks on US military facilities in Bahrain, Jordan

Tehran (TSIT) : Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Wednesday that it conducted retaliatory strikes against the US military facilities in Bahrain and Jordan, attacking their military infrastructure, aircraft shelters, key command centres and strategic drones, local media reported. In a statement, the IRGC said its Aerospace Force targetted the US military base at al-Azraq in Jordan in response to renewed US aggression against Iran.

Amaravati to emerge as AP's economic growth hub: CM Naidu

Visakhapatnam (TSIT)

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday said the State Capital Amaravati should be developed as an inclusive, world-class city that attracts people from all regions of the State and serves as the engine of Andhra Pradesh's future economic growth. Reviewing the progress of the Amaravati 2.0 Integrated Master Plan and the Land Pooling Scheme (LPS-2) with senior officials and representatives from Singapore, the Chief Minister stressed that the capital city's planning should focus on creating employment opportunities while building a strong and sustainable economy.

During the meeting, the Singapore delegation presented the project's scope, implementation strategy and phased development plan. They briefed the Chief Minister on the proposed area plan, infrastructure development, investment framework and other key components of the master plan. Naidu said Amaravati is being designed as an internationally competitive city with comprehensive connectivity through the proposed Inner Ring Road and Outer Ring Road network.

He noted that despite challenges posed by El Niño conditions, the Pattiseema Project had ensured adequate water resources for the capital region by diverting Godavari waters into the Krishna River.

The Chief Minister emphasised the need to develop Amaravati as a creative city capable of driving innovation, investment and economic activity. He said the government aims to achieve global benchmarks in urban development while enhancing per capita income through sustainable economic growth. Highlighting the State's commitment to environmentally responsible development, Naidu said Amaravati would adopt green energy and green building practices to create a sustainable and climate-resilient capital city.

KTR meets Kumaraswamy, seeks revival of CCI at Adilabad

Hyderabad (TSIT) : Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) Working President K. T. Rama Rao on Wednesday met Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H. D. Kumaraswamy in New Delhi and urged the immediate revival of the Cement Corporation of India (CCI) plant at Adilabad.Rama Rao, who led a delegation of farmers and representatives

of the CCI Sadhana Samithi, reminded Kumaraswamy of the assurance given by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in 2019 to revive the plant.KTR said that instead of allowing this valuable public asset to be reduced to scrap, the Centre must act decisively. Spread over nearly 2,300 acres with an installed capacity of 4 lakh tonnes, the CCI plant can be revived with an investment of around Rs 2,000 crore, he said.

ECI modifies SIR schedule for Delhi, Punjab, Karnataka and Telangana

New Delhi (TSIT):

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has revised the schedule for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Karnataka, Telangana, Punjab and Delhi. According to a letter issued by ECI Under Secretary Sandeep Kumar, the final electoral rolls for Punjab and Telangana will now be published on October 12, while Delhi and Karnataka will publish their final rolls on October 19.

The revised schedule extends house-to-house verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs), polling station rationalisation, and the period for filing claims and objections. In Punjab and Telangana, BLO visits will continue until August 3, while in Delhi and Karnataka, they have been extended until August 8.

Draft electoral rolls will be published on August 10 in Telangana, August 13 in Punjab, and August 17 in Delhi and Karnataka. The ECI has directed all Chief Electoral Officers to complete the revision process as per the revised timeline.

TN, Kerala to launch joint drive against narcotics along border

CM VIJAY EXTENDS FULL SUPPORT, SAYS HOME MINISTER RAMESH CHENNITHALA

CHENNAI (TSIT):

In a major joint initiative to crack down on drugs, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have decided to jointly intensify anti-narcotics operations along their shared border.

Kerala Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala said on Wednesday that Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay has assured full support for coordinated enforcement, intelli-

gence sharing, and awareness campaigns to curb drug trafficking.After meeting the chief minister at the Secretariat, Chennithala said Vijay and him discussed the growing drug menace across southern states and the need for a united response. He said Kerala had sought Tamil Nadu's cooperation in strengthening surveillance along border areas.

He also said ports, airports, and railway networks would remain under close watch as part of the coordinated strategy to curb drug trafficking across the two states.The Kerala minister said he has invited Vijay to participate in a major anti-drug awareness programme in Kerala alongside actor Mohanlal, the State's anti-drug campaign ambassador. Recalling that Mohanlal and Vijay had acted together in the film, 'Jilla', he expressed confidence that their joint participation would strengthen public awareness.

Pointing out that Chief Minister Vijay had already launched an anti-drug campaign in Tamil Nadu and reiterated his government's commitment to eliminating narcotics, Chennithala said that a recent meeting of Directors General of Police of southern states evolved a common strategy to combat drug mafia. Highlighting Kerala's ongoing anti-drug campaign, Operation Toofan, Chennithala said the State had conducted the drive successfully for the past 43 days, during which more than 6,000 people were arrested, around 5,500 cases registered, and more than 100 accused put in jail.

Collector reviews voter revision drive

Nagarjuna Sagar (TSIT): District Collector B. Chandrasekhar on Wednesday directed Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to expedite the Special Summary Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and complete all pending voter mapping without delay. During an inspection in Wards 7, 10 and 12 of Nagarjuna Sagar, he reviewed door-to-door verification and instructed BLOs to contact unavailable voters by phone and record household door numbers accurately. He also directed officials to verify EPIC details, resolve unmapped cases and ensure that every eligible voter has only one entry in the electoral roll. Municipal and revenue officials accompanied the Collector during the inspection.

Cyber Frauds Cost Mahabubabad Victims Rs.8.29 Lakh; SP Urges Immediate Reporting

Mahabubabad TSIT District Correspondent Balne Suman July 15: With cyber fraud cases witnessing a rise in Mahabubabad district, Superintendent of Police Dr. Shabarish, IPS, has appealed to the public to stay vigilant and report cybercrimes without delay. According to district cybercrime data, seven complaints were registered recently, including six financial frauds and one sextortion case, causing a total loss of Rs.8.29 lakh. The frauds involved fake investment websites, Telegram trading scams, unauthorized online banking transactions, UPI collect request frauds, and sextortion using morphed images.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal must clarify: Congress slams govt on US bill for 100 per cent tariffs on India

NEW DELHI: With a bipartisan group of US senators unveiling a bill that seeks to impose 100 per cent tariffs on India for purchasing oil from Russia, the Congress on Wednesday sought clarification from Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal over the issue and claimed that the country is being "humiliated" by the threat of punitive action.

The bipartisan group of US senators has unveiled a bill that seeks to impose 100 per cent tariffs on five countries, including India and China, for purchasing oil from Russia. The bill, brokered by late Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, exempts 15 European nations that buy gas from Russia from the tariffs, arguing that the purchases amount to a fraction of their total requirement and the countries in question are taking steps to reduce their dependence on Moscow.Congress's media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said, "Piyush Goyal, who is quick to dismiss reports that India is holding out for a better trade deal with the US, should clarify this. These aren't House Democrats. These are Republican Senators – backed by Trump himself – demanding 100 per cent tariffs on India and four other countries for buying Russian oil." "Imagine the humiliation: needing Trump's approval to buy Russian oil, and now being threatened with punitive tariffs for doing exactly that," Khera said in a post on X.

CM Relief Fund is a lifeline: Madhu Mudiraj

Sangareddy (TSIT): Medak Parliament Congress Party In-charge Neelam Madhu Mudiraj said the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) has become a lifeline for poor families facing medical emergencies. On Wednesday, he distributed CMRF cheques worth 60,000, 47,500 and 60,000 to three beneficiaries at the NMR Camp Office. He said the financial assistance helps economically weaker families meet costly medical expenses and prevents them from falling into debt. Madhu Mudiraj urged eligible patients to make use of the scheme and assured that efforts would continue to ensure timely sanction of relief funds.

No Voter Registration of CM Revanth Reddy in Achampet: District Election Officer Hemanta Keshav Patil

The South India Times // Nagarkurnool : District Election Officer and Collector Hemanta Keshav Patil has clarified that the reports circulating on social media regarding the voter registration of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in the Achampet Assembly constituency are completely false and baseless.

In an official statement, the Collector said that no voter registration has been carried out in the name of the Chief Minister either in the Achampet Assembly constituency or in any other constituency in Nagarkurnool district.

He also dismissed claims of dual enrolment, stating that there is no truth in the allegations that the Chief Minister has been registered as a voter in two different places. Since no voter registration has taken place in his name in the district, there is no question of printing or distributing any enumeration forms under the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls, he added. The District Election Officer appealed to the public not to believe false and misleading information circulating on social media and advised them not to forward or spread unverified content. He urged citizens to rely only on official information released by the District Election Office or the Election Commission regarding all matters related to the electoral process.

Congress committed to Arya Vaishya welfare: MLA

Wanaparthy (TSIT): Wanaparthy MLA Thudi Megha Reddy on Wednesday said the Congress government is committed to the welfare and development of the Arya Vaishya community. Addressing a meeting, he said the community has made significant contributions to business, social service and the state's development. He said the government is promoting business growth, self-employment, women's empowerment and employment opportunities for youth. Citing the appointment of Arya Vaishya leader Madhavi Ramesh as Wanaparthy Municipal Chairperson, he said the government is giving due representation to the community. State Arya Vaishya Mahasabha leaders and district representatives attended the programme.

Andhra Pradesh Government Launched Immediate Rescue Operation in Visakhapatnam Fishing Boat Tragedy: Fisheries Commissioner

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) The Andhra Pradesh Government responded on a war footing to the fishing boat accident off the Visakhapatnam coast, launching rescue operations immediately after receiving the first information and extending comprehensive support to the affected families, State Fisheries Commissioner Ramashankar Naik said on Wednesday. Addressing a press conference at the State Secretariat along with Disaster Management Department Director and RTGS CEO Prakhar Jain and Visakhapatnam Range & Coastal Security Inspector General of Police Gopinath Jetti, the Commissioner presented the official sequence of events and the rescue measures undertaken following the tragedy.

Naik said the government coordinated the efforts of the Fisheries Department, district administration, Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy, Marine Police and Disaster Management Department to carry out an extensive search, rescue and relief operation for more than 72 hours. One fisherman was rescued alive and provided with immediate medical treatment, while the government sanctioned Rs.60 lakh as immediate financial assistance to six affected families at the rate of Rs.10 lakh each. An additional Rs.50,000 was sanctioned to the rescued fisherman for emergency medical expenses. He said that after completion of the prescribed legal procedures, each eligible victim's family would receive Rs.10 lakh as compensation, including Rs.5 lakh ex gratia from the Fisheries Department and Rs.5 lakh insurance assistance under the PMMSY–NFDB Group Accident Insurance Scheme (GAIS).

According to officials, the accident occurred on July 4, when the mechanised fishing boat IND-AP-MM-V5-83, carrying seven fishermen from Visakhapatnam, encountered severe weather and strong winds around 3:45 p.m. One fisherman went missing immediately, while the remaining six stayed on the partially submerged boat until night before attempting to survive using thermocol sheets. One of them, Kari Chinna, managed to reach a passing merchant vessel and was rescued, while the other five fishermen went missing. The Commissioner said that immediately after receiving information from family members and fishermen's associations, alerts were issued to the Marine Police, Fisheries Department, Coast Guard, Navy and district authorities. Emergency communication systems were activated the same night, enabling search operations to begin without delay.

As the Coast Guard vessel stationed at Visakhapatnam was under maintenance, additional rescue vessels were mobilised from Kakinada. Beginning on the morning of July 5, the Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy, Marine Police and Fisheries Department jointly carried out an extensive search covering a vast stretch of the sea despite adverse weather conditions. Kari Chinna, who was rescued aboard a Panama-registered merchant ship, was provided food, drinking water and first aid before being airlifted by an Indian Coast Guard helicopter to KIMS Hospital in Visakhapatnam. Officials said his condition is stable. Naik said the government extended financial support to the victims' families even before completion of the formal verification process on humanitarian grounds. He added that the State is also strengthening maritime safety measures and emergency response systems to improve preparedness for future incidents.

Speaking on the occasion, IG Gopinath Jetti said the Marine Police received information at around 10:30 p.m. on July 4 that the fishing boat, which was expected to return by evening, had not reached the shore. After verifying the information with boat owners and fishermen's associations, details of the missing vessel and crew were collected and shared with the Indian Navy and Coast Guard through official communication shortly after midnight.

He said alerts issued to commercial and defence vessels operating in the area enabled the Panama-registered merchant ship to identify and rescue Kari Chinna the following morning. Additional Coast Guard and Navy vessels, along with helicopters, continued search operations until July 8, despite rough seas with waves exceeding four metres.

TN govt official sought a bribe? Report it on this WhatsApp number

CHENNAI: Members of the public can now report bribery complaints to the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) through its WhatsApp number 94981 80936, as the Tamil Nadu government has directed all government offices to prominently display the anti-bribery helpline and awareness message at visible locations across the state.

The Chief Secretary has instructed all government departments, district collectors, local bodies and public sector undertakings to prominently display bilingual (Tamil and English) notice boards carrying the slogan, "Bribe giving and receiving is an offence," along with the contact details of the DVAC. The instructions reiterate earlier government orders and call for strict compliance.

The government has also directed all departments to display the same anti-corruption message on their official websites, with a link to the DVAC portal. Heads of departments have been asked to issue similar instructions to boards, corporations, local bodies and public sector undertakings under their administrative control.The notice boards will carry the DVAC's address, telephone numbers, WhatsApp number, fax number and email ID to enable the public to report corruption. Further, the Inspection Wings and Inspection Cells in district collectorates have been directed to verify during inspections whether the anti-bribery notice boards have been installed and whether the government's instructions are being implemented properly.

Horse-trading unacceptable, says ally CPM's leader P Shanmugam after meeting CM Vijay

CHENNAI: CPM Tamil Nadu State Secretary P Shanmugam on Wednesday said horse-trading in politics was unacceptable irrespective of which party was involved, and asserted that MLAs switching parties soon after being elected was against democratic principles. He also said the party was yet to decide whether it would contest the upcoming local body elections independently or as part of an alliance.During a press briefing after meeting Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay at the Secretariat, Shanmugam said the CPM had submitted a memorandum on issues including inam lands, implementation of the Forest Rights Act, renaming a village in Virudhunagar district, the Salem drinking water distribution contract, and the custodial death in Nagercoil.

Welcoming the government's recent order on inam lands, he urged the State to constitute a separate commission to resolve similar issues across Tamil Nadu. He also appealed to the government to move the Supreme Court against the eviction of forest dwellers and ensure full implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006.MLAs elected by the people should not resign and switch parties within a few days P Shanmugam, CPM state secretary On the alleged horse-trading of MLAs, he said, "Whoever indulges in horse-trading, it is condemnable. Whether it is the DMK, TVK or any other party, we do not accept it. MLAs elected by the people should not resign and switch parties within a few days." Replying to a question on the local body elections, Shanmugam said the Left parties had not yet taken a decision on contesting alone or in alliance and that the issue would be discussed jointly before a final decision was taken.

Whey protein: Benefits, drawbacks, myths and safety tips you should know

Mumbai, Jan 30: Whey protein is widely regarded as one of the best-quality protein supplements available, as it contains a complete range of essential amino acids that are absorbed quickly by the body. Derived from the liquid part of milk that separates during cheese production, whey is a complete protein, meaning it provides all nine essential amino acids which the body cannot produce on its own. Whey protein is commonly available in three forms — concentrate, isolate and hydrolysate. Whey protein concentrate contains about 70 to 80 per cent protein along with small amounts of fats and carbohydrates. Whey protein isolate offers a higher protein content of 90 per cent or more, with most fats and carbs removed, making it a preferred choice for those watching calorie intake. Whey protein hydrolysate is a pre-digested form that is easier for the body to absorb and is often used in medical nutrition supplements.

One of the major benefits of whey protein is its role in muscle growth and recovery. It is rich in Branched-Chain Amino Acids (BCAAs), especially leucine, which supports muscle protein synthesis and helps athletes and fitness enthusiasts recover faster after workouts. Whey protein can also support weight management by increasing satiety, which may reduce overall calorie intake and help in weight loss or maintenance.

Apart from fitness benefits, whey protein also provides nutritional support by supplying essential amino acids needed for body repair and immunity. It contains precursors to glutathione, one of the body's key antioxidants. Another advantage is convenience, as it can be easily mixed into shakes, smoothies or added to food. Since whey is digested faster than many whole-food protein sources, it delivers amino acids to the muscles within 30 to 60 minutes, making it particularly useful after exercise.

However, experts caution that whey protein may not suit everyone. People with lactose intolerance may experience digestive issues such as bloating, gas or discomfort, especially with whey concentrate, which contains more lactose. Individuals with milk allergies may also face adverse reactions. Overconsumption of protein can lead to dehydration and may strain the kidneys, particularly in those with existing kidney problems. Some flavoured protein powders may contain added sugars and extra calories, which can counter weight-loss goals. Certain users have also reported acne breakouts, possibly linked to hormonal responses associated with dairy proteins. Whey protein may also interfere with some medications and antibiotics, and users are advised to consult a healthcare professional if they are on long-term medication.

There are also several myths surrounding whey protein. Many believe that consuming whey automatically leads to excessive muscle gain, but muscle growth depends on factors such as training, overall diet and genetics.

EDITORIAL

The Growing Drone Wars In Myanmar

The first phase of Myanmar's drone war belonged to the rebels. In the forests, hills, and borderlands, where young fighters had few bullets, fewer heavy weapons, and no air force, small commercial drones became a kind of improvised equaliser. They watched military columns from above, dropped explosives on outposts, guided ground assaults, and gave scattered resistance groups something the junta had long monopolised: the ability to strike from the sky. Now, the war has entered a more dangerous second phase. The military regime, stung by years of drone attacks, has copied the resistance playbook, expanded its own drone fleet, and begun using unmanned aircraft to track, harass, and attack anti-junta forces. In response, resistance groups are no longer only using drones to attack. They are trying to survive them, with jammers, shoot-downs, improvised countermeasures, and, increasingly, reported FPV-style interceptor tactics. Myanmar's civil war is becoming a drone war that is starting to fight itself. Since the February 2021 coup, when the military overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar has fractured into a nationwide conflict involving the junta, long-established ethnic armed organisations, post-coup People's Defense Forces, and groups aligned with the shadow National Unity Government. The humanitarian toll has been catastrophic. Thousands have been killed and millions displaced. But the military balance has also changed in ways few expected in the first months after the coup. The resistance began with almost nothing. Many of its recruits were students, programmers, engineers, delivery riders, farmers and former urban protesters who fled into jungles and borderlands after the junta crushed street demonstrations. They were outgunned by a military with Russian and Chinese aircraft, artillery, armored vehicles and decades of experience fighting ethnic insurgencies. Commercial quadcopters, agricultural drones, online tutorials, 3D printers, spare parts and cross-border smuggling networks became part of Myanmar's new insurgent logistics chain. ACLED, the conflict monitor, says resistance groups first used drones in December 2021 in Pale township, Sagaing Region. Since then, it has recorded more than 2,100 resistance drone strike events across more than 600 locations. Drones have become the resistance's "entire air force." Specialised units emerged. Federal Wings and Cloud Wings became known for drone operations linked to the Karen resistance ecosystem. Shar Htoo Waw became a hub for drone knowledge, training and adaptation. Some groups used quadcopters and hexacopters; others built fixed-wing drones with longer range. They added cameras, first-person-view features, larger payloads and one-way attack designs. The way anti-junta forces obtain and build this technology is central to the story. It is not a single pipeline. It is a marketplace war. Some drones are imported as commercial or agricultural systems, often through border routes with China and Thailand. The Chin National Army showed The Guardian a fleet of commercial and agricultural drones, saying many were imported from China and some from Western countries; commanders said equipment moved largely through the China and Thailand borders rather than India, where controls were tighter.

CHINA NOW HAS 7 OF THE WORLD'S 10 BIGGEST BANKS

AND THAT SHOULD WORRY INDIA

In July 1990, The Banker, a magazine that has ranked the world's banks since 1970, put Sumitomo Bank at the top of its Top 1000. Japanese banks filled most of the top ten that year. Credit Agricole, Barclays, and National Westminster were the intruders. The ranking read as prophecy. Asia had arrived, capital had shifted east, and the future belonged to Tokyo. Within two years, the Japanese asset bubble had burst, and the decades that followed are now called lost. That history is worth keeping in mind while reading the 2026 edition of the same ranking, published this July. Seven of the world's ten largest banks, measured by Tier 1 capital, are now headquartered in China. Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), China Construction Bank, Agricultural Bank of China, and Bank of China hold the top four positions, as they have every year since 2019. The Postal Savings Bank of China, a bank assembled in 2007 out of the post office's savings counters, has entered the top ten for the first time. JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America and Citigroup are the only non-Chinese survivors. Twenty-two Chinese banks figure in the top 100. No Indian bank comes anywhere close. What Is China Aiming At? Two questions follow, and they pull in different directions. What does this concentration of banking capital actually buy China? And what, if anything, should its absence worry India? Begin with what Tier-1 capital measures. It is core capital, equity, and disclosed reserves, the cushion a bank holds against loss. A large number signals a large balance sheet, and a large balance sheet signals large lending. The World Bank's series on domestic credit to the private sector by banks makes the point. For China, the figure was 194.3% of GDP in 2024. For India, 41.6%. Chinese banks are enormous because the Chinese growth model runs on bank credit, directed into infrastructure and property, funded by the captive savings of households with few alternative assets. The Postal Savings Bank's arrival in the top ten is the model in miniature. Hundreds of millions of small depositors, aggregated through post offices, becoming Tier 1 capital. Size, in this sense, is a symptom of the model. The Japanese banks of 1990 were also symptoms of a model. But there is a second reading of the ranking, and it deserves to be taken seriously. Balance sheets are one thing, plumbing is another. The dollar's power does not rest on the size of American banks. It rests on the fact that international payments overwhelmingly clear through dollar accounts in New York, with messages carried by SWIFT, the Belgian cooperative that connects more than 11,000 institutions. SWIFT's own RMB Tracker for June 2026 shows the dollar carrying 51% of global payments by value, the euro 22%, sterling 7%, and the renminbi under 3%t. Whoever controls the plumbing can shut it off. In February 2022, Western governments immobilised Russia's central bank reserves, an amount the REPO Task Force estimates at 280 billion dollars and Moscow puts above 300 billion, roughly 200 billion of it sitting in Euroclear in Brussels. No shot was fired at the reserves, they were simply switched off. A Parallel Pipe Economy Beijing read that episode carefully, in fairness as any large holder of dollar assets would. The response has been the patient construction of parallel pipes. The Cross-border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), launched by the People's Bank of China in 2015, had 1,791 participating institutions by the first quarter of 2026, of which 194 were direct participants. In March 2026 it settled a daily average of 920.5 billion yuan, about 133.5 billion dollars, one fifth higher than a year earlier. The overseas branch networks of the very banks that dominate The Banker's ranking are the nodes of this system. A clearing bank in every financial centre is worth more to renminbi internationalisation than any communique. Add the experiments in central bank digital currencies for cross-border settlement, from which the Bank for International Settlements pointedly withdrew in 2024. The direction is unmistakable. The distance travelled is short. Under 3% of global payments is not a rival system, and a large share of CIPS traffic still relies on SWIFT messaging to move. A currency that cannot be freely converted, backed by a capital account that cannot be freely crossed, cannot clear the world's trade. What Beijing has built is not an alternative to the dollar system but an insurance policy against expulsion from it. Insurance policies matter. They also cost. A world with two payment plumbings, each side stockpiling against the other's sanctions, settles trade less efficiently than a world with one, and the premium is paid by everyone, most of all by third countries invited to choose sides. Where India Stands Which brings the argument home. Where is India in this ranking? State Bank of India, the country's largest bank, stood 45th globally by assets in S&P Global's April 2026 compilation, at 877 billion dollars. HDFC Bank stood 76th. This is not for want of official aspiration. The Committee on the Financial System, chaired by M. Narasimham, recommended in its November 1991 report a structure with three or four large banks, State Bank of India among them, that could become international in character. Thirty-five years later, after the mergers of 2017 to 2020 reduced public sector banks from 27 to 12, no Indian bank is international in character in the sense the committee intended. India's Problem Should this be corrected by decree? Here, the two halves of the argument must be held together. Ranks are rank, and chasing a league table is how one ends up with a Sumitomo. The useful question is not how to inflate Tier-1 capital, but what the capital is for. India intends to finance its own infrastructure at a scale of hundreds of billions of dollars a decade, and its capital expenditure carries a multiplier of about 2.45 against roughly 1 for revenue spending. India also intends to be a lender of consequence in its own neighbourhood. When Sri Lanka ran out of reserves in 2022.

'Zalengam Diary' And Roads As New Language In Demand To Divide Manipur

Roads are no longer just roads in Manipur since May 2023 when the Meitei-Kuki ethnic violence erupted in the state bordering Myanmar. Every new bridge, bypass or transport corridor is seen as an attempt at setting a narrative for political geography, but not a development project. Infrastructure is no longer about engineering in the state where territory has become deeply contested. It is now connected with questions about identity, administration, security and competing visions of Manipur's future. The absence of official clarity over the approval, regulation and oversight of several such projects has added to the confusion and even raised questions about transparency. This has only deepened public suspicion and intensified the political significance attached to such projects. On July 10, a 270-foot Bailey bridge was inaugurated in Manipur's Chandel district. That has sparked a new debate over territory, mobility and the Kuki tribes' demand for breaking up Manipur. The Kukis say the bridge is a rural connectivity project that serves the underserved between Chandel district and Kuki settlements in southern Manipur's Churachandpur district. They say they had been cut off following the outbreak of the ethnic violence. The bridge took 18 months to complete at a cost of Rs 3.5 crore, all of it crowdfunded with no government help, Kuki organisations say. The Kuki Inpi Manipur has refuted allegations that the bridge would be used as a route for carrying out unlawful activities, including drug trafficking. The bridge only restored an essential transport link severed by the violence that killed over 260 and displaced thousands. But the controversy refuses to go away because of one question: how did a project like this evade official scrutiny? In December 2025, a 'ring road' allegedly paved without the state government's approval and passing through forests in six districts was found in Manipur. The matter came to light after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) ordered the Manipur government to ensure no more construction work was done on the 'ring road'. After the NGT order, an umbrella body of civil society organisations of the Meitei community told reporters that the road has been locally referred to as "German Road" and at certain stretches as "Tiger Road". 'German' and 'Tiger' are nicknames of Kuki insurgents. Engineers say the 270-foot Bailey bridge needs specialised steel components, engineered foundations, heavy equipment and professional supervision. They say the cost seems technically plausible if voluntary labour and donated resources were used, but there are no clear answers about the source of the bridge components, engineering certification, statutory approvals and compliance with public safety standards. Soon after the inauguration of the "crowdfunded bridge", several social media accounts that supported the demand for breaking up Manipur into separate territories on ethnic lines, described the bridge as a major achievement in connecting Kuki settlements in Churachandpur with Chandel, Tengnoupal and Moreh along the porous border with Myanmar. The online chatter after the bridge's inauguration showed that infrastructure had become inseparable from the Manipur crisis. The new bridge, called Khulmi, adds another chapter to the long list of controversial projects in Manipur, such as the so-called "Tiger road" or "German road". Named after German H Haokip of the insurgent group Kuki National Front (MC), the 'road' connects Kangpokpi, Churachandpur, Chandel and Tengnoupal, mostly bypassing the state capital Imphal, which lies in central Manipur's valley region. Built and upgraded in phases through mountainous terrain, this 'road' connects Kuki settlements that depended on routes passing through the valley. The Kuki tribes show the road as an example of community initiative undertaken through voluntary contributions and crowdfunding. The Manipur government has questioned the legality and strategic purpose of the road and clarified that it had not officially sanctioned the project. It said legal action would be taken for carrying out the illegal project. The NGT's scrutiny showed the matter's seriousness on the implications it would have on the environment. These issues seem connected only with infrastructure, but on closer look they occupy administrative, legal and political spaces because both the bridge and the 'road' point at an engineered change in the geography of connectivity across Manipur's hill areas. Territory acquires an administrative meaning when it becomes physically connected - since connectivity enables movement of people, goods, institutions, emergency services and governance itself. Infrastructure is not politically neutral in that sense. It decides how territories function and future political possibilities are predicted. These projects have become central to discussions on the Kuki tribes' demand for a separate administration carved out of Manipur. Since May 2023, some Kuki organisations have said coexistence under the existing administrative arrangement is not possible. So, infrastructure connecting the imagined administrative space acquires significance beyond development due to the simple reason that it serves the areas identified by the proponents of the call to break up Manipur. The projects get an ominous vibe when seen with the so-called "Zalengam Diary", whose authenticity is yet to be independently verified. This diary was said to have been recovered from the designated camp of an armed group under the suspension of operations (SoO) agreement after ethnic violence began in May 2023. Reports say it outlines a long-term strategy from the 1980s for achieving a separate "Kuki homeland", described as "Zalengam", through demographic consolidation, political mobilisation, institutional influence, identity politics, infrastructure development and administrative preparedness.

IS SAUDI ARABIA NOW QUIETLY Switching Sides In US-IRAN WAR?

The recent escalation between the US and Iran has a major actor missing - the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Iran pounded US bases in Bahrain and Kuwait and surprisingly even in Oman, the friendliest Gulf countries to Iran and ones where a majority of the mediation between Iran and the US has taken place - not only during the current conflict but decades ago, too. But, conspicuously, Saudi Arabia is not in the picture. Instead, it sent a delegation to the funeral of Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in a joint US-Israel strike (much of the West had stayed away from the funeral), while Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, and the Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, are regularly speaking to each other. In fact, recent Saudi posturing has been a far cry from the initial days of the war. Soon after the US and Israel launched joint attacks on Iran on February 28, reports appeared that Saudi Arabia had been urging for a war against Iran. To an extent, this was surprising, considering that just a couple of years ago, in 2023, Saudi Arabia had entered a China-brokered "truce" with Iran. The two had reestablished diplomatic ties and even exchanged some high-profile visits. The Many Fears In The Kingdom Yet, it was also true that Iran remained the regional hegemon, and its nuclear and ballistic missiles programme was viewed with deep suspicion across the region. Its proxies, scattered around the region, had challenged almost all regional powers. In fact, the Saudis had waged a war for almost a decade with one of them - the Houthi militias in Yemen, with which the Kingdom shared a border. The Houthis did not hesitate to target strategic facilities inside the Kingdom, including the facilities at Saudi Aramco. With the war going nowhere, the Saudis were compelled to enter into a ceasefire agreement with the Houthis; it was also partially to extricate themselves from Yemen that the Saudis agreed to enter into an agreement with Iran. Given the fragile balance of power in the region, the Saudis, like a number of other Gulf states, could not have welcomed a regime change in Iran, and expected Israel and the US to execute their goals. It was thus not surprising when reports emerged that even while calling for cessation of hostilities in public, the Saudis, in private, were rooting for war. Iran, however, changed the equation. Learning From Losses On the eve of war, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had made a round of all the Gulf states to drum up support in case of any military intervention by Israel or the US. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) even spoke to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian over the phone. When war did ultimately break out, Iran hit back hard at the US - at its bases across the Gulf region, including in Saudi Arabia, seriously damaging them, to the extent that the US is now reportedly mulling removing them further away from Iran and relocating them to Israel. Iran targeted not just American military bases, but even strategic facilities like the Ras Tanura Refinery, the East-West Pipeline, the Manifa and Khurais oil Fields, and several other such sites. In using asymmetrical warfare, Iran further closed the Strait of Hormuz within a few days of the war, on March 4, 2026. This was the first time in all its history of conflicts that Iran had taken such a step. A fifth of the world's oil and gas disappeared from the markets, sending oil prices soaring. The Saudis expelled the Iranian military attache and covertly hit back at Iran. But what did all of this mean for the Kingdom? Iran's moves were catastrophic for Saudi Arabia. Not only did it bring in millions of dollars of losses, resulting in a first-quarter fiscal deficit, but it simultaneously showed that US defence and security protection was not foolproof. The Saudis had spent billions of dollars on defence deals with the Americans. Just last year, a year into President Donald Trump's second term, the Saudis signed a defence agreement with the US, worth a whopping $142 billion. Ultimately, however, American bases on Saudi territory turned out to be a liability. Saudi Arabia lost out on energy exports and imports through the Strait of Hormuz. Worse, investor confidence has been dented in its NEOM mega-project, as a number of contracts had to be put on hold.

Strait of Hormuz 'faultline' exposes weakness of the US-Iran deal

The fragile "no war, no peace" situation since the US and Iran signed a tentative deal last month now seems to have tipped into war. This on-again off-again truce could again wobble back into life through the efforts of increasingly exasperated Arab and Pakistani mediators, and the preference of both sides to avoid a return to a drawn out, all-out war. But its biggest fault line is the status of the strategic Strait of Hormuz - and Iran is again making it clear that its control over this vital maritime corridor is a big, bright red line that neither military, economic nor diplomatic pressure can break. "We told you: keep your word or pay the price," is how Iran's lead negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf recently phrased it on social media, quoting the agreement. Tehran has found backing for that word in the very vague details of the deal - known as a memorandum of understanding - which was drafted in haste in June. It has been understood differently by both sides from the start. Iran sees in point five of the 14-point plan a green light, which gives it sway over the management of this critical maritime corridor. Point five reads: "The Islamic Republic of Iran will make arrangements using its best efforts for the safe passage of commercial vessels." The US reads that as saying Tehran has to open this strategic strait to the free flow of global oil and gas supplies, along with other vital commodities, including ingredients to produce fertiliser. "You can drive a truck through those clauses," an Arab oil executive working in the region said. While the new leadership, which emerged in Tehran from weeks of all-out war and waves of US-Israeli assassinations, appears to be aligned on their broad strategic vision for this new chapter of the Islamic Republic, there are clear and growing signs of splits over how to move forward. "Some want to cash in on battlefield gains through diplomacy and some believe the ceasefire came too soon before Iran had inflicted enough pain on the US," assesses Robert Malley of the International Crisis Group, who was part of the US delegation that negotiated the landmark 2015 nuclear deal US President Donald Trump pulled out of in his first term. Recent Iranian attacks on three vessels including a Qatari-flagged liquefied natural gas tanker, moving through a shipping corridor close to Oman's coastline to the south, were described by a diplomatic source in the region as the work of a "rogue unit" within the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). In a system where the IRGC now plays a dominant role, Iran's non-negotiable red line is that vessels must now stick to its designated routes. Last night, far from the thunder of this escalation, its parliament quietly introduced a new bill to manage the strait called the Strategic Action for the Security and Sustainable Progress of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf.

From Wimbledon towels to Scotch: What India-UK trade deal could mean for shoppers

In the offices of Welspun Living, the Indian company that makes championship towels for Wimbledon, preparations have been gathering pace to take full benefit of the India-UK free trade agreement (FTA) that came into effect on Wednesday. The home textile manufacturing giant, among India's largest, supplies bedsheets and towels to several major British high-street retailers. "Many of these brands have been in India in recent weeks to chart a business roadmap for the next few years. We typically did joint forward planning only for our US customers, but now, with the deal, it's happening with UK clients too," Dipali Goenka, CEO of Welspun Living, told the BBC. The FTA between the world's fifth and sixth largest economies removes or reduces tariffs on 99% of Indian exports to the UK and 90% of UK imports into India. The British government has called it "the UK's biggest and most economically significant bilateral trade pact" since leaving the EU, with its GDP estimated to increase by 0.13%, equivalent to £4.8bn ($6.4bn), and India's by 0.06%, or £5.1bn per year in the long run because of the deal. Labour-heavy sectors like textiles, garments, footwear, cars and marine products are counting on the agreement's implementation to spur business growth "I'm expecting our exports to the UK to now grow in double digits," Goenka said. She adds that India was at a disadvantage to countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan because their exports entered the UK duty-free through the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS), while India paid 12% tariffs. But that will now change. "If you look at just home textiles, Pakistan's share of UK exports are at around 55%, whereas India's is just 6-7%. That's the gap we can finally cover." The pact could also be a tipping point for British alcohol and spirits companies. The reduction of customs duties on Scotch whisky from 150% to 75% immediately and then gradually to 40% over 10 years is a "real shift, not a small tweak", says Avneet Singh of Modern Drinks Pvt Ltd, an import house based in the capital Delhi. How much this boosts imports will become clearer in the coming months, says Singh, though he sees momentum building ahead of the new terms of trade taking effect. "The focus has been on getting the operational side ready. That means working closely with UK suppliers to ensure certificates of origin and other trade documentation are in place, reviewing customs and compliance requirements, and co-ordinating with logistics and clearing partners so shipments can benefit from the revised tariff structure from day one," Singh said. So far, it's been a period of "careful preparation rather than rapid expansion", he says. Bigger changes will come once businesses see the actual savings on imported goods. Beyond these few pockets of the industry though, the overall impact of the deal could be "incremental rather than transformational", according to trade experts.

West Asia Tensions and El Niño Risks May Keep Markets Volatile; PL Capital Raises NIFTY Target to 27,019

Mumbai, July 15, 2026: PL Capital, one of India's most trusted financial services organisations, in its latest India Strategy Report titled "West Asia Crisis, El Niño can play a spoil sport", believes that while India's structural growth story remains firmly intact, the domestic economy continues to face near-term risks from geopolitical uncertainty, weather-related disruptions and inflationary pressures. Despite these challenges, improving domestic demand, easing crude oil prices and attractive market valuations continue to provide support to the broader equity market.

According to report, the NIFTY Index has witnessed gains of nearly 7.3% in the past two months and 8% from 52-week lows on the back of easing crude oil prices, temporary ceasefire in West Asia, and robust economic performance in India. Credit growth has picked up to 17%, indicating solid demand in sectors such as retail, services, agriculture, and industry, while policies of the Indian government have insulated the economy from global disruption in supply chain and commodity prices. Taking into consideration the improvement in the macroeconomic environment and valuations, PL Capital has raised its one-year NIFTY target to 27,019 from 26,449 before. The company estimates the value of the index at 10% discount to its average 15-year price-to-earnings ratio for FY28 earnings. Despite the rally in the market, which has raised valuations, the NIFTY is trading at a discount of 11.7% to its historical average.

However, report notes that there is an indication that earnings expectation is still under pressure. Earnings expectations for FY27 and FY28 NIFTY have been reduced by 0.9% and 0.4% respectively by PL Capital with their forecast still lower than the overall market expectation. The research firm believes that there could be additional earnings reduction should any adverse geopolitical developments and weather situations negatively affect consumption and earnings of firms.

Corporate Earnings in the first quarter of FY27 has generally remained solid amid global uncertainty. Earnings after taxes excluding the oil and gas sector is expected to be up 14% YoY due to good demand in Banks/NBFC, consumer durable, hospitals, metals, renewable and engineering services. Demand for weddings and festivals has generally been strong despite higher prices of gold while good summer demand has resulted in increased sales of air conditioners, beverages and others. Rural demand has remained stable although its sustainability would largely be determined by monsoon progress. The report also mentions that increased input costs continue to be a major worry, as seen by margin pressures in various sectors. Increased food costs, crude cost increases and disruption in logistics are likely to gradually translate into higher inflation over the second half of FY27. Inflation, despite remaining moderate, is anticipated to increase on account of an unfavourable base effect as well as the growing likelihood of Super El Niño phenomenon in the current monsoon season.

Monsoon situation, yet again, continues to be one of the major concerns. While deficit rainfall has reduced from about 40% in June to about 21% currently, unevenness of rainfall persists throughout the country. Sowing in Kharif crops has been almost 21% lower this year compared to last year in crops such as oilseeds, pulses and cotton. If such deficits continue to prevail for the rest of the monsoon period, then agricultural production as well as food inflation would come under pressure.

Moreover, the report adds that geopolitical factors will continue to shape the macroeconomic dynamics of India as well. Although reduced oil prices have brought some reprieve for India, there may still be disruptions in global supply chains and commodity prices if tensions escalate in West Asia. Higher spending by the government on subsidies, along with weather issues, may cause further problems for the government's finances, although record dividend payments from the RBI, buoyant GST revenues, and strong industrial production will continue to aid the economy.

In terms of monetary policy, PL Capital feels that liquidity in the country will see even more improvement with the FCNR bonds issue planned. However, with higher inflation in food and fuel prices, an interest rate hiking cycle may become unavoidable in the second half of FY27.

From the sectorial point of view, PL Capital has a positive outlook on the Banking, NBFCs, Capital Goods, Defense, Telecommunication, Jewellery, Hospitals and Consumer Durables segments based on the favourable trends in domestic demand, infrastructure investment, manufacturing prospects, and credit growth. However, the brokerage is cautious on Auto, Consumer, IT Services, Cement, Chemicals and Oil & Gas companies.

Commenting on the report, Mr. Amnish Aggarwal, Co-Head Institutional Equities, PL Capital, said, "India has been showing resilience in the face of an uncertain external environment.

Need LPG cylinder in 10 minutes? Swiggy Instamart says yes

Bengaluru: Quick commerce platform Swiggy Instamart said on Wednesday, July 15, that it has partnered with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) to roll out on-demand delivery of LPG cylinders, billed as the country's first such service on a quick commerce platform. The service has gone live in its first phase in Bengaluru, allowing consumers to order cooking gas cylinders on the Instamart app for delivery within minutes, the companies said. Unlike conventional LPG bookings, buyers do not need to hold an existing domestic gas connection to place an order.

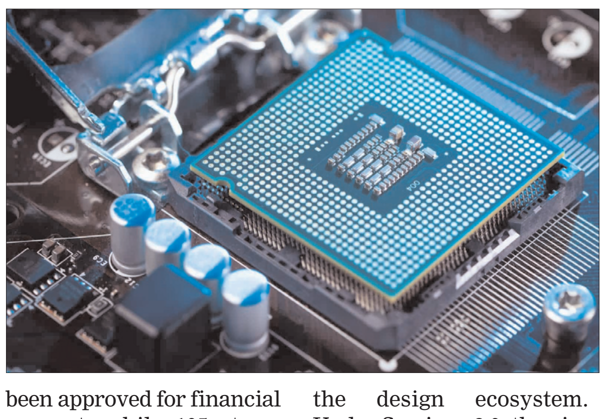
The launch also marks the commercial debut of HP Navya, HPCL's new 10-kg composite cylinder with a translucent body that lets users see how much gas is left. A standard 5-kg metal cylinder will also be available on the platform, the companies said. "Instamart has expanded its consumption use cases well beyond groceries. With HPCL, we are extending that convenience to an essential household service, bringing LPG onto Instamart while adhering to safety and reliability benchmarks," Instamart chief executive officer (CEO) Amitesh Jha said in a press release.

Existing distributor network to handle deliveries Given the safety-sensitive nature of LPG transportation, the companies said the service has been built around HPCL's existing network of authorised distributors rather than Instamart's own delivery fleet. Orders placed on the app will be routed to local HPCL distributors, with the physical delivery carried out only by certified distributor personnel.

First-time orders will be treated as fresh cylinder connections, requiring identity verification and proof-of-delivery documentation, the companies said. Subsequent orders will follow a direct swap system, under which the empty cylinder is exchanged for a new one at the time of delivery.

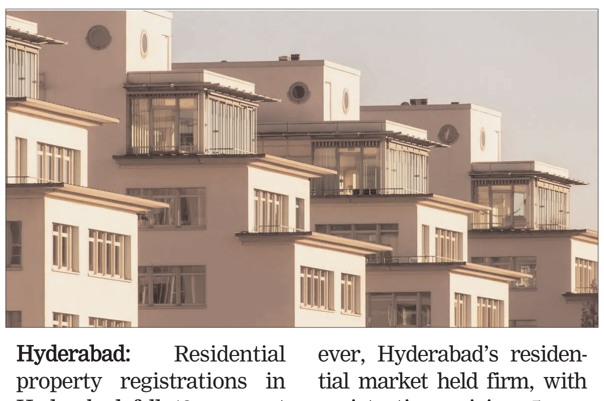
Who Can Order It?One of the biggest highlights is that you don't need an existing domestic LPG connection to buy it. That means students, people living on rent, young professionals, and smaller households can easily order a cylinder whenever they need one. The process is as simple as ordering groceries. Just open the Instamart app, select the cylinder you want, add it to your cart and place the order. If you're buying it for the first time, you'll receive a new cylinder after completing an ID verification. For future orders, simply hand over your empty HPCL cylinder when the new one arrives, and it will be treated as a refill.

Centre clears RS 1.27 lakh crore Semicon 2.0 to boost chipmaking



New Delhi: After the success of the 'Semicon 1' initiative, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday, July 15, approved the 'Semicon 2.0' scheme for the development of a domestic semiconductor design and manufacturing ecosystem, with a total budget outlay of Rs 1,27,500 crore. To date, 12 manufacturing units have been approved with a cumulative investment of over Rs 1.64 lakh crore. These include one silicon fab, one silicon carbide fab, an integrated gallium nitride micro LED display fab and nine packaging units, expected to cater to chip requirements of sectors such as consumer appliances, industrial electronics, automobiles, power electronics, telecommunications, aerospace, etc. Out of the 12 approved proposals, three companies — Micron, Kaynes and CG Semi — have started commercial production and one more is expected to start in 2026. Moreover, 24 semiconductor design projects from start-ups and MSMEs have been approved for financial support, while 105 star - ups/MSMEs have been granted access to industry-standard Electronic Design Automation (EDA) tools. Recognising the requirement to build on the momentum generated under Semicon1.0, Semicon 2.0 aims to further the government's commitment towards putting our country on the semiconductor map of the world, according to a Cabinet communique. Semicon 2.0 is aimed at building the semiconductor ecosystem on six pillars. It will build upon the initial success in chip design. With 105 startups already started developing chips, the focus is on deepening the design ecosystem. Under Semicon 2.0, the aim is to develop IPs and designs of chips and systems with this approach, the communique said. The second pillar is 'Machines and materials.' Companies involved in the manufacturing and R&D of the machines and manufacturing of materials, chemicals and gases that are essential for manufacturing semiconductors will be incentivised. "This will lay the foundation for the sustainable growth of the semiconductor industry. This will also help in developing the precision manufacturing industry in our country," according to the Cabinet communique.

HYDERABAD HOME REGISTRATIONS DIP 13 PC IN JUNE: KNIGHT FRANK



Hyderabad: Residential property registrations in Hyderabad fell 13 per cent year-on-year in June to 5,560 units, as a surge of bookings ahead of a revision in guidance values moderated after being pulled forward to May, according to Knight Frank India. The value of homes registered during the month stood at Rs 4,148 crore, down 10 per cent year-on-year (YoY) and 30 per cent from May, the property consultancy said in a report released on Wednesday, July 15. The decline followed unusually high registrations in May, as buyers rushed to close deals before the revised guidance values kicked in from June 5. For the January-June period, however, Hyderabad's residential market held firm, with registrations rising 5 per cent YoY to 37,992 units and their value up 6 per cent to Rs 26,400 crore. Premium homes hold value Knight Frank said the June slowdown was broad-based, with registrations across all ticket sizes declining between 12 per cent and 14 per cent YoY. Even so, homes priced above Rs 1 crore accounted for 22 per cent of registrations but 52 per cent of transaction value, reflecting continued demand at the premium end. District-wise, Rangareddy accounted for 49 per cent of June registrations, followed by Medchal-Malkajgiri at 38 per cent and Hyderabad district at 13 per cent.

ASUS STRENGTHENS PAN INDIA RETAIL STRATEGY WITH THE LAUNCH OF NEW EXCLUSIVE STORE IN GUNTUR

Guntur, July 2026: As a step towards strengthening the brand's retail footprint across the country, ASUS India, Taiwanese tech giant today announced the launch of its new exclusive store in Guntur. The new exclusive store is spread across 280 sq. ft. and is set to host an extensive range of electronics and computer hardware, including the ASUS flagship consumer products such as Vivobook, Zenbook, Republic of Gamers (ROG) laptops, Gaming Desktops, All-in-One Desktops, and accessories. This is the brand's 9th exclusive store located in Telangana.

Highlights

- As a step towards strengthening the brand's retail footprint across the country, ASUS India, Taiwanese tech giant today announced the launch of its new exclusive store in Guntur.

Talking about the expansion, Jignesh Bhavsar, National Sales Manager – Consumer PC & Gaming Business, ASUS India, said, "We are delighted to announce the expansion of our retail footprint in India. Telangana, being a vital market for us, the inauguration of the new brand store in the city Guntur will play a pivotal step towards empowering consumers across different regions of the country with a unique experience of our latest innovation. With a strategic retail expansion approach, we will continue to create more interaction and new touchpoints for our users."

TRUMP RETREAT OVER HORMUZ TOLLS SUGGESTS HE IS STRUGGLING TO END IRAN WAR

Donald Trump's latest Iran war demand lasted all of 24 hours and suggests a president searching for unorthodox ways out of a difficult position. On Monday morning, in a social media post announcing the resumption of an American naval blockade on Iranian shipping, he said that all vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz - including those of US allies - must pay a 20% fee to reimburse the US "for any and all costs necessary to do the job of providing safety and security to this very volatile section of the world". The following day, he abandoned that proposal completely, offering instead that he would strike "trade and investment deals" with America's Gulf allies, implying the US would offer them safe passage through the Strait in return. The abrupt about-face was the latest twist in a conflict that has now lasted more than four months and, despite a month old "memorandum of understanding" that secured a temporary ceasefire and set up a framework for negotiations, shows no sign of ending. Trump may be reluctant to escalate the war given its continued unpopularity, the likelihood of rising energy prices and the risks associated with American forces and allies once again coming under Iranian attack. He might find the prospect of ending the conflict without reaching an agreement he can claim is better than the one Barack Obama's administration negotiated in 2015 also distasteful, however. "I think the most likely ending is a non-ending," Rosemary Kelanic, Director of the Middle East program at Defense Priorities, said. "This has turned into a war of attrition, and wars of attrition tend to go on for a long, long period of time."

Celebrations as Gibraltar-Spain border fence removed

IRAN THREATENS TO BLOCK MORE TRADE ROUTES AS US LAUNCHES FRESH STRIKES

Iran has threatened to block further trading routes in the region, as the US launched a fresh wave of strikes on military targets. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said the Strait of Hormuz would remain shut until the US ended its "acts of aggression". They also threatened to close off other regional oil and gas export channels. The warning came as the US military's Central Command (Centcom) said it had carried out drone, air and navy strikes on Iran on Wednesday morning, following another seven-hour operation overnight. Fresh hostilities between the US and Iran in recent days have served to underscore the strategic importance of the Strait to the global economy. The renewed attacks have also triggered a sharp rise in oil prices, as tanker traffic

through the vital shipping route has virtually stalled. Wednesday morning's strikes "further degraded Iran's ability to attack commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz", Centcom said in a statement. A 90-minute wave was used to target Iran's coastal defences and cruise missile storage and launch sites on Greater Tunb Island, the Centcom officials added. On Tuesday, US President Donald Trump vowed to strike Iran's bridges and power plants next week if the country did not return to talks. "I'll save the energy targets for last, but ultimately we'll hit energy targets," Trump said in an interview on Special Report with Bret Baier that aired on Tuesday night. The escalation in rhetoric came after Trump said a 20% toll he had threatened to impose in the Strait of Hormuz would be replaced by "massive" trade and investment deals with Gulf states. A previous threat by Trump to bomb Iran's civilian infrastructure, which was made in April, drew condemnation at the time from UN human rights chief Volker Türk, who said: "Under international law, deliberately attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure is a war crime." A renewed US blockade on Iranian ports was imposed on Tuesday evening, which stops vessels from transiting to and from Iranian ports and coastal areas. The blockade had previously been lifted as part of a deal that was struck by the two countries last month - known as a memorandum of understanding - that aimed to end the months-long conflict. However, a dispute over the strait has become a key point of contention.

SPECIAL POLICE TEAM TO INVESTIGATE KILLING OF AN ANTI-MIGRANT LEADER IN SOUTH AFRICA

A special police team has begun investigating the killing of a provincial leader of an anti-migrant group in South Africa. Police confirmed that Andile Mvuyelwa Somgxada, the Gauteng province leader of March and March, was shot outside his home east of Johannesburg earlier this month and died several days later in hospital. "It's a retaliation," March and March spokesperson Sandile Dube told the BBC, explaining how the movement believed he was targeted because of its campaign to get undocumented migrants to leave the country. He said other leaders of March and March, which has been organising anti-migrant demonstrations across the country, had recently received warnings or death threats. "This seems like an orchestrated hitman type of killing," Dube told the BBC's Newsday programme, urging the authorities to get to the bottom of the matter and the intimidation the organisation was facing. Acting police chief Lt Gen Puleng Dimpane has announced a multidisciplinary team to investigate the shooting, which he said underscored the seriousness with which the service was treating the case. "We are committed to conducting a thorough investigation to establish the circumstances surrounding this murder and to ensure accountability," he said in statement on Tuesday evening. Immigration - especially undocumented migration - has become a highly contentious political issue in South Africa, with protesters accusing them of placing pressure on public services, as well as being involved in crime. March and March had set an unofficial deadline of 30 June for all migrants without papers to leave the country. Protesters have promised to stage weekly marches until their demands are met. The South African government has said more than 53,000 foreign nationals have been deported or repatriated since it launched a "migration management" campaign five weeks ago. Xenophobia has long been an issue in South Africa, which is Africa's wealthiest nation and has long attracted migrants searching for better economic opportunities. It has sometimes led to violence - and this current round of demonstrations has seen violence, intimidation and looting. On Tuesday, five people were arrested in Limpopo province for allegedly impersonating immigration officers and unlawfully demanding foreign nationals leave the country. The police said the incident involved a Nigerian national - who was legally in South Africa - being intimidated and forced to close his business by the suspects. Lt Gen Dimpane issued a "stern warning" to those who "continue to intimidate, harass and perpetrate violence against foreign nationals". "The law applies equally to everyone," he said.

Italy's Meloni suffers surprise setback in close vote on electoral reform

Italy's Giorgia Meloni coalition government has lost a crucial vote on an amendment to electoral reform - a significant setback ahead of next year's general election. In a secret ballot in Italy's lower house of parliament on Wednesday evening, MPs rejected a proposal spearheaded by her party, Brothers of Italy (FdI), by 188 votes to 187 - indicating that several of Meloni's MPs voted against the amendment. In an angry post on social media after the vote, she said the result had been "a missed opportunity for Italians". "The opposition celebrating as if they had won the World Cup, for preventing citizens from choosing their parliamentarians says it all," she added, referencing jubilant scenes in parliament by opposition parties. Meloni did not address calls from the opposition to resign and bring forward the general election, currently planned for autumn 2027. The proposed reform would see Italy move to a fully proportional system which would award a bonus to the party or coalition with

the largest share of the vote, even if they fall short of a majority. Coalitions would also be required to agree on a common platform and a single prime ministerial candidate - something that many parties, which tend to campaign separately, would find unpalatable. The amendment that was rejected in Tuesday's vote was a provision on preference voting, allowing voters to choose preferred candidates from a list. Although that element was rejected, the government can continue to press ahead with reform. Meloni has argued the reform would result in less shaky government coalitions and greater stability in Italy. But opposition parties had criticised it as "authoritarian" and an attempt to secure a majority in next year's general election. Since 2022, Giorgia Meloni has led a coalition government made up of centre-right and right-wing parties, plus her own hard-right FdI. But tensions within the coalition have increased as the parties' individual popularity has declined. They became exacerbated ahead of Tuesday's vote - which FdI's junior partners had reservations about - eventually culminating in the defeat of the amendment. Meanwhile, centre-left and left-wing opposition parties are preparing to form a united front against Meloni next year, adding to her concerns. They already teamed up successfully in a campaign against a government-backed referendum on constitutional reform in the spring, which Meloni's camp lost in the first major blow to her government. If she is going to win a safer majority next year, Meloni will have to broaden her appeal either to the centre or towards more extremist groups, such as Roberto Vannacci's fledgling National Future (FN). Vannacci, a former paratrooper, launched FN earlier this year after splintering from Matteo Salvini's League party. The FN is a Eurosceptic, hard-right proponent of remigration - the mass deportation of people with a migrant background. It now polls at around 6%, ahead of the League's 5.6%. Bar an early vote or a reshuffle, if elections are held in September 2027, Meloni will be the first Italian prime minister to have governed for a whole term with just one government since 1946.

How a former 'street kid' is key to South Africa's police corruption inquiry

The name of controversial businessman Vusimusi "Cat" Matlala has haunted the proceedings of South Africa's major inquiry into alleged police corruption. The 49-year-old has been accused of supplying generous gifts - including 20 impalas, the weight-loss drug Ozempic and personal loans - to help him buy influence and get police contracts. In police custody for more than a year in connection with a separate case, Matlala was due to provide his side of the story before retired Constitutional Court judge Mbuyiseli Madlanga and his panel on Wednesday. But after appearing before the commissioners in person for two hours, it was agreed that he would start holding his testimony in earnest in September. The revelations at the Madlanga Commission, in progress for 10 months, have gripped South Africans and they are eager to hear how Matlala responds. Dressed in a Fendi shirt and Gucci glasses, Matlala

did give evidence at a parallel corruption inquiry in parliament last November. He said he did not know senior police officers and politicians personally and denied corruption allegations though he admitted to having made donations for activities related to the African National Congress (ANC), the main party in the coalition government. But he has not yet been asked to address the wider allegations made at the Madlanga Commission or the accusation that he was part of a drug trafficking cartel, allegedly known as the Big Five.

Russian attacks kill eight as Ukraine hits Black Sea oil tankers

VENEZUELA GOVERNMENT TO LAUNCH FORMAL TALKS WITH OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Venezuela's interim government says it will start holding formal talks with some members of the opposition from 1 August. The announcement comes just over six months after US troops seized Nicolás Maduro, the Venezuelan leader at the time, in a dawn raid on the capital, Caracas, and took him to New York to face drug-trafficking charges. Former Vice-President Delcy Rodríguez, a Maduro loyalist, has been in power since then with the backing of the Trump administration, much to the frustration of the opposition, which had hoped Maduro's ouster would be followed by a change of government. An opposition statement said the talks would lay down "a route map towards democracy". The plan for formal talks was announced almost simultaneously by a

group of opposition politicians on the one hand, and Jorge Rodríguez, who heads the government-controlled National Assembly, on the other. Jorge Rodríguez, who is the brother of interim president Delcy Rodríguez, cited the devastation created by the recent twin earthquakes which struck the north of Venezuela on 24 June as the reason behind the talks. At least 4,734 people are already confirmed to have died but the death toll keeps on rising as more bodies are found beneath the rubble. "Only through unity can we move forward with reconstruction and maintain peace," Jorge Rodríguez's brief statement said. The opposition statement was more detailed and expressly referred to the support the United States has lent since the quakes, which it said showed that "Venezuela is not alone". The opposition group is made up of former lawmakers who were elected to the National Assembly in 2015, the last time opposition parties won a majority in the legislative body. National Assembly elections held since then have either been boycotted by the opposition or widely dismissed as neither free nor fair, as Maduro and his PSUV party tightened their grip on all branches of government. The opposition team will be led by Dinorah Figuera, who returned to Venezuela in June after almost eight years in exile. Upon landing in Caracas, she told reporters that she had travelled to her home country "on invitation from the [US] State Department" with the aim of pushing for the renewal of the National Electoral Council (CNE).

10 Million Sign Petition To 'Kick Argentina Out' Of World Cup

Defending FIFA World Cup champions Argentina take on England in the second semi-final of the 2026 edition. Before the match, public outrage has grown over Lionel Messi's team's alleged favouritism from referees. According to a report in the South China Morning Post, the online petition demanded Argentina's expulsion from the FIFA World Cup. This comes after allegations of referee favouritism. The statement from the campaign, by argentinaout.com, reads: "It is obvious that FIFA and the referees are biased toward Lionel Messi and Argentina. Why should the rest of the world compete when the winner has already been decided? Kick Argentina out of the World Cup and give everyone else a fair chance." By early Wednesday evening, more than 10 million people had signed the petition. England and Argentina will lock horns in the latest chapter of one of the game's most compelling rivalries. The history of matches between the nations is peppered with incidents, set against a lingering sovereignty dispute over the Falkland Islands, known in Spanish as the Malvinas, in the South Atlantic Ocean. The encounter takes place 40 years after Diego Maradona's infamous "Hand of God" goal helped Argentina to a 2-1 win at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico. England captain Harry Kane, who is competing against Messi and Mbappe for the Golden Boot, said his team would not be distracted by the emotional baggage surrounding the fixture. "From a player's point of view, it's us against a great team, who are smart, who are tactical, who know how to buy fouls, know how to slow the game down – like many different teams you come up against throughout your whole career," Kane told ITV. Argentina football superstar Lionel Messi made his senior team debut back in 2005, but he has never played against England. It will be the first time Messi will take on England when Argentina take the field during the FIFA World Cup 2026 semifinal on Thursday. It feels unbelievable that despite playing international football for 21 years, It is a bit surprising that Messi has not faced a global powerhouse like England, but this is mainly due to the rarity of the encounter.

FIFA SET TO 'BREAK' FOOTBALL LAWS IN WORLD CUP 2026 FINAL?

After over a month of top action, three teams remain in contention for the title - Spain, Argentina and England. Spain beat France in the first semi-final, while Argentina face England in the second semi-final. The final will be played at the New Jersey Stadium on Sunday. The final will see global superstars such as Tom Cruise, Laura Pausini, Nicole Scherzinger, Robbie Williams and IShowSpeed perform in the closing ceremony. The half-time break in Sunday's World Cup final will see a Super Bowl-style show, headlined by Madonna, Shakira and K-pop boy band BTS. While half-time breaks generally last 15 minutes, with the scheduled programme in between, the half-time break might last between 20 and 25 minutes, according to reports in the BBC and Sky Sports. The laws of the game, governed by IFAB (the International Football Association Board), state that players are entitled to a half-time break "not exceeding 15 minutes". In that sense, this is a break from the traditional law. According to the BBC, "Half-time of last year's Club World Cup final, also organised by FIFA and held in New Jersey, lasted a total of 24 minutes due to a performance featuring Coldplay, J Balvin, Doja Cat, Tems and Emmanuel Kelly." As the largest sporting event in history reaches its conclusion at the New Jersey Stadium on Sunday, the ceremony will celebrate the 48 teams' unforgettable journey across the three host countries and 16 host cities, FIFA said in a statement. Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony Award winner Jennifer Hudson will deliver a special rendition of the United States national anthem ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026 final. One of the world's most celebrated performers, Hudson's powerful performance will set the stage for football's biggest match and the most anticipated moment of the tournament. Produced in creative partnership with Balich Wonder Studio, the closing ceremony will celebrate the passion, emotion and global spirit that have defined the 23rd FIFA World Cup, a game-changing event featuring 48 teams that has shattered records and inspired a new generation of girls and boys around the world to dream.

After ICC's Rule Change, India vs Pakistan Clash Can Happen 3 Times In Cricket World Cup

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Wednesday a revamped format for the men's 2027 one-day international World Cup that could lead to an additional fixture between arch-rivals India and Pakistan. While next year's edition in southern Africa remains a 14-team competition, the three lowest-ranked qualifiers will now take part in a preliminary round with just one of them progressing to a 12-strong main group stage. That will now feature just two pools of six, with a new 'super seven' stage replacing the previous 'super six' round-robin. Significantly, there will be no quarter-finals with the tournament denied the further jeopardy and interest that comes with an extra round of clear-cut knockout matches. An additional team in the round-robin phase, however, increases the prospects of an extra match between India and Pakistan. As such, India and Pakistan could face each other as many as three times – once in the initial group stage, once in the 'super seven' and once more in either the semi-finals or final.

The passion for cricket in the sub-continent, which in turn generates huge broadcast rights and commercial revenues for the ICC, makes a match between India and Pakistan the most lucrative in the sport. But India and Pakistan no longer meet outside of ICC events, with political tensions between the bordering nations meaning they are effectively barred by their own governments from facing each other.

Kylian Mbappe Remains Lionel Messi's No. 1 Challenger

Kylian Mbappe and France's bid to clinch the FIFA World Cup 2026 trophy came to an end on Tuesday following a shocking 0-2 defeat to Spain in the semi-final. France, who were aiming to reach their third consecutive World Cup final, were thoroughly outplayed by Rodri and Co. and knocked out of the title race. It was also a disappointing outing for captain Kylian Mbappe, who had been in fine form throughout the tournament but failed to find the back of the net in the semi-final. Despite drawing a blank and seeing France's title hopes dashed, Mbappe remains firmly in contention for the Golden Boot. The France striker will now have to settle for the third-place playoff while continuing his pursuit of another Golden Boot award in a closely contested race with Argentina superstar Lionel Messi. Mbappe and Messi have eight goals each so far at this year's tournament. Mbappe, who won the Golden Boot at the last World Cup four years ago in Qatar, holds the first tiebreaker with a 3-2 lead on assists. Messi and defending champion Argentina will play again on Wednesday in the other semifinal match against England. Both players will then have one more match before the award is decided. France will play the loser of the other semifinal match in the third-place game on Saturday in Miami Gardens, Florida. Spain will take on the winner in East Rutherford, New Jersey, in the final. "At the end of the day, you take all the glory when you win," Mbappe said. "When you don't win ... it's part of the game. As the captain, I have to take all the responsibility, and I have no problem with that. We wanted to go to the final. We didn't go." Mbappe had the fewest touches of any forward in the first half with 15.

Should MS Dhoni Take Over As CSK Head Coach? R Ashwin Gives Simple Answer

Former Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Indian veteran spinner Ravichandran Ashwin believes CSK should begin planning beyond Stephen Fleming's long tenure as head coach, saying the franchise has reached a stage where it needs a fresh direction. On Tuesday, CSK and Fleming decided to mutually part ways, bringing to a close one of the most successful and enduring partnerships in the history of the Indian Premier League (IPL). He stressed that if MS Dhoni is willing to take up the coaching role, he would be the ideal successor given his deep understanding of the team and his successful partnership with Fleming over the years. Ashwin also noted that any new coach would face uncertainty because Dhoni remains an influential figure within the franchise and continues to play a significant role in discussions surrounding team selection and decision-making.

Atiqa Mir Sizzles In Italy Heat, Beats Two Mercedes F1 Juniors For Pole Position

India's 11-year-old racing prodigy Atiqa Mir gave another compelling example of her precocious talent by out-qualifying two Mercedes F1 junior drivers for pole position in the Champions of the Future Academy Program Round 3 in Viterbo. Despite no testing on a rather technical Leopard Circuit, Atiqa, the first Indian to be backed by Formula 1 Academy, set sizzling pace in qualifying of the karting series. She beat established Mercedes F1 Junior drivers like Niccolo Perico of Italy and Devin Titz of Germany for pole position besides setting an event record, earning the plaudits from one and all in the paddock. Atiqa's special performance in qualifying came after she swept Round 2 of the COTFA series in Greece last month. Post the stellar pole position, Atiqa secured P2 and P3 in the Heats after engrossing battles. In the final, Atiqa started P2 and passed Niccolo for the lead. However, due to an engine mis-fire, she couldn't hold on to the lead and lost places finally before recovering to finish P6. The results don't reflect Atiqa's sensational speed but she did make a mark with the audacious move for the lead on Lap 1 against Niccolo after outpacing him in qualifying. On Day 2, Atiqa was hit by engine trouble and qualified 27th. The organisers were quick to change her engine but the damage was done by then. A recovery drive followed and she charged through the field in every heat to start the final 18th on the grid. In the Final, Atiqa passed as many as nine karts in only one and a half laps before a fellow driver forced her out of the race with a collision from the side. The errant driver was duly penalised.

OLYMPIC CHAMPION LEE TO RETURN AFTER TWO YEARS OUT

Six-time Olympic medallist Sunisa Lee has announced she is coming back to gymnastics after not competing since the 2024 Olympics. The 23-year-old took team gold with the USA in Paris along with all-around and uneven bars bronzes. She claimed all-around gold, team silver and uneven bars bronze at Tokyo 2020. Lee's return, revealed in a video on Instagram,, external comes two years before the Los Angeles 2028 Games. Commenting "I'm back", she said in a voiceover: "I know what I'm capable of. I'm willing to do whatever it takes to get there. Back in the gym. We'll see." The video ends with the words: "This is more than a comeback, stay tuned." Last year Lee said that as well as dealing with health issues after being diagnosed with a chronic kidney disease in 2023, she had issues with depression and self-doubt between Tokyo and Paris. She said that in the absence of daily gymnastics training, her body was feeling good. Jade Carey, who also won medals in Tokyo and Paris, recently made her comeback after a similar break. Follow American and seven-time Olympic champion Simone Biles, the most decorated gymnast of all time and who has not competed since Paris, has said she was unsure about competing in LA.

Why Has Lionel Messi Never Played Against England In His 21-Year Career?

Argentina football superstar Lionel Messi made his senior team debut back in 2005, but he has never played against England. It will be the first time Messi will take on England when Argentina take the field during the FIFA World Cup 2026 semifinal on Thursday. It feels unbelievable that despite playing international football for 21 years, It is a bit surprising that Messi has not faced a global powerhouse like England, but this is mainly due to the rarity of the encounter. England and Argentina last faced each other back in 2005, with their last World Cup meeting taking place in 2002 when England emerged victorious 1-0. Argentina football superstar Lionel Messi made his senior team debut back in 2005, but he has never played against England. It will be the first time Messi will take on England when Argentina take the field during the FIFA World Cup 2026 semifinal on Thursday. It feels unbelievable that despite playing international football for 21 years, It is a bit surprising that Messi has not faced a global powerhouse like England, but this is mainly due to the rarity of the encounter. England and Argentina last faced each other back in 2005, with their last World Cup meeting taking place in 2002 when England emerged victorious 1-0. Defending FIFA World Cup champions Argentina take on England in the second semi-final of the 2026 edition. Before the match, public outrage has grown over Lionel Messi's team's alleged favouritism from referees. According to a report in the South China Morning Post, the online petition demanded Argentina's expulsion from the FIFA World Cup. This comes after allegations of referee favouritism. The statement from the campaign, by argentinaout.com, reads: "It is obvious that FIFA and the referees are biased toward Lionel Messi and Argentina. Why should the rest of the world compete when the winner has already been decided? Kick Argentina out of the World Cup and give everyone else a fair chance." By early Wednesday evening, more than 10 million people had signed the petition. England and Argentina will lock horns in the latest chapter of one of the game's most compelling rivalries. The history of matches between the nations is peppered with incidents, set against a lingering sovereignty dispute over the Falkland Islands, known in Spanish as the Malvinas, in the South Atlantic Ocean.

"Operation Aruna Reddy" Pre-Release Event Held Grandly

The film is all set for a grand theatrical release on July 17

The pre-release event of "Operation Aruna Reddy," written, produced, directed by, and starring renowned writer and actor Posani Krishna Murali, was held in a grand manner in Hyderabad on Tuesday evening.

The pre-release event of "Operation Aruna Reddy," written, produced, directed by, and starring renowned writer and actor Posani Krishna Murali, was held in a grand manner in Hyderabad on Tuesday evening. Posani Krishna Murali has also handled the story, screenplay, dialogues, lyrics, and editing for the film, making it a unique project. The movie features Hindola Chakravarthi, Kajal Sharma, Ayesha Khan, BJP leader Raghunandan Rao, and others in prominent roles. The film is scheduled for a grand theatrical release on July 17. Speaking at the event, Actor, writer, director, and producer Posani Krishna Murali said, "The reason this film has completed production so quickly and is releasing on schedule is my friend Srinivas, whose support has been invaluable. I have written over a hundred films, acted in hundreds more, and directed and produced several movies. Among all my works, I can confidently say that 'Operation Aruna Reddy' has the best screenplay I have ever written. I am proud of this film. From the very beginning until the climax, audiences will never be able to predict what happens next. There isn't a single vulgar dialogue or an obscene scene in the film. I have made this movie with complete sincerity, and I firmly believe that 'Operation Aruna Reddy' will be loved by audiences everywhere."

BOBBY PICTURES' DEBUT PRODUCTION LAUNCHED BY V.V. VINAYAK

Under the banner of Bobby Pictures, producer Sankabattula Nageswara Rao is set to produce his maiden venture, Karunamaya, as Production No. 1. The film stars Chaitanya Shakti and Swathi Sri in the lead roles and is directed by Harshavardhan Parella. Presented by Aradhya Haindavi, the movie is being made as a family emotional drama and is scheduled for release on December 23 this year.
The film's pooja (launch) ceremony was held grandly on Wednesday. Renowned directors V. V. Vinayak and V. N. Aditya attended the event as chief guests and officially launched the film. Producer Sankabattula Nageswara Rao said: "We are planning to release our film during the Christmas season on December 23 this year.

CHARAN'S PEDDI SETS NETFLIX ON FIRE WITH MASSIVE VIEWERSHIP

Mega Power Star Ram Charan's Peddi is proving that blockbuster success doesn't end with a theatrical run. After creating waves at the box office, the sports action entertainer has found an even wider audience on Netflix, where it is rapidly emerging as one of the platform's biggest hits. Helmed by Buchi Babu Sana and backed by Vriddhi Cinemas, the film was celebrated for blending intense action with strong emotional drama. The positive word-of-mouth during its theatrical release has now translated into exceptional digital viewership, helping the film dominate Netflix charts within just a few days of its arrival. The film is ruling the streaming rankings in India. While the movie is available in all south Indian languages, the Hindi version will be released soon. Peddi has now set a new record among highest viewed south Indian movies on Neflix.

'WELCOME TO WILDLIFE' MOVIE POSTER RELEASED

On the occasion of Shiva Rajkumar's birthday, the poster of the prestigious film 'Welcome to Wildlife' starring 'Kannada Superstar' ShivaRajkumar directed by caarthick Raju (known for blockbusters like Ninu Veedani Needanu Nene and Single) was unveiled by Shiva Rajkumar and Geetha Shiva Rajkumar. The film is being produced by Kudipudi Vijay Kumar under the KVK Productions banner. Preparations are underway to release this film on a pan-India level.

HERO KIRAN ABBAVARAM'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Kiran Abbavaram and heroine Sri Gouri Priya star together in "Chennai Love Story," produced by the successful duo SKN and Sai Rajesh, who previously delivered cult classics like "Colour Photo" and "Baby."

"Chennai Love Story" is a hard-hitting love story – Heroine Sri Gouri Priya
Audiences will never forget the conversations between Steven and Nivi – Director Ravi Namburii
"Chennai Love Story" will earn Kiran Abbavaram immense appreciation – Story Writer & Producer Sai Rajesh
"Chennai Love Story" will win your appreciation right from the premiere shows – Producer SKN
"Chennai Love Story" is a memorable film in my career, and we have complete confidence in our content – Hero Kiran Abbavaram
Hero Kiran Abbavaram and heroine Sri Gouri Priya star together in "Chennai Love Story," produced by the successful duo SKN and Sai Rajesh, who previously delivered cult classics like "Colour Photo" and "Baby." The film is being produced under the Amrutha Productions and Mass Movie Makers banners by SKN and Sai Rajesh. Sai Rajesh has penned the story, while Ravi Namburi directs the film. Melody Brahma Mani Sharma has composed the music for the project.
"Chennai Love Story" is all set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on the 24th of this month. Ahead of the release, the makers organized a grand press meet in Hyderabad today, where Kiran Abbavaram's birthday was also celebrated in a festive atmosphere.

MAHESH BABU'S NEPHEW GETS ENGAGED TO KOREAN GIRL

Superstar Mahesh Babu's family has a fresh reason to celebrate. His nephew Siddharth Ghattamaneni, son of late actor Ramesh Babu, got engaged to his longtime South Korean girlfriend Hyein Kim in an intimate ceremony held recently. The couple got engaged at the home of Mahesh's brother-in-law Galla Jayadev and sister Padmavati, and the celebrations have been making waves online. Hyein Kim, also known as Jinny, dazzled in a sleeveless yellow floral lehenga choli, while Siddharth looked dapper in a green kurta pyjama set. The South Korean beauty completed her look with a maang teeka, statement necklace, bangles and delicate mehendi, blending seamlessly into the traditional festivities. Mahesh Babu's wife Namrata Shirodkar shared adorable pictures from the family-only event, posing warmly with the newly engaged couple. Fans and industry friends flooded social media with congratulatory messages, wishing Siddharth and Hyein a happy new journey together. Unlike his cousin Ashok Galla, Siddharth has always stayed away from films, choosing a private, corporate life instead.

Anakapalli; Grand Release Slated for August 7

Highlights

- Produced by Kandregula Naidu and Thrinadha Rao Nakkina under the Bhavya Sri Movie Makers & Nakkina Narratives banners

Produced by Kandregula Naidu and Thrinadha Rao Nakkina under the Bhavya Sri Movie Makers & Nakkina Narratives banners, Anakapalli is a raw and rustic entertainer directed by Khagesh Tammineni. Vikram Sahidev, Sandhya Vasishta are the lead pair and Tarak Ponnappa will be seen in a crucial role while Thrinadha Rao Nakkina has not only penned the story and screenplay but also appears in a pivotal role. Kandregula Kumar Raja serves as the co-producer. Anakapalli has already generated considerable buzz with its impressive teaser and chart-worthy songs. The makers have now announced the release of the movie on August 7.

Adding to the excitement, leading producer Suryadevara Naga Vamsi has now launched the film's latest romantic track, 'Yelage Pilla', and extended his best wishes to the entire team. Complimenting the song, he appreciated its catchy tune, the appealing visuals in the lyrical video, and Vikram Sahidev's graceful dance moves. He also wished the film tremendous success at the box office.

The newly released 'Yelage Pilla' is a breezy, feel-good romantic number that beautifully captures the chemistry between the lead pair. Penned by popular lyricist Anantha Sriram, the song is elevated by the soulful vocals of Kapil Kapilan and Davzand. The choreography is elegant and refreshingly simple, with Vikram Sahidev carrying the hook steps effortlessly. Going by the lyrical video, the dance moves have all the ingredients to become a major sensation across social media and reels.

The film's previously released songs, 'Ammoru Diginadi' and 'Labbaru Bomma', have already emerged as trending hits on YouTube. With its catchy melody and youthful vibe, 'Yelage Pilla' also looks poised to become an instant chartbuster.

The film features cinematography by Maya V, edited by Srikrishna Attaluri, music by Davzand, and dialogues by Uday Bhagavatula. Thrinadha Rao Nakkina has provided the story and screenplay.

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