

CHENNAI | BENGALURU | HYDERABAD | VIJAYAWADA | KOCHI

# THE SOUTH INDIA TIMES

Essence of the South

NATIONAL DAILY NEWSPAPER

For Website Visit [epaper.thesouthindiatimes.com](http://epaper.thesouthindiatimes.com)[www.thesouthindiatimes.com](http://www.thesouthindiatimes.com)[/thesouthindiatimes.yahoo.in](https://thesouthindiatimes.yahoo.in)

**KHARGE ALLEGES**  
Centre undermining MGNREGA, seeks answers from PM on pending dues and new rural employment Scheme

NATION PAGE

**ANGRY VENEZUELAN**  
accuse government of negligence over earthquake response

WORLD | NEWS



**KANNADA FILMMAKER BACKS**  
**DEEPIKA**  
8 - HOUR SHIFT

CINEMA | PAGE



SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

29-06-2026  
Total pilgrims - 95,498  
Tonsure - 30,231  
Kundi kumbh - 5,63 CR  
Laddu sale - 434 Lac  
Annasradams - 2,58 Lac  
Medical treatment - 3,372  
Waiting Campments - 21

Approx. Darshan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens) - 10-12 H.

Will Sooryavanshi debut? India begin England T20I series



Sports News

## Take decisions according to law, no one will interfere: CM Vijay to IAS, IPS officers

CHENNAI: Giving a free hand to the collectors and police officers in discharging their official duties in accordance with the law, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Monday said, “Whoever the offenders may be, and however influential they may be, prompt legal action must be taken impartially and without delay to ensure that they receive the punishment they deserve. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that no innocent person is affected, even inadvertently.”

Addressing the new government's first two-day annual conference of collectors and police officers at the Secretariat, Vijay said, “There will be no interference from any quarter in the discharge of officials' duties.” Stating that the people had elected his government for its commitment to transpar-



ency, honesty, social justice and corruption-free governance, the CM laid emphasis on the safety of women and children. “Their safety must be ensured 100%, and there should be no compromise on that. Special arrangements must invariably be made to safeguard women,” he said and urged the officers to pay special

attention to it. He further said a concerted drive must be undertaken to install CCTV cameras at all identified vulnerable locations, including areas unsafe for women, crime-prone locations, accident black spots, and places frequently visited by senior citizens.

Vijay made it clear that delays in registering FIRs in cases relating to crimes against women and under the Pocso Act must not be tolerated under any circumstances. Schools and

educational institutions must neither suppress complaints nor delay forwarding them to the authorities.

Awareness campaigns should be conducted in all schools, he noted. Stating that special attention should be paid to student safety, the CM said shops near schools must be kept under constant surveillance and inspected periodically. Those involved in narcotics offences should be arrested immediately, produced before the courts without delay.

Pointing out that the narcotics menace cannot be tackled by enforcement alone, Vijay said, “Equal focus is needed on eliminating drug demand through de-addiction camps in every district. As some tablets are also being abused, officials concerned must actively join anti-drug efforts.”

## PM Modi reviews governance priorities with top bureaucrats, pushes faster reforms and AI adoption

New Delhi (TSIT)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting of secretaries from all Central ministries, reviewing key policy reforms, administrative efficiency, ease of doing business and the government's long-term roadmap for achieving the goals of Viksit Bharat 2047. The meeting was attended by Cabinet Secretary T V Somanathan, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P K Mishra, Principal Secretary Shaktikanta Das, the Secretary of the Department of Military Affairs, and secretaries from major ministries and departments. It marked one of the Prime Minister's first full-secretary-level interactions of the current financial year.

According to sources, the review was aimed at aligning the country's top bureaucracy with the government's priorities for the second half of 2026 while accelerating the



implementation of key reforms and governance initiatives.

Improving the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) featured prominently during the deliberations, with officials examining ways to remove administrative bottlenecks, reduce regulatory burdens, simplify compliance procedures and strengthen India's economic competitive-

ness. The meeting also reviewed measures to improve the Ease of Living (EoL) through citi-

zen-centric reforms and better public service delivery.

Secretaries presented updates on the progress of the government's Viksit Bharat 2047 roadmap, outlining ministry-wise implementation strategies and long-term development targets aimed at transforming India into a developed nation by the centenary of Independence. The Prime Minister also reviewed the progress of the “52 Reforms in 52 Weeks” campaign, assessing the implementation timeline and performance of ministries tasked with delivering governance reforms within a defined schedule.

The adoption of next-generation technologies formed another major area of discussion. Ministries shared updates on the use of artificial intelligence and digital tools to improve efficiency, speed up decision-making and reduce procedural delays across departments.

## CM Naidu calls for mineral mapping & value addition to boost revenue

Directs Technology-Driven Monitoring of Free Sand Mining &amp; Transportation



Visakhapatnam (TSIT):

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed the Mines Department to undertake comprehensive mineral mapping across the state to identify valuable mineral reserves and maximize revenue through scientific mining and value addition. Reviewing the Mines Department at the Camp Office on Tuesday, the Chief Minister instructed officials to map critical minerals, bulk minerals, rare earth minerals,

and other high-value metal deposits across the state. He stressed that minerals extracted in Andhra Pradesh should undergo value addition within the state through processing industries instead of being exported as raw materials.

The Chief Minister also asked officials to conduct an expert study on the market capitalization of the state's mineral wealth through the Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation (APMDC).

He noted that significant

revenue could be generated by adding value to minerals such as beach sand, rare earth minerals, iron ore, manganese, and alumina. Mr. Naidu suggested developing a dedicated cluster for rare earth minerals found in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Kerala. He emphasized identifying reserves of high-value minerals such as titanium, ilmenite, and monazite, which are essential for manufacturing electronics, magnets, strategic equipment, and nuclear applications.

The Chief Minister further directed the department to study additional gold-bearing blocks in the state, following the identification of gold reserves in Jonnagiri and Chigurugunta in Chittoor district. Officials informed the meeting that 126 locations containing critical, bulk, and other valuable minerals have already been identified, while mining operations have recorded an 18 percent increase in revenue.

## Modi speaks to Iran Prez, stresses Strait's importance to India



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation on Tuesday with President of Iran Masoud Peshkian, who briefed him on the recent developments in West Asia and the way forward. The Prime Minister said he reiterated in his interaction with the Iranian leader the importance of freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz for India and the world. Prime Minister Modi welcomed the understanding reached, and reiterated India's consistent position that all issues must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

## Pawan Kalyan discusses tiger conservation in Eastern Ghats with Maha CM Fadnavis

Amaravati, June 30 : Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday met Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai and discussed tiger conservation measures in the Eastern Ghats. Pawan Kalyan, who was in Delhi for a medical check-up, met Fadnavis at his official residence.

According to a statement from the Deputy Chief Minister's office here, the two leaders had productive discussions regarding tiger conservation in the Eastern Ghats. Pawan Kalyan, who is also minister for forests and environment, thanked Fadnavis for Maharashtra's support in facilitating the translocation of two female tigers to Andhra Pradesh.

The Deputy CM stated that this generous gesture marks an important mile-



stone in the efforts to restore a thriving tiger population in the Eastern Ghats.

“The introduction of female tigers will help overcome the challenges of inbreeding, enhance genetic diversity, strengthen the long-term viability of the population, and contribute to a healthy, self-sustaining tiger landscape. This collaborative conservation effort reflects our shared

commitment to protecting biodiversity through science-based and sustainable wildlife management,” he said.

According to him, a significant decline in the female tiger population within the Eastern Ghats region of Andhra Pradesh led to genetic issues. “To address this and revive the tiger population, we are seeking the cooperation of the Maharashtra govern-

ment. Maharashtra has agreed to provide two female tigers to Andhra Pradesh, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude for their support.”

Pawan Kalyan exuded confidence that the partnership between Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra will contribute significantly to the long-term conservation of tigers in the Eastern Ghats.

The Jana Sena leader also thanked Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhopender Yadav, for his constant guidance in taking this initiative forward. “We will continue to move ahead with greater coordination alongside the Maharashtra government, the Central government, and other partner organisations to achieve our goals of wildlife and biodiversity conservation.”

## US envoys arrive in Qatar for talks to end war in Iran

Dubai (TSIT):

Two United States envoys arrived in Qatar on Tuesday, June 30, for talks with mediators about the implementation of an initial deal to end the war in Iran, an official said. The visit by Steve Witkoff, US President Donald Trump's special Mideast envoy, and Jared Kushner, his son-in-law, comes after a weekend of crossfire in the Persian Gulf over efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to shipping traffic. The envoys won't be having direct negotiations with Iranian diplomats while in Qatar's capital, Doha, said Majed al-Ansari, a spokesman for Qatar's Foreign Ministry. Instead, mediators are working for the time being as go-betweens for the talks, which won't include any high-level officials, he added.

## Opposition writes to CJI over EC's voter roll revision, says Jairam Ramesh

New Delhi (TSIT)

The Opposition's INDIA bloc has written to the Chief Justice of India expressing concerns over the Election Commission of India's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process and other election-related issues, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on Tuesday. In a post on social media platform X, Ramesh said that 21 political parties and one Independent leader had attended the INDIA alliance meeting on June 8, where it was decided to send a joint representation to the Chief Justice of India on the SIR exercise and other electoral issues.

“Accordingly, a joint letter now signed by 23 politi-



cal parties plus one Independent has been sent to the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India today,” Ramesh said. Emphasising the unity among Opposition parties on the issue, the Congress leader said, “The Opposition parties are firmly anchored in SURE—Solidarity, Unity and Resistance.”

Ramesh did not disclose the contents of the letter in his post but said it dealt with the Election

Commission's Special Intensive Revision process as well as other election-related matters.

The development comes amid continuing criticism by several Opposition parties over the Election Commission's handling of electoral processes. Opposition leaders have repeatedly raised concerns over voter rolls, electoral transparency and the functioning of the poll panel, while the Election Commission has maintained that its exercises are conducted in accordance with constitutional and legal provisions to ensure accurate and updated electoral rolls. The joint letter marks the latest coordinated initiative by the INDIA bloc as it seeks judicial attention to issues it says have a bearing on the integrity of the electoral process.

## CJP protest day 11: Dipke claims police blocking entry; Wangchuk's health deteriorates on fast

NEW DELHI: The protest by the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) at Jantar Mantar entered its eleventh day on Tuesday, with CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke alleging heavy police deployment and restrictions on the entry of supporters to the protest site. Activist Sonam Wangchuk's health condition deteriorated, with his blood sugar levels dipping on the third day of his hunger strike at the protest venue.

In a post on X, Dipke claimed that police were preventing people from entering the protest venue and that several core team members were being denied access. He alleged that transport arrange-



ments were also being blocked to stop supporters from reaching Jantar Mantar. “Heavy police deployment at Jantar Mantar. The police are not allowing people to enter, and many of our core team members are being denied entry. What are they planning to do?” he said.

Dipke also questioned whether the government was obstructing transport to hinder people from joining the protest, asserting that the agitation was being restricted.

Additionally, he raised concerns about the Rajasthan Paramedical Council examination

paper leak, accusing the government of repeatedly failing to conduct examinations properly.

“Double engine-double leak,” he said, adding that the BJP government was not capable of conducting examinations. Meanwhile, Wangchuk's health showed signs of strain, with his blood sugar level reportedly dropping to 66 on the third day of his hunger strike, which began on Sunday.

CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka stated that Wangchuk's condition must be taken seriously, warning that any adverse outcome would hold Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan responsible.

## Kharge alleges Centre undermining MGNREGA, seeks answers from PM on pending dues and new rural employment Scheme

New Delhi (TSIT) Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the implementation of the Centre's proposed rural employment programme, alleging that the government has effectively dismantled the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and deprived rural India of its "right to work."

In a post on social media platform X, Kharge questioned the Centre over pending MGNREGA payments, the funding pattern of the proposed Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G), and what he described as measures that would adversely affect farmers and rural labourers.

"Mr. @narendramodi, You



have effectively ended MGNREGA, taking away the 'right to work' from rural India," Kharge said, before raising a series of questions directed at the Prime Minister. Citing a reply presented in the Lok Sabha, Kharge alleged that dues amounting to Rs 17,144.13 crore remained pending for 34 states and union Territories

as of March 2026, including Rs 7,846.25 crore in wage liabilities. "Workers have still not received the wages they are entitled to. Why?" he asked.

The Congress chief further alleged that while the Centre was rolling out the new VB-G RAM G scheme from July 1, it had yet to clear pending MGNREGA payments to states. He claimed Karnataka was awaiting Rs 700 crore, Jharkhand Rs 900 crore, while Telangana, Tamil Nadu and several other states were also yet to receive their dues.

Kharge also criticised the proposed funding structure of the new scheme, claiming that unlike MGNREGA, under which the Centre bore the full wage cost, the proposed framework shifts 40 per cent of the total expenditure to states. Referring to information obtained through the Right to Information Act, he

said even BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, along with Jharkhand, had expressed concerns over the financial burden and sought a review of the funding pattern.

He also objected to the proposed provision for a 60-day "blackout" period during the peak agricultural season, claiming that several states had opposed the move. "Why is the Central government imposing this anti-worker arrangement on farmers and rural labourers?" he asked.

The Congress president further claimed that implementing the promise of providing 125 days of employment would impose an additional burden of Rs 20,037 crore on Madhya Pradesh and Rs 15,939 crore on Bihar, questioning whether the Centre intended to push states into financial distress to implement its new scheme.

## Collector urges students to excel in studies



Jogulamba Gadwal, June 30 (TSIT): District Collector Rizwan Basha Shaik urged students to work hard and pursue their education with dedication to achieve success in life. During a surprise inspection of the Government Boys High School in Gadwal, he interacted with Class X students and stressed the importance of the SSC examination. He directed

teachers to provide special coaching to weak students and improve this year's results. The Collector also reviewed staff attendance, Mid-Day Meal records and UDISE updates, directing strict compliance with procedures. He later felicitated student Nandini for her selection to the National Sports Academy at Gachibowli in football.

## Rythu Bharosa funds to be credited to farmers in nine days: Ponnam



Husnabad, June 30: Telangana Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar announced that the State Government has begun crediting Rythu Bharosa financial assistance into farmers' bank accounts and aims to complete the process within nine days. Addressing a press conference, he said the government has provided Rs.27,000 crore to farmers

over the past 30 months and is ensuring timely procurement, adequate seed supply, electricity, and fertilizer availability. He urged Agricultural Extension Officers to create awareness on fertilizer use and asked BJP MPs to press the Centre for sufficient supplies. The Minister also participated in the Chief Minister's Rythu Bharosa launch event via video conference.

### BJP National President Nitin Nabin's comments are meaningless - Former Minister Satyavati Rathod



als is nothing and that BJP leaders have no moral right to criticize KCR. He clarified that it was the KCR government that brought about real change in the lives of the tribals after the formation of Telangana. He said that during KCR's rule, many historic decisions were taken such as converting the Thandas into Gram Panchayats, implementing 10 per cent tribal reservation, expanding Gurukul educational institutions, officially organizing Sant Sevalal Maharaj Jayanti, and constructing Sevalal Bhavan and Komaram Bheem Bhavan. He challenged the people to name one great work done by the BJP at the center for the past twelve years for the tribals, not just by giving party membership to a tribal woman.

als is nothing and that BJP leaders have no moral right to criticize KCR. He clarified that it was the KCR government that brought about real change in the lives of the tribals after the formation of Telangana. He said that during KCR's rule, many historic decisions were taken such as converting the Thandas into Gram Panchayats, implementing 10 per cent tribal reservation, expanding Gurukul educational institutions, officially organizing Sant Sevalal Maharaj Jayanti, and constructing Sevalal Bhavan and Komaram Bheem Bhavan. He challenged the people to name one great work done by the BJP at the center for the past twelve years for the tribals, not just by giving party membership to a tribal woman.

Hyderabad, June 30: ESIC Medical College & Hospital, Hyderabad, has inaugurated India's first dedicated Transgender Clinic in an ESIC institution, marking a significant milestone in promoting inclusive and equitable healthcare for the transgender community. The clinic was established in collaboration with the Queer Bandhu Parents Association, led by its Founder President, M. Mukunda Mala. It was inaugurated by Dr. Shirishkumar G. Chavan, Dean of ESIC Medical College & Hospital, who reaffirmed the institution's commitment to providing accessible, dignified and

## ESIC Medical College Hyderabad opens India's first transgender clinic in an ESIC institution



stigma-free healthcare services for transgender persons. To improve access to

medical care, the hospital has also set up a dedicated Help Desk to assist mem-

bers of the transgender community. The Help Desk will provide guidance, counselling, service navigation and facilitate access to healthcare services, helping bridge the gap between the community and the hospital.

Officials said the initiative reflects the joint commitment of ESIC Medical College & Hospital and the Queer Bandhu Parents Association to advancing transgender-inclusive healthcare. The clinic is expected to serve as a model for similar initiatives across the country, promoting equal access to quality healthcare for transgender individuals.

## South Central Railway Chief Commercial Manager Dr. B.S. Christopher retires from service

Hyderabad, June 30: Dr. B.S. Christopher, IRTS, Chief Commercial Manager (Passenger Services & Passenger Marketing) of South Central Railway (SCR), retired from service on Monday after a distinguished career spanning over three decades in the Indian Railways and civil services.

Born on July 5, 1967, in Adoni, Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, Dr. Christopher completed his MBBS from Kurnool Medical College before joining the civil services. He began his career in the Indian Audit and Accounts Service in



1993, later served briefly in the Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Civil Service, and joined the Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) in 1996. He initially worked as Assistant Operations Manager

in Palghat Division of Southern Railway and joined South Central Railway in 1999. During his tenure, he served in almost all divisions of SCR, except Nanded, holding key positions including Assistant Operations Manager,

Divisional Operations Manager, Senior Divisional Operations Manager, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager and Chief Passenger Traffic Manager of South Western Railway.

Before his retirement, he served as Chief Commercial Manager (Passenger Services & Passenger Marketing). He received the Railway Board Award in 2008 and the Railway Shivir Award in 2016 for his outstanding contributions. A keen cricketer, Dr. Christopher also represented Andhra Pradesh at the Under-15 state level.

## Bhadrachalam MLA Dr. Tellam Venkat Rao performs life-saving surgery on burn victim

Bhadradri Kothagudem: Bhadrachalam MLA and surgeon Dr. Tellam Venkat Rao performed a life-saving surgery on a critically injured burn victim at the Bhadrachalam Area Hospital after the designated surgeon was unavailable, earning praise for his timely intervention.

The patient, Madapa Bhaskar of Sudibaka village in Venkatapuram mandal, had suffered severe electrical burns covering nearly 60 percent of his body. His family reportedly spent around Rs.30 lakh on treatment in Hyderabad after selling their farmland and gold ornaments. When doctors advised another surgery that they could not afford, the family returned to their village.



After learning of their plight, Dr. Venkat Rao advised them to admit Bhaskar to the Bhadrachalam Area Hospital. With the patient's condition worsening and no surgeon available, the

MLA personally entered the operation theatre and, with the support of the medical team, successfully performed a complex five-hour surgery that saved Bhaskar's life.

Doctors and hospital staff reportedly appreciated Dr. Venkat Rao's decision to step in during the emergency, describing it as an example of professional commitment and medical ethics. This is not the first time Dr. Venkat Rao has extended medical help to needy patients.

Earlier, he personally led a team to remove an 8-kg abdominal tumour from an underprivileged woman free of cost. Local residents and the medical fraternity praised his continued dedication to both public service and the medical profession.

## Raghavendra Babu enters Telugu Book of Records

East Godavari (TSIT) Koduru Nagasurya Raghavendra Babu, an MBA student from Yerpadu village in Peravali mandal, has earned a place in the Telugu Book of Records for his contribution to environmental conservation. Raghavendra Babu was recognised for conducting a year-long plantation drive and organising awareness programmes on environmental protection as part of World Environment Day initiatives. He said the honour has strengthened his commitment to promoting environmental conservation and inspired him to continue similar activities. Village elders, friends and well-wishers congratulated him on achieving the recognition.

## Merlinhawk inaugurates advanced composites facility in Tamil Nadu Defence Corridor

Bengaluru, June 30: Merlinhawk Aerospace Pvt. Ltd., in collaboration with Italy-based Vega Composites, has inaugurated its advanced composites manufacturing facility, Merlinhawk Composites & Engineering Pvt. Ltd., at Shoolagiri in the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor.

The facility was inaugurated by Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, former Chief of Naval Staff, who lauded Merlinhawk's contribution to indigenous defence technologies and its partnership with Vega Composites in advancing composite material capabilities in line with the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision.

The new unit will manufacture advanced composite aero structures and high-performance materials for aircraft, unmanned systems, radar, electronic



warfare systems, and other defence applica-

tions. Equipped with cleanroom layup, auto-

clave curing, precision cutting, and five-axis CNC

machining facilities, it offers end-to-end composite manufacturing capabilities within India.

Merlinhawk Founder and Managing Director R. Ramachandra Rao said the facility strengthens India's ability to design and manufacture advanced aerospace components while supporting both domestic programmes and global supply chains. Vega Composites CEO Roberto Lapini described the venture as a strategic India-Italy partnership that will facilitate technology transfer and create globally competitive manufacturing capabilities.

Aligned with the Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives, the facility is expected to generate over 200 skilled jobs and enhance the Tamil Nadu Defence Corridor's role as a key aerospace manufacturing hub.

## NLC India CMD receives Einstein World Records recognition for free student bus initiative

Neyveli, June 30: Shri Prasanna Kumar Motupalli, Chairman and Managing Director of NLC India Limited (NLCIL), has been honoured with the Einstein World Records Recognition for introducing free bus transportation for school students in Neyveli Township, a welfare initiative that has benefited thousands of students and their families.

The award was presented by Dr. J. Monica Roshinee, Co-Founder of Einstein World Records, at A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Hall in Neyveli on Monday in the presence of NLCIL Functional Directors, senior officials, teachers and students.

Launched in August 2024, the free bus service provides safe, timely and cost-free transportation to students studying in NLC schools across Neyveli Township. The initiative has eased the financial bur-



den on families while improving access to quality education. Teachers highlighted that the scheme has also encouraged more parents to enrol their daughters in schools, promoting girls' education.

Accepting the honour, Shri Motupalli dedicated the recognition to the entire NLC India family, stating that the achievement reflected the collective efforts of employees, teachers, officers and workers. He noted that

around 30,000 students study in Neyveli Township and encouraged them to strive for academic excellence.

The event also recognised NLC officials who earned IPMA Level-C Certification and Quality Circle teams that won Platinum Awards at the Quality Circle Forum of India Convention, highlighting the company's commitment to education, leadership development and social responsibility.

The registry's findings underscore that stroke is no longer confined to older age groups in India. As patterns evolve, health-care systems must strengthen emergency response infrastructure, especially in semi-urban and rural areas, while policymakers intensify preventive campaigns targeting young adults. Stroke is increasingly treatable when detected early — but prevention remains the most powerful defence. Protecting India's productive young population will require a coordinated effort spanning individuals, clinicians and public health systems alike.

EDITORIAL

SAVING AYODHYA'S RAM  
TEMPLE NEEDS TURNING  
TO KAUTILYA

When a devotee folds a note and drops it into the hundi at the Ram Mandir, she is not completing a transaction. She is performing something older than any temple's ledger - the surrender of a thing that is hers to a presence that is not. Dana, in the Indian grammar of giving, is not charity. It is closer to yajna: an offering whose entire merit lies in the release, in the giver's hands coming away empty and clean. The gift is consecrated at the very moment it stops belonging to anyone.

When it lands in a counting room, the sacred becomes countable, and the countable becomes vulnerable. That narrow seam, between the offering that is given to God and the institution that must physically hold it, is where every great devotional civilisation has, sooner or later, been tested. Ayodhya has just been tested there, and failed. The facts are still settling, but the shape is clear enough. A Special Investigation Team has reported serious shortcomings in how donations at the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple were counted and monitored - weak oversight, poor accountability, gaps wide enough for cash to slip through. Eight people have been arrested, several of them entrusted with the counting itself; CCTV footage is said to show notes being diverted during the tally. The story is both peculiarly Indian - corruption in uniquely opaque systems - and entirely universal. What happened in that counting room is one of the most eternal stories in the history of organised devotion. The error is in not believing this could only happen here. The error is in not recognising how very old, and how very global, the problem is. Consider the institution most often held up as the gold standard of sacred administration. The Vatican has spent four decades cycling through financial scandal: the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano in 1982, with the Vatican Bank as its largest shareholder and its chairman, 'God's Banker' found hanged under a London bridge; the catastrophic London property venture of the last decade, into which the Secretariat of State poured some 350 million euros before selling the building at a 140-million-euro loss; the corruption trial that followed and convicted a cardinal once spoken of as a future pope; a parallel billion-dollar fraud traced through a suppressed Catholic society in Peru. All of this inside a sovereign whose own theology could not be clearer that the wealth it holds is held in trust - that, as the tradition insists, the Church's money is not hers but the Lord's. The conviction did not prevent the theft. Only institutions did: the Vatican's belated financial watchdog, its submission to external money-laundering review, the slow, humbling acceptance that even a holy treasury must be audited by people who assume it might be robbed.

That is the lesson Ayodhya should take, and it is being taken - quietly, and from an unexpected quarter. In direct response to the Ram Mandir affair, the trust that runs Tirupati, the richest temple in the country, has gone to the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and asked it to tear out a decades-old accounting system and replace it with a modern, audited, enterprise platform inside a hundred days. The accountants describe the project, rightly, as a potential template for religious institutions across India.

China's New AI Surveillance System  
Has A Chilling New Mission

China's sweeping new law on "ethnic unity", which takes effect on Wednesday, has raised fears among the country's minority groups that it will further erode their culture and rights. The law also allows Beijing to target people overseas, prompting concern in Taiwan and many other parts of the world, including India, which hosts the largest Tibetan community outside China. The move is seen as the latest tool in Beijing's arsenal to suppress its minorities and dissidents. This comes amid growing evidence that China is using advanced AI not only to target its current critics but also to predict who could become one in the future. The Ethnic Unity and Progress Promotion legislation was approved by China's National People's Congress in Beijing in March, with the stated aim of creating a "shared" national identity among the country's officially recognised 56 ethnic groups. However, the main focus appears to be assimilating minorities into the culture of the majority Han Chinese. The law mandates that Mandarin be the language of instruction in schools and official communication. It also provides a legal basis for prosecuting parents or guardians who may instil what it describes as "detrimental" views in children. Fulfilling Xi's Vision The new law cements President Xi Jinping's vision of a powerful China united by a single national identity. Under his rule, Beijing has already taken a harder line on dissent and protests, especially in Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia, home to minority groups. In 2020, ethnic Mongolians in northern China staged rare protests against measures to reduce Mongolian-language instruction in favour of Mandarin. In Xinjiang, human rights groups have documented the



detention of a million Uyghur Muslims in what Beijing calls "re-education" camps. In 2022, a UN report accused China of crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, including torture and forced sterilisation of Uyghurs. Beijing dismissed the report as "pure farce" and a tool to smear and slander China. In Tibet, Buddhists are not permitted to worship their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who will turn 91 this week. Their monasteries are now controlled by the Chinese authorities, and children are reported to have been sent to state-run boarding schools to be educated predominantly in Mandarin and to inculcate Chinese culture. Speaking in New Delhi, the head of the Tibetan government-in-exile, Penpa Tsering, condemned China's new law as "an instrument of forced assimilation, whose ultimate objective is the gradual erosion of Tibetan lan-

guage, religion, culture and identity". Beijing has defended the new legislation, which puts even foreign citizens' lives at risk. Under Article 63 of the law, people outside China can be held legally accountable for undermining "ethnic unity and progress or inciting ethnic separatism". Beijing's Vice Justice Minister, Hu Weilie, said the law was "legitimate", "lawful" and "necessary". He said the overseas provision had been misinterpreted. However, Taiwan, the UN and the European Union remain unconvinced and have expressed deep concern. In Taipei, an official feared the new law could be used to prosecute the Taiwanese as well as Hong Kongers living in Taiwan who oppose unification. Australia, which has a large Chinese community, has also registered its concern with Beijing. The Case Of Secret "Police Stations" Even with-

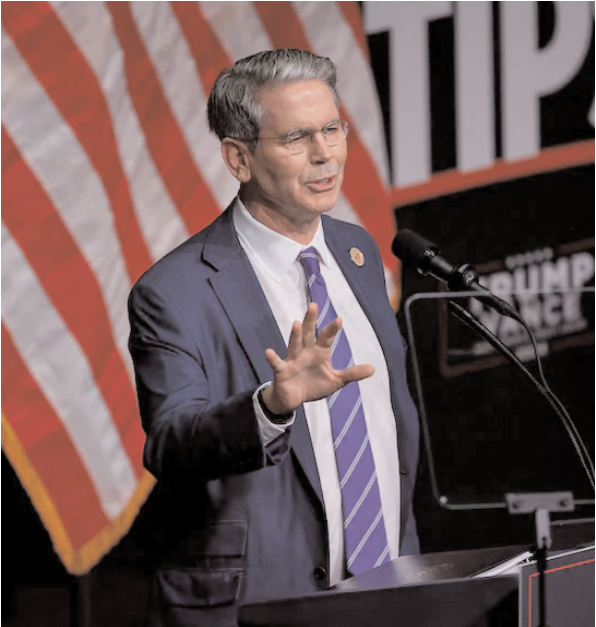
out the new law, Beijing had been accused of targeting its dissidents in foreign countries through a network of shadow police stations. In May, a Chinese-origin American citizen, Lu Jianwang, was convicted in New York of helping run the first known secret police station in the US. The court found he operated the station in Manhattan's Chinatown in early 2022 for China's Ministry of Public Security (MPS). He was accused of targeting Chinese dissidents, including Xi Jie, a pro-Democracy activist who fled his country in 2013. In recent months, France has dismantled nine clandestine police stations operated by Chinese nationals on behalf of their government, according to the French interior ministry. These stations were used to monitor the Chinese diaspora, track down government critics, and forcibly send them back to China. Early in

June, two Chinese men were jailed in London for running "shadow police operations" on British soil. The court heard that they assisted in efforts to track down and forcibly return Hong Kong nationals living in Britain. At least 100 such stations have been reported in more than 50 countries, with rights groups accusing China of using the outposts to threaten and monitor Chinese nationals abroad as well as helping Beijing identify pro-democracy activists living in the US. China has denied that the outposts are police stations, saying they are "service stations" providing administrative services to nationals overseas. Finding Future Dissenters In the 2022 Tom Cruise-starring Hollywood film Minority Report, police identify "criminals" for arrest before they have actually committed a murder. Little did the producers know that it would come close to reality,

thanks to China's sustained efforts to achieve mastery in Artificial Intelligence. Leaked documents from a Chinese state-linked company have revealed that Beijing is now trying to develop technology to predict who might become a dissident. Researchers at the US university Vanderbilt have recently found that the Chinese firm Geedge Networks is analysing vast amounts of data on individuals' daily habits, relationships, and browsing histories to predict who might say or do something critical of the government. The company already sells a commercial version of the Great Firewall, the surveillance and censorship software that China uses to control online activity. Geedge is a private company that operates in coordination with the Chinese government. It has already sold its surveillance software to Pakistan, Myanmar, Kazakhstan and Ethiopia.

US' Scott Bessent Has A New 'Doctrine',  
And It Leaves India With Hard Choices

On the fifth of December 1791, Alexander Hamilton sent Congress his Report on the Subject of Manufactures. The sentence the United States' Treasury Secretary now quotes back to the world is this one: every nation "ought to endeavour to possess within itself all the essentials of national supply." Read the next sentence, which the present Secretary does not quote. "These comprise the means of subsistence, habitation, clothing, and defence." Hamilton named four essentials, and defence came last. Scott Bessent in his WSJ opinion piece made that first sentence the opening principle of what he called American economic statecraft. The doctrine deserves to be read structurally. On the fifth of December 1791, Alexander Hamilton sent Congress his Report on the Subject of Manufactures. The sentence the United States' Treasury Secretary now quotes back to the world is this one: every nation "ought to endeavour to possess within itself all the essentials of national supply." Read the next sentence, which the present Secretary does not quote. "These comprise the means of subsistence, habitation, clothing, and defence." Hamilton named four essentials, and defence came last. Scott Bessent in his WSJ opinion piece made that first sentence the opening principle of what he called American economic statecraft. The doctrine deserves to be read structurally. Advertisement - Scroll to continue Tariffs, Reimagined Begin with the fact that the doctrine has already outlived its instrument. On the 20th of February 2026, in Learning



Resources, Inc. v. Trump, decided alongside Trump v. V.O.S. Selections, Inc., the Supreme Court held by six to three that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977 does not authorise tariffs, and struck down the reciprocal duties of April 2025. Within weeks the same wall was rebuilt out of older stone: Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974, Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. Bessent's own forecast was that the combination would leave 2026 tariff revenue "virtually unchanged." What settles is a particular answer to an old question, the one every trading nation must answer. What to make at home, what to buy abroad, and what never to depend on a rival to supply. For eighty years the Western answer was institutional. Comparative advantage, as Ricardo set it out in 1817, said buy where it is cheapest. The General

Agreement on Tariffs and Trade of 1947 added the discipline, Article I, the most-favoured-nation rule: a concession granted to one is a concession granted to all. The new answer keeps the vocabulary and discards the discipline. From that single move, four consequences follow for the world. 4 Big Consequences For The World First, non-discrimination is being replaced by reciprocity, which is its opposite. Article I made trade a rule. A bilateral bargain makes it a deal. Once the largest market grants access with conditions, as Bessent puts it, access becomes a lever, and a lever is pulled one counterparty at a time. Second, the arbiter is gone and is not coming back. The WTO's Appellate Body has had no quorum since December 2019, because the United States blocked appointments under three successive Presidents. Nearly sixty members, accounting for about three-

fifths of world trade, now appeal to a stopgap, the Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement. The United States is not among them and does not intend to be. A court the strongest party has walked out of is not a court. Third, finance becomes ordinance. Bessent's fourth principle names the dollar an instrument of statecraft. It is candid, and it is also an invitation. Every nation told that the payment system can be switched off will build, slowly and at cost, a way to route around it. To weaponise interdependence is to teach everyone to reduce it. Fourth, mercantilism becomes the norm because imitation is rational. If the largest economy redefines openness as conditional and subsidises its own semiconductors, shipyards, critical minerals and pharmaceuticals, no second nation can keep its own market innocent. Friedrich List argued exactly this in 1841, that the nation and not the individual is the unit, and that prevailing free trade is the ladder the climber kicks away once at the top. The doctrine is contagious by design. India Agrees, But At What Cost? The instructive fact, for Delhi, is that India already agrees with the diagnosis. Atmanirbhar Bharat is Hamilton in another grammar, or more precisely it is Keynes, whose 1933 lecture "National Self-Sufficiency" supplied the case that a nation may rationally pay for the capacity to make what it needs. So the question is not whether the doctrine is sound, but how it cuts. It cuts four ways. It cuts close, first, because India's dependence is sharper than America's.

Pranit More To Everyone Else, How Comedy  
And Its Scandals Continue To Fool Us

Every few months, minus special occasions, India finds itself in the middle of a national emergency, involving a comedian. A statement will be made somewhere in a comedy show, or by a comedian. The clip goes viral, and boom goes the dynamite! Social media erupts with all kinds of opinions from across the spectrum. Primetime debates decide the length and breadth of what should be an acceptable speech. Politicians suddenly discover morality. Everyone has an opinion. A recent controversy involved an audience member at comedian Pranit More's show, who suggested that because he had spent Rs 370 on a biryani date, he expected sexual access in return. The remark was widely criticised as reflecting entitlement and a disregard for consent. More himself later apologised, admitting he should have challenged the comment instead of laughing along. The man who made the comment, a 22-year-old Himanshu Jangra, also rendered an apology after his comment invited backlash and he was fired from his company. However, the lore only got bigger. A second clip from the same crowdwork became viral. A doctor in the audience, Dr Sejal, spoke about medical students joking about the private parts of male cadavers during anatomy and post-mortem work, triggering a second wave of criticism, and eventually an apology. The trolling of Dr Sejal started out as many defended Himanshu's comments in a 'tit-for-tat' attitude, but soon it became a larger conversation on ethics of medical professionals. Many (again, rightfully) criticised



her stand and her training in general, including her place of profession, which raised concerns. But the 'ideological' battle remained. Some people have condemned the remarks as vulgar and offensive. Others have defended it in the name of freedom of expression. Such controversies rise and fall in their due time. The country will move on and find something new to outrage over. That is not the point I am trying to make here. This particular controversy has shed light on comedian Pranit More and how he should have behaved during the remarks. The internet has dubbed Pranit More's response at the time of the '370' statement as encouragement. More deserves his fair share of criticism, and many creators have rightfully called him out for choosing to benefit from it first and being apologetic

about it later. But the voice of reason seemed to have a tiny asterisk mark. The morality clause found itself attached to the same ecosystem that once preached that accountability itself was a 'threat' to comedy. A quick archaeological excavation through stand-up routines from back in the day reveal a graveyard of jokes involving women, minorities, sexuality, religion, body image, stereotypes and every other subject that contemporary sensibilities would regard as problematic. Casual sexism, sexual humour, stereotypes about communities, body-shaming and shock value have been staples of the stand-up routine, even in India. The industry's collective memory appears remarkably short. And the difference is not moral. It is timing. Lost in the shouting matches is an inconvenient truth: almost

every major comedian, given a long enough timeline, has said something they would rather not have clipped and circulated today. This is often described as personal growth. Sometimes it genuinely is. But it is also difficult to ignore how frequently these moral awakenings coincide with changing audience preferences. And this is where we as the audience must understand, that comedy, despite its lofty self-image, is one of the most market-sensitive professions in existence. For years, shock humour relied on violating social norms. The joke may not be necessarily clever; it was simply unexpected. In moderation, such humour has always existed and occasionally served a purpose. Satire often requires discomfort. The problem begins when discomfort becomes the entire product. Today, there are jokes that seem to exist solely because somebody, somewhere, will find them offensive. Their primary function is not humour but circulation. They are designed less for audiences in the room and more for clips on social media. I will even go as far as to argue that the most successful comedians are often those who understand that ideology itself has become content. Political correctness is content. Political incorrectness is content. Being offended is content. Being offended by the offended is content. In today's day and age, the internet rewards all of it. However, today, many of the loudest critics of shock comedy belong to a generation of comics who built their own careers on material that would struggle to survive contemporary scrutiny.

# Telangana eyes big AI campus as Airtel chief meets Revanth Reddy

**Hyderabad:** Telangana is exploring the possibility of setting up a large, comprehensive data centre and artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure campus in the state, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said on Tuesday, June 30, after meeting Airtel chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal. Mittal met the Chief Minister at the MCRHRD Bodhi Pavilion, where Reddy pressed the his group to expand Airtel's digital, cloud, cybersecurity and AI operations in Hyderabad and suggested that the company move ahead soon with its proposed data centre project at Chandanvelli. The Chief Minister also asked Mittal to designate a senior executive to liaise with the state government on future investment proposals so that issues could be resolved without delay. Airtel's second headquarters in Hyderabad Responding to the over-



tures, Mittal said the Bharti group was considering Hyderabad as a second headquarters for Airtel and assured the Chief Minister that the company would go ahead with plans to expand its data centre capacity and broaden its fibre connectivity network in the state. During the meeting, Revanth Reddy also briefed

Mittal on reforms underway in the state's education sector, including the establishment of the Young India Skill University to train unemployed youth, the upgrade of Industrial Training Institutes into Advanced Technology Centres (ATC) and ongoing improvements to polytechnic colleges across

Telangana. In response, Mittal announced that the Bharti Foundation would extend scholarships to students studying in government schools and ATCs in the state. Sunil Bharti Mittal said the Bharti group was considering Hyderabad as a second headquarters for Airtel.

# Why has WhatsApp rolled out usernames by ditching phone numbers?

New Delhi: WhatsApp on Monday, June 29, began allowing users worldwide to reserve usernames, a feature that will let people connect on the messaging platform without sharing their phone numbers, the Meta-owned company said. The reservation process began rolling out from Monday, giving users a head start on claiming a username of their choice before the feature itself becomes functional within the app later this year. Users will be notified in-app once they can begin using their reserved handle. A username, the company said, offers people a way to be reached on WhatsApp without revealing their digits. Users can pick any name of their choosing, independent of handles they may use on other platforms. No directory, no suggestions WhatsApp was at pains to stress that the feature was designed



purely for privacy rather than discoverability. There will be no public directory to browse usernames and the app will not suggest accounts to potential contacts – meaning a person will need to know someone's exact username to reach them for the first time. To add a further layer of security, users will be able to set up a "username key," a code that anyone messaging them for the first time via their username must supply in order for the message to go through. The

key can be changed at any time, the company said, and usernames themselves can be updated within the app. The rollout comes days after Meta chief executive Mark Zuckerberg announced that CRED founder Kunal Shah would take over as WhatsApp's global chief executive, alongside a roughly USD 900 million investment by Meta in the fintech firm. Why it matters WhatsApp's phone-number-based identity has long been flagged as a

privacy weak spot, since contacting someone on the app has traditionally required knowing their mobile number – information that is often tied to bank accounts, government identification and other sensitive records. By decoupling messaging from phone numbers, WhatsApp is moving closer to rivals such as Telegram and Signal, which have offered username-based contact for years, and addressing a long-standing user demand, particularly in regions where unsolicited calls and number-harvesting are common complaints. With India being WhatsApp's largest market by user base, the change is likely to have an outsized impact domestically, even as the company continues to face scrutiny over data privacy and its broader integration with Meta's advertising ecosystem.

# Print Expo Chennai and Media Expo Chennai 2026 expand to their largest ever editions as South India's print and visual communications industries accelerate growth

Reflecting the rapid transformation of India's printing, packaging, signage, visual communications industries, Print Expo Chennai and Media Expo Chennai 2026 will return to the Chennai Trade Centre, Tamil Nadu from 9 – 11 July 2026 with their largest combined editions to date. Bringing together more than 200 exhibitors, over 400 brands and upwards of 550 products and solutions across 11,000+ sqm of gross space, the co-located shows are set to become South India's most comprehensive sourcing platforms for the print, advertising, branding, signage and packaging ecosystems. South India continues to be a highly significant market for the printing, signage and visual communications industries, characterised by a large base of established print businesses, strong demand for cost-effective production technologies and a preference for regional sourcing and business engagement. Print Expo and Media Expo have emerged into strategic platforms that bring the complete spectrum of industry solutions closer to the South Indian market. The growing importance of the platform is reflected in



the 2026 edition, where exhibitor demand has resulted in a sold-out show floor, expanded booth sizes and increased participation from companies across India seeking to strengthen their presence in the region. In 2026, the co-located shows have reflected a growth of 20% including the floor space and many new first-time participants. This has resulted in the addition of a new exhibition hangar to accommodate the growing exhibitor numbers and expanded floor area. The growth of the exhibitions mirrors the momentum of the industries they serve. According to IMARC

group, India's commercial printing market is projected to grow from USD 36.53 billion in 2025 to USD 46.65 billion by 2034, driven by urbanisation, digital infrastructure investments and growing adoption of intelligent display technologies. (Source IMARC Group). Sharing his views on the upcoming edition, Mr Raj Manek, Executive Director & Board Member, Messe Frankfurt Asia Holdings Ltd, shared: "South India continues to play a defining role in India's print and visual communications landscape. What we are witnessing today is a strong conver-

gence of printing, packaging, branding, digital signage and automation technologies. The growth of Print Expo Chennai and Media Expo Chennai reflects the industry's confidence in the region and its appetite for innovation-led business growth. The combined platforms offer a unique opportunity for industry stakeholders to discover emerging technologies, build partnerships and access one of India's most dynamic markets." Likewise, Mr Ashok Neelkant, Managing Director, Showcase Trade Fairs and Business Media,

expressed: "India's commercial printing industry continues to evolve in tandem with the rapid growth of packaging, consumer goods and organised retail. South India remains a key growth engine for the sector, accounting for the largest share of the country's commercial printing market and driving investments in advanced printing technologies, finishing solutions, packaging applications and automation. Over the past 16 years, Print Expo Chennai has consistently reflected these industry trends while providing a platform for innovation, business networking and technology adoption. The scale and strength of the 2026 edition underscore the confidence that exhibitors, technology providers and print professionals place in both the exhibition and the South Indian market." Research conducted through exhibitor interactions ahead of the shows reveals a market actively investing in automation, digital printing, print finishing, UV curing technologies, security, RFID solutions, smart identification systems, packaging applications, sustainable production systems, and advanced display technologies.

# India's 30,000 Crore Plastic Recycling Industry Gears Up for Asia's Largest Recycling & Sustainability Event – GCPRS 2026

**India, June 2026:** India's plastic recycling industry, currently valued at approximately ₹30,000 crore and projected to grow to ₹60,000 crore by 2035, is set to witness the 3rd edition of the Global Conference & Exhibition on Plastic Recycling and Sustainability (GCPRS 2026) from July 2 to 5, 2026, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Organised by the All-India Plastic Manufacturers' Association (AIPMA), an 80-year-old pan-India apex body, the four-day exhibition and conference is supported by and guidance of the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, NITI Aayog, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Under vision of GC chairman Mr. Arvind Mehta and Mr. Sunil Shah - President AIPMA, efforts are always towards strengthening India's sustainability ecosystem through progressive policies, industry collaboration and initiatives promoting responsible resource management and circular economy. Recognised as Asia's largest exhibition dedicated to plastic recycling and sustainability, GCPRS 2026 will bring together over 200 exhibitors from 12 countries across a sprawling

12,000 sq. metre exhibition space, representing the entire value chain of plastic waste management and recycling. GCPRS 2026 is expected to play a pivotal role in accelerating the growth of India's plastic recycling sector while reinforcing the Government of India's vision for sustainability, resource efficiency, circular economy and a carbon-neutral future. The event will serve as a comprehensive one-stop platform for plastic waste management solutions, bringing together technology providers, recyclers, policy-makers, brand owners, entrepreneurs, researchers and environmental experts under one roof. The exhibition will showcase cutting-edge innovations in post-consumer plastic waste management, including collection and segregation systems, automated waste sorting technologies, advanced mechanical and chemical recycling equipment, waste-to-oil and waste-to-energy technologies, end-of-life solutions, and a dedicated recycles marketplace connecting recyclers with brand owners and user industries. A special consultants' clinic will guide entrepreneurs, while an Environment Desk will provide support on Extended Producer Responsibility

(EPR) and regulatory compliance. Designed as a Zero Waste Event, GCPRS 2026 embodies the spirit of the Swachh Bharat Mission, promoting technology-driven recycling solutions to significantly reduce mismanaged plastic waste and strengthen India's circular economy. Among the key highlights of the event are a dedicated Science & Technology Cluster promoting innovative start-ups in the recycling ecosystem, a two-day Sustainability Forum featuring renowned national and international experts, and an exclusive CEO Roundtable that will bring together industry leaders and policymakers to deliberate on India's growing requirement of nearly 3 million tonnes of quality recycles and chart the future roadmap for the sector. The conference will serve as a unique platform for dialogue, collaboration and policy discussions among all stakeholders involved in plastic waste management and recycling. As the flagship event for India's plastic recycling industry, GCPRS 2026 reflects the collective commitment of industry stakeholders towards the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for a Swachh Bharat and Viksit Bharat 2047.

# CHINESE TYCOON SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN US JAIL

Guo Wengui, who was once believed to be one of China's richest businessmen, has been sentenced to 30 years in jail in the US for running a billion dollar scam. The former property tycoon fled China to the US in 2017, where he reinvented himself as a Communist Party critic and built a loyal online following. But Guo was later convicted on charges of racketeering, fraud and money laundering. New York court judge Analisa Torres said Guo had "preyed on those seeking to bring democracy to China", taking their money to fund his lavish lifestyle. The BBC has contacted Guo's representatives for comment. Guo - who goes by several names, including Miles Guo and Ho Wan Kwok - was sentenced in a courtroom packed with his supporters. US attorney Sean S Buckley told the BBC: "Rather than being satisfied with the many legitimate opportunities afforded to him, Guo exploited



the trust that thousands had placed in him for his own greed." "Today's sentence shows that fame and wealth do not place you above the law, and that fraudsters who victimise families to enrich themselves will be met with significant consequences," Buckley said. Before fleeing China, Guo built a fortune as a property developer and had good ties with the country's government. But he sought asylum in the US after being accused by top Chinese officials of corruption. Guo became a critic of China's Communist

regime and cultivated a wide online following among the Chinese community in the US. Prosecutors said Guo raised more than \$1bn (£760m) from online followers, who joined him in investment and cryptocurrency schemes between 2018 and 2023. The money he raised was used to fund Guo's lavish lifestyle which included a 50,000 square foot mansion, a \$1m Lamborghini and a \$37m yacht, they said. Guo denied the allegations, saying the funds were used for his political activism. He had built ties

with other China critics, including Steve Bannon, a former adviser to US President Donald Trump. Bannon and Guo often appeared in online videos and, in 2020, launched a campaign called the New Federal State of China, with the goal of overthrowing the Chinese Communist Party. Later that year, Bannon was arrested on Guo's yacht in Connecticut. Bannon was charged in an unrelated case with fraud in an alleged scheme to defraud people who funded a not-for-profit company to build a US-Mexico border wall. Bannon entered a guilty plea in a Manhattan court to a first degree scheme to defraud charge and received a sentence of conditional discharge for three years. He also faced federal charges over the wall campaign after he was indicted by a federal grand jury, but the prosecution came to a halt after Trump pardoned him in the final hours of his first White House term.

# Bill Changes Put ERP and ASP Readiness in Focus for Indian Enterprises

GSTN's revised 01 August 2026 timeline gives businesses a critical window to strengthen data, API, and dispatch readiness India, June 2026: The recent GSTN advisory extending the implementation timeline for key Bill enhancements from 15 June 2026 to 01 August 2026 has brought ERP, ASP, and enterprise compliance readiness back into focus. The changes include mandatory capture of "Ship To GSTIN" in applicable Bill-To/Ship-To transactions, corresponding updates to e-Invoice and Bill by IRN APIs, and the introduction of a voluntary Bill closure facility. While the revised timeline offers businesses additional preparation time, it also highlights a larger shift in GST compliance - from document-level reporting to transaction-level movement visibility. For enterprises, the impact goes beyond adding one more field in the Bill system. In applicable transactions, missing or invalid Ship To GSTIN details may result in Bill validation failures and additional operational effort, particularly in ERP-integrated and API-driven environments. In high-volume businesses, even small gaps in master data can lead to failed transactions, manual corrections, delayed movement of goods, and reconciliation



issues across invoices, Bills, ERP records, and GST returns. The change is especially relevant for businesses managing multi-location supplies, project-site deliveries, warehouse dispatches, third-party shipping, branch transfers, and complex Bill-To/Ship-To scenarios. Many such transactions depend on accurate consignee details, delivery-location masters, GSTIN mapping, URP treatment, and system-level validation between tax, finance, logistics, and dispatch teams. GSTN has also clarified that where a Ship To GSTIN is not available, taxpayers may use "URP" in the Ship To GSTIN field, wherever applicable. Businesses should therefore review not only

GSTIN master data but also the transaction scenarios where URP treatment may be required. In addition, GSTN has introduced validation controls aimed at improving transaction-level accuracy. These include validation of Ship To GSTIN, consistency checks between GSTIN and state codes, PIN code validations, and restrictions on using the same GSTIN for both Bill-To and Ship-To parties in applicable Bill-To/Ship-To transactions. As a result, businesses should review customer masters, delivery-location data, and ERP mappings well before the implementation date. The voluntary Bill closure facility also brings a new operational control layer. After completion of delivery, businesses will have the option to voluntarily close the Bill, creating a system record of movement completion. This can help reduce open Bill exposure, improve audit trails, and strengthen visibility over delivery status after dispatch. "The revised implementation date should not be viewed as a delay in compliance, but as a readiness window. The real question for enterprises is whether their invoice data, dispatch data, ERP workflows, ASP integrations, and Bill APIs are aligned before the go-live date," said a Cygnet.One tax technology expert.

## Manhunt after bomb injures Ukrainian oligarch in Monaco



A manhunt is under way in southern France after a parcel bomb exploded at a residential building in neighbouring Monaco, injuring a wealthy Ukrainian businessman and two others. Vadym Yermolaiev and two others are believed to have been injured in the attack on Monday evening, according to French media reports. Their identities have not been officially announced. Two are in a critical condition in hospital in Nice, Monaco public prosecutor Stéphane Thibault said, adding that a woman was the most seriously hurt. The blast occurred shortly before 21:00 (19:00 GMT) at an apartment building on Rue Révérend Père Louis Frolla, near the border with France. Ukraine's foreign ministry said its embassy in France was in touch with Monaco's authorities and was working to officially identify those reported injured in the blast. Monaco's government said the explosion had been caused by a parcel bomb, while the Minister of State of Monaco, Christophe Mirmand, told AFP news agency the explosive device had appeared to contain

bolts and pellets. Thibault said four other people had been treated by emergency services - one for shock and three for cuts from debris from nearby shop windows as a result of the blast. He said authorities were searching for a single suspect and that the incident was being investigated as attempted murder, not as a terrorist attack. On Tuesday morning, Mirmand told French broadcaster BFM TV the suspect appeared to "have left for France". The Monaco government has said a suspect was seen on a video surveillance system fleeing towards the French commune of Beausoleil on foot after the explosion, where a major police effort to find them is now taking place. Video surveillance images of the moments before the attack showed a man dropping a backpack in the lobby of a building shortly before the explosion, French newspaper Le Figaro reported. More than 100 police and emergency personnel were deployed to the scene of the blast on Monday evening. Harri Richie, who lives around 100m away from the targeted building.



Thousands of anti-migrant protesters march in South Africa amid heavy police presence

## Angry Venezuelans accuse government of negligence over earthquake response

"Silencio" the rescuers scream turning towards the road with their fists up in the air, motioning to everyone to remain silent. The vehicles on the road stop plying. People stop talking. The diggers fall silent. A rescuer puts his ear to a hole they've just managed to drill through a concrete slab. Another one shines a torch into it. They're listening to see if they can hear any sounds of survivors calling from under the rubble of a 12-storey building that stood by the side of a busy road in the coastal town of La Guaira. It's one of the areas worst hit by the twin earthquakes that struck Venezuela on Wednesday last week and killed at least 1,700 people. Interim President Delcy Rodríguez has called the earthquakes the "most brutal



natural catastrophe" in Venezuela's history. Standing by the side of the collapsed structure, Miguel Oscar Nunez holds his breath, huddled together with other families who had loved ones in the building. Miguel's only child - 34-year-old son Angel - lived in the building. Moments of anticipation pass by, but the rescuers hear nothing. The

silence ends and work resumes. "My son, like hundreds of others is trapped under the rubble. But we need more support from authorities urgently to dig them out. It's possible that the earthquake has not killed him, but can you imagine if he is killed because of the negligence of the authorities," Miguel Oscar says, anger showing on his face. Kevin

Montilla's home was also in the building. He was away at work, but his wife Luzmary and 16-year-old daughter Jhoerliyzmar were at home when the earthquake struck. "The rescue operation started very late and it's been slow. Initially it was only people who live in the community who came in to help. The police just came to check, but they didn't help. The government's response has been frustrating and impotent," the 34-year-old says. When we visited the site, rescue teams from Venezuela and Colombia were conducting operations. Two diggers, as well as a crane that was lifting up concrete slabs was also there. But the families waiting by the roadside said precious days had been wasted before this effort started.

## Flooding hits Ghana's capital killing 13 people - with another storm forecast



At least 13 people have died in Ghana's capital, Accra, after torrential rain resulted in severe flooding, according to the fire service which has been involved in rescue efforts. The government has urged people to stay indoors or move to higher ground, as the meteorological agency warned further rain was expected with a big storm approaching from the east. Much of the water from Sunday night's downpours has begun to recede, but as the recovery operation continues, the Ghana National Fire Service (GNF) said the death toll could rise. Low-lying areas were particularly impacted. Videos circulating on social media show homes and vehicles submerged, while many buildings have been destroyed. Emergency response teams have been deployed to the flood-affected region, including from the police, fire service, the military and the National Disaster Management Organisation. The interior ministry said they had been deployed to monitor the situation and to safeguard lives and property. The GNFS said it had rescued more than 470 people so far. The floods also triggered a major fire at a rubber factory in the city. Some residents have also become trapped at home. The government has called for people to relocate to higher safe grounds and to avoid travelling in flooded areas. "Stay indoors if you are in a safe location," the president's

office said in a statement. "Do not attempt to cross flooded roads, whether on foot or in a vehicle. If your home is being inundated, move immediately to higher ground and call 112 for emergency assistance." According to Mahama, preliminary data indicated that around 140mm of rain descended on Accra. "By comparison, the highest single-day rainfall recorded last year was about 56 mm," he wrote on X, adding the increase pointed to climate change. The Ghana Meteorological Agency also warned that more rain was expected to affect parts of southern Ghana - where Accra is located - on Tuesday morning into the afternoon, raising the risk of further flooding. "Avoid sheltering under trees, stay clear of loose electrical wires, and do not walk or drive through floodwaters," the agency advised. Accra is one of the fastest-growing cities in Africa, with a population of more than four million, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Resident Philip Mensah said his house had been flooded, telling AFP news agency that his "1970s collection of vinyl records is now underwater". Schoolteacher Patience Naa Adjeley Adjei said she had spent hours trying to keep water out of her room. "I have mopped my room more than eight times," she told AFP. "I can't even step out because my room is flooded, and outside is flooded."

# TRUMP LOSES SUPREME COURT BATTLE TO END BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP

By citing the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, the Supreme Court definitively slams the door on Donald Trump's efforts to deny birthright citizenship to the children of undocumented migrants and most temporary foreign residents. According to Chief Justice John Roberts, writing for the majority, the language of the amendment - passed shortly after the end of US civil war - is clear: "All persons born or naturalised in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States". Trump and his legal team had argued that undocumented migrants were not "subject" to US jurisdiction. Roberts and the court majority emphatically disagreed. Because the court's majority held that the US Constitution is explicit in this regard, there is little that Trump can do to reverse its ruling - and deny birthright citizenship - short of amending America's founding document. That is an arduous task that has only



been accomplished 27 times in US history. We're waiting to hear from the president about the birthright decision, a defeat for him and his administration. In the meantime, he's posted on social media platform Truth Social about the transgender athletes case we reported on earlier. "The United States Supreme Court just RULED AGAINST MEN PLAYING IN WOMEN'S SPORTS. Wow! That takes that ridicu-

lous situation off the table!!! President DONALD J. TRUMP," he wrote. Three justices dissented from today's decision to uphold birthright citizenship. Justices Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch and Samuel Alito. The three justices cite several reasons for disagreeing with the majority decision. Justice Thomas argues in his dissent that the 14th Amendment is now being "repurposed for political projects" that go beyond

its "sad history" of securing equal right for freed slaves, whom he argues were entitled to citizenship because "they were Americans" with no other homeland or allegiance to another foreign power. Justice Alito used more dramatic language in his dissent, saying the ruling was "one of the most important decisions in the history of the Court, and in my judgment, the Court has made a serious mistake". He says

Tuesday's ruling "confers citizenship on virtually everyone who happens to be born in this country, including the children of 'birth tourists,' women who come here solely for the purpose of giving birth to a child and then promptly return home". Alito argues that "careful analysis" of the 14th Amendment gives citizenship to "only those children who, at birth, owe allegiance solely to this country". We've yet to President Trump, who is likely to be furious at being handed a defeat by the Supreme Court. Trump has, for years, made ending birthright citizenship a corner of his immigration policies. As far back at 2015, Trump - then still a candidate - called for an end to the practice, describing it as "the biggest magnet for illegal immigration". His executive order attempting to end birthright citizenship was signed within hours of his return to the White House last year, and the topic is one he has brought up frequently in both public remarks and

on Truth Social. Just a few weeks ago, for example, he posted that the US "cannot live with the shackles" of birthright citizenship. "It is not economically, or otherwise, sustainable and no other country in the world, of consequence, does it," he added. The US president has reacted angrily in past instances in which the Supreme Court thwarted his policy objectives, such as tariffs. We are likely to hear more of that today. This is a ruling that will be studied in constitutional law classes for years to come. The Supreme Court - a bench reshaped by Trump himself - has delivered a clear message: the 14th Amendment guaranteeing birthright citizenship can't simply be annulled with the stroke of the Presidential pen. The personal and political dimension for Trump cannot be underestimated. This is a court he fundamentally reshaped - and one that has now ruled against one of the signature promises of his political career.



Senegalese MPs move to clip presidential powers as tensions mount

## US envoys in Doha to meet mediators but not Iranians, Qatar says

US special envoy Steve Witkoff and President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner are in Doha to discuss the US-Iran negotiations with mediators, Qatar's foreign ministry spokesman says, but they will not meet Iranian officials there. Majed al-Ansari told reporters that no high-level meetings or direct talks between the two sides were scheduled in the coming days. The US and Iran agreed to stop attacking each other and send delegations to the Gulf state following a four-day exchange of strikes triggered by a dispute over the reopening of the crucial Strait of Hormuz waterway. The strikes threatened the preliminary agreement to end the four-month war between the US,



Israel and Iran. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) brokered by Pakistan and Qatar less than two weeks ago committed the countries to halt military operations on all fronts, including Lebanon, and immediately reopen the Strait of Hormuz, through which about 20% of global oil and gas shipments pass. They also gave themselves

at least 60 days to reach a final deal that covers Iran's nuclear programme, US sanctions and a permanent truce. Pakistani and Qatari mediators said encouraging progress was made at the first round of talks held in Switzerland a week ago, which US Vice-President JD Vance and Iran's Parliamentary Speaker Mohammed Bagher

Ghalibaf attended. They also said a "communication line" had been formed to enable the safe passage of commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz. But that failed to prevent the recent exchanges of strikes, which began when Iran attacked a cargo ship on Thursday following efforts to open Oman's territorial waters to both inbound and outbound traffic on the southern side of the strait. Iran had warned vessels that the only route was through its own waters on the northern side. On Sunday night, a US official said both sides would "stand down for now", and that vessels could "move freely" in and around the strait. Technical talks would also "continue on all areas of the MoU", the official added.

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026:

# VAR Controversy Behind Germany's Shock Defeat To Paraguay Explained

Germany suffered one of their biggest humiliations in FIFA World Cup history after being knocked out of the tournament in the Round of 32 by Paraguay. The South Americans opened the scoring on Monday through Julio Enciso, before Kai Havertz equalised in the second half. The game remained 1-1 over 90 minutes, forcing the match into extra time, where Germany seemed to have pulled ahead through Jonathan Tah before a major VAR (Video Assistant Referee) controversy struck. The referee chalked off Tah's towering header, ruling that there was a foul on the goalkeeper before the German centre-back headed home his team's second goal. It was the VAR team that suggested a foul was committed on Paraguay goalkeeper Orlando Gill by Germany's Waldemar Anton in the build-up to Tah's goal.



Moroccan referee Jalal Jayed then went to the screen to check the incident himself and eventually ruled that a foul had indeed been committed. The German camp was outraged by the decision of the referee. Former England captain Alan Shearer, commentating for the BBC, said that it was a

"very, very soft" foul that the referee ruled in Paraguay's favour. "Not for me, I don't agree with that decision at all," he added. Further explaining his stance on the foul, Shearer explained that the contact was too soft to be called a foul, especially considering there were 13 players in the penalty box. "He

falls to the ground far too easily. Yes, there's contact, but it's a contact sport. There are 13 bodies in the six-yard box, not for me. I don't agree with that. The 'keeper buys it [the contact]. Very, very soft, that is, very soft." READ | Germany Captain Throws Entire Team Under The Bus After World Cup

Debacle Former World Cup final assistant referee Darren Cann echoed Shearer's sentiments, but admitted that such decisions can be given in the goalkeeper's favour. "This is soft but it wouldn't surprise me if it's ruled out," he said. "This is hardly anything - a small block on the goalkeeper, I suspect it's for a block on the goalkeeper." As the game went to penalties at 1-1, Germany were still considered the favourites considering their exceptional record in shootouts over the years. However, the Germans went on to miss a total of three penalties in the shootout, with Kai Havertz, Nick Woltemade, and Jonathan Tah failing to put the ball past the Paraguay goalkeeper. Paraguay, who also missed two penalties, did just enough to clinch a 4-3 win in the shootout and qualify for the Round of 16.

# DID RUSSELL'S POLE SET DANGEROUS PRECEDENT?

Mercedes' George Russell took his second win of the season with victory from pole position at the Austrian Grand Prix. Max Verstappen recovered from a crash in the final part of qualifying to finish second at Red Bull's home race, with championship leader Kimi Antonelli in third. Russell's win moves him back up to second in the drivers' standings, 40 points behind team-mate Antonelli. BBC F1 correspondent Andrew Benson answers your latest questions before this weekend's British Grand Prix at Silverstone. I think a pole position under a yellow flag sets a dangerous precedent, because it's clear that from now on, everyone will continue to push hard after a small slow down, or else their lap will be cancelled. I'd be curious to hear your opinion - Lorenzo George Russell's pole position at the Austrian Grand Prix, the foundation for his victory on Sunday, came



about in controversial circumstances. According to the rules, Russell did nothing wrong. Marshals trackside initially waved a single yellow flag when Max Verstappen crashed at Turn Nine. Kimi Antonelli mis-read the light board as a double yellow, and backed out of his lap - the correct response for what he thought to be the case. Under a double yellow, drivers have to "slow down and be prepared to stop". But under a single yellow, a driver does not have to abandon their lap. They

only have to not set a fastest time in the relevant section of the track. Russell complied with this, but the rest of his lap was fast enough to put him on pole anyway. The concern here is less the specifics of these rules, but whether the correct flag was shown in the circumstances. The answer to that has to be no. Verstappen crashed at the fastest corner on the track, which is taken at close to 140mph. Turn Nine is notoriously challenging, with its downhill entry, and an exit kerb that's easy to over-run.

# FIFA World Cup: Brazil Star Disrespects Japan Player After Victory, Faces Severe Backlash

Brazil and Manchester United forward Matheus Cunha has received severe backlash on social media for a "disrespectful" gesture directed at Japan's Kento Shioyai. The incident was captured by television cameras during injury time, moments after Brazil scored a dramatic late winner against Japan to secure their place in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round of 16. As the Selecao secured victory following an absolute thriller against Japan, Cunha was seen pointing to the Brazilian crest on his shirt whilst holding up an open hand. The gesture from the forward was seemingly a direct response to Japan's Shioyai, who had previously claimed that "Brazil is no



longer a football powerhouse." Following the match, Cunha shared multiple stories on Instagram to justify his actions on the pitch. He also explained his motivation when questioned by the media in the mixed zone. "With all due respect, to have a Japanese player saying that about such a victorious Brazilian national team,

man, if it is a Brazilian talking about Brazilians, we might even accept it. But coming from outsiders, I think we stand together against anyone. So, it is more about what this shirt represents, who has worn this shirt before us, and everything we went through to be wearing it today." In his series of Instagram stories,

Cunha shared pictures of his team's victory over Japan whilst directly targeting Shioyai. "Now you know a bit more about us," he wrote in one post, followed by, "Neither superior nor inferior to anyone" in another. He capped off one of the posts with a Brazilian flag emoji set to Kendrick Lamar's song, Humble. Despite the social media storm, a contrasting side of Cunha was also visible on the pitch. The Brazilian forward was spotted breaking away from his teammates' wild celebrations to console a devastated Ao Tanaka. The Japanese midfielder had broken down in tears at the final whistle, inconsolable after his team's painful elimination from the tournament.

# Brendon McCullum Reveals Chat With Ben Stokes Before England Captain Called It Quits

England head coach Brendon McCullum revealed that he tried to persuade Ben Stokes to reconsider his decision to retire from international cricket, but said the captain had made up his mind by then. England lost the third and final Test against New Zealand at Trent Bridge by 160 on Monday, conceding the series 1-2. But Stokes announced his adieu on the fourth day of the match itself, shocking everyone around. But McCullum said he "tried to talk him down." "When he confirmed to me that he was going to retire, first I tried to talk him down (laughs) and... (it) became pretty obvious that he had made his decision and he was at peace within," McCullum told Sky Sports. "From that point of view, I



guess your emotion then leads on to just a bit of sadness really because you have been on this journey together for four years and it's been a real thrill. I feel very privileged that I've been able to work intimately with Stokesy throughout that and consider him a friend, a good friend." McCullum lauded Stokes' contribution as cap-

tain and player, terming him "a leader of men". "He is a leader of men, people follow him wherever he goes, whether that's on the field, whether that's in the dressing room, whether that's at the team hotel, people follow him because he's a vivacious character and he's a big presence and he has conviction in his thoughts and his meth-

ods. "In a game of cricket, which has so many variables and inconsistencies, that is one level of consistency that he brings...he truly believes in every situation. I think that adds a real sense of calm to a lot of people around him," he said. "So we are going to miss Ben, we're going to miss that presence, we're going to miss his leadership and his performance and it is difficult to replace someone like that." McCullum said Stokes deserved a fitting farewell from fans. "I was quite strong in my opinions that I thought we should get it out there when we could because I think he's been a cricketer that's been able to transcend the sport into other aspects of society and the popularity throughout society."

# Too Pushy? Coco Gauff Brought To Tears By Interaction With Anti-Doping Tester

Coco Gauff said she was brought to tears by a "pushy" anti-doping tester. Serena Williams called the system "grueling." Protocols designed to protect tennis from doping are in the spotlight as players open up about their experiences navigating the system in the aftermath of a four-year ban handed to 2023 Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova - not for testing positive but for refusing to take a test. Players are required to provide a 60-minute time slot each day to be available for testing, plus the International Tennis Integrity Agency says that if a doping control officer "locates and notifies a player outside of that



hour, they must complete the test." Naturally, there's a need for communication between players and testers. "I'm not going to lie, some of them can be pushy, make you feel like you're

doing something wrong," Gauff, the No. 7 seed, said after her first-round victory at Wimbledon. "One time she came outside my time slot. But the way she was speaking to me on the phone, it literally made me cry afterwards," the 22-year-old American said. "I found out I was in the right, and I didn't have to do anything." Ahead of her first-round match Tuesday, Ajla Tomljanovic described her close calls.

# Convicted Stalker Arrested For Killing Influencer Natalia Villalba

A convicted stalker has been arrested in connection with the killing of Colombian influencer Natalia Villalba, found stuffed inside a suitcase in a Bogota apartment. The suspect insists he couldn't have done it. He says he was watching an England World Cup match at the time, drinking at an Irish bar with strangers around him as proof. Police tracked him across two countries before an Interpol Red Notice finally caught up with him in Ecuador. His alibi, though, has a problem, and it comes down to a single missed date. The Suspect Behind the Killing Natalia Villalba had been staying in a rented apartment in one of Bogotá's wealthier neighborhoods for nearly three weeks before anyone



realized something was wrong. She was supposed to check out on June 21. Instead, a cleaner walked in the next day and found her body stuffed inside a suitcase in the bathroom, with the shower still running. Colombian prosecutors named Matthew Ashley Foster-Smith, a 46-year-old British man, as the suspect, accusing him of aggravated femicide and tampering with evidence. Investigators allege he

entered the apartment while Villalba was alone, physically assaulted her until she died, then staged the scene and placed her body in the suitcase before fleeing the country entirely. An international manhunt involving authorities in Colombia, Ecuador, and the UK eventually tracked him down in Ecuador, where Interpol's Red Notice caught up with him. This wasn't his first run-in with the law.

# "It All Comes Down To Enjoying The Game": Stefanos Tsitsipas As He Embraces Fresh Mindset Before Novak Djokovic Test



Stefanos Tsitsipas says rediscovering his enjoyment of tennis has helped him move beyond the anxiety and setbacks that derailed recent seasons as he prepares to face seven-time champion Novak Djokovic in the second round of Wimbledon on Wednesday. Speaking after his straight-sets opening-round victory over Hugo Gaston at the All England Club, the former World No. 3 reflected on his struggles with injuries, the pressure to constantly reinvent his game, and the renewed confidence he hopes will carry him into one of the biggest matches of the tournament. Tsitsipas revealed that he has shifted his focus from chasing results to finding

satisfaction in competing, a change he believes has eased the burden he had been carrying, and admitted that trying to alter his game to meet external expectations often felt unnatural. "I feel like I have been constantly chasing change and improvement in my game. I feel like sometimes it is not part of my personality. It just doesn't belong to me, even though my coaches or the people around me want me to go towards that other route, a good change that they assess and they think is important for me, it seems to take time to adjust," Tsitsipas was quoted by ATP. He also spoke candidly about the emotional toll that the process had taken.



# LeBron James Shares 5:51 AM Workout Video, Shows Off Early Morning Grind On Instagram

Even during the NBA off-season, LeBron James is making sure everyone knows he is still putting in the work. The Los Angeles Lakers superstar shared a raw gym video on his Instagram account, @kingjames, at 5:51 AM on June 30, 2026. Shortly after, Lakers fan account @PurpGoldLakers reposted the clip on X with the caption, "Lebron is going AT

IT before 6am." The video quickly grabbed fans' attention because of both the timing and LeBron's energy. LeBron James' 5:51 AM Instagram Video Highlights His Relentless Work Ethic The 17-second clip showed LeBron James filming himself inside a gym while wearing a gray Nike hoodie featuring the word "WITNESS." A large "5:51 AM" timestamp stayed on the screen throughout the video. LeBron appeared sweaty and energized as he lip-synced to music, moved his head to the beat, and flashed intense expressions. Throughout the video, LeBron pointed upward, smiled briefly, turned his head from side to side, and continued singing along. There was no spoken dialogue.

Instead, the clip captured a natural behind-the-scenes moment during or immediately after an early workout session. The original source of the video was LeBron's Instagram account, while @PurpGoldLakers later shared it on X. Early-morning training has become part of LeBron's identity over the years. At nearly 41 and preparing for another NBA season, these videos send a clear message: he is still committed to competing at the highest level. That dedication has also sparked plenty of fan reactions, leading into a familiar offseason conversation surrounding his future. LeBron James Continues A Long Tradition Of Sharing Offseason Training Sessions LeBron has regu-

larly posted workout clips during previous offseasons, and this latest upload follows that pattern. While the video itself did not reveal anything major, it once again reminded fans why his longevity continues to stand out across professional sports. Fans responding to the repost praised LeBron's discipline, while others joked about his animated expressions and graying beard. Some also connected the video to ongoing discussions about retirement and free agency. However, the workout clip seemed designed simply to document his preparation process. Whether fans view it as motivation or just another classic LeBron moment, the importance remains the same.

# VIRAT KARNA: GAVE MY 100% FOR 'NAGABANDHAM'

I worked hard for 'Nagabandham'. It is a great fortune as an actor to do such a huge project. The film has turned out amazingly. It will definitely give the audience a great cinematic experience: Hero Virat Karna

Virat Karna is the hero of the epic adventure thriller 'Nagabandham' - The Secret Treasure' directed by Abhishek Nama. Kishore Annappureddy and Nishitha Nagi Reddy have produced this film on a huge budget under the banner of Nick Studios. Nabha Natesh, Aishwarya Menen, Jagapathi Babu, Mahesh Manjrekar, Rishabh Sawhney and other key roles are playing in this film. The promotional content that has already been released has created a sensation across the country. The film will be

released worldwide on July 3. On this occasion, hero Virat Karna shared the features of the film at a press conference.

**■ BOTH OF THE FILMS YOU HAVE DONE SO FAR ARE BIG BUDGET FILMS. HOW DID IT FEEL TO DO SUCH BIG FILMS AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR CAREER?**

-I think it's my luck. My first film Pedakapu was also a big budget film. Now Nagabandham has also been made with a very big budget. Regardless of the outcome of Pedakapu, I worked 100 percent as an actor. I did everything that was required for that role. I got good



praise as an actor. I worked twice as hard for this film than that film.

**■ HOW DID THE NAGABANDHAM JOURNEY BEGIN?**  
-Abhishek Nama garu had

prepared this story and was looking for an actor who would be suitable for the role. He thought it would be good if it was a new person who had all the qualities required for the role. At that time, he called me and spoke to me. I liked the story a lot. I was very excited. That's how this journey began.

**■ DID YOU PLAN ON A BUDGET OF RS 100 CRORE WHEN YOU STARTED THIS FILM?**  
No. As the film developed, the budget size increased according to the demand for content.

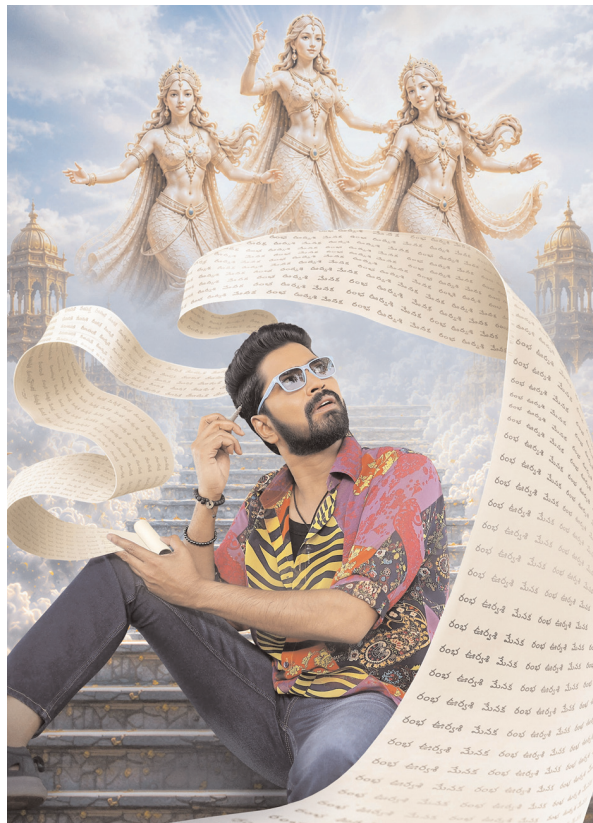
**■ HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR ROLE?**  
-When I heard this story, I got a clear understanding of what my character should be like. It felt like this story was written just for me. When I was told about the roles of Rudra and

Nagasadhu, I felt very excited. I felt like I was waiting for a film like this. I immediately underwent a body transformation to suit the role. I learned horse riding. I also paid special attention to dance. I completely transformed myself to suit the role. In this, Nagasadhu's character took six hours to do makeup.

**■ WILL THERE BE A SEQUEL TO THIS MOVIE?**  
Yes. Our director has already said that there will be a part 2 to this movie.

**■ HOW DID IT FEEL TO HAVE SUCH A LARGER-THAN-LIFE CHARACTER IN JUST THE SECOND FILM?**  
-I always wanted to make a mark in the industry. It is a great opportunity for an actor to get such a role. That opportunity came to me with Nagabandham.

## Allari Naresh's Ramba Oorvasi Menaka First Look Out



Allari Naresh, Chandra Mohan Chintada, Annappurna Studios, Hasya Movies' Ramba Oorvasi Menaka Striking First Look Unveiled, Theatrical Release On September 4

Known for constantly reinventing himself with unconventional and content-driven films, Comedy King Allari Naresh is now making an entertaining return to the genre that established him as one of Telugu cinema's finest entertainers. His 65th film #Naresh65, marks a fun-filled collaboration with director Chandra Mohan Chintada. The film is being jointly bankrolled

by Razesh Danda and Nimmakayala Prasad under the prestigious Annappurna Studios and Hasya Movies banners. The project ventures into a unique space by merging fantasy with laugh-out-loud comedy. With the intriguing tagline, "Comedy Goes Cosmic," the makers promise a fantasy ride packed with hilarious situations, magical twists, and a refreshing storytelling approach that is set to offer audiences a one-of-a-kind theatrical experience. Marking the birthday of Allari Naresh, the makers unveiled the title and first-look poster of the film. Titled Ramba Oorvasi

Menaka, the film instantly grabs attention with its quirky title and visually striking first look, promising a wildly entertaining fantasy comedy unlike anything seen before. The first-look poster presents Allari Naresh in a stylish avatar, seated on heavenly steps with a pen and scroll a scroll bearing the names Ramba, Oorvasi, and Menaka in his hand, while celestial nymphs (Apsaras) hover above him amidst the clouds. The creative design, filled with divine elements and humorous undertones, hints at a unique cosmic entertainer packed with fantasy, fun, and Allari Naresh's trademark comedy. The film boasts a strong ensemble cast featuring Vennela Kishore, Naresh VK, Srinivas Reddy, Muralidhar Goud, and several other noted actors who are set to add to the laughter with their hilarious performances. Backed by an experienced technical crew, Raam Reddy handles the cinematography, while Chaitan Bharadwaj composes the music. Brahma Kadali is the production designer, and Chota K Prasad oversees the editing, ensuring the fantasy world is brought to life with top-notch production values. With an eye-catching title, an inventive first-look poster, and an exciting fantasy-comedy premise, Ramba Oorvasi Menaka generates strong buzz. The film is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on September 4.

## VDK: A New-Age Star Powering India's Sporting Dreams

AVC Men's Cup has become a proud moment for the nation. While the players rightly deserve all the applause, sports followers are also acknowledging the contribution of the Prime Volleyball League

and Vijay Devarakonda. Vijay Devarakonda's Hyderabad Black Hawks have been among the active franchises promoting volleyball over the last few seasons. As co-owner, Vijay has often spoken about empowering athletes and

providing them with better opportunities to grow and compete at the highest level. Known for encouraging fresh talent in the film industry, Vijay has carried the same approach into sports. His investments in volleyball and support for local cricket demonstrate a long-term commitment toward helping young athletes achieve their dreams.



## India's Got Latent isn't the same anymore, and now we know why



Samay Raina's India's Got Latent is back, but many fans feel the show no longer has the same raw madness that made it blow up in the first place. At first, viewers blamed the change on brand promotions. The new season feels more polished, more commercial and, at times, more like a marketing property than the chaotic comedy show people fell in love with. But a viral post has now pointed

out another reason: the show is no longer just entertainment. It is also a legal operation. Latent Season 2 reportedly has 12 lawyers credited, and their work is not limited to handling one controversy. From talent contracts, content clearance, music licensing and sponsor agreements to platform compliance and legal risk around jokes, every episode has to pass several layers before it reaches the

audience. The post also mentions how Season 1's controversy changed everything. After FIRs, public outrage and legal scrutiny, unscripted comedy no longer remains fully unscripted. Every joke about a public figure, brand, community or real event can become a legal issue. That fear naturally changes how a show is made. And that is exactly why Latent may not feel the same anymore.

## Sivaji's powerful first look as Lailam Babu from Sudheer Anand's "Highlesso" released

Sudheer Anand, popularly known as Sudigali Sudheer, is the hero in the film Highlesso, directed by Prasanna Kumar Kota. Produced by Shiva Cherry and Ravikiran under the banner Vajra Varahi Cinemas. This is production number 1 for their banner and Sudheer Anand's fifth film as a hero.

In this film, which is set against a rural backdrop, Shivaji, who impressed with his intense performance in the film Court, will be seen in the role of a powerful villain named 'Lailam Babu'. On the occasion of Shivaji's birthday, the makers released his first look poster and wished him.

The poster shows Shivaji sitting on a stone throne in a black dress, wearing a five-pointed stark black tie, and holding a bottle in his hand, showing the power of his character. Shivaji is going to enter



tain the audience in the most powerful avatar of his career in the role of 'Lailam Babu'. This first look has created more interest in the film.

Natasha Singh and Naksha Sharan are playing the heroines in this film. Popular Kannada actress Akshara Gowda will be seen in a key role in this film. Motta Rajendran, Getup Srinu, and Bevara Duhita Sharanya are playing important roles. A young and talented technical team is working. Anudeep Dev is composing the music, Sujatha Siddharth is handling the cinematography. Chota K Prasad is the editor, Brahma Kadali is the production designer, and Chinta Srinivas is the writer. Hai Lesso will be released in theaters in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam.

## KANNADA FILMMAKER BACKS DEEPIKA PADUKONE'S 8 - HOUR SHIFT



Deepika Padukone has consistently used her voice to advocate for issues that matter, and her stance on an eight-hour workday has sparked a wider conversation around work-life balance in the film industry. As the debate continues to gain momentum, several voices from the industry have come forward in support of the actor. The latest to back her is filmmaker and journalist Indrajit Lankesh. Speaking about the debate, Lankesh said he believes actors, especially mothers, require balanced schedules, adding that productions should be planned around them rather than expecting them to work exhausting hours. Explaining why he

supports Deepika's stand, he said, "If you're shooting with an artist especially with Deepika for 6 hours and then he can shoot another scene for 4 hours because I'll be behind the camera. I can work for the next 4 hours also. But artist cannot. They look tired. So you can plan your scenes, you can schedule accordingly and you can give them a break. You have to give them a break. And especially when you're a mother and you have a kid, you have to because you have to look after the kid. Mother's love is most important. You can have a caretaker or anybody for the kid but mother has to look after this."

Lankesh further praised Deepika for speaking up, saying her decision benefits not just mothers but every actor in the industry.

## Krishna Reddy's Allegations Are Completely False: "Spirit Is Not One" Producer Narsamma



The team of "Spirit Is Not One" has strongly condemned the allegations made by Krishna Reddy regarding the film. The producers stated that his recent statements are completely false, baseless, and intended to mislead the public. The film unit clarified

that all aspects of the project, including its production, title change, and banner change, were carried out legally and in accordance with the prescribed procedures. They also asserted that Krishna Reddy's claims regarding his involvement in the project have no truth whatsoever.

## Can Dhurandhar Hero Pull Off The VFX-Heavy World?

Ranveer Singh appears to be entering one of the most exciting phases of his career. After impressing audiences with his intense and rugged avatar in Dhurandhar, the actor is now gearing up for another ambitious project, Pralay, directed by Jai Mehta. Recent reports suggest that the film will go on floors in September, with a significant portion of the shoot planned in Australia. What makes Pralay particularly intriguing is its scale. Unlike Dhurandhar, which showcased Ranveer in a raw, grounded, and action-driven role, Pralay is expected to rely heavily on

visual effects and larger-than-life storytelling. The film is reportedly being mounted as a grand cinematic spectacle, requiring extensive VFX work to bring its world to life. This shift presents a new challenge for Ranveer. Over the years, he has proven his versatility in films ranging from historical dramas to commercial entertainers. However, carrying a VFX-heavy film demands a different kind of screen presence, where actors often perform against green screens and imaginary environments before the magic is added in post-production. Fans are already

excited to see how Ranveer adapts to this format. His performance in Dhurandhar reminded audiences of his ability to completely transform into a character, and many believe the same commitment could elevate Pralay as well. With production set to begin soon and expectations steadily rising, Pralay has all the ingredients of a major event film.

