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Odisha CM assures full support as floods impact over 2 lakh people

Bhubaneswar, Jul 29: Odisha chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi has assured that the safety and well-being of every citizen remain the state government's highest priority as floods triggered by incessant rainfall have affected more than two lakh people across several districts.

ANTHONY FAUCI REFUSES TO ANSWER QUESTIONS DURING US SENATE HEAR-ING ABOUT COVID ORIGINS

VIJAY DEVERAKONDA COMPLETES 10 GLORIOUS YEARS IN TFI

CINEMA | PAGE

Rahul seeks Amit Shah's removal, SC probe into Student Crackdown

New Delhi (TSIT):

Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday intensified his attack on Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the alleged police excesses against students during the July 20 protest march to Parliament.

Addressing a press conference, Gandhi urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remove HM Shah from office and order a Supreme Court-monitored independent investigation into the incident.

Gandhi alleged that the Delhi Police and the Rapid Action Force (RAF), both functioning under the Union Home Ministry, used excessive force against protesters, including pellet guns and lathis. He claimed the HM was directly responsible for



the crackdown. According to Rahul, there were only two possibilities: either the Home Minister ordered the action or was unaware of it. "If he ordered it, he is culpable. If he did not know, then he is incompetent. In either case, he has to go," Gandhi said.

Referring to the alleged police brutality during demonstrations at Jantar Mantar on July 20, Gandhi said the students, who were peacefully asking questions to the government, were brutalised and shot with pellet guns.

Rahul Gandhi said he had written to Amit Shah

on July 25 seeking clarification on whether the use of pellet guns had been authorised but had received no response.

The Congress MP also accused the government of suppressing dissent. In this context, Gandhi said he was prevented from speaking in the Lok Sabha and was asked to apologise for his remarks against Shah. "I will never apologise to the BJP-RSS," he asserted, maintaining that it was his duty to raise issues concerning students. He promised justice for those allegedly assaulted during the protest. Gandhi said the Opposition had collected photographic and video evidence identifying police personnel involved in the crackdown. He also questioned the role of individuals in plain clothes seen during the operation.

Assam flood: More than 3.32 lakh people affected in seven districts

Guwahati (TSIT):

Flood waters continued to affect thousands of people in upper Assam even as the overall flood situation showed signs of improvement, with over 3.32 lakh people across seven districts still reeling under the impact of the deluge, officials said on Tuesday.

According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), 3,32,639 people in 622 villages under 21 revenue circles remain affected by the floods. The affected districts are Sivasagar, Charaideo, Golaghat, Jorhat, Nagaon, Sonitpur and Kamrup (Metro). Nearly 45,341.98 hectares of crop land continue to remain submerged, dealing a major blow to the agricultural sector. Officials said the Dhansiri (South) river at Numaligarh was flowing above the danger level, while no river was report-



ed to be flowing above the highest flood level.

The latest flood wave claimed seven lives in Sivasagar district, taking the total flood-related death toll in Assam this year to 75. No person has been reported missing in the current spell of floods, the ASDMA said.

The disaster management authority said 115 relief camps and relief distribution centres have been opened across the affected districts, including 81 relief camps and 34 relief distribution centres. A total of 32,477 people are currently taking shelter in

relief camps, with Sivasagar accounting for the highest number of inmates, followed by Jorhat, Golaghat and Charaideo.

Rescue and relief operations are continuing with the deployment of medical teams, SDRF personnel and local volunteers in the worst-hit areas. Officials said relief materials, including food grains, drinking water, tarpaulins, baby food, medicines, bleaching powder and other essential supplies, are being distributed among affected families.

SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

29-07-2026

Total pilgrims - 78,709
Yonnes - 31,352
Hundi kumbh - 4,76 CR
Laddu sale - 3,97 Lac
Annasradams - 2,26 Lac
Medical treatment - 2,939
Waiting Compartments - 31

Approx. Darsan Time for Saranatharam (with out SSD Yonnes) 10:30 H

TRUMP HOLDS TALKS ON IRAN, UKRAINE

Washington, July 28 : US President Donald Trump held separate White House talks on Tuesday with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as the United States confronted two wars and difficult diplomatic choices. Both meetings took place behind closed doors in the Oval Office. The White House did not open either session to the press. "President Trump has concluded his meet-



ings in the Oval Office with President Zelenskyy and Prime Minister Netanyahu. Both meetings were positive and productive!" White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said on X. Zelenskyy arrived at the White House at about 9:40 a.m. and entered through a side entrance of the West Wing. Netanyahu departed shortly after 12:25 p.m., according to reports. The Israeli prime minister's office later released photographs showing Netanyahu and Trump together.

13 INDIAN SEAFARERS STRANDED NEAR UKRAINE AMID BLACK SEA ATTACKS: SEAMEN UNION

New Delhi/Kyiv, July 29 : At least 13 Indian seafarers are among the 15 crew members stranded aboard a cargo vessel at Ukraine's Chornomorsk port as drone and missile attacks continue in the vicinity of the strategic Black Sea harbour, according to the Forward Seamen's Union of India (FSUI). The sailors' union has warned that the crew is caught in what it



described as a "terrible and life-threatening situation", saying those onboard are living in "constant fear of a direct hit at any moment" as hostilities between Russia and Ukraine continue near the port. In a post on X, the FSUI appealed for immediate intervention by the Indian government and other stakeholders to ensure the crew's safety. "M.V. AMIRI, currently at Ukrainian port Chornomorsk with 15 crew on board, including 13 Indian seafarers, is trapped in a terrible and life-threatening situation," the union said in a post on X. It further stated, "Repeated drone and missile attacks are being attempted in the immediate vicinity of the vessel."

After hours of heated debate, anti-paper leak Bill gets Lok Sabha nod



New Delhi (TSIT):

After an intense and often acrimonious debate spread over two days, the Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, by a voice vote, paving the way for stricter legal measures to combat paper leaks and examination-related malpractices.

The legislation amends the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, and was passed following pro-

longed discussions that witnessed sharp exchanges between the treasury and Opposition benches.

While the NDA and its allies supported the Bill and called for wider reforms in the examination system, Opposition members questioned whether the proposed amendments addressed the fundamental reasons behind recurring examination failures and paper leaks. The amended law seeks to strengthen transparency, accountability, and integrity in public examinations through

tougher punitive provisions while safeguarding the interests of students.

Among its major provisions are enhanced penalties, including imprisonment of up to 10 years, fines of up to Rs 10 crore, confiscation of assets of those found guilty, and a mechanism aimed at ensuring that judgments in such cases are delivered within three months.

The passage of the Bill also comes against the backdrop of the large-scale 'Sansad Chalo' protest organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) in New Delhi on July 20. Hundreds of students had gathered to protest against the NEET paper leak and other examination-related irregularities, demanding the resignation of then Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Pradhan later stepped down from his post on July 25.

Taiwan Firms Explore Electronics & Semiconductor Investments in AP



VISAKHAPATNAM (TSIT)

A high-level delegation of Taiwanese industry representatives met Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and IT Minister Nara Lokesh on Wednesday to explore investment opportunities in electronics, semiconductors and advanced manufacturing sectors in the State.

During the meeting at the State Secretariat, the Chief Minister highlighted Andhra Pradesh's industry-friendly policies, world-class infra-

structure, ports, airports and robust logistics network.

He said the government is giving priority to electronics, semiconductors, information technology, advanced manufacturing and export-oriented industries while assuring investors of policy stability, faster approvals and full government support. The Taiwanese delegation included representatives from leading companies such as Delta Electronics, BenQ, CBTC Bank, Dimercor, Master Hill, Nan Pao Resins, Ever Clear Environmental Engineering,

Sheng Hui Tech, Tech Top Engineering, KS Terminals, Sand Sun, Jile Construction and Engineering, and Capella Stores.

The delegates expressed interest in expanding their manufacturing operations in Andhra Pradesh and agreed to strengthen industrial and technological cooperation with the State. Later, the delegation held separate discussions with IT Minister Nara Lokesh, focusing on skill development, higher education partnerships and workforce training.

The discussions covered collaboration in semiconductor manufacturing, electronics, precision engineering, industrial automation and healthcare.

Both sides also explored opportunities for Mandarin language training, industry-oriented certification programmes, internships, student and faculty exchange initiatives, joint research and job-readiness programmes, marking a significant step towards deeper cooperation between Taiwan and Andhra Pradesh.

K'taka to Challenge Cauvery Water Release Order: CM

New Delhi (TSIT):

Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Wednesday said the State Government has decided to challenge the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) order directing Karnataka to release Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu by filing an appeal before the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA).

Speaking to reporters near Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi, the Chief Minister said a meeting was held with the Advocate General, legal experts and senior officials to discuss the legal options available.



He said preparations were underway to file the appeal before the CWMA.

Shivakumar said the State had already opposed Tamil Nadu's request for

water release on earlier occasions and noted that the current order came despite inadequate rainfall in Karnataka. He added that the matter would also be discussed with opposition leaders after his return to Bengaluru.

The Chief Minister said Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay had expressed a desire to meet him regarding the issue. He said the Karnataka Government had invited him for discussions and requested him to personally visit the Cauvery basin to assess the prevailing water situation. Shivakumar added that the State was ready to

arrange a helicopter for the visit. Commenting on the reported use of pellet guns against protesting students, Shivakumar said it was a matter of national concern and sought an explanation from the Union Government, stating that it was the first time in his political career that he had witnessed pellet guns being used against students.

On the proposed Cabinet expansion, the Chief Minister said discussions had been held and the final round of consultations with the Congress high command would take place shortly before a decision is announced.

Only some vehicles produced before 2016 may require minor tweaks for E20 fuel: Gadkari

New Delhi (TSIT)

Some Bharat Stage (BS)-III vehicles, which were introduced from April 1, 2005, and manufactured before 2016, may require certain rubber parts and gaskets to be replaced before being run on E20 petrol, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari stated in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

In a written reply to a question in the Upper House, Gadkari said that extensive studies conducted by Indian Oil Corporation, the Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP), Dehradun, the



Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) and the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) found no need to modify engines of either cars or two-wheelers for the use of E20 fuel.

The studies showed that even older vehicles did not experience any significant

changes in performance or abnormal wear and tear after operating on petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol, the minister said.

"No issues were reported in parameters such as drivability, startability, metal compatibility, and plastic compatibility," Gadkari said.

"Only in case of testing done on BS-III vehicles introduced from 1st April, 2005, and manufactured prior to 2016, some rubber parts and gaskets may require replacement, which can be easily managed during the routine servicing regime of the vehicle," he observed.

J&K Lt Governor Manoj Sinha visits Nama Memorial Park



Khammam town (TSIT): Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha visited the Nama Muthaiah - Varamma Memorial Park at Gollagudem village in Khammam Rural mandal on Wednesday during his visit to the district.

He paid floral tributes to the statues of Nama Muthaiah and Varamma, parents of former Khammam

Niranjan Reddy Alleges Telangana Farmers Ignored in Water Policy



Wanaparthy (TSIT): Former Minister and BRS leader Singireddy Niranjan Reddy on Wednesday accused the Telangana Government of neglecting the interests of the state's farmers and demanded that floodwaters from the Jurala Project be utilised for irrigation in Telangana.

Speaking to the media at Atmakur after visiting the Jurala Project along with former MLAs Chittam Rammohan Reddy and Ala Venkateswar Reddy, Niranjan Reddy alleged that farmers in Andhra Pradesh were cultivating crops with the expectation of receiving water, while Telangana farmers

Expedite Land Acquisition for Key Projects: Collector



Warangal (TSIT): District Collector Dr. Satya Sharada has directed officials to expedite land acquisition for various prestigious development projects and complete the process within the stipulated time. Reviewing the progress at a meeting held at the District Collectorate Conference Hall on Wednesday, the Collector assessed land acquisition related to the J. Chokka Rao Devadula Lift Irrigation Scheme, Konaimakula Lift Irrigation Scheme, Kakatiya Mega Textile Park, Inner Ring Road, National Highway-163G, railway projects and the proposed airport. Officials discussed project

Madhapuram MPPS Reflects Rising Trust in Government Schools: MLA

Palakurthy (TSIT): Palakurthy MLA Yashaswini Reddy visited the Government Primary School (MPPS) at Madhapuram village in Devaruppula mandal on Wednesday and reviewed the school's

the institution, which began with just 20 students, now has an enrolment of 143 students, reflecting the growing confidence of parents in government schools. She credited the achievement to the dedication and com-



MLA Yashaswini Reddy directed on SIR to Thorruru mandal and town BLAs



Palakurthy, July 29, TSIT : Palakurthy MLA Yashaswini Reddy held a review meeting with Thorruru Mandal and Town Booth Level Agents (BLA) at the MLA camp office in Palakurthy Mandal Centre.

Various guidelines were given to BLAs on booth level party strengthening, voter list revisions and field level coordination.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA suggested that party activities should be more actively organized in every booth and accessible to the people. Enrollment of newly

Collector Directs Speedy Completion of 1000-Bed Super Speciality Hospital Works



Mahabubnagar, July 29 (TSIT Bureau): District Collector Khushboo Gupta has directed officials to expedite the construction works of the 1,000-bed Super Speciality Hospital being built in Mahabubnagar district headquarters and ensure that all pending works are completed on schedule.

During an inspection of the hospital construction site on Wednesday, the Collector reviewed the progress of the ongoing works. She also visited the office of the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

academic standards, infrastructure and teaching methods.

Interacting with teachers and students, the MLA said the Telangana Government, under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, is giving top priority to strengthening government education. She said Madhapuram MPPS has emerged as one of the district's model government schools due to sustained efforts to improve public education.

Highlighting the school's progress, Yashaswini Reddy said

mitment of the teaching staff in delivering quality education.

The MLA congratulated the headmaster and teachers for their efforts in shaping the future of students and assured full support for the school's infrastructure development and other requirements. She said she would strive to secure the necessary funds for the school's continued growth.

Education department officials, teachers, public representatives, village elders, parents and students attended the programme.

SBI Hyderabad Adopts Five Tigers at Nehru Zoo



Hyderabad (TSIT): State Bank of India (SBI), Hyderabad Circle, marked International Tiger Day by adopting five tigers at Nehru Zoological Park for one year as part of its commitment to environmental sustainability and wildlife conservation.

On the occasion, Neelesh Dwivedi, Chief General Manager, SBI Hyderabad Circle, handed over a cheque for Rs.15 lakh to J. Vasanth, IFS, Curator of Nehru Zoological Park, towards the tiger adoption programme.

Speaking at the event, Neelesh Dwivedi said wildlife conservation is a shared responsibility and SBI remains committed to supporting initiatives that promote ecological balance and sustainable development. He said the adoption of the five tigers reflects the

Coalition Government Focused on Balanced Development, Says Minister Kolusu Parthasaradhi



Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Andhra Pradesh Minister for Housing, Information and Public Relations Kolusu Parthasaradhi on Wednesday said the coalition government is ensuring balanced development across the State, with special emphasis on North Andhra. Addressing a press conference, he alleged that the previous YSRCP government had neglected the region, hindered industrial growth and failed to generate employment opportunities for youth. The Minister claimed that the Chandrababu Naidu-led government had laid the foundation for developing Visakhapatnam as an IT

hub, but many investments were lost during the previous regime. He also accused the YSRCP of large-scale land encroachments and criticised its handling of the three-capital proposal.

Highlighting the Bhogapuram Greenfield

LIC Hands Over Rs.12,207 Crore Dividend to Centre



Mumbai (TSIT): Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) on Wednesday handed over a dividend cheque of Rs.12,207.25 crore to the Government of India as its share of the dividend approved by shareholders at the Annual General Meeting held on July 27.

The cheque was presented by R. Doraiswamy, CEO and Managing Director of LIC, to Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The Sanjay Lohiya, Secretary, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, was present along with LIC Managing Directors Ratnakar Patnaik

and R. Chander, and N.S. Raghava, Zonal Manager (In-Charge), Northern Zone. LIC, which is celebrating 70 years since its incorporation, continues to be the market leader in the Indian life insurance sector. As of March 31, 2026, the Corporation had an asset base of Rs.59.03 lakh crore, reflecting its strong financial position and continued leadership in the insurance industry.

Rare Vaginal Tumour Treated Without Surgery at Medicovert Hospital



Hyderabad (TSIT): Doctors at Medicovert Woman & Child Hospital,HITEC City, successfully saved the life of a 41-year-old woman suffering from severe vaginal bleeding caused by a rare vaginal hemangioma using a minimally invasive image-guided embolisation procedure, avoiding the need for major surgery.

The patient was admitted with profuse bleeding and severe blood loss. After detailed evaluation, doctors

diagnosed the condition as a vaginal hemangioma, a rare benign blood vessel tumour that can cause sudden, life-threatening haemorrhage. She was first stabilised with blood transfusions and intensive care before undergoing uterine and vaginal artery embolisation, in which tiny catheters were used to block the blood supply to the tumour.

The advanced procedure successfully controlled the bleeding without open sur-

Agastya Agro Partners Chemley to Expand Crop Protection Solutions



Hyderabad (TSIT): Telangana-based Agastya Agro Limited has entered into a strategic partnership with Chemley Agritech Pvt. Ltd. to introduce patented crop protection solutions across South India, with plans to double its annual turnover from Rs.300 crore to Rs.600 crore over the next three years.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Murali Mallampati, Founder and Managing Director of Agastya Agro, and Raajan Kumar Ailawadhi, Managing Director of Chemley Agritech, at Agastya Agro's corporate office in Secunderabad on Wednesday.

Under the partnership, Agastya Agro will market

Chemley's portfolio of patented insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, plant growth regulators, fertilizers and plant nutrition products. The collaboration will also focus on product development, manufacturing, marketing and distribution of advanced crop protection solutions for farmers across South India.

Speaking on the occasion, Murali Mallampati said the partnership combines Chemley's patented technologies with Agastya Agro's manufacturing capabilities and extensive distribution network to

deliver innovative solutions that improve farm productivity and farmer profitability. Raajan Kumar Ailawadhi said Agastya Agro's strong market presence makes it the ideal partner for Chemley's expansion in South India.

Agastya Agro currently operates in nine states through a network of more than 4,500 dealers and plans to add another 2,500 dealers in the coming years. The company is also strengthening its presence in cotton, chilli, plantation and pulse crops while maintaining its leadership in rice cultivation.

Senior executives, channel partners and customers from both companies attended the MoU signing ceremony.

Rumi Fine Fragrances Launches Luxury Perfume Brand Blending French Craftsmanship with Indian Essence

Bengaluru: Rumi Fine Fragrances has entered India's premium perfume market with the launch of a luxury fragrance collection that combines classical French perfumery with Indian-inspired aromas and emotions. The brand, founded by entrepreneur Rajnish Kumar, aims to redefine luxury fragrances by offering premium-quality perfumes at accessible price points. The launch event was attended by



Bollywood actor Diana Penty, playback singer Kunal Ganjawala, and renowned fourth-generation French Master Perfumer François Robert, who collaborated in shaping the brand's fragrance philosophy. Rumi Fine

Fragrances is built around the concept of "French Artistry with Indian Soul," with each perfume inspired by emotions, memories and personal journeys. The company said its fragrances are designed to create emotional connections rather than simply offering pleasant scents. Founder Rajnish Kumar said the vision behind the brand is to create fragrances that become a part of people's most cherished memories.



A Congress delegation led by KPCC General Secretary S. Manohar has met Director General of Police Dr. Salim and filed a complaint seeking legal action against BJP MLA Yash Pal Suvarna.

Protest and effigy burning against BJP MLA Yash Pal Suvarna

Bengaluru: KPCC General Secretary S. Manohar has demanded immediate legal action and arrest against Udupi MLA Yash Pal Suvarna, who has threatened the life of Lok Sabha Opposition Leader Rahul Gandhi and made provocative statements that are detrimental to the health and harmony of the society.

participated in the protest and burned a portrait of yashpal suvarna, demanded that the police department take strict legal action against those who are inciting communal hatred and aiding the BJP. BJP members are deliberately threatening law and order in the state by making derogatory statements and threats against the national lead-



ers of the Congress party and the police. He has demanded that such BJP scoundrels be arrested immediately and legal action be taken.

The BJP is deliberately making such provocative statements to create unpleasant incidents and communal riots in the

state. The police department should register a complaint on its own initiative and take necessary legal action and arrest the BJP leaders. He alleged that the police department's silence on this issue would be an endorsement of such individuals in the society.

Global Oil Crisis Makes Green Mobility Imperative, Says Pankaj Kumar Pandey at India Green Energy Expo

Bengaluru : Amid growing concerns over global crude oil supply following the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, this is the most appropriate time for India to accelerate its transition towards electric vehicles (EVs), said Pankaj Kumar Pandey, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises and Administrative Reforms, Government of Karnataka, and President of the Bangalore Management Association.

Speaking after inaugurating the 8th India Green Energy Expo and Green Vehicle Expo at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC) on Wednesday, Pandey



said Bengaluru is steadily emerging as India's leading hub for green energy, electric mobility, and sustainable transportation by promoting renewable energy, solar power, and electric vehicles.

He highlighted Karnataka's vast renew-

able energy potential, particularly wind energy in districts such as Haveri and Vijayapura, and noted that while India has set a target of generating 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030, the country has the capability to achieve 1,000 GW.

Declare Drought Immediately, R. Ashoka Urges Karnataka Govt

Davanagere (TSIT): Karnataka Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka on Wednesday demanded that the State Government immediately declare drought and announce relief measures for farmers, alleging that the Congress government had failed to respond to the worsening agrarian crisis caused by deficient rainfall.

After touring drought-hit villages in Davanagere district and interacting with farmers, Ashoka said the government's delay in declaring drought was preventing farmers from receiving Central assistance and crop insurance benefits. He accused the government of giving priority to politics over



the welfare of farmers.

Citing rainfall deficits across the state, Ashoka said sowing had been severely affected in several districts, including Davanagere and Chitradurga,

where only 19 per cent of the cultivation had been completed. He alleged that crops such as sunflower had suffered extensive damage and criticised the compensation

announced for arecanut plantations as inadequate.

The BJP leader claimed that 31 farmers had died by suicide in the last two months and demanded compensation of Rs.50,000 per acre for crop loss and Rs.10,000 per damaged coconut or arecanut tree. He also sought the release of Rs.50 crore for each Assembly constituency, constitution of local drought task forces and measures to ensure adequate fodder for cattle.

Ashoka further demanded that the government release a white paper on the state's financial condition, alleging that pending payments under various welfare schemes had delayed the drought declara-

tion.

Criticising the government's handling of the Cauvery water-sharing issue, he alleged that Karnataka's interests had not been adequately protected and called for strengthening the state's legal strategy to safeguard drinking water and irrigation needs.

He said the BJP was conducting a statewide drought study and would raise issues relating to drought declaration, farmer relief and Cauvery water sharing during the Assembly session beginning on August 13. He warned that the party would intensify its agitation if the government failed to take immediate steps in support of farmers.

KPCL Ramps Up Thermal Power Generation, Makes Arrangements for Additional Coal

BENGALURU : With deficient rainfall leading to a decline in hydropower generation, the Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL) has ramped up thermal power generation to meet the State's electricity demand and is taking measures to ensure adequate coal supplies for its thermal power plants. As part of these efforts, senior officials of KPCL, led by Managing Director Rajendra Cholan, visited the Western Coal Fields Limited (WCL) and Baranj Captive Coal Mines in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The Corporation is also in continuous discussions with other coal mines and Coal India Limited to ensure uninterrupted coal supplies.

Senior officials led by KPCL Managing Director Rajendra Cholan met Dr. Hemant Sharath Pandey, Chairman and Managing Director of Western Coal Fields Limited (WCL), and requested additional coal supplies for the Raichur Thermal Power Station (RTPS) operated by KPCL. In response, WCL officials agreed to provide an addi-



tional 4,000 metric tonnes of coal per day, over and above the quantity currently being supplied.

Similarly, arrangements have been made to increase the daily coal supply from the Baranj Captive Coal Mine, which is allocated to Units 1 and 2 of the Ballari Thermal Power Station, from the current 16,000 metric tonnes to 25,000 metric tonnes. During the visit to the mine, KPCL MD Rajendra Cholan and senior officials inspected coal production, the weighing system and coal transportation arrangements.

"Discussions have also been held with Coal India Limited to provide an additional one to two coal rakes every day, over and above the coal currently being supplied to the Raichur Thermal Power Station. Coal India Limited officials have agreed to supply coal as per the requirement," KPCL Managing Director Rajendra Cholan said.

"Due to deficient rainfall, hydropower generation has declined. To make up for this shortfall, KPCL has decided to generate 100 million units of electricity every day from the ther-

mal power plants at Raichur, Yermarus and Ballari. This requires up to 20 coal rakes every day, and arrangements have been made to procure the required quantity of coal," he said.

Meeting with Railway Officials

Meanwhile, the delegation led by KPCL Managing Director Rajendra Cholan met Krishnath S. Patil, Senior Divisional Manager (Operations), Central Railway, in Nagpur, Maharashtra, and requested the necessary railway rakes to facilitate the transportation of additional coal to the State's thermal power plants. Railway officials agreed to provide the required empty rakes to KPCL. "KPCL has taken all necessary measures to procure the additional coal required to increase electricity generation at the State's thermal power plants in view of the deficient rainfall. At the same time, the thermal power plants have also been kept fully prepared through proper maintenance and operational readiness."

Speed Up Ongoing Flyover and Underpass Works: Maheshwar Rao

Bengaluru : Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao directed officials to expedite the pending works on the Ejipura Flyover, Yelahanka Flyover, Wind Tunnel Underpass, and Okalipuram Eight-Lane Corridor and ensure their completion within the stipulated timeline. Chairing a virtual review meeting on the progress of major flyover and underpass projects being executed within the GBA limits, he instructed officials to take all necessary measures to accelerate the completion of the Ejipura Flyover, Yelahanka Flyover, Wind Tunnel Underpass, and Okalipuram Eight-Lane Corridor projects.

Ejipura Flyover: The Chief Commissioner directed officials to speed up the ongoing works on the Ejipura Flyover and complete them within the prescribed timeframe. He instructed that Portal Frame No. 6 be installed at the earliest. Wet Mix Macadam (WMM) work is currently in progress on the Indiranagar ramp, and

officials were directed to complete the ramp works expeditiously. He also instructed that the ramp works on the Madiwala side be completed without delay.

As additional hydraulic jacks are required for the installation of bearings, he instructed the contractor to hire more jacks on a rental basis and complete the bearing installation at the earliest.

Okalipuram Eight-Lane Corridor:

Two box-pushing works beneath the Chennai railway line have been completed by the Railway Department. The Chief Commissioner directed officials to expedite the construction of the approach road connecting to the railway station, the construction of a 1200 mm diameter stormwater drain to facilitate smooth rainwater flow, and the retaining wall works, ensuring their completion within the stipulated time. He also directed that the accumulated soil, debris, large concrete slabs belonging to the Railway Department, and other



waste materials within the railway premises be removed immediately. Officials were instructed to coordinate with the Railway Department, prepare an appropriate action plan, and undertake the necessary clearance and cleaning operations.

Wind Tunnel Underpass:

The Wind Tunnel Underpass project is progressing steadily. Of the 74.23-metre retaining wall under construction on one side, 35.23 metres have already been completed. More than half of

the remaining approximately 40 metres has also been completed. Officials were directed to complete the remaining retaining wall within one week.

On the Manipal Hospital side, works are in progress on approximately 100 metres of the 174.04-metre retaining wall. Officials were instructed to complete all pending works expeditiously and ensure that the entire project is completed by November.

Yelahanka Flyover: The Yelahanka Flyover project has achieved 80 per cent completion.

BAJAJ LIFE INSURANCE LIMITED
Regd. Office :
Bajaj Insurance House, Airport Road, Yerwade, Pune - 411006
Tel.: 020 68026777

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that the office of Bajaj Life Insurance Limited located at 2nd Floor, Arattukulam Building, Opp. Govt. Boys HSS, AC Road, Cherthala, Alappuzha (Dist.), Kerala - 688524 will be shifted to its new address at Bajaj Life Insurance Ltd., 1st Floor, IP Building, Kuppikavala, Cherthala, Alappuzha (Dist.), Kerala - 688524 with effect from 12-10-2026.

EDITORIAL

Bihar: Just One FIR Charged 144 Protesters and 5,000 Unknown, At Least 50 Minors, With ‘Attempt to Murder’

The police action on protestors in Bihar has stood out for the exceptionally harsh treatment accorded to protestors. The image of a police officer firing with an AK-47 in Siwan has become an emblem of police impunity. Three people in Siwan were hit by bullets and are being treated at Jayprabha Medanta Hospital in Patna. One of those hit is a 15-year-old minor. His family says he works at a local shop and was not part of the protest. Siwan Superintendent of Police Puran Kumar Jha said he had ordered an inquiry and the policeman who had fired AK-47 towards the protestors, had been suspended. But beyond this incident in Bihar, the FIRs filed by the police against protestors are a testament to the brutality with which the police has tried to throttle any attempts at protest or marches in the state. Chief minister Samrat Choudhary, the first the BJP has been able to appoint in the state, is yet to issue any statement beyond one on July 23, responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s general post, saying the “youth are the biggest strength of the country. No attempt to play with their future will be tolerated.” The Bihar government has later promised to withdraw cases filed against youth protestors during the movement demanding accountability for paper leaks, but a look at the cases that were filed offer insight into how the police respond to dissent and whom the police was hoping to go after. The Wire has looked at eight FIRs the Patna Police filed over two days of student protests, July 22 and 25. The FIRs named hundreds of people, and roughly 14,000 ‘unidentified’ others were also charged. An analysis of the documents found that they contradict one another on who protested, how many people were there and how old the accused are. Stringent charges aimed at ensuring protestors are arrested and find it hard to secure bail were invoked, hundreds were rounded up and only cursory medical examinations conducted, different officials filed identical complaints, and attempts were made to pass off minors as adults. The Wire has reached out to the IG, Patna asking about the discrepancies found, identical complaints, the treatment of minors and the withdrawal of FIRs. This article will be updated when a response is received. The night of July 26 The All India Students’ Association (AISA), the students’ wing of the CPI(ML), had called a statewide bandh on July 25 demanding that the police action stop and protestors in custody be released. The police had started arresting people from July 24 on FIRs that were filed on July 22. On the night of July 26, more than 100 people were produced before a single magistrate in Patna. Some of them were in handcuffs, and all of them had been charged under a single FIR registered at the Gandhi Maidan police station. Advocate Akash Shankar represented around two dozen of them. He told The Wire that many of them were minors. He said, “The magistrate herself saw that three or four children had handcuffs on. Because of that she issued a show cause to the SHO, who is the informant in this case, the one who registered the FIR.” Shankar added that the medical examinations of more than 100 people took about only 30 minutes. “It was just a mechanical process, a formality. Some of the students were injured, and had received no medical attention.”

Indian Political Parties Are Now Stuck In An Awkward Gen Z 'Situationship'

I am sitting at a McDonald's outlet. At the next table, I see two boys and a girl, probably in their late teens or early 20s, opening a box that contains a big birthday cake to celebrate. I take a start. Given that I have grown up with establishments advertising "Outside Food Not Allowed". This is strange to me. Mercifully, the kids order an add-on burger meal. On Sunday, as the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) headed towards a political victory after weeks of their attention-grabbing Jantar Mantar protests, I watched a popular chat show in a Tamil TV channel, in which people variously stacked as Boomers, Gen X and Millennials, gasped in awe and smirked as the tribe broadly known as Gen Z listed the workplace requirements they seek from their would-be recruiters: no micro-management, flexible hours, WFH at will, joining bonus, retention bonus, mid-week off-days, free gizmos, and such. Walking 'Red Flag' Detectors it dawns on me that there is a new generation out there that unconsciously demands or assumes, sometimes with a stubborn entitlement, what to the previous generations meant earned privileges and acquired permissions. But the angst and the anger at Jantar Mantar that led to the resignation of Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan showed us that unemployment, tough competition, higher aspirations, and career uncertainties are objects of stress for Gen Z, contrasting the perceived sense of entitlement. You cannot paint an entire generation with the same colour. There are struggling Gen Zers in rural areas trying to get their first graduate degree in their families or a white-collar job where the previous generation tilled the fields. There are the rich



and the poor, divided by caste, language, and status. Then there are the sanskari Gen Zers who do 'bhajan-clubbing' while the upscale decadents try their hands at vaping or lounge-hopping. However, across all this, there is a generation gap that is telling. The previous generations cannot easily fathom the minds they had thus far written off as lazy or directionless. The CJP movement showed what they can do when the occasion demands. And the manner in which they did - in a stubborn mix of organisation, courage, comic memes, creative videos and tough but tactful negotiation - shows that even when they have no political affiliations as such, their styles, attitudes, and needs are a new puzzle to be solved in Indian public life. This is as true for the opposition parties that basked in the CJP's glory as the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that encountered a staggering Black Swan event in 12 years of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's record run. Notes From Mamdani Modi has begun a Gen Z outreach with Instagram videos, and his party troops have started similar shows at the ground level. However, it seems the new generation needs not as much "outreach" as "insight". There is a higher need for listening and observing than simply telling them something. The outreach style may well make the kids out of reach. The millennial Zohran Mamdani is seen as a Gen Z icon, though the New York mayor comes in a traditional leftist mould. What matters perhaps is the ability to capture the imagination of new voters. In my assessment, they also want to see a sense of character that goes beyond promises and words. The Gen Z language is only symbolic of the cultural brick wall the older leaders have to climb or move across. One girl says in a post that she was being "gaslit" by her own government, a curious crossover to

describe what to the previous generations would have been "state propaganda". Another one talks of her backside being "legit" attacked by policemen. Jargon and slang apart, the excess of F-words and abuse showed that genteel ladies are passe. But street plays and brandished portraits of Bhagat Singh, Chhatrapati Shivaji, and Ambedkar alike showed a motley mix of the earthy and the Westernised meeting in what is being quickly dubbed as an 'Instagram revolution' that upends the fake news factory of the WhatsApp University era. Those protesting against irregularities in the NEET (National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test) that kick off medical careers are evidently a strange mix of the erudite, the earthy, and the abusively irreverent. This is just not what the doctor ordered for the elders in public life. Know Thy Audience There's more. Unlike the Bhagat Singhs of the Independence era and the idealists of the JP

Movement that led to the imposition of the watershed Emergency in 1975, these are not selfless, sacrificing youngsters, even when they are out for a community engagement. They know their onions - which makes them political hot potatoes. In a sense, one is reminded of the early days of the Indian National Congress, which was formed in 1885 as a club of the elite seeking fair opportunities for themselves, rather than a bunch out to change the world. Early founders of the Congress had wanted the British-era Indian Civil Service to be accessible to locals. It was a NEET of sorts for those times. The movement acquired complexity and mass support much later as other interest groups joined and new issues and challenges emerged to make the little stream a mighty river. Who knows, the boys and girls of the CJP may be writing a new wave in history. If you compare the CJP protests with uprisings in

Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, which showed various shades and degrees of GenZ-ism and led to political upheavals, the Jantar Mantar show is a small act. But political leaders are certainly headed for a steep learning curve to deal with those for whom stand-up comedians offer the public-life education that op-ed writers and TV news anchors once used to. Parties Really Need To 'Clock It' What do the entrenched parties do to woo this Gen Z as voters - or pacify them as new-age protesters? There are a lot of drawing-board issues out there. In communication style, demands and aspirations, they are unlikely to sit easy on old handouts, promises, and even achievements. Recent elections in Tamil Nadu, in which Chief Minister MK Stalin's DMK lost to the two-year-old TVK led by movie star C Joseph Vijay, had their own Gen Z angle. It is widely believed that Instagram reels played a key role in Vijay's victory, as did the ability of the youngsters to persuade older family members to vote out the DMK. The DMK failed despite a stellar record in economic growth and welfare handouts. The mood had shifted towards law and order, women's empowerment, and a host of new aspirations that challenged the old-world to-do list. The generation gap is probably not the typical Right-Left ideological gap that older leaders are familiar with. Picture it like a Test match generation having to grapple with the rules and styles of the new-age T20 games. "It just isn't cricket," they might well say. For Gen Z to say "Bet" or "No cap" to express their full agreement, there is a lot of homework ahead for political parties - even for those who have gained sympathy after the CJP protest. They are only in a political 'situationship'.

The Cockroach Movement: Shadow of Gandhism or New Resistance for the Digital Age?



PRIYANKA SAURABH

Whenever a new mass movement emerges in India, attempts are made to understand it within old ideological frameworks. This is precisely what happened with the Cockroach Movement. Some see it as a new expression of youth discontent, while others attempt to read it within the shadow of the Gandhian tradition. But the question is: can this movement truly be linked to the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi, or is this merely a catchy but superficial comparison? The answer to this question is neither a complete "yes" nor a complete "no." The Cockroach Movement certainly reflects some elements of Gandhian politics, but its nature, language, medium, and ideological structure are clearly distinct from Gandhism. Therefore, before considering it a direct extension of Gandhi's tradition, it is essential to understand its nature and limitations. The greatest strength of Gandhian politics was its moral discipline. Truth, non-violence, self-restraint, public service, and constructive programs—these were not merely political slogans, but the soul of the movement. For Gandhi, the objective of struggle was not merely a change of power, but also a process of moral transformation of the individual and society. This is why his movement demonstrates a profound harmony between means and ends. In contrast, the power of the Cockroach Movement lies in its satire, symbolism, and digital activism. It has emerged at a time when a new generation is distancing itself from traditional political languages and registering its

dissent through social media, memes, digital campaigns, and public demonstrations. This movement demonstrates that today's youth seek to express their discontent through new cultural symbols and communication channels, rather than through old political structures. In this sense, it represents a new form of contemporary resistance, not a reiteration of traditional Satyagraha. Nevertheless, its connection to the Gandhian context cannot be completely denied. Gandhiji placed the ordinary citizen at the center of politics. He instilled the belief that the real power for change lies in the consciousness, labor, and moral courage of the people. The Cockroach Movement is also significant in that it brought issues such as youth unemployment, the credibility of the examination system, institutional accountability, and growing distrust of governance to the center of public discourse. At this level, it generated the same energy of public participation that is considered the core element of Gandhian politics. But this is where the most important difference emerges. For Gandhi, the purity of means was paramount. He believed that righteous ends could not be achieved through unrighteous means. On the other hand, the Cockroach Movement's tone is more sharp, satirical, and immediate. It challenges the establishment, but does not emphasize self-discipline, self-confidence, and ideological restraint as Gandhi did. Its language is one of resistance, not of asceticism. Therefore, calling it a complete Gandhian obscures its unique identity. It should also be remembered that Gandhism was not merely a politics of protest. It encompassed the broader concept of village self-rule, swadeshi, dignity of labor, social harmony, communal harmony, and constructive nation-building. In contrast, the current focus of the Cockroach Movement appears to be limited primarily to education, employment, youth aspirations, and institutional accountability. Therefore, it would be premature to call it a comprehensive social project like Gandhism. Yet, there is a profound similarity between the two—both break the

silence of the masses. Gandhi taught ordinary Indians to speak out against colonial rule. Today's movement reassures young people that discontent isn't merely personal frustration; it can also be given democratic expression. When youth issues are voiced through digital platforms, public demonstrations, and social dialogue, it signals the vitality of democracy. Politics hasn't ended; it has simply found new mediums and new symbols. Therefore, Gandhi's relevance here is less important as a direct inspiration and more as a moral criterion. The question should not be whether the Cockroach Movement is Gandhian or not; rather, whether it awakens the moral consciousness of the people. Is it merely a momentary outburst of discontent or is it preparing the ground for some long-term social change? Will its satirical power translate into democratic reforms? Time will provide answers to these questions. For now, it can certainly be said that linking this movement to Gandhiji is partially justified if we view it in the context of public participation, civil dissent, and the demand for accountability. However, when judged against the criteria of satyagraha, nonviolence, self-restraint, and moral reconstruction, it appears distinct from Gandhism. It is not a successor to Gandhi, but a representative of the new protest culture of the digital age. In conclusion, any mass movement should be evaluated not just by its symbols or popularity, but by its purpose, means, ethics, and long-term impact. If a movement awakens the public, demands truth, non-violence, self-discipline, and a broader vision of constructive social change, it would not be appropriate to call it an extension of Gandhism. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to understand the so-called "cockroach movement" not as a rebirth of Gandhism, but as a new protest culture of the digital age. History will ultimately decide whether it was a momentary discontent or a lasting chapter in democratic consciousness.

Rahul Gandhi Calls for Modi to Sack Amit Shah Over Police Brutality on Youth Protesters

New Delhi: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday (July 29) accused Union home minister Amit Shah of ordering the police action on protestors last week and demanded that he be sacked. He also sought an independent Supreme Court monitored probe against the police brutality unleashed on July 20. "There are two possibilities: he [Shah] gave the order to shoot with pellet guns, to beat people with lathis with nails and [to give them] electric shocks. Or he did not know what was happening. If he gave the order, he is culpable and if he didn't know, he is incompetent. In either case, he has to go. Every child who was beaten should know that this is the man who beat you, thrashed you and shot you with pellet guns," said Gandhi. Gandhi's remarks came at a press conference just hours after a massive uproar in the Lok Sabha during his speech on the Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026. During the discussion, Gandhi said that it was Shah who ordered that students be shot at, leading to an uproar from the Treasury benches, demanding Gandhi's apology. "Part of the beatings was done by the Delhi Police, which reports to the MHA [home affairs ministry] and the home minister," Gandhi said. He said the Rapid Action Force, which reports to the CRPF, which again reports to the MHA, "also did the beatings". "These forces both



report to Amit Shah. On July 25, I wrote a letter to the home minister asking him if lethal force, pellet guns approval was given and whether those seen beating up youth in plain clothes, if they are police officials. I did not receive even an acknowledgement of the letter," said Gandhi at the press conference. Gandhi said that the Opposition will ensure that the students who were beaten get justice and demanded that Modi sack Shah and order an independent probe. "We have the photographs, we have the videos. Accountability is going to come; this is the opposition's guarantee to the students. This is our advice to the prime minister, that sack Shah and order an independent probe monitored by a high powered committee of the Supreme Court. At least have the decency to take responsibility for what you have done," he said. Gandhi said that he was holding the press conference because he was not allowed to speak in the

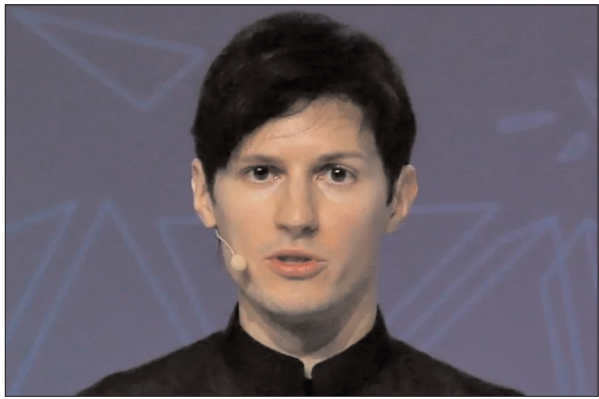
House. The Treasury benches had demanded an apology from Gandhi for his remarks against Shah, even though the home minister himself was not present in the House. "The Leader of Opposition [Gandhi himself] is not allowed to speak in the Lok Sabha. Multiple times, I asked the Speaker to bring order to the House so that I could speak, but I was not allowed," said Gandhi. "The excuse was that I said something about Amit Shah, that he was responsible for the brutality that was carried out ... I was given an assurance that if I apologise, I will be allowed to speak. I will never apologise to the BJP, RSS or any other person associated with them." Also read: 'Home Minister Ordered Students to be Shot,' Says Rahul Gandhi in Lok Sabha Gandhi also said that he was concerned about the action being taken against students who had participated in the protests. "I am doing this press conference right now because I am concerned

about that. I am concerned that, in the shadows, silently, the home minister, the establishment, and those who share his thinking are attacking the students who were on dharna. They are using facial recognition, threatening them, and the Bajrang Dal is being used against them and beating them up," he said. "That is why I am standing here today, because I want to draw attention to this, and I want every single student and their parents to know that the government is doing this. These are our children. They are our future, and the government has no business attacking them, threatening them, beating them or even touching them." Following Gandhi's speech in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh said that no shots were fired and only tear gas was used and therefore the question of asking who issued orders [for firing on protestors] does not arise. "A pellet gun is a lethal weapon. At close range, pellet guns can kill a person, blind a person. In front of the press, I showed you a pellet gun victim. There were injuries on his body and in his eye. The AIIMS report said that the patient has been shot by pellet guns. Who did this? It's not one person, there are many. I have given proof. And they are saying we are lying. I have spoken to the victim, to the doctor. And government is saying we did not use pellet guns. Will you go by proof or hollow words?" said Gandhi in response at the press conference.



Russia charges Telegram founder Durov with facilitating terrorism

Russia has charged Telegram's founder Pavel Durov with facilitating terrorism over allegations the messenger app has been used for recruitment by Ukrainian secret services. The FSB - Russia's domestic security service - said Telegram had been used "to prepare and co-ordinate acts of sabotage and terror" inside Russia and had failed to remove channels, chats and bots used by Ukraine. An international arrest warrant has been issued for the Russian-born Durov, who lives abroad. Shortly after the charge was announced, Telegram's account on X posted an image showing Durov holding up his middle finger. He has previously accused Russian authorities of "fabricating new pretexts to restrict Russians' access to Telegram". Telegram is popular in Russia and is used by tens of millions of people, although authorities have been restricting access as part of a wider crackdown on internet freedom. The app is also popular in



Ukraine. Multi-billionaire Durov, 41, has lived outside of Russia for many years and holds French and United Arab Emirates (UAE) passports. It is unclear whether other countries or authorities would comply with an arrest warrant issued by Russia. Durov left Russia in 2014 after refusing to comply with government demands to shut down opposition communities on the platform. He had previously founded popular Russian social media company VKontakte - dubbed the "Facebook of Russia". Telegram is used by around

950 million people worldwide and has previously positioned itself as an app focussed on its users' privacy, rather than the normal policies prioritised by other global social media companies. The platform has previously faced criticism of its app moderation, but has denied having insufficient practices. Durov was arrested and placed under formal investigation in France in 2024 over allegations of failure to properly moderate the app to reduce criminality. He was allowed to go home months later, with the investigation continuing.

Rice prices surge in Telangana amid El Niño, hoarding worries

Hyderabad: Rice has become significantly costlier in Telangana in recent months, with prices rising faster than the national average. While experts say hoarding by private players is driving up prices, traders cite concerns over crop yields amid a possible El Niño impact. In fact, as the Times of India cites, a policy paper has warned that global prices of rice could also spike by 30-50 per cent if El Niño-linked losses continue to be coupled with stockpiling. Data from the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs showed that while the national average increase between May and July was 3.33 per cent, the average retail price of rice in Telangana increased by 4.65 per cent during the same period. Telangana's average retail rice price during that period was Rs 52.67 per kg, which is nearly Rs 10 more per kg than the national average in July. This is true for almost all popular varieties, the report quotes rice traders as saying. The fine rice varieties are priced anywhere between Rs 54 and Rs 70 per kg.



EL NINO OR HOARDING?

"Prices have certainly gone up. This is certainly the El Niño effect. The crop has been impacted. If the crop is good in the coming months, prices will come down," said Chinnapu Reddy of the Telangana Rice Millers Association. But production concerns cannot be the sole reason, said Samarendu Mohanty, former

adviser to the International Commodity Institute and founding director of the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture and Development Studies, adding, "In states like Telangana, where paddy acreage is quite good, prices should not rise too much. The current increase is not because of supply disruption. Hoarding by private players is also contributing to the rise in prices." Global price surge likely

According to a policy paper by Professor Jayashankar Telangana Agricultural University (JTUATU), global rice prices could surge by 30-50 per cent due to a combination of factors: geopolitical uncertainties, rising fertiliser and energy costs, and the threat of El Niño impacting rice-growing areas in Asia. It said that there are three possible scenarios for the global rice market. In the best-case scenario, prices could rise by 10-20 per cent if production is stable and there is no panic buying. What is most likely to happen, however, is that prices could increase by 30-50 per cent because of moderate production losses and stockpiling. In the worst-case scenario, the study said, global prices could double due to export restrictions and panic buying. Data from the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs showed that while the national average increase between May and July was 3.33 per cent, the average retail price of rice in Telangana increased by 4.65 per cent during the same period.

Odisha AM/NS India Kho Kho High Performance Centre celebrates two years of sporting excellence

Bhubaneswar July 29, 2026:

The Odisha AM/NS India Kho Kho High Performance Centre (Odisha AM/NS KHPC), Puri marked its second anniversary with a landmark celebration, which included the felicitation of athletes of the centre who have excelled on national and international stages and the induction of a new batch of promising athletes through the Kho Kho Selection Trials 2026. This is a significant milestone in the journey of the centre in nurturing India's future Kho Kho champions. Odisha AM/NS India Kho Kho High Performance Centre is a collaborative initiative between ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) and the Government of Odisha to nurture Kho Kho talent in the country. It also coaches and develops judges for the sport. The athletes of the Odisha AM/NS KHPC have been achieving laurels in various prestigious international and national platforms such as Kho Kho World Cup 2025, National Games 2025, Khelo India Youth Games 2025, Junior National Kho Kho Championship 2024-2026, Senior National Kho Kho Championship 2025-2026, Sub-Junior National Kho Kho Championship 2025-



2026. Over the span of two years of its operations, the athletes have participated in more than 30 national, regional and state competitions earning 48 medals in various categories. This reinforces Odisha AM/NS KHPC role as a consistent talent incubator, where structured training and exposure to high-level competition are translating into measurable success and national recognition. Mr. Ashutosh Telang, Director & Vice President - HR & Administration, AM/NS India said, "Even in a short span of two years, the Odisha AM/NS India Kho Kho High Performance Centre has established itself as a beacon of structured training and talent development in the field of Kho Kho. The achievements of our athletes at national and

international platforms reflect not only their dedication but also the strength of the ecosystem we have built together. As we welcome the new batch of athletes, we reaffirm our commitment to nurturing discipline, excellence, and competitive spirit, while shaping champions who will elevate India's standing in Kho Kho globally." The ceremony was attended by distinguished dignitaries including Shri Pratik Waikar, Captain of the Indian Men's Kho Kho Team, as the Special Guest. The Guests of Honour included Shri Pradyumna Mishra, Vice President, Kho Kho Federation of India & Secretary, Odisha Kho Kho Association, Dr. Debabrata Dash, Head - HR (East), AM/NS India, Dr Vikas Yadvendu, Head - CSR,

AM/NS India, and Shri Sagar Samal, Project Head, Sports for All (SFA), the implementing partner for Odisha AM/NS KHPC. Their presence encouraged the athletes, setting the stage for the induction of athletes who represent the next chapter in the centre's journey. During the induction ceremony following the Kho Kho Selection Trials 2026, 31 athletes from the Junior and Senior categories retained their places, while 19 new athletes — 10 boys and 9 girls — were welcomed into the Centre. The fresh Sub-Junior intake was essential, as the entire 2024 batch had progressed to the Junior level. Likewise, 8 new Junior athletes joined after existing Juniors advanced to the Senior category. These tran-

sitions highlight the Centre's growing strength as a structured talent pipeline, ensuring continuity while creating opportunities for emerging athletes to rise through the ranks. During the felicitation ceremony, athletes who brought laurels at various national championships were honoured for their exceptional achievements. The centre also recognised excellence beyond competitions recognising athletes for all-round performance, exemplary discipline, consistent academic excellence, and remarkable contribution on the playing field. The athletes also showcased their skills in an exhibition match, demonstrating the speed, agility, tactical brilliance and competitive spirit that define modern Kho Kho.

SBI Life Insurance partners with Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) as 'Principal Partner' of Indian Contingent for 2026 Para Sports Season

July 2026: SBI Life Insurance, one of India's most trusted private life insurers, today announced the strengthening of its partnership with the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), becoming the 'Principal Partner' of the Indian Contingent for the 2026 para sports season. The company will act as the 'Official Life Insurance Partner' for the Indian Paralympic Contingent that will be heading to the upcoming Commonwealth Para Games 2026 in Glasgow and the Asian Para Games 2026 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.

Building on its successful association with India's para-athletes during the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, SBI Life continues to champion stories of determination, preparation, and excellence that inspire individuals to pursue their aspirations with confidence. Through this partnership, SBI Life aims to recognise and amplify the journeys of India's elite para-athletes, as high-performance competitors who continue to redefine possibilities through their dedication and commitment. Their journeys highlight a universal truth—that aspirations can be pursued when individuals have the confidence, support, and preparation to



move forward.

Speaking on the partnership, Mr. Ravindra Sharma, Chief of Brand, Corporate Communication & CSR, SBI Life Insurance, said, "At SBI Life, we believe that confidence is what empowers individuals to pursue their aspirations while staying prepared for life's uncertainties. This belief lies at the heart of our brand philosophy, 'Apne Liye, Apno Ke Liye', and is what makes our association with the Paralympic Committee of India so meaningful. India's para-athletes embody what it truly means to prepare with purpose, remain focused on their goals, and perform with unwavering determination. Their journeys demonstrate that when individuals are supported with the right foundation, they can overcome barriers and achieve extraordinary milestones. As we strength-

en our partnership with PCI as the Principal Partner of the Indian Contingent for the 2026 para sports season, we are proud to stand alongside these exceptional athletes as they represent India on the global stage. Beyond supporting sporting excellence, this partnership reflects our larger commitment to enabling confidence—encouraging individuals and families to prepare for the future with assurance, so they can focus on pursuing what matters most." Mr. Devendra Jhajharia, President of the Paralympic Committee of India and a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna and Arjuna Awards, said, "We are delighted to strengthen our partnership with SBI Life as they come on board as the Principal Partner of the Indian contingent for the 2026 para sports season. We are grateful for SBI Life's continued trust in the Paralympic movement, having previously stood with us during the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, where India achieved a historic milestone of winning 29 medals. Corporate partnerships like these play a vital role in creating an ecosystem where our para-athletes can focus entirely on achieving sporting excellence."

INDIAN TRAVELLERS CAN PAY VIA UPI FOR BURJ KHALIFA TICKETS

Dubai: Indian travellers can now book tickets online for At the Top, Burj Khalifa in Dubai using the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), following the launch of the service on Wednesday, July 29. Introduced by NEOPAY in partnership with NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) and Emaar Entertainment, the initiative makes At the Top, Burj Khalifa the first attraction in the UAE to accept UPI for online transactions. Visitors can now purchase tickets and experiences through the attraction's official website using India's popular real-time payment system before travelling to the UAE. The rollout builds on NEOPAY's collaboration with NIPL, which introduced QR-based UPI merchant payments across the UAE in 2022. By extending the service to e-commerce, Indian travellers can complete bookings online using a payment method they already use at home. At the Top, Burj Khalifa welcomes



millions of visitors annually, with India ranking among its largest interna-

tional source markets. The new payment option is expected to simplify

travel planning and improve the booking experience for Indian tourists. Vibhor Mundhada, CEO of NEOPAY, said the launch marks a milestone in expanding cross-border digital payments. Ritesh Shukla, Managing Director and CEO of NPCI International, said the integration enables Indian travellers to use a familiar payment method while planning their visit. An Emaar Entertainment spokesperson said the addition of UPI makes the online booking process more convenient for Indian guests and supports the company's focus on customer-centric digital innovation. The initiative further strengthens digital payment connectivity between India and the UAE while supporting the growing demand for seamless cross-border payment solutions in the travel and tourism sector. The initiative marks a major step in expanding cross-border digital payments between India and the UAE.

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance pays total benefits of Rs. 4,666 crore to customers in Q1-FY2027



- **Term plan business grows by 60.4% in Q1-FY2027**
- **Industry-leading claim settlement ratio of 99.3% in Q1-FY2027**
- **Profit After Tax increased by 27.8% year-on-year to ₹ 386 crore**

July 29, 2026: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance reported a growth of 27.8% year-on-year in net profit to ₹ 386 crore for the first quarter ended June 2026. Notably, the Term plan (retail protection) business of the company grew by 60.4% year-on-year in Q1-FY2027. The Board of the Company approved proposal to rename the Company

as 'ICICI Life Insurance Limited'. The Company's MD & CEO, Mr. Anup Bagchi, said, "Customer-first remains the core of our strategy. Our industry-leading claim settlement ratio of 99.3% in Q1-FY2027, with an average turnaround time of just 1 day for non-investigative claims underscores our commitment to supporting customers and their families when they need us the most. During the quarter, we settled ₹ 1,306 crore of death claims and paid ₹ 3,360 crore as maturity & survival benefits reflecting our continued focus on delivering timely financial protection and peace of mind to our policyholders. Furthermore, in FY2026, we

settled ₹ 5,149 crore of death claims and paid ₹ 15,363 crore as maturity and survival benefits. Our Company's Profit After Tax increased by 27.8% year-on-year to ₹ 386 crore in Q1-FY2027. Notably, we registered a strong growth of 60.4% year-on-year in our retail protection business in Q1-FY2027, demonstrating our continued commitment towards addressing India's protection needs. We shall continue to leverage economies of scale, technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital capabilities to improve efficiency and enhance customer experience. Importantly, our savings cost-to-premium ratio reduced by 50 basis points

(bps) to 13.6% in Q1-FY2027, enabling us to reinvest in innovation, strengthen digital capabilities and support future growth. The Board of Directors recently approved a proposal to rename the Company as 'ICICI Life Insurance Limited', subject to relevant approvals. The proposed name reflects the strength, trust and legacy associated with the ICICI franchise. Our business continues to be on growth trajectory, operating as usual, and we remain focused on expanding our reach, enhancing customer value, and capitalising on the significant opportunities presented by India's growing life insurance market."

Four women accuse Jared Leto of criminal sexual conduct



Four women have accused Oscar-winning actor and Thirty Seconds to Mars frontman Jared Leto of criminal sexual conduct, with the alleged offences having taken place when they were teenagers. One of the women says she was sexually assaulted in a motel bathroom when she was 17. Another says the Hollywood star threatened her with sexual assault when she was 19, and had been unexpectedly left alone with him in a hotel room. A third describes how she had under-age sex with the star in California when she was 17 - which would be classified as statutory rape. Leto "shrugged off" a conversation about the age of consent being 18 in the US state, she says. The fourth woman describes being groomed by Leto, saying he abused his celebrity status by making repeated sexually explicit phone calls to her when she was 16. On at least one occasion, she says he suggested they should have sex. She was subsequently sent a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to prevent her from talking about her relation-

ship with Leto, which the BBC has seen. However, she refused to sign. Four further women also say they received strange and often very sexual phone calls from Leto when they were younger. Another woman says, when she was 14, he instructed a security guard to take her backstage at a music festival after having made a lewd comment about her chest during an autograph-signing. The girl's mother confronted Leto, but he repeated the comment, it is alleged. In total, 10 women have spoken to the BBC documentary - Jared Leto: Hollywood's Dark Secret - with nine of them sharing their stories publicly for the first time. All the women say they encountered Leto between 2002 and 2016, when he was in his 30s and 40s. He is now 54. "This was 25 years ago... he has gotten away with it," says one of his alleged victims. The BBC has corroborated a number of the women's accounts with friends and family who were told about the encounters with Leto at the time.



■ More than 100 aftershocks hit Japan after powerful quake that killed 13

THOUSANDS IN SPAIN RETURN HOME BUT NEW HEATWAVE RAISES WILDFIRE FEARS

Spanish authorities have allowed thousands of people evacuated because of wildfires to return to their homes after restrictions were lifted in the areas of Toledo, Madrid, Ávila, and Castellón. In the Madrid region alone, 24,000 people have been told they can return and lockdowns on another 20,000 have been lifted. Spain and France are both braced for the start of the fourth heatwave so far this summer and some fires have continued to burn, including one at Burgohondo 150km (93 miles) west of Madrid. In south-west France, the largest fires in the Gironde region are described as "still stabilised" despite several flare-ups, however officials warn of dry winds and temperatures of up to 41C (106F). The mayor of Le Barp, south-west of Bordeaux,



Blandine Sarrazin, warned that the situation was "getting harder", after two fires had broken out the day before, and said everyone had to be "hyper-vigilant". Flare-ups were also reported not far from Lanton on the eastern shore of the Bay of Arcachon. Gironde and the Landes are among 16 departments or districts are under orange heat-wave alert. The fire service has had to deploy special measures in Gironde to pro-

tect a number of sites linked to France's defence and aerospace industries. The so-called "Seveso" sites include plants that manufacture hazardous materials for missiles and rockets. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has warned the next 12 hours will be "decisive" in putting out the wildfire near the capital. "Things are progressing favourably, with maximum caution," he told reporters, because of higher tempera-

tures, lower humidity and the risk of gusts of wind. One fire remains out of control, at Vall d'Uixó north-west of Valencia. Meanwhile, the fire at Burgohondo in Ávila province has already ravaged more than 43,000 hectares (108,000 acres) - and is now considered the largest recorded wildfire in Spanish history. In total this year more than 207,000 hectares of land have been burned by wildfires in Spain. The Burgohondo fire has forced 40,000 people from their homes, and one of the team directing firefighting operations, Francisco Bolaños, said that while the fire "has not moved a centimetre during the night", there were concerns it could reignite because of the higher temperatures, and the focus was on stabilising a perimeter of 180km (112 miles).

ANTHONY FAUCI REFUSES TO ANSWER QUESTIONS DURING US SENATE HEARING ABOUT COVID ORIGINS



Former top US health official Anthony Fauci refused to answer questions at a US Senate hearing about the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic, saying he feared Republican lawmakers would try to use his testimony to prosecute him for perjury. He invoked the Fifth Amendment to the US Constitution, which says no individual can be "compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself". Days before the hearing, Republican Senator Rand Paul released more than 1,000 pages of Fauci's pandemic-era writings, in which he mused about fame and the origins of Covid. Fauci said Paul has a grudge against him. He said he previously testified about Covid under oath at several congressional hearings. "Although it pains me to do so because of the respect I have for the legislative branch of government ... under the advice of my attorneys, I will invoke my right under the Fifth Amendment of the constitution to refrain from answering your questions," said, Fauci, the former leader of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). Taking the Fifth is not an admission of guilt - it is designed to protect individuals against coercion, mistakes, and unfair burden-shifting. Fauci said Paul's "obvious obsession" with pushing for his prosecution had led him not to answer questions this time. "The only conclusion I can reach

is that the sole reason he is calling me before this committee is to get me to say something - anything - that could vindicate his repeated public pledges that I end up, in his words, 'behind bars,'" Fauci said. Paul continued questioning Fauci despite his refusal to answer. The hearing grew tense at times, including when one of Fauci's lawyers who was seated next to him repeatedly tried to interject during Paul's questioning. Paul directed a security guard to remove him from the room. During opening remarks, Paul claimed Fauci's diary entries contradicted what he told the American people about the origins of the virus. Paul suggested that while Fauci said publicly that Covid originated naturally, he privately believed the virus originated in a medical lab. The senator has repeatedly promoted the lab-leak theory that Covid came from China's Wuhan Institute of Virology. The World Health Organization in 2025 said the natural-origins theory - the virus spilling over from animals to people - was the "best supported" idea from the available evidence but said until more information emerges, origin determination is "inconclusive". Fauci's diary entries reflect openness at the start of the pandemic to two possible theories about Covid's origins - including natural origins and a lab leak - before he appears to become more convinced it had a natural origin.

TRUMP'S NEW SPY CHIEF JAY CLAYTON CONFIRMED BY US SENATE

Jay Clayton has been confirmed as the next US director of national intelligence (DNI), after President Donald Trump's original choice was rejected by lawmakers. On Tuesday, the US Senate voted 51 to 47 to install Clayton, replacing the acting DNI Bill Pulte. Pulte was Trump's original pick but faced backlash for being a housing official with no national intelligence experience. Clayton had been serving as US attorney for the Southern District of New York, overseeing several prominent cases including the drug trafficking case against former Venezuelan president Nicholas Maduro. "Jay is outstanding in every way, and will do a spectacular job as Director," Trump posted afterwards on Truth Social. Clayton, who is also a former securities regulator and federal prosecutor, succeeds Tulsi Gabbard, who left her job last month and was replaced temporarily by Pulte. Pulte's initial appointment in early June raised alarm for both parties, as the Trump loyalist used his



other role as federal housing regulator to refer several of the president's political opponents for possible prosecution and oversaw staffing cuts. Shortly before the vote for Clayton's appointment passed, Pulte posted about the cuts on X, writing that "we are, this morning, executing a 5th and near final round of terminations, an approximately 30% staff reduction from weeks ago". Shortly after the alarm in June over Pulte, Trump announced Clayton as his replacement nominee. Senators sought to move quickly with his confirmation. However Clayton's first scheduled appearance

before the Senate intelligence committee on 17 June was called off by Trump, who blamed lawmakers for allowing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (Fisa) to lapse. Initially, Democrats welcomed Clayton as a more conventional nominee than Pulte, though their opinion seemed to change during his confirmation hearing earlier this month. Clayton was repeatedly asked whether former Democratic president Joe Biden won the 2020 election, to which he replied by saying that Biden had been "certified" as the winner. "I'm not an election denier," Clayton told sena-

tors. Senate Intelligence Committee Vice-Chair Mark Warner, a Democrat, said afterwards that he "came away from [Clayton's] confirmation hearing with serious reservations about whether he would be willing to stand up to political pressure". "I sincerely hope he proves those concerns unfounded, because the Intelligence Community deserves steadier leadership than it has received in recent months," Warner said in his statement. Clayton's confirmation could help revive congressional negotiations on Section 702 of Fisa. This legislation allows the US government to collect communications involving foreigners abroad without an individual warrant, and Trump has been pushing for its long-term renewal. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, a Republican, said on Monday: "I hope [Clayton's appointment] will encourage my colleagues to stop blocking reauthorisation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act".

Oscar-winning songwriter Glen Hansard killed in crash



Oscar-winning Irish musician Glen Hansard has died in a motorbike crash in Dublin. Hansard, 56, was the frontman for rock group The Frames and also featured in The Commitments. He won an Academy Award for Best Original Song for Falling Slowly in 2008 which he wrote for the low-budget film Once. Hansard was born in Dublin in 1970 and busked on its streets before landing the role of Outspan Foster in Alan Parker's The Commitments, a 1991 film about a soul band made up of a group of working-class young people from Dublin. He had founded The Frames a year previously. Police are appealing for witnesses following the single-vehicle

crash, which happened on Lower Road in Lucan, west of Dublin. It was reported to the emergency services shortly before 04:30 local time. Hansard was also one half of the rock duo The Swell Season, and released solo albums including Didn't He Ramble, which was nominated for a Grammy for Best Folk Album in 2016. He was the father of a three-year-old boy. In a 2023 interview with BBC's Radio Ulster Hansard said he was in a "very different place than I've ever been before" after the birth of his son eight months previously. "It's completely, in the greatest way possible, upturned everything that I know." He added: "It's absolutely incredible, I can't believe I stood on the other side of this chasm for so long." In 2002, Hansard became the original presenter of Irish broadcaster RTE's acclaimed music series Other Voices. His charity work has included Dublin's annual Christmas Eve charity busk in support of the Dublin Simon Community, a charity in the UK and Ireland which helps homeless people.



Saudi Arabia joins US in strikes on Iran-backed militias in Iraq

GHANA HIT BY NATIONWIDE BLACK-OUT AS POWER PLANTS FAIL

A major fault on Ghana's national power grid has triggered widespread outages, leaving the capital, Accra, the commercial hub of Kumasi and much of north without electricity. Several power plants across the West African nation were forced to shut down in the early hours of Wednesday morning, the state-run power distribution company said. "Our engineers and system operators are working continuously to restore power in the shortest time possible without compromising safety," Ghana Grid Company Limited (GRIDCo) has said in its statement. Ghana has had regular power shortages for years - popularly known as "dumsor",



meaning "on and off" in the Akan language - but the situation has been improving. Wednesday's power cut has left homes, businesses and essential services without electricity across multiple regions of the country. Many commuters had problems getting to work as those

whose phones were not charged had difficulty paying for transport and in some cases ordering taxis via apps such as Uber. It has also affected small businesses and people relying on digital services, though big institutions, such as hospitals, tend to have back-up gen-

erators. GRIDCo said it was conducting a comprehensive technical investigation to determine the outage's cause. It did not say how long it would take for normal supplies to resume. Ghana, one of the world's biggest producers of both gold and cocoa, has in recent years started using gas to generate electricity to help with demand as the population grows and becomes more urbanised. Most of the country's electricity is generated by ageing hydropower plants, which have suffered from poor maintenance over years. The addition of gas has eased power cuts, but the sector remains vulnerable to transmission failures and fuel supply interruptions.

GIANNI INFANTINO SETS DEADLINE FOR FIFA OFFER TO MEMBERS IN WORLD CUP INVESTOR PLAN

FIFA President Gianni Infantino set a September 19 deadline on Wednesday for the 211 member federations to accept one-off 20 million dollars offers as part of a project to sell stakes in the World Cup to private investors. The 20 billion dollar FIFA subsidiary, bankrolled by the brother of Jared Kushner, was blasted by international football organizations. European football body UEFA aims to call its 55 member federations to an emergency online meeting, likely on Thursday. "But having held discussions with many stakeholders across the game, UEFA knows there is significant and growing opposition to FIFA's scheme," the organization said in a statement. The effort also marks Infantino's latest effort to align with those in the orbit of U.S. President Donald Trump: by creating the FIFA peace prize, letting



Trump intervene in a process that led to United States forward Folarin Balogun playing at the World Cup, and now trying to lock in Joshua Kushner's investment firm to a 12-year ownership deal with the Switzerland-based not-for-profit soccer body. Infantino set out the "singular and unique funding opportunity" in a letter detailing why he wants to

create the \$20 billion FIFA subsidiary — 20% owned by private investors — that would run the football body's competitions and events like World Cups and Club World Cups. "It is my duty and responsibility as FIFA president to present such game-changing opportunities to you, our members," Infantino wrote in the letter seen by The Associated Press.

"Have To Change Colour Of Medal": Boxer Sakshi Chaudhary Eyes Gold After Reaching Semifinals At CWG 2026



Indian boxer Sakshi Chaudhary vowed to "change the colour of the medal to gold" after she advanced to the women's 51kg semifinals at the Commonwealth Games 2026 after defeating Northern Ireland's Caitlyn Fryers with a dominant unanimous 5-0 decision in the quarterfinal on Wednesday. Sakshi, who came into the Games in good form after moving back to the 51kg category and beating top Indian boxers during the trials, con-

trolled the bout with a composed performance. She won all three rounds by identical 5-0 margins, using her movement and accurate punches to keep Fryers under pressure, according to ESPN. The victory also assured Sakshi of a Commonwealth Games medal. She will now face Canada's Amber-Jane Wall in the semifinal on Friday for a place in the gold medal bout. Speaking to ANI, Sakshi said her aim is now to change the colour of the medal she assured to gold.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi Storms ICC T20I Rankings, Shubman Gill No.1 ODI Batter

India captain Shubman Gill on Wednesday reclaimed the No. 1 spot in ICC rankings for batters in ODI cricket while young batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi moved up a whopping 230 places to 48th in T20Is after his recent exploits against Zimbabwe. Gill has replaced New Zealand batting mainstay Daryl Mitchell at the top spot in the ODI chart. Mitchell had held the top spot since January this year. "There was some change at the top of the latest ODI rankings following the completion of the recent series between the West Indies and New Zealand as the absence of Black Caps' right-hander Daryl Mitchell saw Shubman Gill move back to become the No.1 ranked batter in 50-over cricket," the ICC said. "Mitchell had held the top billing since January this year," it added. Sooryavanshi, who smacked two half-centuries in the recently-concluded India's tour of Zimbabwe for three T20Is, scored 151 runs at 50.33 in his side's 3-0 victory. The 15-year-old batter rose as many as 230 spots to reach 48th in the list of T20I bat-

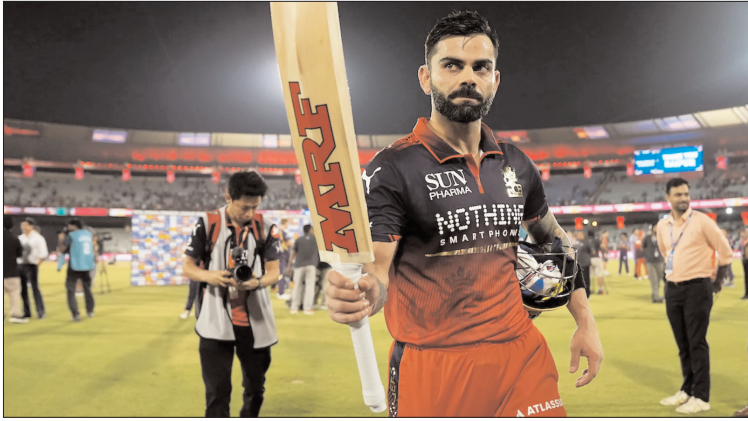


ters, which is led by compatriot Ishan Kishan with 910 rating points. Kishan had recorded the third highest batting rating of all time behind Abhishek Sharma (931) and Dawid Malan (919) when he reached 916 points after the end of the second T20I against Zimbabwe. Despite losing some rating points, Kishan maintains a healthy lead over the second-ranked Sahibzada Farhan (848). "Sooryavanshi's rating of 536 points is well adrift of his more experienced teammates, but Kishan can now boast of having a better career batter rating than more accomplished Indian players like Suryakumar Yadav (912) and Virat Kohli

(909)," the ICC said. Meanwhile, Tilak Varma moved up two positions to reach sixth while T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer jumped seven places to 24th. Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi gained 31 positions to move to 41st in the list of T20I bowlers but Varun Chakravarthy, who missed the Zimbabwe tour due to an injury, dropped three places but remained in the top 10 rankings. Zimbabwe's Ryan Burl rose six positions to reach 85th in rankings for batters while Blessing Muzarabani jumped 10 spots to reach 26th among bowlers. West Indies' Justin Greaves was also rewarded for his impressive showing against Pakistan in the first Test.

RCB Most Valued IPL Team At USD 312 Million, CSK Only 4th

The Global investment bank Houlihan Lokey has released its 2026 IPL Brand Valuation Study, revealing that the Indian Premier League's business enterprise value has climbed 11.4% year-on-year to \$20.6 billion (Rs 197,024.68 crore). This marks a second consecutive year of double-digit expansion. Concurrently, the league's stand-alone brand value rose 10.3% to \$4.3 billion (Rs 41,106 crore), an increase of over \$1.1 billion since 2023, solidifying its standing as one of the world's premier sports properties, trailing only the NFL on a per-match valuation basis. The 2026 season also featured historic shifts in franchise ownership. Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) was bought by a consortium including Blackstone, Bolt Ventures, Aditya Birla Group, and Times of India Group for a record \$1.78 billion. Separately, the Mittal family and Adar Poonawalla acquired the Rajasthan Royals (RR) at a \$1.65 billion valuation. These landmark deals reflect surging institutional confidence in the IPL's vast audience reach, reliable revenue models, and sustained commercial



potential. "Cricket's evolution into a globally owned, institutionally backed asset class has accelerated further in 2026, with the IPL continuing to redefine the global sports landscape," says Harsh Talikoti, Director in Houlihan Lokey's Financial and Valuation Advisory business. "What the market confirmed this year, through landmark franchise transactions, is the extent to which the league can attract precisely the caliber of global, institutional, and strategic capital it was built to draw. Franchise valuations have reached

new highs, private capital participation has accelerated, and the league's commercial ecosystem continues to diversify. The IPL represents a unique convergence of sport, media, and consumer opportunity, underpinned by strong revenue visibility, disciplined cost structures, and an expanding global audience. These latest transactions further demonstrate the confidence investors continue to place in the long-term value creation opportunity." The 2026 edition also underscored a structural shift in media consumption, combin-

ing record digital scale with a clear divergence between accelerating digital and declining linear television viewership. According to JioStar, the tournament delivered a cumulative reach of 1.06 billion screens and viewership up 7% year-on-year, with the opening weekend alone attracting 515 million viewers and generating 32.6 billion minutes of watch-time. Connected TV (CTV) was the key growth driver, with reach increasing 26% year-on-year, while linear television declined, with ratings down 18.8%. This ongoing migration from broadcast to digital is reshaping monetization dynamics, enabling premium, data-driven partnerships such as a three-year association with Google Gemini, as total league revenues surpassed US\$1.8 billion. "We were actively engaged in the processes for both the RCB and Rajasthan Royals, and both are great assets," says Mr. Satyan Gajwani, Co-Owner of Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Chairman at Times Internet, in this report. "Across the league, however, RCB's fanbase intensity and connection are unparalleled, which made this a special opportunity."

Ankit Baiyanpuria Set To Make His Combat Sports Debut Against UFC Star Arman Tsarukyan

After inspiring millions through his discipline, wrestling training, and viral fitness challenges, Ankit Baiyanpuria is set for the biggest leap of his career. On August 1, the creator will make his competitive combat sports debut in a Submission-Only Grappling Title Fight against UFC lightweight title contender Arman Tsarukyan at Hype Fighting in Yerevan, Armenia. After years of training, this will be Ankit's first-ever professional fight making the stakes even higher as his debut comes directly in a championship bout against one of the world's top MMA athletes. It's an exceptionally rare opportunity for any debutant, let alone an Indian digital creator. The matchup is already attracting international attention, with leading combat sports publications such as MMAmania covering the announcement, signaling growing global interest in Ankit's crossover from creator to athlete. More than just a fight, the bout reflects a larger shift in the creator economy, where digital personalities are increasingly breaking into elite competitive sports.



Ryan Ten Doeschate, Days After Quitting Team India Job, Joins 3-Time IPL Winners KKR

Just a day after quitting his role as Team India's assistant coach, under head coach Gautam Gambhir, Ryan Ten Doeschate has joined 3-time Indian Premier League (IPL) winners Kolkata Knight Riders. Doeschate has joined the franchise as its Head of Cricket Strategy, marking his return to the Knight Riders family in a role that will oversee cricket strategy, talent acquisition and development across its global franchises. In a press release, the Knight Riders said: "Ryan will lead the strategic direction for scouting, player recruitment, squad planning and performance evaluation across the Knight Riders network. He will work closely with the coaching teams to help build a consistent cricketing philosophy and approach across all Knight Riders franchises. As part of his role, he will also serve as Assistant Coach for



Trinbago Knight Riders in the CPL, Abu Dhabi Knight Riders in the ILT20 and Los Angeles Knight Riders in the MLC." Venky Mysore, CEO, Knight Riders Sports, said on the appointment of Ten Doeschate: "We are delighted to welcome Tendo back to the Knight Riders family. His deep understanding of our philosophy, combined with his experience across franchise and international cricket, makes him ideally suited for this role.

He will help shape the next phase of growth across the Knight Riders ecosystem." Speaking of his decision to join the Knight Riders, Ten Doeschate said: "I'm excited to be back with the Knight Riders in this role. This is a unique opportunity to work with the coaching & analytics teams across our global franchises to strengthen our scouting/player development systems, and to build a long-term cricket strategy."

"If I Execute Well, Result Will Follow": Indian Distance Runner Parul Chaudhary Ahead Of Commonwealth Games 2026



Asian Games medallist and India's leading female distance runner, Parul Chaudhary, is carrying confidence gained from recent performances in international and domestic competitions to the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow, hoping to achieve success in women's 5000m and the 3000m steeplechase. Over the last few years, Parul has emerged as one of India's

leading distance runners, consistently raising the bar in both of her favourite disciplines by banking on her strong performances and valuable international experience. An Asian Games champion, multiple-time national

record holder and Olympian, Parul remains focused on one thing-executing her race well. "Every race is different, so I don't think too much about the result beforehand. My job is to stick to the race plan, stay patient and give my best in every lap. If I execute well, the result will follow," she said. Distance running is a sport that demands years of consistent work, and Parul believes that strong support systems play an important role in helping athletes sustain that journey.

CWG 2026: Sajan Prakash Fails To Qualify For 200m Freestyle Finals



Seasoned Indian swimmer Sajan Prakash failed to qualify for the men's 200m freestyle finals at the Commonwealth Games, signing off a disappointing fifth in his heat and 20th overall in Glasgow on Wednesday. Only the eight fastest swimmers advance to the final and Sajan was way off the mark at 1:51.99 seconds. His personal best and the National Record stands at 1:46.61 seconds. The 32-year-old finished behind debutant compatriot Aneesh Gowda, who too failed to move ahead with a timing of 1:51.64 seconds. Gowda's performance was marginal improvement on his personal best of 1:51.88secs but it was never going to be enough as the fastest time recorded was 1:45.69sec by England's James Guy. The slowest qualifier was another

Englishman, Thomas Dean, who clocked 1:47.46sec. In the para swimming competition, Chaitanya Vishwas Kulkarni and Suyash Narayan Jadhav entered the S7 50m freestyle finals. Kulkarni was fourth in the Heats at 32.77seconds, while Jadhav was sixth with a timing of 35.35sec. The S7 classification is for swimmers with limited leg function. Earlier, Sajan Prakash had failed to qualify for the men's 50m butterfly semifinals and the 200m butterfly events, continuing a poor run for the two-time Olympian. He has failed to touch his personal bests, which also happen to be national records, even once so far. Prasanta Karmakar remains the only Indian para swimmer to have ever won a medal at the Commonwealth Games -- a bronze in the 50m freestyle S9 para event at 2010 Delhi CWG. S9 classification covers athletes with amputations and spinal restrictions.

'Don't Want To Fight Anymore': Neymar Confirms International Football Retirement

Brazil's all-time leading scorer Neymar has officially confirmed his retirement from international football, bringing the curtain down on a career that spanned more than 16 years with the national team. The 34-year-old gave an update on the decision after Santos secured a 4-2 victory over Venezuela's Universidad Central in the Copa Sudamericana, ending speculation over his international future following Brazil's exit from the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Brazil's campaign ended in the Round of 16 after a defeat to Norway, with Neymar making what turned out to be his final appearance for the five-time world champions. The veteran forward said he leaves the national

team with no regrets, insisting he had always given everything while representing his country. "My time with the national team is over. I made history, I was very happy, I gave my blood, my life, I always fought for the yellow jersey, but now I don't want to anymore," Neymar said after the match as quoted by Goal.com The announcement marks the end of one of the most decorated international careers in Brazilian football. Neymar finishes as Brazil's all-time leading goalscorer and represented the country in multiple FIFA World Cups, Copa America tournaments and Olympic competitions. Attention has now shifted fully to his club career with Santos, where

he also addressed recent reports claiming he had criticised and intimidated younger teammates in the dressing room following a league match. The former Brazil captain dismissed those reports, saying his comments after the game were aimed only at demanding higher standards from the team. "It is sad and annoying, but it is not my fault. These stories reach a lot of people," Neymar said. "I spoke after the match, demanded better, and said we could not afford to be so careless. You cannot give away a draw like that. As captain, I have every right to say that. Lucas Verissimo and Gabigol also spoke to the players," he added. Despite the off-field speculation, Neymar

played his part in Santos' 4-2 win over Universidad Central, helping the Brazilian club advance to the Round of 16 of the Copa Sudamericana, where they will face Ecuadorian side Macara. "I think my time with the national team has already passed. I made history there, and I'm very happy about it. I experienced a lot there, gave my blood and my life, and always fought and battled for the yellow jersey. But I don't think I want it anymore," he told reporters.



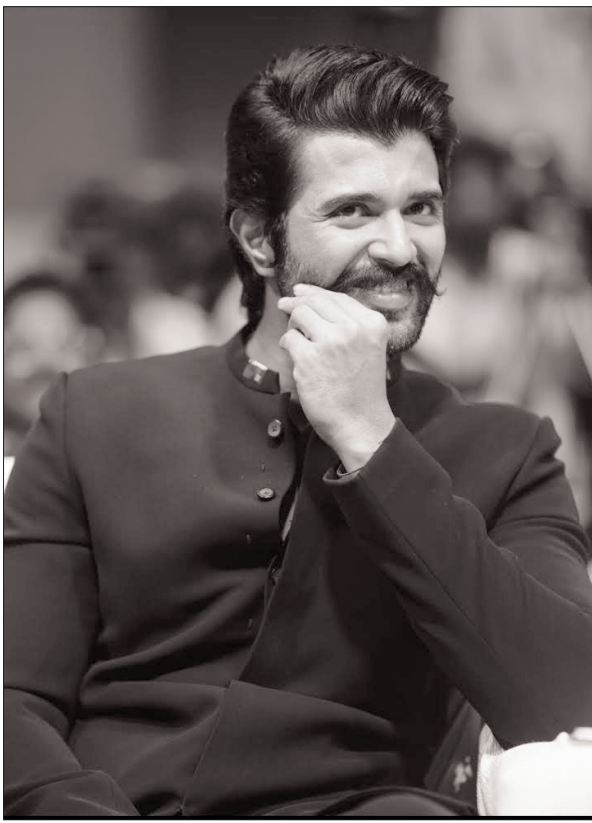
VIJAY DEVERAKONDA COMPLETES 10 GLORIOUS YEARS IN TFI

Actor Vijay Deverakonda has completed a remarkable 10-year journey as a solo hero in Telugu cinema. His first film as a lead actor, Pelli Chooopulu, was released on this day in 2016. Although he had already earned recognition for his performance in Evade Subramanyam, it was Pelli Chooopulu that marked his debut as a solo lead. The film became a major box office success, winning both critical acclaim and the love of audiences. From that point onwards, Vijay never had to look back. Over the years, he has delivered several successful films, including Arjun Reddy, Geetha Govindam,

Taxiwaala, Kushi, Family Star, and Kingdom, establishing himself as one of the leading stars of Indian cinema. He also made a special appearance as Arjuna in Prabhas' Kalki 2898 AD. By taking on ambitious projects, Vijay has played his part in expanding the reach of Telugu cinema across India. Starting his career without any film background and rising to become a major star through sheer determination, Vijay's journey continues to inspire countless aspiring actors. His decade-long career has been marked by both triumphs and setbacks, along with immense appreciation and criticism, making it one

of the most dynamic and versatile careers among contemporary actors. Apart from acting, Vijay has also found success as an entrepreneur through his Rowdy Wear fashion brand. Through The Deverakonda Foundation, he has been actively supporting underprivileged and middle-class families. Recently, the foundation awarded scholarships to 180 talented students from economically weaker sections in Mahabubnagar district. His efforts reflect not only his growth as a star but also his commitment to giving back to

society. Vijay is currently working on three exciting projects. He is starring in Rowdy Janardhan, directed by Ravikiran Kola and produced by Dil Raju and Shirish, which is scheduled for release in December. He is also playing the lead in Ranabali, directed by Rahul Sankrityan and produced by Mythri Movie Makers in association with T-Series. The pan-India project is set to release on September 11. Another highly anticipated film in his lineup is being produced by Vyra Entertainments and directed by Shouryuv, featuring several renowned Hollywood technicians.



FARRHANA BHATT'S HYDERABAD VISIT CONFIRMED



Farrhana Bhatt is currently one of the most talked-about faces on Indian television. Hailing from Srinagar, the reality star shot to nationwide fame with her fearless and outspoken personality on Bigg Boss 19, earning the tag of a true "Sherni" and building a massive fan base across the country. Her popularity has only grown further after joining Khatron Ke Khiladi 15, and now fans in Hyderabad have a reason to celebrate. The reality TV sensation is all set to visit the city for an exclusive meet-and-greet event this

September.

Farrhana Bhatt to visit Hyderabad expo

Farrhana Bhatt has been announced as the chief guest for SheGlam Expo Season 3, a lifestyle exhibition that brings together fashion, beauty, shopping and entertainment under one roof. The organisers have revealed that Farrhana will meet fans on September 26 at King's Crown Convention, Gudimalkapur, where visitors will get an opportunity to interact with the reality star while enjoying the two-day exhibition.

Aadarsha Kutumbam House No: 47 – AK47 Introduces a New Character: Sampoorna



After the terrific response to Venkatesh as Chittibabu and Srinidhi Shetty as Swarna, the makers of Aadarsha Kutumbam House No: 47 – AK47 have now introduced the next member of the family. Yuvina Parthavi steps into the role of Sampoorna, the adorable daughter, whose playful antics seem to bring plenty of fun and trouble into Chittibabu's life. With the character introduction campaign contin-

uing to build excitement, the makers will next unveil Raja Prajwal as Sarwa. Written and directed by Trivikram Srinivas and produced by S. Radha Krishna (Chinababu) under Haarika & Hassine Creations, the film features music by S. Thaman, cinematography by Ravi K. Chandran, and editing by Sreekar Prasad. Aadarsha Kutumbam House No: 47 – AK47 is all set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on October 2, 2026.



Aamir Khan threat case: Sweden VPN, audio note and 'love jihad'

As per the latest update in the Aamir Khan threat case, police sources revealed that a Sweden-based VPN was allegedly used to send the viral threatening audio message received by the actor. Police authorities are now examining the digital trail to trace the person behind the message. According to sources, the threatening audio message was allegedly linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. In the clip, a person claiming to be Arzu Bishnoi allegedly made remarks against Aamir Khan and accused him of promoting "love jihad," claiming it was against Indian culture and Sanatan Dharma. The audio message further contained a threat to "teach Aamir

Khan a lesson."

Police have not registered an FIR in the case so far. Sources said that officials are working to identify the person responsible for sending the message. As part of the investigation, police officials reportedly traced the initial IP address to Sweden. However, authorities suspect that the actual location may have been concealed as the message was allegedly sent using a VPN and Tor browser. The use of such tools can make it difficult to identify the original source of an online activity, and investigators are now analyzing available digital evidence to trace the sender. On July 18, Aamir Khan allegedly received a threat from individuals claiming links to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang through a purported social media post. The alleged threats were issued by people identified as Arzu Bishnoi and Tyson Bishnoi.

ZEE5 Unveils Its Biggest Multilingual Slate Yet Across Seven Languages; ZEE5 Telugu Unveils a Power-Packed Slate of Premium Originals, Marquee Films and Fan-Favourite Shows



Reinforcing its commitment to delivering premium Telugu entertainment, ZEE5 Telugu has unveiled an exciting line-up of original series, returning audience favourites and highly anticipated films as part of ZEE5's biggest multilingual content slate yet. Spanning Hindi, Tamil, Telugu,

Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada and Bangla, the ambitious slate reflects the platform's continued commitment to bringing bold, culturally rooted and compelling stories to audiences across India. Further strengthening its language-first strategy, ZEE5 Telugu continues to champion

authentic Telugu storytelling with a diverse mix of premium originals, marquee films and beloved returning formats. Leading the slate is Shrimathi, starring Nivetha Thomas, alongside the gripping courtroom drama Objection Mylord, headlined by Srikanth.

IRUMUDI THEATRICAL RELEASE IN 25 DAYS ON AUGUST 21, ANNOUNCED THROUGH A BEAUTIFUL POSTER



Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja's much-awaited emotional family entertainer Irumudi, directed by Shiva Nirvana and produced by Mythri

Movie Makers, continues to build strong anticipation. After winning hearts with i t s

impactful first glimpse and the chartbuster Ayyappa devotional song Irumudi Kattu, the film has now arrived with another important update. Putting an end to all speculation surrounding its release, the makers have officially confirmed that Irumudi will hit theatres worldwide on August 21, as originally planned. The announcement was made with a beautiful and heartwarming 25 Days To Go poster, reassuring movie buffs that there has been no change in the film's release schedule.



TOM HOLLAND SAYS PLAYING SPIDER-MAN HAS BEEN A GIFT OF HIS LIFE

Los Angeles: Tom Holland is returning as the Spider-Man for a fourth time with "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" and the actor hopes that he will get to have more adventures as the web casting superhero. The new movie is set four years after the events of "Spider-Man: No Way Home" where Peter requested Dr Strange to make his identity as Spider-Man a secret again and erase him from everyone's memory, including his girlfriend MJ and best friend Ned. "There's a family here at Marvel and Sony. We've been making these movies for 10 years and we're all really good friends and we all still really love

working with together and there's a shorthand, there's a collaboration, there is a shared love for this character that is Peter Parker. When we all get together, it always feels like something magical happens, and to get to do it time and time again is something that will never really sink in for me. It still feels like this is my first-ever premiere for this character. It has been the gift of my life," Holland told the Hollywood Reporter.

Asked about his future as the superhero, Holland said, "I will do it for as long as they'll have me. So if this movie does good, I guess we'll see!" "Brand New Day" is expected to be one of the biggest movies of

the year and comes close on the heels of another blockbuster starring Holland, Christopher Nolan's "The Odyssey". Holland plays Telemachus in the movie with Zendaya playing Athena. "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" releases on Friday. Asked about his future as the superhero, Holland said, "I will do it for as long as they'll have me. So if this movie does good, I guess we'll see!"

RICHA CHADHA ANNOUNCES YOUTUBE SERIES 'MUSAFIRI'

Actor and producer Richa Chadha is set to feature in a non-fiction YouTube series "Musafiri". The travel based series is set to release in August and will be another project under the actor's banner, Pushing Buttons Studios, according to a press release. Blending travel, culture and conversations, the show will have the actor explore destinations while uncovering the stories, history, traditions and people of the places.

