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SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

18-07-2026

Total pilgrims : 90,045
Tonsures : 38,573
Hundi kankabali : 4,06 CR
Laddu sale : 473 Lac
Annasprasadam : 3,10 Lac
Medical treatment : 3,616
Waiting Compartments : Out side line @ Silathogam.

Approva. Daran Time for Saravandhanam

(with out SSD) Tonsure : 24 H.

11 dead, seven missing as flash floods batter J&K

Jammu, Jul 19: At least 11 people were killed and seven others remain missing after flash floods and landslides triggered by heavy rainfall caused widespread devastation in the border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. Continuous rain since Saturday night triggered landslides, house collapses and overflowing rivers, leaving several villages cut off and damaging roads. Rescue teams have launched extensive operations to trace the missing and evacuate stranded residents. Officials said Surankote teshil in Poonch district was the worst-affected area, accounting for most of the fatalities. One of the worst incidents occurred in Lower Murrah village, where a landslide caused a house to collapse. Five members of a family, including two-year-old Sofian Yasar, were killed, while rescue teams continued searching for the remaining missing occupants. In Sangla village, flash floods swept away another house, leaving four members of a family missing. They have been identified as Abdul Hameed, his wife Sharifa Begum, daughter Aareba and sister Manira Begum. Twenty-eight-year-old Nazia Kousar was killed when her house collapsed in Noonabandi village. Her husband and three young children sustained injuries and were admitted to hospital.

Wangchuk under close medical care after prolonged fast



New Delhi (TSIT): Activist Sonam Wangchuk is undergoing required medical intervention at Safdarjung Hospital in New Delhi, where a multidisciplinary team of specialists is closely monitoring his condition. Although his vital signs are stable, his blood parameters remain marginally altered due to the physiological stress and systemic effects of prolonged fasting, the hospital said on Sunday. The update comes a day after the hospital stated that Wangchuk had refused intravenous fluids, oral rehydration solution and all medications despite repeated counselling by the treating team and an independent expert from AIIMS. The hospital had also said his family was yet to provide consent for the recommended medical intervention. Wangchuk was taken to Safdarjung Hospital by the Delhi Police on Saturday, the 21st day of his hunger strike.

Students must learn one additional Indian language besides mother tongue: HM Amit Shah

Kolkata (TSIT):

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday urged students to learn at least one additional Indian language besides their mother tongue to appreciate the country's diversity.

"The language diversity in India carries the rich heritage of the country. Only through language can one understand a nation's culture. Hence, it is necessary for every student to learn at least one additional Indian language besides his or her own mother tongue," Shah said while addressing a gathering at the inauguration of the Museum of Word at the National Library campus in Kolkata.

Speaking on the occasion, Shah said the Museum of Word is a new feather in Kolkata's crown. Its largest gallery is the 'Timeline of Languages'.



"This museum will showcase the evolution of 22 Indian languages. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the creation of this museum in 2020. It has been created as per his instructions and plans. There is no place for narrow-mindedness in our country. Narrow-mindedness cannot be the identity of Indian culture. We cannot create obstacles in anyone's way of judging," the Union Home Minister said. Also present on the occasion was West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, who said the current Union

Government was placing special emphasis on establishing the Bengali language in its full dignity and making it more widely recognised globally.

The first phase of the museum, which is being built under the Union Ministry of Culture, cost around Rs 14 crore. The total cost of the entire project is estimated at around Rs 41 crore. There are nine galleries, each showcasing the history of Indian languages from a different perspective. Each gallery features a collection of preserved words, ancient manuscripts, inscriptions, documents on the evolution of various scripts, and interactive presentations of language development using modern digital technology. Visitors will get the opportunity to see thousands of years of linguistic evolution under one roof.

Chalo Sansad eve:

Jantar Mantar comes alive as nearly 20,000 gather

New Delhi (TSIT):

Ahead of the Cockroach Janta Party's proposed march to Parliament on Monday, July 20, to press for education reforms, political leaders, actors and common people thronged the protest site at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

CJP chief spokesperson Saurav Das claimed that nearly 20,000 people were "at and around Jantar Mantar" even before the scheduled mobilisation. In a post on X, Das said, "20,000 people are at and around Jantar Mantar. And it's not even July 20 yet. Dharmendra Pradhan — your day of reckoning is here." CJP members shared photographs and videos on social media showing the protest site



packed with supporters, claiming people from different parts of the country had begun arriving for Monday's mobilisation.

They expressed apprehension over possible police action ahead of Monday's march. It appealed to protesters not to respond to any provocation and to ensure the march remained peaceful. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke,

addressing supporters through a video message, urged them to remain at Jantar Mantar through the night, saying their presence was essential to ensure the Parliament march proceeded peacefully. "Our protest is going on. Please come here in large numbers. Stay here for the night. If you don't come, they will try to end the protest," he said.

Telangana govt inspects private universities under SC order

Hyderabad (TSIT):

A committee appointed by the Telangana government to inspect private universities in compliance with the Supreme Court order is visiting and thoroughly inspecting every private university in the state. The committee, chaired by the Commissioner of Collegiate Education (CCE), comprises the Secretary of the Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE) as the Convener; the Registrar of JNTU as the Member-Convener; and the Registrar of Palamuru University, the Chief Finance and Accounts Officer of Osmania



University, and the Assistant Director (Academic-C) from the Department of Technical Education as members.

The state government has also authorised the committee to appoint a subject expert if deemed necessary. This committee is visiting and thoroughly inspecting every private university in the state, focusing on the nine

specific aspects mandated by the Supreme Court.

According to a statement by the Chief Minister's Office, the Supreme Court has turned its attention to the underlying motives behind the proliferation of private universities and the actual objectives of the institutions or individuals establishing them. It is also examining

the educational qualifications of the faculty teaching at these universities. After reviewing numerous complaints brought to its notice during the hearing of the Ayesha Jain vs. Union of India case, the Supreme Court ordered inspections of private universities across the country.

Noting the arbitrary manner in which private universities often operate, the Court directed state governments to thoroughly inspect every aspect, from the intent behind their establishment to the quality of education provided, and to submit affidavits detailing comprehensive information.

Hyderabad (TSIT):

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has once again asked all the party leaders to focus on the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and warned that negligence will not be tolerated.

During a virtual meeting on SIR on Sunday, he directed the leaders to remain on the field to monitor the SIR process to ensure that the voting rights of all genuine voters are protected.

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Mahesh Goud, State Party Affairs In-charge Meenakshi Natarajan, AICC Secretary Sachin Sawant, ministers, MLAs, MLCs, MPs, constituency in-charges, and SIR coordinators attended the meeting. The Chief



Minister said ministers, MLAs, in-charges, corporation chairpersons, and party in-charges appointed for the SIR process must go to the field. Stating that ministers-in-charge must fully supervise the SIR process, he remarked that the ultimate responsibility lies with them.

He said PCC President Mahesh Goud and Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka must take greater responsibility in coordinating the ministers-in-charge, MLAs, and

party in-charges.

The Chief Minister said that with the deadline for SIR being extended to August 3, this should be viewed as an opportunity.

He announced that on Monday, 10 in-charge ministers will conduct review meetings on SIR across all districts. The Chief Minister said MPs must conduct regular reviews, even while attending Parliament sessions. He said that strict action will be taken if MPs fail to perform their duties in the

areas where they are acting as in-charges.

He said those designated as SIR in-charges for the party must ensure constant coordination.

He noted that a total of 489 meetings regarding SIR have been conducted by the Congress party across the 119 constituencies. The Chief Minister said that immediate action is required, especially in constituencies that are lagging. He said that some leaders are merely staying in Hyderabad and not actively working. The CM asked the party leaders not to roam around Gandhi Bhavan (state Congress headquarters) seeking chairman posts or party positions, saying appointments will not be granted to such individuals. He said leaders should not visit Gandhi Bhavan from Monday till August 3. A comprehensive review meeting will be held again on July 30, where reports will be collected on an Assembly-

CM SHIVAKUMAR PRIORITISES DRINKING WATER, SEEKS CENTRAL ASSISTANCE

Bengaluru (TSIT)

Karnataka Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Sunday said the state was facing an alarming rainfall deficit, with reservoir levels dropping sharply. He directed officials to treat drinking water security as the top priority while preparing for a possible drought declaration and seeking



Central assistance. Chairing a special Cabinet meeting followed by a nearly

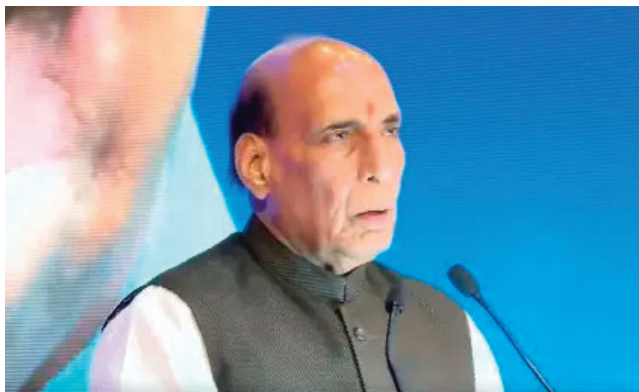
four-hour review with deputy commissioners, zilla panchayat chief executive officers and senior officials from multiple departments, Shivakumar said rainfall was nearly 60 per cent below normal in large parts of the state and instructed the administration to intensify field-level drought management measures.

Centre in talks with stakeholders on social media curbs for kids

New Delhi (TSIT):

The Centre is holding consultations with stakeholders on possible safeguards for children on social media, including proposals to restrict access for users under 16, Electronics & IT Secretary S. Krishnan said. Krishnan said India is closely studying global developments before deciding on its own approach.

Zero tolerance is action, not just a statement: Rajnath Singh highlights defence reforms after Op Sindoor



New Delhi (TSIT) Calling Operation Sindoor a defining demonstration of India's modern military capability, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said the operation reflected the country's transformed defence preparedness, built over the past 12 years under the government's "Nation First" and "Forces First" approach.

Addressing an event here, Singh said the operation not only showcased the Indian Armed Forces' operational prowess but also highlighted the growing strength of indigenous defence manufacturing and technological self-reliance.

"Operation Sindoor is testimony to India's up-to-date, up-to-the-mark, and up-to-the-standard defence preparedness, sharpened by the transformation of the defence sector through sustained efforts over the last 12 years," he said. Describing the operation as a reminder of the "unmatched valour" of

the armed forces, he asserted that it reflected the government's uncompromising policy of zero tolerance against terrorism.

The Defence Minister said the operation proved that India possesses the capability to strike terrorists not only at its borders but also at their bases. He added that advanced indigenous systems, including the Akash Teer air defence control system, the Akash missile system and the BrahMos super-sonic cruise missile, were effectively deployed alongside other state-of-the-art military equipment during the operation.

Singh said the success of Operation Sindoor underscored the government's sustained investment in indigenous defence capabilities and demonstrated the confidence placed in Indian industry. According to him, the technological sophistication displayed during the operation was the outcome

of reforms undertaken over the past decade to modernise the armed forces while reducing dependence on imported equipment.

Highlighting the government's push for self-reliance, the Defence Minister said five positive indigenisation lists issued by the armed forces now cover 509 defence items, while Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) have notified five additional lists containing 5,012 items. He announced that another positive indigenisation list would be released soon to further accelerate domestic manufacturing.

The minister said the government had replaced what he termed an "outdated mindset" favouring imports with a policy focused on indigenous development. He described self-reliance in defence as one of the most significant reforms undertaken by the Narendra Modi government, saying India had transitioned "from dependency to self-reliance and from being a consumer to becoming a producer."

Emphasising that military strength also depends on a country's ability to sustain itself during crises, Singh said strategic autonomy cannot be achieved if a nation relies heavily on imports for weapons, ammunition, missiles, drones, radars and navigation systems.

CM VIJAY HAILS TAMIL CINEMA’S NATIONAL AWARDS SWEEP

CHENNAI: Hailing the Tamil film industry for securing 10 awards at the 72nd National Film Awards, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Sunday expressed confidence that the industry would continue to earn greater recognition.

South Indian cinema bags honours at 72nd National Film Awards; Dhanush, 'Amaran' among big winners

In a government release, the Chief Minister congratulated Tamil film personalities on this historic feat, as the film fraternity hadn't reached the double-digit mark at the national level in recent years.

Chief Minister Vijay extended his congratulations to all the award winners and said the recognition reflected the creative excellence and enduring strength of the State's film



industry.

The Chief Minister noted that the Dhanush-starrer Raayan, directed by the actor, was adjudged the Best Tamil Feature Film. The release also pointed out that Captain Miller won the Best Film Promoting National, Social and Environmental Values award, while actor

Dhanush received the Special Jury Award for Best Actor for his performance in the film.

Rajkumar Periasamy was named Best Director for Amaran. R Kalaivanan won the award for Best Editing, while G V Prakash Kumar secured the Best Background Score honour for the same

film; the release added, sharing CM Vijay's confidence in the industry's capabilities.

CM Vijay also praised the filmmakers of Maharaja, as Anal Arasu was recognised with the Best Action Direction award, and Sachana Namidass received the Best Supporting Actress award. G Suren was honoured with the Special Jury Award for Best Sound Mixing for Meiyazhagan, while TS Harihara Sudhan won the Best Sound Design award for the short film Blue, the release pointed out.

“Winning 10 National Film Awards is a proud achievement for Tamil cinema. I congratulate all the artists and technicians and wish the industry many more such laurels in the years ahead,” CM Vijay said.

Bhadradri Co-operative Urban Bank Crosses Rs.1,000 Crore Business Milestone

TUMMALA NAGESWARA RAO ATTENDS 29TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AS CHIEF GUEST

Khammam, July 19: Bhadradri Co-operative Urban Bank achieved a major milestone by crossing the Rs.1,000 crore business mark for the first time in its history, Chairman Cherukuri Krishnamurthy announced during the bank's 29th Annual General Meeting held at Vasavi Kalyana Mandapam in Dabala Bazaar, Khammam, on Sunday.

The meeting was attended by a large number of shareholders and dignitaries. Telangana Minister for Agriculture, Marketing and Cooperation Tummala Nageswara Rao attended as the chief guest, while Khammam District Collector Divakara T. S. (IAS) was the guest of honour.

Presenting the annual report and budget for the financial year 2025-26, Chairman Cherukuri Krishnamurthy said the bank had recorded total business exceeding Rs.1,000 crore, setting a new benchmark in its three-decade journey. He said the bank now holds around 5 percent of the total business of cooperative banks in Telangana.



As of March 31, 2026, the bank's deposits stood at Rs.629.06 crore, while advances reached Rs.401.10 crore. During the financial year, the bank earned a net profit of Rs.151.39 lakh, reflecting its strong financial performance and efficient loan recovery.

The chairman also highlighted the bank's rapid expansion, stating that

four new branches were opened during the year, including its first-ever branch in Hyderabad. With this expansion, the bank now operates 25 branches across nine districts of Telangana. He added that the institution has entered its 30th year of service with the support and trust of 21,849 shareholders.

Former DMK Minister rejects corruption allegations, dares TVK Minister to produce evidence

MADURAI: Challenging Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam (TVK) Energy and Law Minister T Nirmal Kumar over his repeated corruption allegations against him in connection with the Registration Department, former Registration Minister P Moorthy on Sunday asked the Minister to substantiate his claims with evidence.

Addressing a press conference in Madurai, Mr. Moorthy challenged Mr. Nirmal Kumar to produce proof for his allegation that he had received a 20 per cent commission from illegal property registrations.

“There are 589 Registration Offices in Tamil Nadu. Every Registration Office maintains records. If the Law Minister claims that I interfered in any registration or received a 20 per cent commission, let him produce evidence and identify the Registration Office, the officials involved and the transaction concerned,” Mr. Moorthy said.

“The only reason I am responding today is that if someone repeats a false



allegation ten times, people may begin to believe it is true. I have only one request to him—prove it with evidence,” he said.

Mr. Moorthy alleged that instead of explaining what the present government had achieved during its first 60 days in office, the Law Minister Nirmal Kumar was repeatedly referring to the previous five years under the DMK government and alleging that illegal registrations had taken place during that period. “I openly state that during my five years as Registration Minister, I never instructed even a single Sub-Registrar to register any property in violation of the law,” he said, adding that if there

had been isolated instances of wrongdoing, departmental authorities would have taken action against the officials concerned.

Referring to the Rs.100-crore Palani temple land registration case, Mr. Moorthy claimed that temple properties cannot legally be registered because they listed as prohibited properties in the Registration Department's records.

“Whether it is temple land, government land, waterbody poramboke land, Waqf Board property or any other prohibited property, registration cannot be carried out because the government has flagged it (as prohibited) in the sub-registrar office,” he said.

Grand Bonalu Celebrations Held at Hyderabad City Civil Court



Hyderabad, July 19: The traditional Bonalu festival, one of Telangana's most revered cultural and spiritual celebrations, was observed with great devotion and grandeur at the Hyderabad City Civil Court on Sunday.

City Civil Court Chief Judge Shashidhar Reddy attended the celebrations as the chief guest and offered special prayers to Goddess Mahankali, praying for the well-being, peace, and prosperity of all.

Several dignitaries also participated in the festivities, including National Secretary S.V. Subbayya, State General Secretary

Veerababu, Central Nazir Sai Kumar, Krishna Yadav, Varma, Naresh Yadav, Uday, Manish, Shravan, and Smt. Sandhya, who joined devotees in offering special prayers to the Goddess.

Judicial officers and court staff from civil courts across Hyderabad and Secunderabad took part in the celebrations in large numbers. The court premises echoed with traditional fervour as participants celebrated the festival with devotion, reflecting Telangana's rich cultural heritage and strengthening the spirit of unity and faith among the judiciary and court employees.

Tamil Nadu plans major expansion of govt nursing education with 1,500 new seats

Chennai, Jul 18: The Tamil Nadu government has announced plans to substantially expand nursing education by adding nearly 1,500 B.Sc. Nursing seats in government medical colleges from the next academic year, aiming to make healthcare education more affordable and strengthen the state's medical workforce.

The initiative is intended to improve access to professional nursing courses while meeting the rising demand for qualified healthcare professionals across the country.

Currently, six government medical colleges in the state offer 510 B.Sc. Nursing seats, with students paying an annual tuition fee of ₹13,750. In contrast, private institutions charge fees that can reach ₹1.20 lakh per year, making government colleges the preferred choice for many aspiring students.

Officials said the expansion follows repeated requests from students and parents seeking more affordable government nursing seats. The move is expected to ease financial pressures on families



while opening up greater opportunities for candidates pursuing careers in nursing. The government has also decided to revive earlier proposals to strengthen nursing and pharmacy education that had remained pending. Plans are now in place to introduce B.Sc. Nursing programmes in 14 government medical colleges across Tamil Nadu.

Medical colleges in Vellore, Tiruvannamalai, Dharmapuri, Tirunelveli, Tiruchirappalli, Namakkal, and several other districts have been identified for the expansion. According to officials from the Directorate of

Medical Education, the government has instructed the department to increase admissions not only in nursing but also across various paramedical courses alongside undergraduate medical and dental programmes.

The objective is to build a larger pool of skilled nurses and allied healthcare professionals to support the state's growing healthcare requirements.

Along with the nursing expansion, the government is planning to introduce over 700 additional pharmacy seats under the same programme, further boosting opportunities in healthcare education.

Many liver disease patients quit alcohol after diagnosis, but relapses common: Study

Copenhagen, Jul 19: A diagnosis of alcohol-related liver disease (ALD) prompts many patients to significantly reduce or stop drinking, but more than one-third relapse within three months, according to a new observational study.

The findings highlight a crucial opportunity for doctors to encourage behavioural change soon after diagnosis while underscoring the need for structured long-term support. Alcohol-related liver disease is caused by prolonged harmful alcohol consumption, with continued drinking being the primary factor driving disease progression.

Researchers found that although many patients reported reducing alcohol intake immediately after diagnosis, blood biomarker testing showed actual abstinence rates were



lower than those indicated through self-reporting. The study, conducted between 2021 and 2025 at Zealand University Hospital in Denmark, screened 299 newly diagnosed ALD patients, of whom 104 met the study criteria.

Participants underwent interviews regarding their current and previous alco-

hol consumption, motivation to reduce drinking and confidence in remaining abstinent. Researchers also measured phosphatidylethanol (PEth), a blood biomarker used to assess alcohol consumption, before monitoring participants for 90 days.

The participants had a median age of 64 years, with 76 per cent being

men, while 30 per cent had decompensated cirrhosis.

In the five years before diagnosis, 76 per cent reported consuming at least 20 alcoholic drinks a week after nearly three decades of increasing alcohol use. Following diagnosis, that proportion fell to 24 per cent, while 56 per cent reported complete abstinence.

However, PEth testing indicated that only 37 per cent of patients were actually abstinent.

Among those who had stopped drinking at the start of the study, 37 per cent resumed alcohol consumption within 90 days.

Researchers found that patients who maintained abstinence were generally more motivated to change, had greater confidence in their ability to avoid alcohol and recorded lower baseline PEth levels. The severity of liver disease

and Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) scores did not significantly predict abstinence after three months.

The researchers said the findings indicate that the period immediately after an ALD diagnosis offers a critical opportunity for intervention, as many patients are willing to change their drinking habits. However, the high relapse rate also suggests that motivation alone may not be sufficient to maintain long-term abstinence. The study recommends integrating structured treatment for alcohol use disorder into liver care services. The researchers noted that the study was observational, relied partly on self-reported alcohol consumption alongside biomarker testing and involved a relatively small sample size.

H&M opens its first store in Visakhapatnam

THE LAUNCH MARKS THE BRAND'S 74TH STORE IN INDIA



Visakhapatnam July 2026: H&M has opened its first store in Visakhapatnam, further strengthening its presence in India. Located at Inorbit Mall, Port Quarters, the new store marks H&M's 74th store in the country - bringing fashion and qual-

ity at the best price, in a sustainable way, closer to customers in the city.

Located on the ground floor, the new store offers a modern shopping experience featuring H&M's full range of collections across clothing and accessories for women, men and chil-

dren. Inaugurating the store, Helena Kuylenstierna, Director, H&M India, said “We're pleased to open our first ever store in Visakhapatnam, marking another milestone in our journey to strengthen our presence across India. We look forward to connecting with the city's growing community of fashion aspirers and continuing our mission of liberating fashion for the many.” With this opening, H&M continues to build on its growth momentum in India, expanding its footprint across key cities through its network of stores and its online platform: www.hm.com.

Andhra Pradesh Aims to Emerge as a Global Wedding Destination: Minister Kandula Durgesh



Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Andhra Pradesh Tourism and Culture Minister Kandula Durgesh has said that the State Government is committed to transforming Andhra Pradesh into a global wedding destination by leveraging its diverse natural landscapes and tourism potential. Speaking at the International Wedding and Tourism Conclave

held in Jaipur, Rajasthan, the Minister held key meetings with leading international wedding planners and event organizers to showcase the opportunities available in Andhra Pradesh's tourism sector. Durgesh stated that wedding tourism has immense potential to boost the State's economy, promote tourism, and generate large-scale employment opportuni-

ties. He assured investors that the Andhra Pradesh Government would provide all necessary support, including approvals through a single-window clearance system, to facilitate investments in the wedding tourism sector. Highlighting the State's unique attractions, the Minister said Andhra Pradesh offers a wide range of natural beauty, making it an ideal destination for various types of weddings. He noted that Visakhapatnam's scenic coastline is well-suited for world-class beach weddings, while Tirupati is emerging as a hub for traditional and spiritual wedding ceremonies with the development of world-class hospitality infrastructure.

Pawan Kalyan Fulfils Promise to Tribal Communities; Development Works Worth Rs. 1 Cr Completed in Three Villages



Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Shri Pawan Kalyan has fulfilled the assurances he made to tribal communities during his visit to Ballagaruvu village in Ananthagiri mandal of Alluri Sitarama Raju district by completing development works worth nearly Rs.1 crore in three tribal villages. The development initiatives, undertaken in Ballagaruvu, Velagapadu and Koraparathi villages, include the construction of Anganwadi centres, drinking water facilities, CC roads, and renovation of school buildings. The projects were implemented with funds from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). During his earlier visit to Ballagaruvu,

the Deputy Chief Minister interacted with tribal residents and personally enquired about their problems. He observed the difficulties faced by women and children due to the lack of

proper Anganwadi infrastructure and assured the villagers that the government would address their basic needs. Acting on these assurances, the government con-

structed three Anganwadi buildings at a cost of Rs.55 lakh. New Anganwadi centres were built in Ballagaruvu and Velagapadu under the Panchayat Raj Engineering

Department, while a compound wall was constructed for the Anganwadi centre in Koraparathi with the support of the Tribal Welfare Engineering Department. In addition, the government undertook the renovation of the MPP school building in Koraparathi, installed a borewell and pipelines to provide drinking water, and laid CC roads in the villages. The initiatives are aimed at improving the quality of life of tribal communities in the region. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan reiterated that the coalition government is committed to the holistic development of tribal areas and will continue to prioritize the welfare and upliftment of tribal communities across the State.

Coalition Government Ensuring Financial Security for Employees' Families: Leaders at OPS

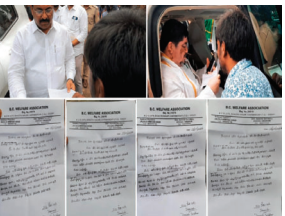


Visakhapatnam : Leaders of the ruling coalition on Sunday said that the Andhra Pradesh Government has ensured financial security for thousands of employees' families by implementing the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for eligible government staff. A thanksgiving meeting organized by employees who were shifted from the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) to the Old Pension Scheme was held at the Swarna Bharathi Indoor Stadium in Visakhapatnam. Thousands of employees from North Andhra districts attended the event along with their family members to express gratitude to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for implementing OPS. The programme was attended by Legislative Council Government Whip Dr. Vepada Chiranjeevi Rao, TDP State President and Gajuwaka MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao, Visakhapatnam East MLA Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu, Visakhapatnam North MLA Vishnu Kumar Raju, and MLCs Alapati Raja, Kancherla Srikanth, and Perabathula Rajasekar. Employees' associations, including the AP DSC Forum, Noble Teachers Association, PRTU, and APTF, performed a ceremonial milk abhishekam to a portrait of

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and raised slogans thanking him for fulfilling a long-pending demand of government employees. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Vepada Chiranjeevi Rao said that while employees retire, their families continue to depend on financial security. He stated that the implementation of OPS has benefited around 11,000 families across the State by providing pension, family pension, and gratuity benefits. He also said that the coalition government remains committed to employee welfare and called upon government staff and teachers to actively contribute to the State's development. He credited Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu with addressing long-standing issues of employees appointed under the 2004 notification but who joined service after 2004 due to technical reasons. TDP State President Palla Srinivasa Rao said employees and teachers play a vital role in implementing welfare and development programmes and urged them to support the government's efforts to build a prosperous Andhra Pradesh. Several employees shared their experiences during the meeting, expressing gratitude to the Chief Minister for restoring the Old Pension Scheme.

BC Welfare Association Demands BC Representative for SUDA Chairman Post

Karimnagar, July 19: District BC Welfare Association leader Doggali Sridhar has urged the Telangana Government to appoint a representative from the Backward Classes (BC) community as the Chairman of the SUDA. During the integrated review meeting of the undivided Karimnagar district on Sunday, Sridhar submitted a representation to District In-charge Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, IT Minister Duddilla Sridhar



Babu, and Welfare Minister Adluri Laxman.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that if internal party considerations required the appointment of another candidate, the post should be given to a deserving BC representative rather than the current chairman of the educational institutions.

Work in Mission Mode to Tackle El Niño: Minister

Karimnagar, July 19: Telangana Agriculture Minister and Karimnagar District In-charge Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao has directed officials to work in "mission mode" to minimise the impact of the anticipated El Niño-induced rainfall deficit and protect farmers and the public. Chairing a review meeting on the El Niño contingency action plan for the undivided Karimnagar district at the Karimnagar Collectorate on Sunday, the Minister called for coordinated efforts from elected repre-



sentatives and officials at every level, from ward members and panchayat secretaries to MPs and district collectors. The meeting was attended by Ministers Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Ponnam Prabhakar, and Adluri

Laxman Kumar, Government Whips Adi Srinivas and Chintakunta Vijaya Ramana Rao, MLAs, mayors, Special Chief Secretary Mahesh Dutt Ekka, Agriculture Secretary Surendra Mohan, district collectors,

Commissioners of Police, Superintendents of Police, agricultural scientists, and officials from the Irrigation, Groundwater, Electricity and other departments. During the meeting, officials reviewed water storage levels in reservoirs, groundwater availability, drinking water supply, alternative crop planning, promotion of low water-intensive crops, power supply, and farmer awareness programmes. District Collectors presented district-wise preparedness plans and contingency measures.

Hi-Fi Premier Cricket League to be Held in Visakhapatnam on IPL Lines

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) A Hi-Fi Premier Cricket League, modeled on the Indian Premier League (IPL), is set to be held in Visakhapatnam from July 29 to August 4 at the Railway Stadium. Organizers said the tournament will be conducted on a grand scale. The league trophy was unveiled at a ceremony held at Four Points Hotel on Sunday evening. The trophy was unveiled by AP Tours and Travels Association State President Kanneganti Vijay Mohan, Visakha Star Hotels Association President Pawan Karthik, Park Hotel General Manager Jaydeep Biswas, and Race Event Manager Dadi Ravi Kumar. Player auctions for the eight par-



ticipating teams were also conducted during the event. Members of the organizing committee, including M. Sandeep Kumar, Sharif Khan, P. Suresh Babu, and Santosh Kumar, said that this is the first-ever premier cricket league being organized for

the event industry in Visakhapatnam. A total of eight teams and over 150 players representing various segments of the event industry will participate in the tournament, which is expected to offer a blend of competitive cricket and entertainment.

Sakshatkara Vaibhavotsavams Conclude with Grand Garuda Vahanam at Srinivasamangapuram

Tirupati, July 19: The three-day annual Sakshatkara Vaibhavotsavams at the Sri Kalyana Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Srinivasamangapuram concluded on a grand and devotional note on Sunday with the Garuda Vahanam procession. On the final day, Lord Sri Kalyana Venkateswara Swamy, accompanied by Sridevi and Bhudevi, was taken in a majestic procession on Garuda Vahanam through the temple streets, blessing thousands of devotees who gathered to witness the celestial event. The day's rituals commenced with Suprabhatam, followed by Thomala Seva, Koluvu, Panchanga Sravanam,



and Sahasranamarchana. Later, Snapana Tirumanjanam was performed to the processionary deities in the Kalyana Mandapam between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. using milk, curd, honey, turmeric, sandalwood paste, and tender coconut water. A large number of devotees participated in the

sacred ceremony. In the evening, the Unjal Seva was performed, followed by the Garuda Vahanam procession at 7 p.m., marking the grand finale of the annual religious festival amid devotional fervour. The Paruveta Utsavam will be celebrated on July 20 at the Paruveta Mandapam near Srivari Mettu from 11 a.m., followed by a special Asthanam. Special Grade Deputy Executive Officer Smt. Varalakshmi, AEO Sri Gopinath, Superintendent Sri Raj Kumar, Temple Inspector Sri Muni Kumar, Arjitham Inspector Sri Dhana Sekhar, priests, temple officials, and a large number of devotees participated in the festivities.



His Holiness Sri Sri Varaha Mahadesikan (Andavan), Chief Pontiff of Srirangam Srimath Andavan Ashramam, offered prayers in Tirumala temple on Sunday.

TTD Extends Humanitarian Support to Families of HDPP Artists Killed in Line of Duty

Tirupati: Rs. 25,000 Immediate Funeral Aid, Rs. 5 Lakh Ex Gratia, Free Education for Children up to Degree Level Two private artists engaged by the Hindu Dharma Prachara Parishad (HDPP), TTD, for a Harikatha programme at the TTD temple in Satravada on Sunday morning, Sri K. Chakravarthi (Violin) and Sri K. Nagaraju Chetty (Tabla), were killed in a tragic road accident near Vadamalapeta-Pudi Cross while travelling to perform their assigned devotional service. Expressing deep con-



cern over the incident, which occurred while the artists were on duty, TTD Chairman Sri B.R. Naidu, Executive Officer Sri Muddada Ravichandra, and Joint Executive Officer Dr. A. Sharath approved immediate humanitari-

an assistance to the bereaved families. Accordingly, Rs. 25,000 has been provided to each family from HDPP funds towards funeral expenses. In addition, Rs. 5 lakh ex gratia has been sanctioned to each bereaved family. TTD

has also decided to provide free education up to the degree level in TTD educational institutions for the children of the deceased artists, if eligible. These humanitarian measures will be placed before the TTD Board for ratification.

Staff Shortage Hampers Food Safety Inspections in Karimnagars

Karimnagar, July 19: Concerns are mounting over the effectiveness of food safety enforcement in Karimnagar district, with consumer groups alleging that acute staff shortages have severely weakened inspections of adulterated and substandard food products, posing a risk to public health. According to available data, only around 1,450 food business establishments in the district hold valid food safety licences, while thousands of hotels, bakeries, grocery stores, fast-food centres, tea stalls, and other food outlets are operating. Many of these establishments are reportedly functioning without the mandatory licences required under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulations.



EDITORIAL

Garry Sobers: Quite Simply the Greatest

Sir Garfield St Aubren Sobers, who passed away on July 17 at the age of 89, was quite simply the greatest cricketer the world has ever seen. His was a multiple talent rolled into one. Any other description of him, including calling him ‘one of the great all-rounders’ is not only nonsense, but reeks of ignorance.

An all-time great batsman is one who averages above 50 after a substantial number of Test appearances. Similarly, an all-time great bowler is he who averages below 25, again, after a significant number of caps at the highest level of the game. Sobers achieved the former; and although he didn’t accomplish the latter, this was partially because the West Indies’ burgeoning bowling strength reduced the burden with the leather on him. That notwithstanding, he proceeded to become the first all-rounder to capture 200 wickets in tests. He could swing the ball at high velocity, bowl left-arm orthodox as well as a wrist spin. A cricketer is incomplete unless he is also a capable fielder. In this respect, Sobers was brilliant anywhere, albeit most conspicuously at short-leg to Lance Gibbs’ off-spin. In the riot-marred 1966-67 test match at the Eden Gardens, an Indian batsman edged a ball skyward to thirdman. Sobers, fielding in the slip cordon, appeared to glance at his colleagues as if to check if any of them was going to attempt the catch. Then, raced back himself like a cheetah to almost pull off an impossible pouch. In the same match, rather worryingly for Indian supporters, he raced to 70 off 85 balls, at which stage the deceptive Bhagwat Chandasekhar induced a mistimed stroke. Over and above, Sobers earned seven wickets in the match taking the new ball. One can be forgiven for being mesmerised by such omnipotence!

AT HIS PEAK

Sobers was at that time at the peak of his powers. His glamour and fame enveloping the cosmos. In Mumbai, during the 1st test of the series, he was introduced to Anju Mahendru, an attractive young actress. They even got engaged, before going their different ways. He later married Australian-born Prudence Kirby.

Sobers, like several West Indians of his generation, was reputed to drink and dance into the early hours even during a test match. He would return to his hotel for a short nap, wake up an hour before start of play, skip furiously with a rope to sweat out the alcohol, have a shower and turn up at the ground just in time.

I once saw him padded up at the Eden Gardens, while he was fast asleep. By the time a wicket fell and it was time for him to fill the breach, he would be woken up. Bleary-eyed, loosening and stretching his arms and legs he walked out to bat; and unerringly middle the first ball he faced.

Sobers made his test debut against England at Kingston, Jamaica in 1954 at the age of 17. He batted at number nine; but bowling left-arm orthodox, he returned figures of four for 75 in his very first innings. His hidden genius as a flamboyant left-handed batsman would only surface four years later. In the opening engagement in the spring of 1958 against Pakistan, he did not get an opportunity to bat at his home ground of Bridgetown, Barbados. In the second at Port of Spain, Trinidad he notched 52 and 80.

ASPIRING TO RAMARAJYA?

THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA HAS SOME INSIGHTS FOR OUR TIMES

I have turned to the Ramayana of Valmiki in difficult times for over 40 years. When I was unable to sleep for months after the 1984 anti-Sikh violence, waking up in a sweat every night on hearing gunshots in my nightmares, my father’s aunt, a Sanskrit scholar and tennis player who played and won a match or two at Wimbledon in the 1930s, taught me half a verse from the Ramayana which, she told me, had been the mantra she recited before matches, during phases of debilitating illness, and indeed, every day. She assured me it would help me fight fear. Since then, yatra ramo bhayam natra nasti tatra parab-havah (where there is Rama, there is neither fear nor defeat) has been my mantra, too. The Ramayana’s poetry has captivated me, and I have a quote from the text for all occasions – even earthquakes, for those occur, the Ramayana tells us, when the mighty elephants Virupaksha, Mahapadma, Saumanasa and Bhadra, who support the earth, get tired and shake their heads for a moment to relieve their weariness. So, does the Valmiki Ramayana contain insights on the burning issues of our time – the dharma of those who rule a realm and the character of those who lead religious establishments? It does. For these insights, we need to turn to the Uttarakanda, the seventh and last book of the Valmiki Ramayana. The sixth book, the Yuddhakanda, culminates in Rama’s long-delayed ascension to the throne of Kosala, and contains a few verses about the perfection of Rama’s reign. We are told that there was no fear of disease or poisonous snakes, the old never had to perform the funeral rites of their children. No one heard the wailing of widows. Everyone lived for a thousand years. Everyone was content. Trees yielded fruit and flowers all year. The rains always came at the right time, and the touch of the wind was always pleasant. Everyone was devoted to dharma. Rama’s subjects adhered to their own occupations and were satisfied with their own duties. People followed Rama’s example and did not



harm one other. But we learn virtually nothing of what Rama actually did as ruler. What, for instance, were his judicial acts as king that make us long for the re-establishment of Ramarajya? We learn something about the administration of justice during Rama’s rule in the Uttarakanda. This book contains the controversial Shambuka-vadha episode. When a brahman boy died in childhood during Rama’s reign, the boy’s grieving father accused the king of a transgression that resulted in his son’s untimely death. When the sage Narada informed Rama that the child’s death was the result of a shudra performing austerities, Rama immediately swung into action – he went in search of the culprit, located Shambuka and cut off his head. Shudras were not entitled to practise austerities, and Shambuka’s tapas was a threat to the dharma of Rama’s kingdom. The beheading of Shambuka restored dharma and the brahman boy came back to life. This episode has shaped the reception of the Uttarakanda, and indeed, the Valmiki Ramayana as a whole, from pre-modern times, and its story has been repeatedly chal-

lenged by low-caste groups who have criticised the upper-caste ethics that allow Rama to kill Shambuka. Justice for the brahman and maintenance of the varna hierarchy trump Shambuka getting a full and fair hearing. But another episode of the Valmiki Ramayana suggests that even the lowliest creature was treated fairly during Rama’s reign. Two prakshipta sargas or interpolated cantos of the Uttarakanda can be cited here. The two sargas do not appear in some editions of the text or are explicitly marked in them as interpolations, but they are well known, and versions of the episode they recount feature in later Ramayanas, such as the medieval Sanskrit Ananda Ramayana. In these prakshipta sargas of the Valmiki Ramayana, the absence of grievances among Rama’s subjects is highlighted, for Ramarajya meant that there was no adharm anywhere, and no one was discontent. People did not suffer from mental and physical ailments. Everyone lived long, happy lives. Everything was governed in accordance with dharma, so the king had no complaints to deal with. Rama sent Lakshmana again and again to

find someone, anyone, with a matter that needed adjudication by the king. Finally, Lakshmana located a crying, injured dog with a grievance – he had been beaten without reason by a brahman mendicant. The dog entered Rama’s assembly hall hesitantly, for dogs are degraded creatures and he did not wish to do anything above his station. Once in the assembly hall, he spoke eloquently of the duties of the king – protection of his subjects and protection of dharma. Then he told Rama that he had been thrashed mercilessly by a brahman named Sarvarthasiddha. Sarvarthasiddha was summoned and admitted that he had committed an offence. The aggrieved dog suggested that the culprit be made the head of a religious establishment in Kalanjara as punishment, and Rama appointed Sarvarthasiddha to the position. Sarvarthasiddha was delighted, and Rama’s ministers were astonished by the judgment, which seemed like an honour rather than a punishment. The dog then explained that leadership of a religious establishment is a curse rather than a boon. In his past life, he had headed one. He had been righteous, pious and

devoted to the welfare of all beings, he had guarded the wealth of the gods scrupulously, yet he had been reborn as a dog. Sarvarthasiddha, on the other hand, had already abandoned dharma, was cruel and violent, and his conduct would surely lead several generations of his family to hell. The dog concluded that a position of authority with respect to gods, cows and brahmins has dire consequences. And whoever siphons off donations to gods falls into hell after hell. The wise dog, who had been defiled merely by leading a religious sect, then fasted unto death in Varanasi. In Rama’s realm, therefore, a dog got a fair hearing, though a shudra did not. Heading a religious establishment resulted in a low birth. Misappropriating the property of deities could keep one in hell indefinitely. But that was the Tretayuga. What of the Kaliyuga? Who is entitled to justice in our times? Humans of all kinds? Dogs and other creatures? And which Rama should we choose? The one who helps us fight fear, or one whose name instills fear? Naina Dayal teaches history at St. Stephen’s College, University of Delhi.

How EC Has Quietly Changed Form 6 During SIR, Evading Parliament

New Delhi: It is the government and parliament that are the sole competent authorities which decide on what changes, if any, are to be made in Form 6, the form Indians need to fill in order to demand inclusion in the electoral rolls. The Wire has tracked how the Election Commission, since its Special Intensive Revision drive has quietly changed this crucial Form. The Election Commission first added a new declaration to be submitted along with Form 6 during the Bihar SIR. Another page was added in the second round of the SIR. During the present round of SIR, the Form 6 itself has been changed for online applications. Former Election Commission officials The Wire spoke to said that rules and forms can be amended only by the government and after amendment, this has to be approved by parliament. Altering Form 6 without this amendment renders the Election Commission’s actions “ipso facto illegal”. Transparency activists said that use of Form 6 both to enrol new voters and by those who failed to fill enumeration forms in Bihar, and the Election Commission’s failure to provide segregated data of how many Form 6 additions were new voters and those unable to fill enumeration forms, is only one among the “series of arbitrary and sudden shifts” characterising the SIR. While the Supreme Court has once again reiterated earlier this week, that the Election Commission is not an



arbiter of citizenship, exclusion from the rolls resulting in the termination of state welfare benefits, even denial of passports, has made scrutiny into how new voters are being taken onto the rolls even more important. What is Form 6? Before June 24, 2025, Form 6 was simply an application that new electors used to apply for their inclusion in the electoral rolls. It required no proof of citizenship, and only needed Aadhaar details for authentication of entries, and self attested documents of age and ordinary residence. Such was the flexibility of the Form 6 that the guidelines also provided that if none of the documents sought in the Form as age and residence proof was available the applicant could enclose some other document in support of age proof by mentioning its name in the Declaration part of the Form following which the applicant was required to appear personally before Electoral Registration Officer or any other officer designated by

him for verification. Since June 24, 2025 when the Election Commission of India announced SIR of the electoral rolls, not only has the accompanying declaration sought in Form 6 changed but the Form itself has undergone a change. The changes have come despite the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 that flows from the Section 28 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 requiring that any change or amendment can only be made by the government and are subject to parliamentary oversight. The journey of the Form 6 and the statutory changes brought in it through the SIR, done quietly by the Election Commission through instructions, without going to parliament have once again raised questions about the opaque manner in which the procedures under the SIR have been adopted, even as it has asked citizens to furnish proof after proof subjecting them to a virtual citizenship drive. Former Election Commission officials The Wire spoke to said

that rules and forms can be amended only by the government and after amendment, this has to be put in the parliament, calling the Election Commission’s actions “ipso facto illegal”. Transparency activists said that the changes to Form 6, its use to both enrol new voters and by those who failed to fill enumeration forms in Bihar, and the Election Commission’s failure to provide segregated data of how many Form 6 additions were new voters and those unable to fill enumeration forms is only one among the “series of arbitrary and sudden shifts” characterising the SIR, evading parliamentary and public scrutiny. How Form 6 changed course In the SIR’s pilot edition in Bihar that commenced on June 25, 2025 the Election Commission in its instructions said that new voter applications, voters who failed to fill enumeration forms in time, could also fill Form 6. In both cases they were required to attach the prescribed Declaration Form.

MAA BEHEN, OBSESSION, AND THE GAZE THAT EATS ITSELF

In a certain colony, a woman lives alone. Stories about her, however, are everywhere. She lures men, scans them like QR codes, and some even lie buried in her garden. Widowed early, she has a daughter with her late husband. But in a tryst shrouded in mystery, she birthed another with a man no one knows about. Her tainted character is further infected by the recurring visuals of her waist peeking out from the cotton saris and the sleeveless blouses she continues to wear, and by the place she chooses to work at: an alcohol shop. Therefore, when the self-appointed moral guardian of the neighbourhood is found dead in her house, the implication is clear as day. Rekha, the eternal seductress, has committed the murder. A premise such as this can largely go two ways. It can either confirm the rumours and craft a narrative of a woman doubling down on her reputation, or it could dispel hearsay and culminate as a tale of a woman killing a moral custodian to vindicate her disrepute. Suresh Triveni’s latest film, Maa Behen, playfully smart, does neither. Instead, the outing finds a near-impossible middle ground where the social prejudice is replicated only to be critiqued. The filmmaking, too, responds through heightened tonality and camp. A male journalist, trained in sensationalisation, is the narrator. He briefs the viewer about the notoriety of Rekha (Madhuri Dixit)



as flashbacks of her mas-saging her husband on the terrace as a newly-wed and men gathering to see splash on the screen. More incriminating images follow: Rekha flirting with the neighbour, Charitra Gupta (Ravi Kishan), the same man who her husband had taken a loan from, and who later was found dead in her house. The walls of her house are scribbled with choice words - "Did you see Rekha's?", "Witch". And then, there are daughters. As Charitra Gupta lies motionless in her house, a panicked Rekha summons her two daughters - Jaya

(Triptii Dimri) and Sushma (Dharna Durga) - for help. The mother claims it was an act of self-defence, but her story - him coming on to her, her pushing her away, his head hitting on the cupboard - is so neat that it feels orchestrated. Further probing only weakens her case. It was Rekha who had called Charitra at night to play cards, it was Rekha who had taken money from the liquor shop, and Charitra knew about it. Sitting with her daughter at the dinner table and wearing a sleeveless blouse, it was Rekha who seemed capable and

culpable of murder. And then, Charitra Gupta gains consciousness. From here, Maa Behen embarks on a wilder ride, with the three women, each with a shadier past than the other, constantly bickering but also helping each other. Jaya, a homemaker, had seduced her husband when the latter had come to see her friend for marriage; Sushma, an influencer, gained popularity after uploading a video of kissing a boy for five minutes. But soon, this turns out to be a smokescreen. The Tragedy Of The 'Femme Fatale' With his latest, Triveni not just depicts cautionary women but mimics the gaze that makes them one. The excessive tone is revealed to the conceit and the slant of their story once the women take charge of their past. In a fleeting moment, Rekha shares that it was her husband who wanted to be massaged in full view, implying in the subsequent silence that her objectification was an offshoot of his desire and not the result of her deliberation. Similar subtext arrives with Jaya and Sushma, wherein they both admit that it was the men whose decisions altered their lives. In any other film, such women would have lurked in the background, and their infamy, at best, would be rebranded as forced autonomy. Maa Behen flips the script in that it inherits and imitates the male gaze, outlines the extent of it, and then ekes out agency from that.

CHINESE FIRM SEEKS COMPENSATION OVER BRITISH STEEL NATIONALISATION

The former owner of British Steel has said it will pursue the British government for compensation after the loss-making firm was nationalised. The UK took control of the Scunthorpe steel-works a year ago after China's Jingye Group said it planned to close the site because it was not financially viable, and fully nationalised the plant on Thursday. In a statement on Sunday, Jingye said it will seek "full compensation through legal means to the very end" over the UK's move. A government spokesperson said draft compensation regulations due to be released in the autumn will set out a compensation process through which an independent assessor "would determine what, if any, is payable". Jingye bought the Lincolnshire steel plant in 2020, but in March last year the firm launched a consultation on its closure saying the plant was losing £700,000 a day. The government took



control of British Steel operations in April 2025, but until this week it remained under Jingye's ownership which limited the government's ability to shape the firm's future. On Thursday the UK government said it was taking the firm into public hands in order to safeguard a "vital national capability", giving the government the power to decide the plant's future. The decision to nationalise British Steel has threatened

to strain the relationship between London and Beijing just as Andy Burnham prepares to enter Downing Street as prime minister on Monday. China hit out at the nationalisation of British Steel on Friday, saying it "firmly opposes and is strongly dissatisfied with the British government's decision". China's commerce ministry said the move "seriously infringed" upon Jingye's rights and interests, and

"severely undermined the confidence of Chinese companies investing in the UK". The statement added that Beijing would support Chinese firms to protect their rights, but did not detail what that might involve. A UK government spokesperson said on Friday that commercial negotiations with the Chinese steelmaker had failed to reach an agreement "that represented value to the taxpayer".

Somany Ceramics inaugurates its 1st Somany Grande Showroom in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

Anantapur - Andhra Pradesh July, 2026: SOMANY Ceramics Limited, one of the world's leading manufacturers of Ceramic Tiles, Bathware & Building solutions, has strengthened its presence in Andhra Pradesh, by the launch its 1st Grande showroom in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh operated by Alani Tiles Park. The new showroom spread across 4,000 sq. ft., showcases Somany's latest collections of tiles, bathware and sanitaryware, offering customers an immersive brand experience. This expansive space enables customers to explore a wide range of products, gain expert guidance and make informed choices for their homes and projects. The showroom was inaugurated by Mr. Rahul Sharma, Joint President of SOMANY Ceramics Limited, who shared his excitement about this new milestone. He said, "With the launch of 1st Grande Showroom we want to bring Somany's premium



offerings to the fast-growing market of Anantapur and the surrounding region. The region's rapid urban development and evolving infrastructure make it a strategic location for our expansion. This showroom reflects our commitment to delivering innovative products, thoughtful design and reliable service while providing customers with a comprehensive destination for all their surface and bathware needs." With this launch, SOMANY brings a one-of-a-

kind retail experience to customers in Anantapur and the surrounding region, catering to the diverse requirements of homeowners, architects, designers and builders. The first Grande Showroom marks another milestone in the company's retail expansion strategy and reinforces its commitment to delivering quality, innovation and customer-centric solutions across India. About Somany Ceramics Limited: SOMANY Ceramics

Limited (SCL) is one of the leading players in the ceramic industry in India and amongst the top 12 manufacturers in the world. The company is a complete solution provider in terms of décor solutions with widest product selection of Ceramic Wall and Floor tiles, Polished Vitrified Tiles, Glazed Vitrified Tiles and Slabs, Sanitaryware, Bath Fittings, Adhesives, Grouts and Home & Building solutions. SOMANY has pan India distribution across 12000+ retail points and having over 500 exclusive showrooms, it also exports to more than 80 countries across 6 continents. The company has a capacity to produce ~80 million square meters per annum of tiles through 2 company owned plants, 5 strategic alliances, and tie ups with outsourced partners spread across India. It also has manufacturing units for Sanitaryware, Bath fittings and Adhesives.

KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS 2026:

Raksha Mantri Flags Off Shaurya Vijay Yatra with Riders on Jawa and Yezdi Motorcycles

New Delhi July 2026: To mark the nationwide commemoration of Kargil Vijay Diwas 2026, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh flagged off the 'Shaurya Vijay Yatra' from the National War Memorial, New Delhi, with riders undertaking the 13-day expedition on Jawa and Yezdi motorcycles. With the motto 'One Ride, One Nation, One Salute', the 1,900-km expedition will see 28 riders, including serving and retired defence personnel, and the next of kin of fearless martyrs, travel to the Kargil War Memorial in Dras, Ladakh. The expedition will honour the courage, resolve, and supreme sacrifice of the Indian bravehearts who ensured victory in the 1999 Kargil War. The ride will pass through the Chandimandir, Rezang La, and the Leh War Memorials before culminating at the Kargil War Memorial on 26 July 2026. The expedition will carry sacred soil from the National War Memorial to Kargil to symbolise the confluence of generations of war heroes India has witnessed. The riders will also felicitate Veer Naris for their resilience. The flag-off ceremony was graced by Shri Rajnath Singh, Defence



Minister of India; General N. S. Raja Subramani, Chief of Defence Staff; and General Dhiraj Seth, Chief of the Army Staff, along with senior military officials, veterans, and invited guests. With the National Cadet Corps in attendance, the occasion conveyed to India's youth the importance of honouring India's gallant soldiers in their memories and by upholding the values of duty, honour, and selfless service. Addressing the gathering,

Shri Rajnath Singh paid tribute to the Indian soldiers whose courage and endurance upheld the honour of the Tricolour in the Kargil War. He described the victory as a symbol of India's enduring resolve to protect its land and identity, and remembered the contributions of Param Vir Chakra awardees Captain Vikram Batra, Lieutenant Manoj Kumar Pandey, Subedar Major (Honorary Captain) Yogendra Singh Yadav

(Retd), and Subedar Major (Honorary Captain) Sanjay Kumar (Retd). Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles initiated this tribute ride in 2021 to bring the motorcycling community closer to the inspiring stories of India's valiant soldiers and their service to the nation. Over the years, it has evolved into a tradition that honours the spirit of fearlessness, sacrifice, and national pride. This year, the expedition will be accomplished on Jawa 350, 42, 42

FJ, and Yezdi Adventure and Scrambler. Anupam Thareja, Co-founder, Classic Legends, said, "Shaurya Vijay Yatra is our way of helping today's generation remember the sacrifices of the heroes of Kargil and their families. This expedition is to ride in solidarity with the Indian Armed Forces to introduce new generations to the values of valour, discipline, resolve, and selflessness that makes one a true hero.

ICICI PRUDENTIAL LIFE INSURANCE PAYS TOTAL BENEFITS OF RS. 4,666 CRORE TO CUSTOMERS IN Q1-FY2027



Mumbai, July 19, 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."

The Rise of India's Mass Affluent and the Evolution of Premium Banking

Vishakhapatnam, July 2026: The growing middle class in India has fortuitously created a new segment of the population. Over the years, a shift in the economic story from scale to sophistication has led to a sizeable expansion of the mass-affluent population. Positioned between traditional retail customers and ultra-high-net-worth individuals, the mass-affluent segment is increasingly redefining consumption, aspiration and financial engagement. Mass affluent are currently redefining consumption, aspiration and financial engagement. Besides being globally aware and digitally astute, mass affluent have growing spending power and evolving expectations. Mass affluent with a deep consciousness of value, together with this economic shift, have fundamentally altered the approach towards premium banking. Hitendra Jha, Head of Retail Liabilities, TASC and TPP, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank said, Rising incomes, entrepreneurial growth and increased access to global lifestyles via digital platforms led to the rise of mass affluent in India. However, beyond income levels, this segment is defined by a mindset. Mass affluent individuals build wealth, not inherit it, which makes them highly discerning, selective, time-conscious, and attracted to personalised financial solutions. For them, banking is no



longer just about transactions or savings. It is about seamless integration with their broader lifestyle, which includes travel, wellness, entertainment and long-term financial planning. Individual engagement with financial markets has expanded too, as the share of equity and mutual funds in annual household financial savings increased from nearly 2% in FY12 to over 15.2% in FY25, according to India's Economic Survey 2025-26 released by the Ministry of Finance. This financially aware and investment-oriented consumer base is now looking to build wealth, gain experience and expect more from the financial ecosystem. Interestingly, the elite and mass affluent are inclined

towards investment-oriented behavior and long-term wealth building.

Holistic Banking Experiences

In response, Indian banks are delivering holistic and experience-driven propositions with the idea to transition from standalone products to integrated ones where financial services are complemented by lifestyle benefits. The modern exclusive banking programme is no longer limited to preferential interest rates or faster service. It brings together personalised relationship management, enhanced transaction limits, lifestyle partnerships across travel, dining, and entertainment, health and wellness integrations, and reward ecosystems that extend beyond traditional cashback. In many ways, the idea of a bank account with lifestyle benefits is becoming central to how this segment evaluates value.

A New Approach to Premium Banking (such as Ivory by Ujjivan) Banks are launching a new generation programme aimed at their mass affluent customers. For example, Ivory by Ujjivan is built around a simpler but more ambitious idea that banking at this level should feel genuinely different rather than showing up as just another financial product with a premium sticker.

AWS TO EXPAND DATA CENTRE OPERATIONS IN HYDERABAD

Amazon Web Services hosts groundbreaking ceremony marking the expansion of AWS (Asia Pacific) Hyderabad Region, with Amazon planning to invest over US\$21 billion in cloud infrastructure in India from 2026 to 2030

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Amazon's expansion of its data centre operations in Hyderabad is part of the recently announced \$48 billion investment by Amazon in India, of which \$21 billion will go towards cloud and AI infrastructure from 2026 to 2030.

Through the Amazon Data Centre Skilling program, the company has trained 250 students in Telangana on data centre operations and has hired 110 of these students into the AWS Data Centre Operations team. Hyderabad, July 2026: Amazon Web Services (AWS) broke ground on a new data centre in Hyderabad alongside the Honourable Chief Minister of Telangana, Shri A. Revanth Reddy, marking

the continued expansion of the AWS (Asia Pacific) Hyderabad Region. The ceremony signals Amazon's deepening commitment to India's digital future as artificial intelligence (AI) and cloud demand accelerates across the country. "The foundation stone laying for the Amazon Web Services data centre in Bharat Future City will serve as a stepping stone for a wide range of investments and businesses to come forward and invest in Bharat Future City. We are building a world-class city in Bharat Future City with the best of infrastructure. I congratulate the AWS team on this development," says Shri A. Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister of Telangana. "Since we launched AWS infrastructure in Hyderabad back in 2022, we have deepened our investment and commitment to build sustainable cloud data centre operations in the State of Telangana to help meet the growing demands of Digital India and the India AI Mission," says Anurag

Khilnani, AWS Director of Data Centre Delivery. "The support of the State Government of Telangana has been essential to fast-tracking the build of India's digital backbone in Hyderabad. We look forward to continuing to invest in the State of Telangana into the local data centre supply chain, local workforce and the local community to serve India's growing digital and AI ambitions."

■ AMAZON'S \$21 BILLION INVESTMENT IN CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDIA

Amazon is scaling its infrastructure investments to support the nation's Digital India ambitions. By the end of 2025, Amazon invested more than \$1.3 billion in cloud infrastructure in the AWS (Asia Pacific) Hyderabad Region. The company now plans to invest over \$21 billion into cloud infrastructure in India from 2026 to 2030, establishing it as one of the largest global AI and cloud infrastructure investors in

the country. This is part of the \$48 billion planned investment recently announced by CEO Andy Jassy across the company's businesses in India. The cloud investment will expand AWS data centre capacity in Hyderabad and Mumbai, giving startups, enterprises and government organisations access to custom AI chips, hundreds of cloud and managed AI services, secure and reliable cloud technologies and developer tools to innovate faster, scale further and serve customers globally. "Amazon Web Services' decision to significantly expand its data centre footprint in Telangana is a strong endorsement of our vision to make the state India's AI and cloud capital. As AI transforms every sector, data centres have become the foundational infrastructure of the digital economy," says Shri D. Sridhar Babu, Minister for Information Technology and Industries, Government of Telangana.

HUNGARY'S PRESIDENT AGREES TO STAND DOWN AFTER PARLIAMENT BACKS REMOVAL



Hungarian President Tamás Sulyok has agreed to step down, signing an amendment to the country's constitution which will end his presidency at midnight on Sunday. Prime Minister Péter Magyar's Tisza party had steamrolled the law change through parliament to oust Sulyok - widely seen as a loyalist of former prime minister Viktor Orbán who lost power in April after 16 years. Sulyok had five days to sign the amendment or risk a protracted constitutional crisis and impeachment proceedings. He confirmed he would agree to the law change as the deadline passed on Saturday evening, but in a statement accused Magyar's government of violating the rule of law. He said the amendment marked a "breaking point in Hungarian constitutional democracy" and said the "core values of a free society... have been trampled underfoot for the sake of political power". It marks the latest and most dramatic move by the Tisza government, which saw

Sulyok as a puppet of the former government and had pushed for his resignation. It has swept through major constitutional changes since winning a landslide victory in April. The 17th amendment, passed with an overwhelming majority on Monday, ends the president's term citing "serious loss of confidence" in him. It also removes the head of the Constitutional Court and forbids MPs who have served three terms from standing again - which applies to more than half the current deputies from Orbán's Fidesz party. Orbán had described the amendment as an act of tyranny and called for protests. Since the April election, Fidesz has been in free fall, reeling from the shock defeat. Orbán himself has hardly been seen in public, and refused to take his seat in parliament. In office from 2010 until 2026, Fidesz reshaped the Hungarian state to its own will, and filled supposedly independent state positions with party loyalists using its own two-thirds majority.



■ Russia launches major ballistic missile attack on Ukrainian cities

RUSSIANS TURN TO CASH, PUTTING MORE STRAIN ON SLOWING WARTIME ECONOMY

Russians are returning to cash, as mobile internet shutdowns disrupt card payments, and more businesses seek to dodge tax under mounting financial pressure more than four years into the war with Ukraine. Russia has added 1.56tn roubles (£14.8bn; \$20bn) in cash into circulation since the start of the year - the biggest rise for the equivalent period in any year outside the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Central Bank figures analysed by the BBC. The spike comes amid a wave of Ukrainian drone attacks, which have repeatedly led the Kremlin to shut down mobile internet across large swathes of the country, leaving many unable to pay by card. The government says the aim of the shutdowns is to counter the drone strikes. "Having cash on hand gives you some



sense of control and security," one woman in Moscow told the BBC on condition of anonymity. "If there's an emergency in the city, I know I'll still be able to buy basic necessities, even if the mobile network goes down." The latest increase follows several earlier wartime surges in cash withdrawals as Russians have sought a buffer against uncertainty. Cash in circula-

tion jumped after President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilisation in September 2022 and during a brief mutiny by the Wagner mercenary group in June 2023. Now, the shift is making it harder for the state to collect tax, just as it faces a widening budget deficit and needs every rouble it can raise to fund the war in Ukraine. Although Russia's oil and gas sector, which accounts for about a quarter of state revenues, has benefited from a recent rise in oil prices following the Iran war, the broader economy is slowing. In May, the Russian economy ministry cut its GDP growth forecast to 0.4% for 2026, putting the country on course for its weakest economic growth since 2022. To boost revenues, the Kremlin hiked VAT from 20% to 22% in January, and lowered the threshold at which small and medium-sized businesses have to pay it, pushing many already struggling firms to the brink. With margins squeezed by higher taxes and a slowing economy, pharmacies, restaurants, beauty salons and corner shops are increasingly steering customers towards cash to keep more income off the books.

CUBAN DISSIDENT LUIS MANUEL OTERO ALCÁNTARA GOES INTO EXILE IN US



One of Cuba's most prominent dissidents has gone into exile in the US, after leaving Cuba where he had served a five-year prison sentence. Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, 38, is the leader of the San Isidro Movement (SIM), a group of artists, journalists and intellectuals who have campaigned for freedom of speech and democracy in the communist country. He was arrested in 2021 during Cuba's largest anti-government protests in decades and spent five years in the maximum-security Guanajay prison near Havana. His whereabouts have been unclear in recent days as Cuban authorities held him in an unknown location while the US approved a parole request. Emerging from the airport in Miami, the 38-year-old was greeted by supporters who sang the Cuban national anthem as he held up his forefinger and thumb in the shape of the letter L to represent "Libertad" - meaning freedom, a recognised anti-government symbol. "I believe the dictatorship has to end, and the Castro dynasty has to end, as well," Otero Alcántara later told journalists. "Because as long as there is a Castro in power, there will be corruption." Cuban authorities allege the SIM is funded by Washington and has been used to subvert the state, claims the movement denies. Many members say they have

been constantly targeted by the security forces, and some arbitrarily detained. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the Cuban government's "brutal crackdown against its own people five years ago is yet another reminder of the unique misery and evil that is innate to the communist system". "Otero Alcántara's only 'crime' was refusing to stay silent and using his art to demand the basic freedoms everyday Cubans have been denied for almost seven decades," he said in a statement. The cases of Otero Alcántara and fellow SIM member Maykel Castillo, known as "Osorbo", who is serving an eight-year prison sentence, have been a recurring source of diplomatic tension between Washington and Havana. That tension has swelled in recent months, with the Trump administration hitting Cuba with an oil blockade, sanctions and openly threatening military intervention. Last week the BBC's US news partner CBS reported that the Pentagon was looking at military options in Cuba, although it quoted officials as saying the briefings did not mean any decision to carry out an operation had been made. The US oil blockade has exacerbated an ongoing fuel crisis, with Cubans facing extended blackouts and food shortages in recent months.

Tate brothers arrested in US as further UK charges take total to 59

Controversial influencer Andrew Tate and his brother Tristan have been arrested in the US after British authorities issued 38 new charges against the pair. The UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said Andrew was being charged with seven further counts of rape, as well as charges relating to sex trafficking and indecent images of a child. Tristan's charges include two counts of rape and three counts of arranging or facilitating trafficking for sexual exploitation. The total number of charges against the brothers is now 59, police said. The alleged offending is said to have taken place between July 2010 and August 2017. The Tates have previously denied any wrongdoing. Following their arrest, prosecutors will begin legal proceedings to extradite the brothers, who are dual British-US citizens, to the UK, the CPS said. "These charging decisions followed receipt of a further file of evidence



from Bedfordshire Police and bring the total number of alleged victims in this case to seven," Malcolm McHaffie, Head of the Special Crime Division at the CPS, said. Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire police have been investigating a number of offences in what it called a "complex investigation". As a result, 38 new charges were authorised against the brothers, meaning Andrew, 39, faces a total of 42 charges in the UK and Tristan, 37, faces 17. The US Marshals confirmed to the BBC that the Tates had been taken into custody, while a US Department of

Justice spokesperson said the arrests were "pursuant to extradition proceedings". A lawyer who represents the Tates, Joseph McBride, said "the world knows Andrew and Tristan are innocent" in a statement released after their arrest on Saturday evening. "Their enemies know it best of all. That is exactly why they have been attacked," McBride continued, describing the new UK charges as a "political hit". He said the new charges were designed to counter a defamation action filed by the brothers in the US. "We are confident that once a

competent judge sees the facts, and once the Department of Justice confronts this egregious abuse of its own authority, Andrew and Tristan Tate will walk free. America does not do Britain's political dirty work," he continued. In 2024, Bedfordshire Police secured European arrest warrants for the pair to have them returned from Romania, where they are based and are under criminal investigation. In June, the brothers lost a legal bid to be told the names of their UK accusers, after the CPS decided it was necessary to withhold the names of their alleged victims until legal action formally started. Lawyer Matt Jury, who represents several alleged British victims of Andrew, welcomed the charges and said: "Andrew and Tristan Tate are accused of some of the most serious offences, including multiple counts of rape and human trafficking. It is time they face justice".

PRIVATE JETS FLOCK TO MONTANA - BUT LOCALS CAN'T AFFORD THE TRAILER PARK



Grandmother Sara Folger sits in the kitchen of her single-wide trailer, the Rocky Mountains looming in the distance, and remembers the Bozeman, Montana she fell in love with decades ago. Back then, Folger says, the rural western outpost was filled with "back-to-the-land hippies, college students, cowboys and ski bums". But nowadays, the formerly sleepy streets are awash with diggers, orange construction cones and out-of-state licence plates. Since the pandemic, Bozeman's population has grown by about 20% - a huge jump for a town that had fewer than 50,000 people in 2019. The influx was fuelled by a unique set of drivers. The state had for years been

drawing in conservatives from around the country, who were attracted to the state's historic emphasis on rugged individualism and self-reliance - as well as its lack of sales, luxury and inheritance taxes. Their numbers increased exponentially as droves began "fleeing the Covid mess ... on the East Coast and West Coast," says Mark Corner, president of Southwest Montana Realtors. And that made housing prices soar. A recent rent strike by two mobile home parks has epitomised the ongoing socioeconomic culture clash between the haves and have-nots - while highlighting a growing grassroots effort to fight for the survival of the working class.

NEW EU BORDER SYSTEM TRIPLING TIME AT PASSPORT CONTROL, AIRPORT BOSS SAYS

The EU's new border system has nearly tripled the time it's taking for Brits to get through passport control even after improvements have been made, a boss at Rome's main airport has said. It comes as Ryanair has warned passengers travelling to Europe this summer to prepare for extended waits. Border police at Portugal's Faro airport also told the BBC the Entry Exit System technology suffered from bugs, but insisted any queues there would go down quickly. The European Commission (EC) has said in most EU airports disruption is limited, and added that it will continue to support member states in the system's implementation. It added: "This support will continue to the fullest extent possible." The digital Entry



Exit System (EES) requires non-EU citizens entering the Schengen area - made up of 29 European countries - to register fingerprints and a photo when they arrive. The information is checked as they leave. It's often done using standalone, automated machines known as "kiosks" and sometimes with border officers - for example, for children under 12. The new process and machines have

been phased in since October. Some European airports have seen hours-long queues at passport control. Passengers have even reported missing flights home. This week, Ryanair said "the failed EES rollout" was causing unnecessary delays and long queues. The airline said UK passengers should "allow extra time for their journey and be prepared for extended waits at

passport control." In Rome, a perennially popular destination for tourists from the UK and around the globe, everyone we spoke to in the Piazza di Spagna had an EES story. Carl and his family travelled to Rome from Yorkshire. "It was two hours queuing, from getting off the plane to getting through with children. I knew it was going to be bad, but not as bad as that." David, visiting from the US with his wife Marlo, said the queue took about an hour. "We actually missed our car, our driver." We met people who'd flown into other airports too. One group had landed in Barcelona before a cruise brought them to Rome. Barry, from Bracknell, said passport control had taken 45-50 minutes because some machines weren't working.



US and Iran exchange strikes after two US soldiers killed in Jordan

Why India And England Players Observed Silence, Wore Black Armbands During 3rd ODI?

England captain Harry Brook won the toss and elected to bat in the third and final ODI of the three-match series against India at Lord's in London. Before the match got underway, players from both sides observed a minute's silence in tribute to West Indies legend Sir Garfield Sobers, who passed away on Friday at the age of 89. The players also wore black armbands as a mark of respect for the iconic all-rounder, widely regarded as one of the greatest cricketers in the history of the game. Players of both teams, along with the match officials, lined up on the field to honour Sobers, widely regarded as the greatest all-rounder in cricket history, with a minute's silence. The perfectly observed minute's silence drew deep respect from the packed Lord's crowd, thus evoking a wave of nostalgia and respect for Sobers. Born in Barbados, Sobers was an unparalleled titan of the game whose international career ran from 1954 to 1974. He amassed 8,032



runs in 93 Tests at a staggering average of 57.78, while also claiming 235 wickets and holding 109 catches. He was also famously the first batter in first-class cricket history to smash six sixes in an over, a feat achieved in 1968. "To the community of West Indies cricket, he is a legend-one of the greatest all-rounders ever. I saw him a couple of months ago when I was at home in Barbados and he said he was moving well

for his age. I was very sad to hear the news (of his passing)," England pacer Jofra Archer had said to broadcasters ahead of the third ODI. Apart from captaining West Indies in 39 Tests, Sobers is also one of only two players, alongside Jacques Kallis, to achieve the double of 8,000 runs and 200 wickets in Tests. Young batting all-rounder Jacob Bethell, talking to the broadcasters, remembered Sobers as a 'larger than life'

figure and recalled how he helped him play for England. "He was a larger-than-life character, whether around the golf club when I used to go and play a couple of rounds with him or in and around the cricket stuff that I witnessed. First of all, he was a very humble guy that just everybody gravitated towards. "Every time he walked into anywhere, the place would come alive. It was unbelievable to be able

to spend a bit of time with him and be around someone of that calibre. The major helping point for me personally was helping me get over to England. (The reference he wrote) helped me a lot to get over here and do what I'm doing now." Prasidh Krishna gave India their third breakthrough of the day by dismissing Harry Brook for a superb 14. Joe Root, who brought up his half-century in 39 balls, is now joined at the crease by Jos Buttler as England look to capitalise on their strong start and post a

formidable total. Meanwhile, Shubman Gill and his men will be aiming to strike again and regain some control over the contest. Earlier, England captain Harry Brook won the toss and elected to bat first. The Gill-led Indian side made three changes to the playing XI, with Jasprit Bumrah ruled out due to a knee injury.

Kimi Antonelli Beats Max Verstappen To Take Pole At 2026 Belgian Grand Prix

Championship leader Kimi Antonelli roared to pole position for Mercedes on Saturday when he beat Red Bull's four-time champion Max Verstappen in the final seconds of qualifying.



Belgian Grand Prix qualifying. The 19-year-old Italian clocked a superbly-executed best lap in one minute and 44.361 seconds to outpace the Dutchman by 0.317sec with defending champion Lando Norris third for McLaren. Norris has a 10-place grid penalty for Sunday's race after taking a new engine. It was Antonelli's sixth pole this year and extended Mercedes run to 10 consecutive poles this season. His success came with the biggest pole-winning margin of the season. "Let's go man," cried Antonelli on team radio. "Let's go!" Reminded it was his father Marco's birthday, he added: "Happy birthday, Dad." In his on-track interview, the Italian said he was happy with his display. "The last lap was good. It was a nice lap. It was very clean, so very happy," he said. "Tomorrow is another day, with Max starting next to me it will be important to

get a good start and be ahead into Turn 5." George Russell was fourth for Mercedes ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, who had crashed earlier in the day, with Oscar Piastri seventh in the second McLaren. Racing Bull's rookie Arvid Lindblad was eighth ahead of Audi's Gabriel Bortoleto and Isack Hadjar, in the second Red Bull, who also faces a penalty and will start from the back of the grid.

"One Can Only Feel Bad": R Ashwin Slams India's Playing XI Call Against England

Former Indian cricket team spinner R Ashwin questioned the decision to not include Kuldeep Yadav in the playing XI for the third ODI encounter against England on Sunday. Kuldeep did not feature in any of the three matches against England and even during the home ODI series against Afghanistan, he played just one game where he went wicketless. Ashwin said that such exclusions can end up impact Kuldeep's rhythm and confidence before pointing out that India's batting looked quick even after not including Kuldeep. India went with four fast bowlers and only one spin bowling all-rounder in Axar Patel. "The only



defense for not playing Kuldeep usually is that the batting finishes at number 7, wonder how it feels to have Arshdeep at number 8 today! Adding Bumrah's absence to that, one can only feel bad for Kuldeep. Trust me, this can affect the rhythm and confidence of a bowler," he posted on X (formerly Twitter). The

only defense for not playing Kuldeep usually is that the batting finishes at number 7, wonder how it feels to have Arshdeep at number 8 today! Adding Bumrah's absence to that, one can only feel bad for Kuldeep. The Indian team management has usually preferred Axar and Washington as they bol-

ster batting depth. While Axar and Washington have justified their selection with all-round performances, Kuldeep's primary skill continues to be overlooked due to his lower-order batting limitations. The left-arm wrist-spinner has endured a tough run lately after having a challenging IPL 2026 campaign for Delhi Capitals. Post the tournament's end, Kuldeep made a switch to Lucknow Super Giants via a trade deal which saw Rishabh Pant moving back to Delhi Capitals. While Kuldeep boasts an incredibly impressive career record of 194 wickets in 121 ODIs, his continuous non-selection still leaves many people curious.

Argentina Star Cristian Romero Sends Emotional Message Ahead Of World Cup Final vs Spain

Argentina centre-back Cristian Romero issued an emotional rallying cry to his teammates and fans just hours before the FIFA World Cup 2026 final, saying the defending champions are ready to fight "until the very last day" as they prepare to face Spain at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey on Sunday (local time). The Tottenham Hotspur defender shared a picture of the entire Argentina squad on X, highlighting the unity that has carried Lionel Scaloni's side to a second consecutive World Cup final. He wrote, "Once again, defending these colours until the very last day. How beautiful it is to be part of this amazing family. Behind every training session, every effort, and every



step, there is something that makes us stronger: this incredible group and a family that chose to journey together. Thank you to all the Argentines who, wherever you may be, will be with us and cheering us on tomorrow. All together once more. Let's go Argentina! @Argentina." Romero has been a cornerstone of Argentina's defence through-

out the tournament and has also made his presence felt at the other end of the pitch. The 27-year-old scored a crucial 79th-minute header in the Round of 16 against Egypt, igniting Argentina's remarkable comeback from 2-0 down before Lionel Scaloni's side completed a dramatic 3-2 victory. The centre-back has also picked up one yellow card during the

tournament while forming a formidable defensive partnership with Lisandro Martinez. Argentina head into the final after another trademark comeback, defeating England 2-1 in the semi-finals. Enzo Fernandez equalised before Lautaro Martinez struck a stoppage-time winner to send the defending champions into their seventh FIFA World Cup final. Scaloni's men have now won 14 consecutive matches, equalling the longest winning streak by a South American nation, and are aiming to become the first team since Brazil in 1962 to successfully defend the World Cup title. Standing in their way is a Spain side that has enjoyed a near-flawless campaign.

"MEDALS VERY IMPORTANT FOR COUNTRY TO GLORIFY ITS NAME": SWIMMER SAJAN PRAKASH AHEAD OF CWG 2026

India's senior swimmer Sajjan Prakash said striking a balance between chasing personal best timings and winning medals is essential, stressing that while personal milestones reflect an athlete's progress, medals bring glory to the country on the world stage. The 2026 Commonwealth Games will get underway with the Opening Ceremony on July 23 in Glasgow. The multi-sport event will be held over 11 days across four existing venues before concluding on August 2. The swimming events will be held from July 24 to July 29. Ahead of the multi-sport event, Sajjan, speaking in an interview, lauded the Sports Authority of India (SAI), saying personal best performances and medals complement each other. "Personal best is always knowing that you have progressed. In training, a lot of times, that will replicate in the competition. And medals are very important for the country to glorify its name on the world stage. So both go hand in hand," Sajjan told reporters. The 32-year-old Olympian also spoke about the responsibility of representing India as one of the country's senior swimmers ahead of the Commonwealth Games, saying the responsibility remains the same irrespective of seniority, though experience brings added



accountability. "I've always been responsible when representing the country, irrespective of whether I'm a senior or not. But definitely, yes, I should know what to talk about, when to talk and how to talk to the media and everyone else. That is one. And my performance needs to be on point on the day of the race because there are many things that can spoil that, but I need to be much more prepared months before and days before.

Indian Olympic Association Ensures Woman Support Staff For Minor Para Cyclist



The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Saturday stepped in to ensure that Commonwealth Games-bound para cyclist Lisha Das will have a female support staff member accompanying her in Glasgow after the 16-year-old raised concerns. Lisha, the youngest athlete in India's contingent and the lone para-track cyclist to qualify for the Games, had

expressed concern after neither her personal coach nor a female support staff member was initially assigned to accompany her. The Commonwealth Games begin in Glasgow on Thursday. PTI had highlighted the issue on Monday. "As soon as we were made aware of this issue, we took cognisance and made arrangements for the female physiotherapist whom Lisha had

requested to accompany her at the Games," India's Chef de Mission Rohit Rajpal, who is also an Executive Committee member of the IOA, told PTI. "The safety, well-being and dignity of every athlete are non-negotiable. We remain fully committed to providing all our athletes with a safe, respectful and supportive environment at all times," he added.

PV Sindhu Feels Blessed As She Clinches Japan Open Title During 'Jagannath Rath Yatra'



Fresh off scripting history as the first Indian shuttler to conquer the prestigious Japan Open, double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu

the Japan Open 2026 badminton title, ending a two-year wait for a BWF World Tour crown in an emotional triumph for the Indian shuttler. The title win coincided with Odisha's sacred Jagannath Rath Yatra, an alignment the badminton ace described as "truly poetic." After Sindhu's win, former Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik congratulated the former world champion via an X post, "Congratulate @Pvsindhu on her historic win over Japan's #AkaneYamaguchi to lift the Japan Open 2026 women's singles badminton title, the first Indian to clinch the title. Her flawless performance in the final helped her defeat the home favourite and three-time world champion in straight sets.

Why Is Jasprit Bumrah Not Playing In 3rd ODI Against England?

Indian cricket team star fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah was not included in the playing XI for the third ODI encounter against England at Lord's on Sunday. India captain Shubman Gill revealed that Bumrah had picked up an injury and was not fit for the series decider. "Jasprit Bumrah had an impact injury on his left knee while fielding in the second ODI in Cardiff. He was not available for selection for the third ODI due to reactive swelling in his left knee," BCCI posted on social

media. Coming to the match, England skipper Harry Brook won the toss and opted to bat. With Bumrah and Washington Sundar, who was ruled out due to hamstring strain, unavailable, India have brought in Prince Yadav and Arshdeep Singh. Wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul is fit again after missing the second ODI in Cardiff due to illness and replaces Shivam Dube. "We were in a great position in Cardiff but then lost too many wickets in the middle

overs so hopefully we can get good runs today. We're not the one who rely on stats so much. We think he's (Arshdeep) a great bowler, and we were looking for four seamers on this ground. We have seen in the middle overs, spinners don't really offer much as compared to the fast bowlers," said India skipper Shubman Gill. England, meanwhile, have brought Josh Tongue in place of Saqib Mahmood in their playing eleven. "It looks a good surface so

hopefully we can get runs on the board and put India under pressure. I thought we did really well in the middle overs (in the second ODI) to restrict India, while the way Joe Root batted set a great template. It would be beautiful to win and lift the trophy at the end of the day but we have to assess conditions and adapt," Harry Brook said. Jasprit Bumrah has been ruled out of the third ODI against England on Sunday (July 19) after suffering from a knee injury. At the toss, cap-

tain Shubman Gill confirmed that Bumrah had been left out due to a knee issue, one of three changes India made from the second ODI. Having lost the Cardiff game, and with the series level 1-1, India welcomed back KL Rahul from illness, and also included Prince Yadav and Arshdeep Singh at Lord's.



expressed deep gratitude and spiritual joy, dedicating her monumental victory to Mahaprabhu Jagannath. Sindhu defeated home favourite Akane Yamaguchi to win

'COMMITTEE KURROLLU' SCRIPTS HISTORY WITH TWO WINS AT THE 72ND NATIONAL FILM AWARDS; CROWNED BEST TELUGU FEATURE FILM

Committee Kurrollu has scripted history at the 72nd National Film Awards, winning Best Telugu Feature Film, the highest honour for Telugu cinema at India's most prestigious film awards. Adding to the celebrations, P. Ravi Kumar has been honoured with the Best Make-up award, making it a landmark double victory for the film and its entire team.

The National Film Awards represent the highest recognition for cinematic excellence in India, honouring films that make a lasting artistic, cultural, and social impact. Being named Best Telugu Feature Film is a defining milestone for Committee Kurrollu, recognizing not only its cinematic merit but also its powerful storytelling, rooted cultural identity, and meaningful social message.

Presented by Niharika Konidela and produced by Padmaja Konidela and Jayalakshmi Adapakula under the banners Pink Elephant Pictures and Shree Radha Damodar Studios, Committee Kurrollu marked Niharika Konidela's debut as a feature-film producer. Choosing to back a rooted, content-driven story over conventional commercial formulas, she placed her faith in debut director Yadhu Vamsee and an ensemble featuring 16 newcomers. That belief has now culminated in Indian cinema's highest honour.

Written and directed by Yadhu Vamsee, Committee Kurrollu is set in a small Andhra village and explores how a seemingly simple disagreement among a close-knit group of friends gradually evolves into a larger conflict that exposes issues of caste, class, identity, and collective responsibility. Seamlessly blending humour, nostalgia, emotion, and social commentary, the film struck a deep emotional chord with audiences while earning widespread acclaim from critics for its authenticity, sincerity, and powerful storytelling.



telling. The National Award also stands as a fitting recognition of Yadhu Vamsee's remarkable directorial debut. With a distinct cinematic voice rooted in Telugu culture, he crafted a film that resonated far beyond regional boundaries while remaining deeply connected to its native soil. Following the phenomenal success of Committee Kurrollu, Yadhu Vamsi is now directing Bhari, starring 'Mega Prince' Varun

Tej, reaffirming the industry's confidence in one of Telugu cinema's most promising young filmmakers. The film's second National Award celebrates the exceptional contribution of P. Ravi Kumar, who has won Best Make-up. His meticulous work played a significant role in authentically portraying the film's expansive timeline and large ensemble cast, enhancing the realism that became one of the film's defining visual strengths. Released on August 9,

2024, Committee Kurrollu emerged as both a critical and commercial success. Made on a budget of ₹9 Crores, the film went on to collect ₹18.5 Crores at the theatrical box office while earning ₹6 Crores through non-theatrical business, taking its total revenue to ₹24.5 Crores. The film proved that compelling storytelling rooted in local culture could achieve remarkable commercial success without relying on established stars.

Long before its National Award triumph, Committee Kurrollu had built an extraordinary record of recognition across prestigious award platforms. The film won Best Feature Film on National Integration, Communal Harmony and Social Uplift of Depressed Classes and Best Debut Director for Yadhu Vamsee at the Gaddar Telangana Film Awards 2024. It continued its winning journey internationally at the Gulf Academy Movie Awards (GAMA) 2025 in Dubai, where Niharika Konidela was honoured as Best Debut Producer and Yadhu Vamsee received Best Debut Director.

The accolades continued at the SIIMA Awards 2025, where Niharika Konidela won Best Debutant Producer (Telugu) while Sandeep Saroj received Best Debutant Actor (Telugu). The film further earned national recognition when Yadhu Vamsee was nominated for Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film at the 56th International Film Festival of India (IFFI). Most recently, at the 70th Filmfare Awards South, the film secured two major honours with Best Debut Director for Yadhu Vamsi and Best Debut Male for Sandeep Saroj.

With its triumph at the 72nd National Film Awards, Committee Kurrollu has completed an extraordinary journey from a modest debut production to one of the most celebrated Telugu films of recent years.

"BRAMAYUGAM" WINS TWO AT THE 72ND NATIONAL FILM AWARDS 2024



Night Shift Studios and YNOT Studios are delighted to announce that 'Bramayugam' has been honoured with two prestigious awards at the 72nd National Film Awards (2024).

The film has received the following honours:

- Best Actor in a Leading Role – Mammooty
- Best Cinematography – Shehnad Jalal

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Mammooty for his extraordinary performance as Kodumon Potti, and to Mr. Shehnad Jalal for his exceptional visual craftsmanship, both of which played a pivotal role in shaping the

film's artistic vision and impact. We also express our sincere gratitude to the Directorate of Film Festivals, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, the National Film Development Corporation, and the distinguished Jury of the 72nd National Film Awards for this recognition. We also congratulate all the winners of the 72nd National Film Awards. Their remarkable work continues to inspire filmmakers across the country and collectively raises the bar for Indian cinema. These two National Film Awards stand as a proud milestone for both Night

Shift Studios and YNOT Studios, reaffirming their shared commitment to producing distinctive, culturally rooted, and globally resonant cinema. Since its release, Bramayugam has earned widespread critical acclaim in India and internationally. The film was an Official Selection in the Indian Panorama at the 55th International Film Festival of India, was showcased at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles, received multiple honours at the Kerala State Film Awards 2024, and continues to be celebrated across national and international platforms.

NAG ASHWIN'S 'KALKI 2898 AD' NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL AWARD FOR BEST POPULAR FILM

Kalki 2898 AD' has won National Awards in two categories at the 72nd National Film Awards announced for the year 2024. 'Kalki 2898 AD' has been nominated for the National Award in the 'Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment' category.

Nitin Jihani Chowdhury, who worked on the film 'Kalki 2898 AD', was also nominated for the National Award in the 'Best Production Designer' category. Vyjayanthi Movies' science fiction visual wonder 'Kalki 2898 AD', directed by Nag Ashwin and starring Prabhas in the lead role, has been a huge success with praise from audiences and critics worldwide. Now that it has won two National Awards, audiences and fans are congratulating the film's team.



NAMIT MALHOTRA'S RAMAYANA BEGINS ITS JOURNEY FROM BHARAT TO THE WORLD



Ahead of its worldwide trailer premiere on 24 July, the makers of Ramayana mark the ceremonial beginning of its global journey with an exclusive first unveiling in New Delhi. There has never been a more important moment to share India's greatest cultural inheritance with the

world. For generations, the Ramayana has lived far beyond the pages of an epic. It continues to shape our festivals, our values and the stories we pass from one generation to the next, remaining an enduring part of everyday life across Bharat and Indian communities around the world. Today, that journey

enters a new chapter. Ahead of its worldwide trailer premiere on 24 July, the makers of Ramayana hosted an exclusive first unveiling of the film in New Delhi. The evening marked Pratham Sankalp, the ceremonial beginning of Ramayana's journey from Bharat to the World. In Indian tradition,

a Sankalp is the conscious intention and commitment made before embarking on a great undertaking. For the makers of Ramayana, it represents a shared commitment to honour one of India's greatest cultural treasures and present it to the world with authenticity, artistic excellence and deep reverence.

Hero Kiran Abbavaram's "Chennai Love Story" Trailer

I became a fan of Chennai Love Story right from the release of its glimpse" – Producer Ravi Shankar

"The trailer gives complete confidence that Chennai Love Story will surely become a success" – Producer Allu Aravind

"What you have seen in the trailer is only a small glimpse; the film has many more surprises" – Director Ravi Namburri

"We are enjoying Kiran and Gouri Priya's performances every day while watching Chennai Love Story" – Story Writer and Producer Sai Rajesh

"Chennai Love Story is a pure and beautiful love story" – Actress Sri Gouri Priya

"Chennai Love Story is going to bring a big



success to all of our lives" – Co-Producer Dheeraj Mogilineni

"The film will be a hundred times more interesting than the trailer, and that's my guarantee" – Producer SKN

"Chennai

Love Story is a film that will make all my fans feel proud" – Hero Kiran Abbavaram

Starring Kiran Abbavaram and Sri Gouri Priya in the lead roles, Chennai Love Story is being

produced by SKN and Sai Rajesh under the banners of Amrutha Productions and Mass Movie Makers. The film marks another collaboration from the makers who delivered cult classics like

Colour Photo and Baby. Sai Rajesh has provided the story, while Ravi Namburri has directed the film. Melody Brahma Mani Sharma has composed the music for Chennai Love

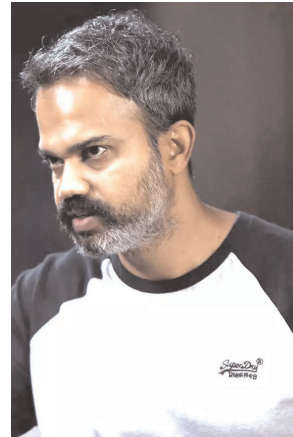
Story. The movie is gearing up for a grand worldwide theatrical release on July 24. The trailer launch event was held grandly in Hyderabad, with star producers Allu Aravind and Mythri Movie Makers' Ravi Shankar attending as chief guests. The trailer was unveiled by Allu Aravind. On the occasion, Ravi Shankar's birthday was also celebrated with a cake-cutting ceremony.

Actor Mahender said, "We hope everyone loved the trailer of Chennai Love Story. We started shooting this film exactly a year ago, and it is now ready to meet audiences on July 24. We request everyone to support our film by watching it in theatres."

Mythri Movie Makers Produces, Prashanth Neel Presents- 418 Set For July 31 Release

Mythri Movie Makers' much-awaited horror thriller 418, which is in the final phase of post-production is now all set to hit theatres worldwide on July 31, as officially announced by the makers. Presented by blockbuster filmmaker Prashanth Neel, the film is written and directed by Kirtan Nadagouda, while Naveen Yerneni and Yalamanchili Ravi Shankar bankroll the project under the Mythri Movie Makers banner.

Starring Surya Raj, Charan Lakkaraju, and Preethi Pagadal in pivotal roles, 418 promises an intense horror experience that relies on fear, suspense, and psychological



tension rather than comedy. The makers are positioning it as a spine-chilling entertainer designed to keep audiences on the edge of their seats from start to finish.