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When Mirai Girl Turns To Korean Girl

CINEMA | PAGE

Rahul writes to Amit Shah; seeks accountability for assault on student protesters

New Delhi: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Sunday wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, demanding accountability for the alleged assault on students who were peacefully protesting in Delhi on July 20.

ISRAELI SETTLERS SET FIRE TO MOSQUES, CARS AND FARM LAND IN WEST BANK



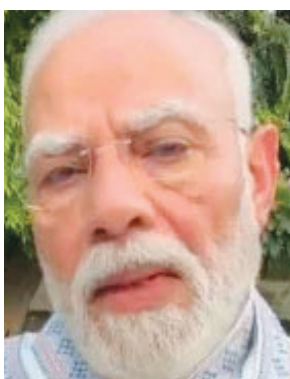
PM asks Nilekani panel to draft exam reforms

New Delhi (TSIT):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced the constitution of a task force on exam reforms under Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani. Prime Minister Modi said that the report of the task force will be used for taking steps to ensure the credibility of upcoming examinations.

The decision to rope in Nilekani, who is the brain behind Aadhaar number, comes a day after a students' agitation against alleged paper leaks concluded following the resignation by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Sharing a video statement on Sunday, Prime Minister Modi said, "The Government of India is continuously taking various measures for the future of students. Those who tampered with the



students' future are languishing in jail. We have already established fast-track courts. We are also moving towards enacting new legislation in Parliament that incorporates stringent legal provisions." "However, we must look to the future. Our examination system needs to be reliable and transparent, and it must make maximum use of technology. Keeping all these factors in mind, we have decided to constitute a high-powered task force under the lead-

ership of the world-renowned technology expert Nandan Nilekani," the Prime Minister added. "This task force will focus on examination reforms, and based on its report, steps will be taken to ensure the credibility of upcoming examinations at the earliest," he said.

Apart from technology expert Nandan Nilekani, the task force will include former ISRO Chairman S. Somnath, former IB Director Tapan Deka, IIT Chennai Director V. Kamakoti, former Education Secretary Anita Karwal and Logistics Expert Amrit Lal Meena, an official statement said.

Earlier on Sunday, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, who assumed charge as the Union Education Minister on Sunday, expressed gratitude to PM Modi for entrusting him with the responsibility.

CM Revanth seeks lower age limit for elections

Proposes Jai Jawan Jai Kisan Jai Yuva Seeks Lower Age Limit for Contesting Elections

Hyderabad (TSIT Bureau):

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has proposed a new national slogan, "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Yuva," stressing that youth should play a greater role in shaping India's future. He urged the Central Government to amend the Constitution and reduce the minimum age for contesting Assembly and Lok Sabha elections from 25 to 21 years.

Addressing representatives of the national media in Hyderabad, the Chief Minister said young people have emerged as leaders across the world in governance, technology and business, and deserve greater opportunities in democratic institutions.

He also expressed con-



cern over issues related to national-level examinations such as CBSE, NEET and NET, urging the Centre to safeguard students' interests, review cases registered during student protests and extend support to affected families.

Revanth Reddy noted that many 21-year-olds already serve as IAS and IPS officers, lead global organisations and hold elected positions in local bodies. He argued that they should also be eligible

to contest Assembly and Lok Sabha elections at the same age.

The Chief Minister proposed reducing the minimum age for contesting Legislative Council and Rajya Sabha elections from 30 to 25 years. He announced that a joint session of the Telangana Legislative Assembly and Council would be held in August to discuss the proposal and adopt a resolution to be forwarded to the Centre after consultations with all political parties.

He also urged the Central Government to consider the proposal along with electoral reforms such as delimitation, an increase in Parliamentary seats and women's reservation, saying greater youth participation is vital for India's democratic future.

WILL NOT CONTEST 2028 ASSEMBLY POLLS: SIDDARAMAIAH

Bengaluru (TSIT):

Former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday, July 26, announced that he will not contest the 2028 Assembly polls, citing advancing age and politics becoming "deeply polluted". The Congress Working Committee



member, however, asserted that he will remain active in politics and continue to be a voice for the people's hardship and well-being. "Politics has become deeply polluted today, and for that reason I will not contest the 2028 Assembly elections. However, I will remain active in politics and continue to be a voice for the people's hardships and well-being," Siddaramaiah said in a post on 'X', detailing what he said at a private event held on Saturday in K R Pet in Mandya district.

After Pradhan's resignation, BJD, Cong demand Odisha minister's removal over textbook errors



ODISHA PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEE PRESIDENT BHAKTA CHARAN DAS

BHUBANESWAR (TSIT):

A day after Dharmendra Pradhan resigned from the Union Cabinet over the NEET paper leak,

opposition parties in Odisha on Sunday demanded the removal of state minister Nityananda Gond for alleged errors in the school textbooks for classes 1 to 8.

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhakta Charan Das threatened to call a statewide bandh if Gond does not resign for the "grave mistakes in the school textbooks". "We know that Pradhan was forced to resign. Odisha's School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond should resign, taking responsibility for the textbook errors. Our party has given an ultimatum to the Mohan Charan Majhi government in Odisha either to take the resignation of Gond or sack him," Das said.



Lotus-shaped lab-grown diamonds from Surat shine aboard Vikram-I: CEO

Surat (TSIT):

The CEO of a Surat-based firm has claimed that its lotus-shaped design of laboratory-grown diamonds sparkles on recently launched Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-I orbital rocket. The firm has sent its lotus collection of lab-grown diamonds to Skyroot. "When the sun rays fall on the rocket orbiting space, the diamonds sparkle

wonderfully," said Nityas Gems and Jewellery CEO Rajnikanth Chanchad on Sunday. He claimed Surat, known as the diamond city, has for the first time sent a diamond into space. Skyroot Aerospace recently successfully launched India's first privately developed orbital rocket, Vikram-I, under Mission Agaman from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC-SHAR) in Sriharikota.

Nandan Nilekani panel formed to 'fix' PM Modi's 'image': Congress

New Delhi, July 26 : The Congress on Sunday dismissed the constitution of a task force on exam reforms, headed by Nandan Nilekani, as an exercise aimed to "fix" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "compromised image". Jairam Ramesh, Congress MP and General Secretary in-charge Communications, took to social media to criticise the creation of the task force.

"Friends, in June 2024, after it bungled multiple examinations including NEET-UG, the Modi Government constituted a High-Level Committee of Experts headed by Dr K Radhakrishnan to 'ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations'," wrote Ramesh on X. "In July 2026, after the Modi Government has yet again bungled the NEET-UG and other examina-



tions, it has constituted a 'High Powered Task Force' to focus on examination reform," he said. "The Modi Government has still not finished implementing the K Radhakrishnan Committee's 101 recommendations. Indeed, for most of the two years between the 2024 and 2026 paper leaks, it didn't even

appoint a full-time Director General for the National Testing Agency," said Ramesh.

"This is ultimately only a High-Powered attempt to fix the Pradhan Mantri's irretrievably compromised image," said the Congress MP, referring to the Nilekani-led task force.

Mayank picks 3-29 as India beat Zimbabwe by 35 runs, complete 3-0 sweep

Harare (TSIT):

Spearheaded by Mayank Yadav's impressive 3-29, India capped off a clinical trip to Zimbabwe with a 35-run victory in the third T20I and complete a 3-0 series sweep at the Harare Sports Club on Sunday. The victory also gave new T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer his maiden series sweep as India's captain.

Having arrived on the back of disappointing series defeats in Ireland and England, India produced a clinical all-round performance to assert their dominance. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi set the tone early with a sparkling 81 to



lift India to a formidable 192/5 on a slow pitch.

In defence of the total, Mayank was clinical in using short of good length and short balls to ensure Zimbabwe were never in the hunt. Despite a sloppy display in the field that saw five chances being dropped, India restricted

Zimbabwe to 157/7 to wrap up a comfortable series win. Chasing 193, Zimbabwe's reply got off to a disastrous start as Mayank struck with the very first ball of the innings - just like he did in the first T20I. The express pacer produced a 147kph thunderbolt that nipped

away and drew an edge from Brian Bennett, which Vaibhav Sooryavanshi caught sharply at first slip.

Yash Thakur's double-strike in the fourth over effectively derailed Zimbabwe's chase. Thakur first outsmarted Dion Myers (19) with a clever 125kph bouncer, which the batter tamely chipped to Shreyas Iyer. On the very next ball, Thakur produced a moment of magic - getting a 143kph delivery to take skipper Sikandar Raza's leading edge before diving dynamically in his follow-through to pluck a sensational one-handed stunning catch.

'People decide Prime Minister in India': Reactions pour in over Owaisi's 'young PM' remark

New Delhi, July 26 : Leaders across the political spectrum on Sunday hit back at the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) Chief Asaduddin Owaisi's remark that a "young person should become the Prime Minister", asserting that it is the citizens who choose the Prime Minister in India, irrespective of his or her age. Addressing a public rally on Saturday, Owaisi said: "In India, 65 per cent of our population is under the age of 35, and 50 per cent of India's population



is under the age of 25. Our effort will be that, in the coming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, our party will nominate

young people as its candidates so that they can speak for you fearlessly." "Our effort will be that when the 2029 elections

are held, not an 80-year-old man becomes the Prime Minister of India, but a 40 or 45 year-old young person becomes the Prime Minister of this country. This will be our endeavour," the AIMIM Chief added. Responding to the statement, BJP spokesperson Pratul Shah Deo said: "I don't know why he is so concerned about age. The President of the United States is aged over 80 years and continues to remain in the spotlight. I think Owaisi is trying to build a narrative.

All Village Panchayats to Conduct Gram Sabhas on July 30

The South India Times // Nagarkurnool : Nagarkurnool District Collector Hemanta Keshav Patil has directed officials to ensure the successful conduct of Gram Sabhas in all village panchayats across Nagarkurnool district on July 30 to create awareness among farmers and rural communities on the possible impact of El Niño and the need for precautionary measures.

Following the State Government's instructions, the Collector issued guidelines to district and mandal-level officials, sarpanches and panchayat secretaries. He said the district is likely to receive



below-normal rainfall due to the El Niño effect, which could lead to declining water levels in tanks, reservoirs and groundwater sources. He cautioned that prolonged dry conditions could

adversely affect agriculture, livestock and rural livelihoods. Therefore, advance planning and timely implementation of mitigation measures are essential, he said.

The Collector instructed officials to use the Gram Sabhas to educate farmers and villagers about the impact of El Niño, precautionary measures and the government's preparedness plans. Discussions should cover contingency crop plans, drinking water management, water conservation, construction of individual and community soak pits, farm ponds, percolation tanks, borewell recharge structures

and other rainwater harvesting measures.

He directed that Gram Sabhas be held in every village panchayat on July 30 with the participation of farmers, women's self-help groups, youth, public representatives and villagers. Mandal-level officials, including MPDOs, MPOs, Divisional Panchayat Officers and special officers, have been instructed to personally monitor the proceedings and ensure effective implementation. The Collector also asked officials to submit detailed reports on the conduct of the Gram Sabhas to the District Panchayat Office immediately after the meetings.

2,278.14-Crore Adilabad Joint User Airfield Gets Green Signal Says Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy

Hyderabad, TSIT: Telangana Roads & Buildings and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Sunday announced that the State Government has accorded administrative sanction of Rs.2,278.14 crore for the establishment of the prestigious Adilabad Joint User Airfield, describing it as a game-changing project for the development of North Telangana.

Minister said the approval was granted under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, marking another major milestone in the government's efforts to promote balanced regional development.

According to the Minister, the project will require the acquisition of 2,009.23 acres of land, of which 1,609.23 acres



will be allocated to the Indian Air Force (IAF), while the remaining 400 acres will be used for the Civil Aviation Enclave, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities, cargo terminal, hangars and future expansion.

He said administrative sanction also covers expenditure for land acquisition and associated infrastructure works, including the diversion of existing

roads, relocation of 765 kV high-tension power lines, diversion of streams, shifting of Mission Bhagiratha drinking water pipelines and removal of electricity poles.

Describing the airfield as a strategically important project for the State, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said it would be jointly developed by the Indian Air Force and the Airports Authority of India. Project is expected to significantly boost industrial growth, investments, cargo transportation, tourism and defence infrastructure across North Telangana while creating thousands of direct and indirect employment opportunities for local youth.

Minister attributed the project's progress to the special initiative of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and continuous

coordination with the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India. He said the Telangana Government would bear the cost of land acquisition as well as the expenses involved in removing all project-related obstacles.

Komatireddy Venkat Reddy further informed that the district administration has been instructed to complete land acquisition and the relocation of roads, power lines and other utilities by December 31, 2026.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to balanced regional development, the Minister said the Adilabad Joint User Airfield would emerge as a transformative infrastructure project and a major growth engine for North Telangana.

Health Teams Directed to Cover Every Household in NCD Survey



The South India Times // Nagarkurnool : A special door-to-door National Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Health Survey was conducted across Nagarkurnool town on Sunday. Deputy District Medical and Health Officer Dr. Bharat Kumar Reddy carried out a surprise field inspection to monitor the survey and review its implementation.

During the inspection, Dr. Bharat Kumar Reddy instructed health teams to visit every household in the PP Unit limits, including Housing Board Colony, BC Colony, Eshwar Colony, Raghavendra Colony, Yerragadda, Vinoba Nagar, Srinagar Colony, Rahat Nagar, Teachers Colony, Vaddegeri, Sanjay Nagar, Papayya Nagar, Madhura Nagar, Christian Colony, Brindavan Colony, Sripuram Road and

Nallavelli Road, and collect health details of all family members aged 30 years and above.

He directed the staff to mandatorily collect information on hypertension, diabetes, tuberculosis (TB), stroke, pregnant women, all types of cancer patients, and family planning status, as per government guidelines. He also instructed health workers and ASHA workers to upload Aadhaar-linked beneficiary details through the online system and ensure that the NCD survey is completed within this month.

The inspection was attended by PP Unit Medical Officer Dr. P. Srujana, Health Educator Oruganti Srinivasulu, Supervisor Mariyamma, Women Health Workers Narsingamma, Kalpana and Sunitha, Pharmacy Officer Akhila, ASHA workers and other health staff.

Youth Volunteers Honoured for Assisting Public with SIR Electoral Forms in Mahabubabad

Mahabubabad TSIT District Correspondent July 26: Youth volunteers who played a key role in assisting the public with the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) electoral forms were felicitated at a function held at the Government Urdu School in Idgah Bazaar, Mahabubabad.

The felicitation ceremony was organized jointly by the Telangana Muslim Organizations Joint Action Committee (JAC), Old Bazaar Idgah Committee, Old Bazaar Kabristan Committee, and Umar Farooqi Masjid Committee. For nearly a month, the volunteers extended dedicated support to citizens by helping them fill out SIR forms at facilitation centers set up at the Mahboobiya Masjid near the Tahsildar's Office, the Government School in Idgah



Bazaar, and the mosque at Kankarabodu. They patiently guided applicants, clarified procedures, and ensured that forms were completed accurately. Addressing the gathering, Mufti Alamgir appreciated the commitment and perseverance shown by the youth volunteers, stating that their month-long service to the public was truly commendable. Ahmed Khan, State Organising Secretary of the Telangana Muslim Organizations JAC, lauded the efforts of members of the Al Ansar Youth Committee from Idgah Bazaar, as well as volunteers from Mahboobiya Masjid and Kankarabodu Mosque.

Shadnagar scientist shines in Vikram-1 mission

RANGAREDDY (TSIT) Nikhil Madduri, a young aerospace engineer from Shadnagar, has earned recognition for his key contribution to the successful launch of Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1, India's first privately developed orbital launch vehicle.

As part of the Guidance, Navigation and Control (GNC) team, he played an important role in developing the rocket's navigation software, which enables precise guidance and control during flight.

An IIT Kharagpur graduate, Nikhil went on to



earn dual master's degrees through the Erasmus Mundus SpaceMaster programme at universities in Germany and Sweden. He previously worked at the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), contributing to the development of the indig-

enous LCA Tejas fighter aircraft, and has been with Skyroot Aerospace for the past six years. The successful Vikram-1 mission marks a major milestone for India's private space industry, and Nikhil's technical contribution has been widely appreciated. Apart from his work in aerospace, he is also passionate about acrylic painting, with his artworks inspired by nature and space, making him an inspiration to young innovators.

GO 51 Withdrawal, MPW System Scrapping Demanded

Khammam (TSIT): The Telangana government should withdraw GO No. 51 and abolish the Multi-Purpose Workers (MPW) system, which has led to the exploitation of gram panchayat workers, demanded CPI State Secretary and Kothagudem MLA Koonamneni Sambasiva Rao. Addressing the third State Conference of the Telangana Gram Panchayat Employees and Workers' Union (AITUC) at Ganesh Garden in Raghunathapalem on Sunday, he said sanitation workers were being paid only Rs.8,500 despite trade unions demanding a minimum wage of Rs.26,000. He urged the government to



resolve the long-pending demands of panchayat workers, ensure fair wages and job security, and withdraw GO No. 51. AITUC State President M.D. Yousuf demanded that salaries of gram panchayat workers be paid on the first day of every month. He said around 54,000 workers in nearly 12,000 gram panchayats across

Telangana should be provided with PF, ESI, insurance, permanent appointments, compassionate jobs for eligible family members, a one-time gratuity of Rs.10 lakh on retirement, promotions for eligible workers as Panchayat Secretaries and coverage under the upcoming Pay Revision Commission (PRC).

Mogilicherla Sarpanch Elected Kuravi Congress Sarpanch Forum President

Mahabubabad TSIT District Correspondent July 26: Telangana: Mogilicherla Gram Panchayat Sarpanch Nookala Venugopal Reddy has been unanimously elected as the President of the Kuravi Mandal Congress Sarpanch Forum.

The unanimous decision was taken during a meeting of Congress-affiliated sarpanches held at Mogilicherla village under the chair-

manship of Kuravi Mandal Congress President Ambati Veerabhadram. The election was conducted in accordance with the directions of Dr. Ramchandra Naik, MLA from Dornakal and Government Whip. Speaking on the occasion, party leaders expressed confidence that the newly elected president would work towards strengthening coordination among sarpanches and effectively address local governance and rural development issues across



man. Among those present were Mahabubabad Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Islavath Sudhakar Naik, Kuravi Sri Veerabhadra Swamy Temple Chairman Korn Ravinder Reddy, District Secretary Badhavath Ramu Naik, TPCC Doctors' Cell General Secretary Dr. Veeranna Naik, Kuravi Mandal Congress Vice President Balagani

Srinivas, party leader Dr. Karunakar, along with several sarpanches and Congress leaders from across the mandal.

The gathering congratulated Nookala Venugopal Reddy on his unanimous election and wished him success in representing the interests of sarpanches and promoting rural development initiatives in Kuravi Mandal.

This version is formatted in a neutral, professional style suitable for publication in an English-language national newspaper.

Sai youth hold tree plantation drive

Siddipet, July 26: The Sri Sathya Sai Young Wing, under the guidance of the Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Siddipet, organised a tree plantation programme titled "Prema Taru" (Tree of Love) at various locations across the town on Sunday.

The programme was conducted in line with the teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, promoting the values of "Love All - Serve All" and "Help Ever - Hurt Never." Young



volunteers planted saplings to create awareness about environmental conservation and the importance of protecting nature.

The organisers said that "planting a tree is planting a life," adding that every sapling contributes to cleaner air, greener surroundings and a healthier future for coming generations. They urged citizens to actively participate in environmental protection by planting and nurturing trees.

The organisers said such service activities not only help conserve the environment but also inspire the spirit of selfless service in society. They appealed to the public to plant at least one tree and care for it as a contribution towards building a greener and healthier India.

Giving Back to Society: A Journey of Service and Social Impact

Hyderabad City TSIT July 26: Driven by the philosophy of "Pay Back to Society," young social activist K. Paramesh has been carrying out a series of educational, healthcare and rural development initiatives aimed at improving the lives of tribal communities and economically weaker sections across Telangana.

Paramesh's journey in social service began as a National Service Scheme (NSS) volunteer during his studies at Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU), Hyderabad. As an NSS Student Coordinator, he actively organised and coordinated several programmes, including health camps, NSS Day celebrations, International Yoga Day, Swachh Bharat cleanliness drives and environmental awareness campaigns.

Having completed his education from primary school through M. Tech with the support of scholarships and fee reimbursement schemes, Paramesh says he was



inspired to repay society for the opportunities he received. Working in collaboration with non-governmental organisations, corporate social responsibility (CSR) partners, philanthropists and volunteers, he has focused his efforts on the welfare of tribal and underprivileged communities, particularly in the Nallamala forest region.

Without establishing a formal organisation, Paramesh mobilised sponsorships to conduct his first major community service programme at the Government School in Chitlamkunta village of Padara Mandal in Nagarkurnool district. The initiative provided an RO water plant, sound system, notebooks, stationery kits, sports equipment and dresses for girl

students. The programme was supported by Hariitha Foundation, Dr. Panraj Kumar and JNTU students, while the then District Forest Officer Rohit Gopidi attended as the chief guest.

Encouraged by the success of the programme, he later organised another educational support initiative at Ippalappally village in association with Aware Group founder Sri Madhavanji. School bags, books, uniforms and sports kits were distributed to students, while a plantation drive was conducted to promote environmental awareness.

Paramesh also organised a mega free medical camp at Chitlamkunta village with the support of Aware Group, Madhavanji Hospitals, Yashoda Hospitals, Kamineni Hospitals and other leading healthcare institutions from Hyderabad. Around 1,200 rural residents received free medical consultations, diagnostic services and medicines during the camp.

EDITORIAL

Sacrificing Pradhan
Won't Save Modi

Anyone who visited Jantar Mantar at the peak of the recent protest could not help noticing an atmosphere at once un-awed and unadulterated in its hostility towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi. One hour at that newly consecrated site of defiance and resistance was all it took to frame the obvious question: Why hasn't Modi thrown Dharmendra Pradhan under the bus? Is an inconsequential politician so indispensable that the regime would risk its own survival in order to save him? Why was the time-tested device of sacrificing a pawn in order to save the King not been used? By the time Pradhan was asked to pack his bags Saturday afternoon, it was already too late. The unmovable emperor proved to be no match for the unstoppable force that was India's youth. And with this, the myth of Modi's invincibility stands punctured. The buck stops at the Shahenshah, of course, but there is already chatter about how Amit Shah and other darbaris, including the RSS brass, contributed to this colossal and costly mishandling. How the scores eventually get settled is the internal business of the ruling establishment. But, for the larger polity the gains are unmistakable—and, irreversible. The entire episode has cast a spotlight, once again, on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's self-inflicted isolation. He is a leader who is fond of soaking himself in the false and meretricious adulation of foreign lands, perhaps even seeing this as a way of getting away from the anxieties and resentments of the street at home. The "Cockroaches" at Jantar Mantar have ensured that Modi will no longer be accepted as master of the game. To begin with, Modi's aura of invincibility was anchored in his claim to be the role of sole and supreme priest of Indian nationalism. He and he alone embodied 'national interest.' All his rivals, detractors or critics could be diminished with the tag of 'anti-national' or 'anti-Indian'. The 'cockroaches' at Jantar Mantar knew the Modi playbook: they mocked and ridiculed the charge. Unlike Modi's traditional rivals, the youth in Delhi and other cities and towns around India refused to be on the back-foot. Because their demands were linked to the education system, the regime's apologists – otherwise quite skilled in tarnishing partisan or 'ethnic' movements – found it impossible to pigeon-hole the cockroaches. Attempts by regime-friendly anchors to portray them as American or Chinese agents fell flat. Not just the prime minister but the entire Sangh parivar and its allied industry of disinformation will soon find that their ability to control and calibrate the national narrative stands vastly depleted. Second, a simple lesson from the past hundred years of Indian political history is that "charisma" lasts only as long as the "charismatic leader" is able to demonstrate an ability to deliver success and progress. The "cockroach revolution" is able to find traction in the national imagination precisely because the Modi regime has proved itself incapable of setting right a flawed 'system.' After more than a decade in power, no leader is entitled to pretend that they cannot be held accountable for 'collapse' of the 'system' in this or that sector, least of all something so basic as examinations. The Dharmendra Pradhan episode has exposed the fact that the prime minister's credibility stands vastly depleted. His latest assertion of determination to "punish" the "guilty" was rightly juxtaposed with his previous –and, unfulfilled—promises to do exactly the same thing a few years back. Sooner or later, the sleight of hand is seen through. His eleventh-hour attempt to portray sincerity and trustworthiness through an Instagram reel was seen as nothing but the not-so-clever trick of a politician.

ONE RESIGNATION, 3 HEADACHES:

THE BIGGER POLITICS BEHIND
DHARMENDRA PRADHAN'S EXIT

There is a particular theatre to an Indian resignation. It is rarely just about the minister who walks out; it is about the message the walking out is designed to send, to whom, and why now. Dharmendra Pradhan's decision to send his resignation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 25, amid the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led protests over the NEET-UG paper leak and Sonam Wangchuk's fast at Jantar Mantar, belongs to that theatre. It is a gesture with a long lineage in Indian public life - and, like most such gestures, it is being read far more closely for its politics than for its penance.

The Shastri Standard
Indian ministers have periodically reached for the moral high ground of resignation, and the templates are instructive. Lal Bahadur Shastri set the gold standard in December 1956, quitting as Railway Minister after 144 people died in an accident near Ariyalur. "I must do penance for this. Let me go," he told Jawaharlal Nehru - a line that has echoed through every subsequent debate on ministerial accountability. Nehru accepted the resignation not because Shastri was culpable, he said, but to set an example in Constitutional propriety. Shastri was back in government within months, given transport and communications in 1957. The pattern repeated itself with Madhavrao Scindia, who resigned as Civil Aviation Minister in 1993 after a leased TU-154 crashed in Delhi fog, saying he had decided within 30 seconds because his conscience would not permit otherwise. He returned to the Rao ministry in 1995. Shivraj Patil quit as Home Minister after the 2008 Mumbai attacks and

was compensated with a Raj Bhavan posting soon after. TT Krishnamachari resigned as Finance Minister after the Mundhra scandal in 1958, only to be reinducted in 1962 and again as Finance Minister in 1964. The lesson of this history is uncomfortable but consistent: the Indian resignation is rarely terminal. It is a pause, a punctuation mark, often a prelude to rehabilitation. Pradhan, a four-term Parliamentarian, a Rajya Sabha veteran-turned-Lok Sabha MP from Sambalpur, and one of the RSS's most trusted interlocutors within the government, is unlikely to be an exception to this pattern. His resignation letter - addressed pointedly to the country's youth rather than merely to the Prime Minister - reads less like an admission of failure and more like a carefully constructed exit designed to preserve every option for a return. He listed the government's response step by step: the CBI probe, the cancelled examination, the shift to a computer-based NEET format from next year, the successful conduct of a fresh test for over 20 lakh students on June 21. He said he had accepted responsibility "from the very first day". And he reserved his sharpest, if unnamed, criticism for those in positions of responsibility who, he said, tried to mislead students rather than help them. Repercussions For The NDA
The more immediate and less discussed consequence of this resignation lies within the NDA's own house. Pradhan has been among the more consequential Odia faces in the Modi cabinet, a bridge figure between the BJP's central leadership and its expansion ambitions in Odisha, where the party finally dislodged Naveen

Patnaik's BJD only in 2024. His removal from the Education portfolio at a moment of visible student anger reshuffles equations of trust and turf within the wider Sangh Parivar ecosystem, where the education portfolio has always carried outsized ideological weight. Whoever inherits the ministry inherits both a policy in mid-implementation and a movement that has shown it can mobilise without Congress, without the Samajwadi Party, without any of the conventional student-wing machinery of Indian politics.

The Uttar Pradesh Puzzle
This is where the resignation stops being a story about one minister and becomes a story about the battleground state. Uttar Pradesh, of all Indian states, has the largest stake in any question involving competitive examinations, government jobs, and the credibility of testing agencies - from Vyapam-style anxieties to the perennial anger over paper leaks that has animated the state's youth politics for a decade. The Samajwadi Party and the Congress have both, at various points, tried to own this anger and convert it into electoral capital, with limited and inconsistent success. The Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) emergence complicates that project considerably. It did not arise from any established political organisation; it arose from outrage at a remark by the Chief Justice of India and has since drawn hundreds of thousands of young Indians who are, by and large, contemptuous of all organised parties, the BJP as much as the Congress and the SP. For Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi, that is a genuine strategic problem.



STARTED WITH NEET,
ENDED WITH POLITICS!

— Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

The greatest strength of democracy is that the public has the right to question the government. This right keeps democracy alive. When shortcomings are discovered in a government system, when irregularities occur in an examination, when the future of youth is questioned, protest is not only natural but also necessary. But this very power of democracy begins to weaken when the focus of a real issue gradually shifts to political competition, ideological polarization, and power struggles. Then the original question is left behind, and the calculus of political gains and losses takes the forefront. The alleged paper leak and other irregularities in the NEET exam shocked the entire nation. Millions of students worked hard for years, and families spent beyond their financial means to prepare their children for competitive exams. However, when the fairness of the examination process was questioned, the confidence of students and parents naturally wavered. In such a situation, it is entirely justified to demand answers from the government, demand strict action against the culprits, and demand reforms to the examination system. The primary responsibility of any democratic government is to ensure transparency and accountability in matters concerning the future of its citizens, especially the youth. It is equally true that any paper leak cannot be dis-

missed as merely an administrative lapse. This is not merely the theft of a question paper, but a betrayal of millions of dreams. Fair investigations and swift punishment of individuals, gangs, or officials involved in such crimes are essential. If there are shortcomings in the system, it is the government's responsibility to address them. Making the examination system more technologically secure, increasing digital monitoring, establishing accountability, and ensuring timely justice are no longer just options, but a necessity. But another aspect of this entire incident also emerged. As the protests grew, political debates increasingly overtook the core issue in many places. Various political parties, social organizations, and ideological groups began presenting the issue from their own perspectives. The question of student welfare gradually became a medium for political accusations and counter-accusations. Some platforms criticized government policies, while others questioned the entire democratic structure. At times, even the limits of language were violated. This naturally raises the question: was the movement's goal to secure justice for students or to gain political advantage? The role of the opposition is crucial in a democracy. The opposition questions the government, reviews policies, and brings the public's voice to Parliament and the streets. Similarly, the ruling party's responsibility is not only to

list its achievements but also to answer the public's concerns. Democracy remains healthy when both parties respect their constitutional roles. However, if every issue is weighed solely on the scale of political gains and losses, the common citizen suffers the most. India's democracy has gone through many difficult periods. After independence, the country witnessed political instability and periods like the Emergency, when civil liberties were severely restricted. That history also taught us that democracy is protected not only by the Constitution but also by informed citizens. Today, the situation is different. Social media has given every citizen a platform to express their views. Governments are criticized more openly than ever before. This is a testament to the strength of democracy. However, it is equally important to maintain the distinction between freedom of expression and indecency. Dissent is a democratic right, but personal insults, hatred, and propaganda weaken any healthy society. Today, social media has simplified communication as much as it has complicated it. Unverified information, half-baked videos, emotional posts, and political propaganda reach millions of people within minutes. As a result, issues are often decided based more on emotions than facts. During the NEET controversy, a wide variety of information and claims emerged. At such times, the responsibility of citizens, the

media, and political parties—all of them—increases to express their views based only on verified facts. There are varying opinions in the country about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. His supporters consider his achievements to include infrastructure expansion, digital governance, India's growing role on international platforms, and numerous welfare schemes. His critics, meanwhile, raise serious questions about unemployment, inflation, social tensions, and some administrative decisions. The maturity of democracy lies in ensuring that both sides have the right to express their views. A leader should be judged not solely by his popularity, but by his decisions, results, and accountability. It must also be kept in mind that elections are not the final stage of democracy, but rather a crucial one. The public chooses from available options based on their discretion. This does not mean that the elected government is above criticism. Similarly, it is not appropriate to dismiss every government decision without supporting it with facts. The balance of democracy lies in acknowledging achievements while also clearly questioning shortcomings. The NEET controversy has exposed a deeper problem in the education system. Competitive exams in India are no longer just tests, but have become the foundation of the social and economic aspirations of millions of families.

The NEET Movement Has Written
a New Chapter in Student Power

THE WORLD YIELDS; IT ONLY TAKES SOMEONE TO MAKE IT YIELD

— Saurabh Varshney

Throughout the country's democratic history, there have been mass movements that compelled those in power to heed the voice of the people. From farmers' protests and anti-corruption movements to the recent student agitation against alleged paper leaks and irregularities in the NEET examination system—these events have once again proven that in a democracy, organized, peaceful, and purposeful collective action can be more powerful than any government. This is why the saying "The world yields; it only takes someone to make it yield" seems relevant once again. The NEET examination is one of the most critical exams linked to the futures of lakhs of students across the country. Consequently, if the fairness and credibility of the exam are called into question, it is not merely a crisis for a single examination but a blow to the integrity of the entire education system. After years of hard work, it is only natural for students to feel outraged when they realize their success might hinge on systemic flaws rather than their own merit. It was this anguish that united students from across the country on a single platform. Mobilizing through social media, young people raised their voices democratically at various locations, including Jantar Mantar. This movement was not led by any single political party but

was driven by the collective participation of students and socially conscious citizens. It also demonstrated that today's youth are not confined to digital platforms; when the need arises, they know how to take to the streets and defend their rights in a manner consistent with the Constitution. Amidst mounting public pressure, the government was compelled to make several significant decisions regarding the education system. The resignation of the Education Minister, indications of reforms in the examination process, and a renewed emphasis on transparency—these developments were widely viewed as a moral victory for the student movement. This sends a clear message that, in a democracy, power is ultimately accountable to the voice of the people. If a movement is conducted with adherence to facts, discipline, and democratic decorum, even the most formidable governments are compelled to reconsider their decisions. This movement conveys another significant message. It would be a grave error to view students merely as future voters or as part of a political crowd. Indian history bears witness to the fact that, from the freedom struggle to the JP movement, student power has played a decisive role in shaping the course of change. Even today, the youth are struggling not just for their personal futures, but for the establishment of transparen-

cy and justice within the system. However, it is equally essential that the objective of student movements be systemic reform rather than political gain. If a movement shifts its focus from education, transparency, and equal opportunity to political polarization, its core purpose is undermined. Therefore, it is the collective responsibility of the government, the opposition, the judiciary, and society to strengthen the examination system so that issues like paper leaks, cheating mafias, and corruption do not recur. The NEET controversy has made it clear that merely arresting the guilty is not enough. The need of the hour is to implement systemic improvements—such as technological upgrades, digital security, institutional accountability, time-bound investigations, and stringent penalties—across the entire examination process. The future of lakhs of students cannot be sacrificed at the altar of administrative negligence or organized crime. A government yielding to a student movement after 12 years? A perception has also emerged regarding this movement that, after a long time, the central government was compelled to take significant decisions amidst mounting pressure from students. In a democracy, when the public—and the student community in particular—consistently voices concerns about an issue, the government's obligation extends

beyond merely maintaining law and order; it must also establish a dialogue and seek solutions. The success of a democracy lies in the government and citizens arriving at solutions through dialogue rather than confrontation. It is equally vital that mass movements remain entirely peaceful and constitutional. Violence, damage to public property, or actions that disrupt law and order undermine the moral strength of any movement. On the other hand, the government, too, must respect the democratic right to dissent and protest. Timely dialogue can prevent many major movements from escalating into confrontations. The NEET movement has not only exposed flaws in the examination system but has also reaffirmed the role of student power in a democracy. The most significant message of this movement is that change stems not merely from a shift in power, but from informed citizens, organized efforts, and democratic struggle. In a democracy, the strength of a voice is determined not by numbers, but by its purpose, moral conviction, and public trust. If the struggle is just, the intentions are clear, and the methods are democratic, change is inevitable. Thus, the greatest lesson for today's India is this: "The world bows down; it only takes someone with the resolve to make it bow."

The author is a senior journalist, thinker, and political analyst.





Finance Minister Sitharaman Urges I-T Department To Stop Making Taxpayers Run 'From Pillar To Post'

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday urged the Income Tax department to work for the benefit of common people without making them run from pillar to post. She also went public with her disappointment at the "laidback" nature of government departments, which leads to illegal occupation of government lands or encroachments.

on government lands and underlined the need for integrity in conduct from all officials. Citing the challenges faced by the department in getting permissions to construct a building in the Nariman Point business district, which she inaugurated on Sunday, Sitharaman said these experiences, despite serving in the Indian Revenue Service (IRS), would have given them an idea of what the common man goes through. An IRS officer has the name of the Income Tax department behind him, a "powerful force to frighten people", Sitharaman reminded, adding that despite this, the officials had to run from pillar to post to get clearances from authorities to proceed with work on the 13-floor building. "Can this (experience) incentivise you to understand the position of a common citizen when he approaches you? Don't make them run from pillar to post where your authority is required; do the work for them," the FM said.

Theminister was quick to say that she is not asking the officials to break the rules or do something out of the way for the common citizens but rued that it takes a lot of effort in this country for people to get their rightful claims. The land parcel on which Aaykar Sindhu, the 1.13 lakh sq ft building, is built, had been with the I-T department since 1973, Sitharaman said, adding that despite this, illegal occupations had sprouted up on the land. "The fact that you led it to have occupations, illegal occupation, shows somewhere in our governance, we are too laid back. It is somebody's job to take care of our assets, and when it is encroached, we say, oh, we have the land, but we can't build it," she said. Sitharaman also promised to look into the issue of many of the I-T officials not staying in official accommodations in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai areas, hinting that half of them do not enjoy such a facility and also travel for long to get to workplaces. Stating that she would prefer government-to-government transfer of lands for the purpose, Sitharaman assured that she will facilitate the quick transfer of lands and other aspects like getting the permissions, building, dealing with CPWD (Central Public Works

Department), assigning contracts and tenders will be the job I-T officials will have to perform. "Get it all done at the earliest so that we do not get into the second half of the 21st century with scattered office spaces, rental accommodation in a city, which is fast growing and expect to pay rents or lease rental at phenomenal rates," she said. She particularly mentioned state-run BSNL, asking officials to get the telco's land and promised to speak with her counterpart minister. Meanwhile, she also used the opportunity to underline the importance of integrity in the discharge of a critical work like tax collection for the country. "Integrity is the one and only principle I will advocate to each one of you," she said. India is not planning to reconsider its budget numbers for now as the country has sufficient buffers to deal with pressures stemming from the Middle East conflict, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said. The government has "some resource kept aside" to meet challenges arising from rising risk insurance premia as ships pass through war zones, Sitharaman said at an event in Mumbai on Sunday. "I have kept buffers which can take care of it and therefore at this stage, I don't think I'll look at my budget

number for readjusting," she said, pointing to government support for oil and fertilizer imports at higher prices. Risks to India's economic outlook have increased as a truce between the US and Iran remains elusive, raising the prospect of prolonged geopolitical tensions and higher energy prices. India is a large importer of crude oil, making it susceptible to higher inflation and a wider trade deficit when energy prices climb. India's inflation accelerated last month, rising above the central bank's target for the first time in almost a year and a half as food prices hardened. Sitharaman said erratic monsoons due to the El Nino effect were adding to existing inflation risks, with the country receiving excessive rain in some parts and not enough in others. "Inflation therefore cannot be just imported," she said, adding "it's also our own want of rain and the monsoon being less-than-normal" that could also add to price pressures. The finance minister said several indicators including goods and services tax collections pointed to resilient economic growth. The central bank expects the economy to grow 6.6% in the fiscal year through March despite headwinds from the war and a deficient monsoon.

DONALD TRUMP IMPOSES NEW TARIFFS TARGETING DOZENS OF COUNTRIES

Dozens of America's trading partners, from Europe to China to India, now face new tariffs of 10% to 12.5% on goods shipped to the United States, according to the office of the US Trade Representative. The tariffs, announced Thursday, went into effect Friday morning. Goods from the 60 affected trading partners make up 99.4% of US imports. The timing coincides with the lapse of a 10% near-blanket duty President Donald Trump imposed earlier this year that was deemed unlawful by the Supreme Court. "The president is not going to allow his trade policy and overall objectives to be undermined simply because one tool may be limited by a court or something else," senior White House officials told reporters Thursday on a call previewing the actions. The latest action follows a monthslong investigation by the US Trade Representative into the alleged use of forced labor to produce goods exported to the US and the failure by various countries to address the practice. The European Union questioned the new tariff, with its foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas calling it a "negative surprise" and rejecting the forced labor claims as



unfounded. Switzerland also opposed the allegations, while Norway said it does not plan to retaliate by imposing tariffs on American goods. In a statement on Thursday, Brazil rejected the 12.5% tariff on its goods and reiterated its call for reciprocity. And in a video on social media, Mexico's economy minister said, "We do not see a change in the effective tariff Mexico is paying today." Australia, subject to a 12.5% tariff, also voiced opposition to the new tariffs. Trade Minister Don Farrell told reporters Friday that Washington's move is "completely unjustified," adding that Canberra would continue to lobby the US to

remove all tariffs on Australian goods. The new rates apply to imports from countries that supply nearly everything the United States buys from abroad. A variety of imports, including oil and gas, as well as products that can't be sourced domestically, were granted exemptions, administration officials said. The timing of the rollout was intended to "avoid complexity" that would come from layering the new levies on top of the existing 10% duties, administration officials said. They added that business leaders have been seeking more continuity and predictability around tariffs. That marks a stark shift from a year ago when

businesses were smack in the middle of Trump's dizzying on-and-off again tariffs. "We have heard loud and clear: people want to know what tariff rate they're going to pay," the administration official said. "The real message here that everyone needs to take away is the president is going to always use the tools at his disposal to achieve his trade policy objectives." Certain countries qualified for a lower 10% rate instead of the 12.5% rate after taking steps aimed at combating alleged forced labor. But administration officials said they were not convinced the affected countries would eliminate the practice any-

time soon, and are prepared to keep the higher levies in place. For most Americans, the change is unlikely to immediately translate into higher prices because it largely preserves duties that importers have already been paying. That may change in the coming weeks and months, though. There are several other pending investigations that rely on the same trade law, Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, being used to enact the new rates. One focuses on allegations that major trading partners — including China, Mexico and the European Union — are contributing to global manufacturing overcapacity. Section 301 tariffs are viewed by trade experts as a more legally durable option because they have survived previous court challenges, unlike the emergency authority Trump last April used for his "Liberation Day" broader tariff regime. They can also remain in place indefinitely. The administration is exploring additional ways to raise border taxes. Earlier this week the White House announced a 50% tariff on certain Canadian goods set to take effect next month under a never-before-used provision of the Smoot-Hawley Trade Act.

Mumbai court orders Flipkart to refund iPhone buyer sent beard oil

Mumbai: A consumer court here has directed Flipkart and the seller to refund over Rs 1.11 lakh to a customer who received beard growth oil instead of the Apple iPhone he had ordered, and to pay Rs 70,000 in compensation and litigation costs. The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Additional DCF, Mumbai (Suburban), in its order passed earlier this month, held that repeated closure of the customer's complaints without granting any effective relief amounted to "unfair trade practice". It noted that the order was placed through the online platform by making the necessary payments. "Therefore, the opposite party No 1 (Flipkart) owed a corresponding duty to ensure that the consumer received the product ordered and to provide an effective mechanism for redressal of consumer grievances," the commission said. An e-commerce entity cannot simply distance itself from a transaction after facilitating the sale, particularly where the consumer immediately reports that a completely different product has been delivered, it said. The failure to investigate the complaint, recover the wrongly delivered parcel, provide a replacement or refund and repeatedly close the complaint without granting any



effective relief "amounts to a clear cut deficiency in service and also constitutes an unfair trade practice", the commission said. The panel emphasised that the failure on the part of the seller, International Value Retail Pvt Ltd, to deliver the contracted product and rectify the grievance despite repeated requests clearly establishes deficiency in service on its part. Thus, both the platform and the seller are jointly and severally liable for the loss and inconvenience caused to the complainant, the commission ruled. Purchased in 2023 The complainant, a resident of Mumbai's Powai area, had purchased an Apple iPhone 14 Pro (128 GB) on April 22, 2023, via Flipkart for Rs 1,11,793 using a no-cost EMI scheme. While a separately ordered charger and cover were delivered successfully, the main package

delivered the following day contained "beard growth oil" and packing material instead of the high-end smartphone. The complainant alleged that despite repeatedly approaching Flipkart's customer support between April and May 2023 and submitting all required documents, the company failed to resolve the issue. Instead, the complaint was repeatedly marked as "resolved" without any refund or replacement being provided. The consumer forum directed Flipkart and the seller to refund the principal amount of Rs 1,11,793 with an interest of 9 per cent per annum from April 22, 2023, until actual realisation. Additionally, they were ordered to pay Rs 50,000 as compensation for mental agony and harassment, and Rs 20,000 as litigation costs within a period of 45 days.

MILLENNIALS ARE TRYING TO MAKE MINIVANS COOL AGAIN

New York — They see them rolling, but maybe they won't be hating. Millennial parents are changing their minds about the minivan. A TikTok video shows off lounge-style chairs with built-in ottomans and 14-inch screens in the back of a Kia Carnival. Another proudly shows off a Toyota Sienna, proclaiming "18 cupholders but y'all still thirsty." One mom turned her minivans into a mobile living room — but not without throwing out the old stuff with an enthusiastic "YEEET!" Minivans, once the de facto soccer-mom vehicle of choice, are making a big comeback. Long considered a dead segment, minivan sales grew 21% in 2025, selling almost 400,000 units, according to Edmunds. The Toyota Sienna is one of the fastest-selling cars on the market right now, Matt Smith, head of content at CarGurus, told CNN. Sales increased 35% in 2025, and they stay on dealer lots for only around 18 days. In May, Chrysler and Dodge CEO Matt McAlear declared that the minivan is "seeing a resurgence." Millennials have reached prime parent-



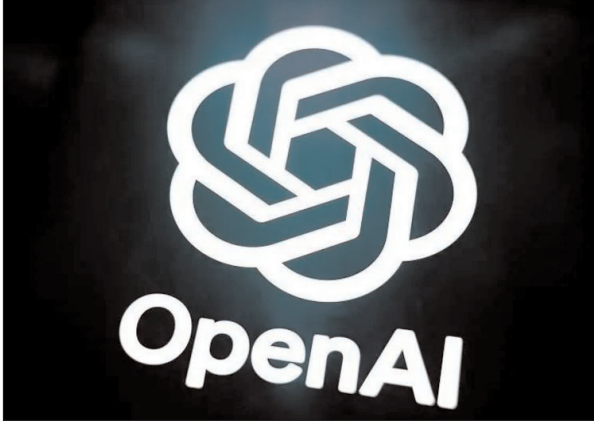
ing age, and they're not just discovering the wildly practical features inside minivans — like seats that don't just slide backwards and forward, but side to side — but also learning how to best lug their kids. Kelsey Spencer, a mom of three girls in Northwest Illinois, thought she'd never be caught dead in a minivan, but now she can't seem to live without her 2026 Kia Carnival Hybrid. When she first got a van two years ago, Spencer was afraid she would "pull up, and people are going (say) 'ugh, a minivan.'" Instead, people ask: "What kind of car is this? It's really cool." Parents told

CNN that sliding doors make it easier to shuffle kids around, and the third row fits growing humans well. But it's also an affordable vehicle compared to the muscular, hulking SUVs that were once family vehicle of choice but are now some of the most expensive autos on the market. "There's really no better vehicle for people hauling and cargo capacity, but because they were deemed uncool for so long, sales just completely dropped off," Ivan Drury, director of insights at Edmunds, told CNN. "But in the end of the day, your money is what matters most." How the minivan lost its

'mom car' throne Minivans' space and versatility were pioneering when the car debuted in the 80s. At the time, station wagons were the uncool family lugger, Damon Smith, research editor at cars.com, told CNN. Overtime, minivans acquired "soccer mom" baggage. SUVs were simply seen as cooler. Commercials showed off sleek and imposing vehicles with four-wheel drive going off-roading through rugged terrain, adding some aspiration to a Tuesday night baseball practice pick-up. And car manufacturers knew that customers would buy into that, even though more families were using their cars to go to the grocery store rather than driving through the jungle. "We are not a smart car-buying population in that regard," Drury said. "I know plenty of people with families that would have certainly benefited from all that additional cargo space" in a minivan. Minivans still only represent about 2.4% of the overall car market, compared to 3.2% in 2016. Most people simply don't need all the space a minivan provides.

Warning shot or publicity stunt - how worried should we be about the OpenAI hack?

This week the tech world was gripped by a story that has it all - and which started like a sci-fi thriller. Hugging Face - a kind of app store for artificial intelligence tools - announced on 16 July it had been hacked by a cyber criminal wielding enormously powerful AI. The bombshell announcement was full of scary, highly technical terms: "a swarm of sandboxes", "agentic attacker", and "self-migrating command and control". Hugging Face said the hack was different from anything it had handled before because it was done at superhuman speed by an AI with little or no human guidance. The AI performed 17,000 actions in less than two days, successfully breaching the large wealthy tech company to steal secrets. It left the tech world in shock. But who was responsible for this attack? Hugging Face researchers guessed the mysterious attackers had used one of the big AI models but they had no idea who or where the criminals were. The perplexed company contacted the police and investigations commenced. Who did it? Commentators and analysts took to their pod-



casts and social media accounts to guess which cyber crime group or nation state hacker might be behind it. Then on Wednesday, nearly a week after Hugging Face raised the alarm, the true culprit was unmasked. It was ChatGPT. The Scooby-Doo-style reveal was made even more bizarre - and worrying - because OpenAI said its bot did the whole thing on its own, without permission. The firm said it all went down during a test of its tech's hacking skills. Two new versions of ChatGPT, designed to be master hackers, broke out of a supposedly secure test environment and gained access to the

internet. They then attacked Hugging Face to get access to the information to help them ace their exam. OpenAI issued a press release explaining what had happened and said it was "partnering with Hugging Face" to address the security incident and share lessons learned. Conspiracy drama Since then, there has been fierce debate about the incident. Was it truly a stark warning about the future of AI? Or was it a publicity stunt by OpenAI to show off how powerful their models are? It's the kind of scare marketing AI companies have been accused of for years and, since the much discussed launch of

Anthropic's Mythos model, cyber-security prowess has been a focal point. One of the top comments on OpenAI boss Sam Altman's X post about the incident summarises this scepticism: "If y'all can't understand that this was written to purely brag about the model then I don't know what to tell you." Cyber-security consultant Daniel Card said sarcastically on LinkedIn: "Isn't it lucky [that] out of the millions of sites that got pwn3d [hacked], OpenAI managed to pwn someone who also could benefit from the marketing exposure..." For some, the story is more conspiracy drama than sci-fi thriller. The message is: "Aren't my AI tools really powerful? Buy them so you can protect yourself from other people's AI attacks." We can't know the truth, but the opposing point of view posed by other commentators is just as dramatic. Is this a sign that OpenAI made a potentially dangerous error in judgement and planning? An OpenAI spokesperson said "we recognise there are a lot of questions and speculative details circulating" about the incident.

Firefighters battle wildfire as tens of thousands evacuated near Bordeaux



Firefighters are battling to contain wildfires burning near to the city of Bordeaux as tens of thousands of people have been evacuated from the surrounding region. Speaking on Sunday, the city's Mayor, Thomas Cazenave, said the fire was about 15km (9 miles) from the outskirts of the city's wider region, and 25 to 30km (15 and 19 miles) from its centre, although downplayed the possibility of Bordeaux being evacuated. Overnight into Sunday about 55,000 people were evacuated from villages to the south of the city in the Gironde region, famed for its vineyards. Wildfires have raged across Europe over the past week, primarily France and Spain, where more than 330,000 people have been evacuated. France has been worst-affected, with an area of 42,000 hectares burnt, making it one of the largest forest fires since World War Two. About 98,000 hectares have burnt across the country since the start of the year. In total, more than 220,000 people have been evacuated in the south west of the country. Captain

Nicolas Braz, one of the leaders of the firefighting operation, said the fire had created "its own winds - complete with whirlwinds", adding it was "erratic and unmanageable". France's Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said on Sunday the situation in the region remained "very unfavourable" and the wildfire was "moving erratically towards the Bordeaux metropolitan area". In the Gironde region, the rescue effort involves 2,500 firefighters, including a Swiss team, 1,500 military personnel and almost 1,200 police and gendarmes, who are carrying out evacuations and helping with rescue and securing operations. Dry vegetation and brisk winds are causing the fire to spread, with 60km (37 miles) of the A63 motorway, which leads to Spain, having been closed. The final stage of the Tour de France, taking place in Paris on Sunday, has been shortened from 133km to 89km (from 82 miles to 55) to allow security forces to be redeployed to the firefighting effort.



■ One dead, 16 injured at Berlin Pride event after vehicle driven into crowd

ISRAELI SETTLERS SET FIRE TO MOSQUES, CARS AND FARM LAND IN WEST BANK

Israeli settlers have set fire to two mosques, as well as cars and agricultural land in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian officials say, as tensions in the territory continue to flare. The latest attacks come two days after a clash between settlers and Palestinians near the village of Tal, which left four Palestinians and two Israelis dead. Both sides accused the other of provoking the violence. The confrontation has further inflamed the situation in the West Bank, which has seen ever growing violence by extremist settlers encouraged by far-right elements in the current Israeli government. Palestinian reports say that two villages in the occupied West Bank came under attack from settlers



overnight - with cars vandalised, property stolen and hate graffiti spray painted on walls. The mayor of Qusra said that settlers set fire to a mosque that was under construction. Abdul Azim Wadi said that settlers spray painted graffiti that included the word, "revenge", on the walls of the mosque. The Israeli military has said that troops were sent to Qusra and that police

would investigate and collect evidence. Palestinian officials say that in a separate incident, settlers set fire to another mosque in the village of Kour and sprayed slogans on its walls. Since the deadly clash on Friday in Tal, Palestinians say that there have been multiple settler attacks on villages across the West Bank. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has carried out raids and arrested dozens of Palestinians in what it's called a "counter-terrorism" operation. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded to the incident in Tal by vowing to take "powerful action". That includes the possible demolition of the homes of two of the Palestinians who were allegedly involved. There's been a sharp increase in settler attacks in the West Bank in recent months. It's drawn international condemnation, but has shown little or no sign of being reversed. The situation had already deteriorated before the Hamas-led attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023. But since the subsequent war waged by Israel against Hamas in Gaza erupted, settler violence in the West Bank has escalated.

Meghan calls Harry 'a charmer' during MasterChef Australia appearance



The Duke of Sussex surprised his wife with a video call during her appearance as a guest judge on MasterChef Australia. During the episode, Prince Harry called Meghan to check in, with producers handing her the phone. She greeted him by saying "hi, my love," and afterwards called him "a charmer". Contestants were set the task of transforming a staple ingredient into a dish "fit for a duchess", although the duchess herself urged her fellow judges to "call me Meghan". Critics were split on the episode, with The Sunday Times calling it "one big gush-fest" while Hello Magazine posted she "made MasterChef Australia her own". Meghan filmed the episode in Melbourne in April, during a four-day tour of Australia with Prince Harry. The couple, no longer working royals, visited in a private capacity. Their trip combined visits to charitable causes alongside money-making events. She said it was "a tough one because I have a lot of palettes to appease", with her British-born husband favouring "meat, potatoes and cream sauce" while she preferred grilled fish. Their two children, Archie and Lilibet, often help with meal preparation and are "great eaters", she said. "We're really lucky on that front," she added. She then urged the chefs to cook something they felt connected to. "What's the story behind it?" she asked them. When Prince Harry dialled in later on during the episode, Meghan told them:

"My husband's here," prompting cheers and shocked faces from contestants and spectators. "I wish you could try these, these dishes are fantastic," she told him, before showing him the food. He signed off by telling her to go and enjoy, adding: "Very sorry to disturb you." The duchess's appearance on the latest season of the show was well received by Hello Magazine, which shared a video of the episode online and complimented Meghan for the way she interacted with the chefs. "The Duchess of Sussex gave personal time calls to all the contestants, proving that she's always so effortlessly elegant," it wrote. Writing in The Sunday Times, Charlotte Ivers was less impressed, saying her appearance on the show "told us nothing about what she likes or who even will leave the competition". Social media users were also split, with one viewer writing that Meghan was "warm, gracious and a delight to watch" while another called Prince Harry's cameo appearance "cringe". Meghan's appearance on MasterChef Australia comes after her own lifestyle and cookery show, With Love, Meghan, which sees her share cooking and hosting tips with friends and guests. Her show has secured a nomination at the Daytime Emmy Awards, in the Outstanding Lifestyle Program category. Earlier this month, Prince Harry and Meghan, along with their children Prince Archie and Princess Lilibet, visited the UK.

Zelensky tries to fix crisis over removal of defence minister and counts the cost

With an acting defence minister in place and a new commander-in-chief in charge of the military, Ukraine's recent political crisis is over, right? Not so fast. The political fallout from President Volodymyr Zelensky's 15 July decision not to re-appoint Mykhailo Fedorov as defence minister, as part of a cabinet reshuffle, continues to reverberate about Kyiv and beyond, even as air raid sirens wail and Russian drones and missiles are intercepted overhead. Fedorov's mostly young supporters are still mounting daily street protests, demanding that Zelensky reinstate the popular young innovator widely credited with driving much of Ukraine's recent technological innovation. On Thursday, Fedorov said he had rejected Zelensky's offers of alternative posts in government, saying there were only three positions worth having to influence the course of the war: minister of defence, commander-in-chief of the military or president of Ukraine. "If you don't have a ministry under you, you



don't have a budget," ex-deputy defence minister Alina Frolova said, "and you don't actually have the authority to do something." Fedorov's reference to the presidency did not go unnoticed. Was this the first public sign that the ousted minister sees himself as a rival to Zelensky? One former defence official suggested he became a real candidate for the presidency the moment he was dismissed. But with the country at war and no elections scheduled - Ukraine's constitution still prevents them in wartime - how useful is it to put your head above the political parapet so far in advance? "He's

being childish," one opposition MP told me, on condition that he remained anonymous. "He's looking to further his political career, which I think is just stupid in the circumstances where we are." The president's supporters say Zelensky has gone to great lengths to resolve the crisis, especially over the question of who to replace the unpopular commander-in-chief, Oleksandr Syrskyi. Eventually he decided on Maj Gen Mykhailo Drapaty, 43, a highly respected former commander of Ukraine's land forces. "He consulted pretty much every significant figure in the Ukrainian army," former government adviser

Yuriy Sak told the BBC earlier this week. "So the decision that he has taken now is very well informed, and I support it because General Drapaty is a young, battle-proven, modern general who will take our defences to a new level, hopefully." But while Drapaty's appointment has been generally welcomed, it only represents a partial fix by a president scrambling to repair the damage caused by his removal of Fedorov. Ironically, for a president whose youth and apparent dynamism propelled him to power in 2019, Zelensky seems to have misjudged the mood of young Ukrainians, eager for their leaders - political and military - to represent their values and aspirations. "It's quite natural that people want to see someone who is a warrior against corruption, who is very modern, who is young," Oleksandr Merezhko, an MP from Zelensky's Servant of the People party, said. "People want to see something like that in politics, which they consider to be dirty and full of hypocrisy."

Man charged with possession of explosive substance after bomb found in car



A Dublin museum employee has been charged in connection with an investigation into the discovery of a bomb in a car in the Republic of Ireland. Simon O'Donovan, 44, with an address at Sperrin Road in Dublin 12, was charged with being in possession of an explosive substance at St Lawrence Rd in Chapelizod, Dublin 10 on 22 July. He appeared before the Special Criminal Court on Saturday evening, where the court heard he was employed by the Collins Barracks National Museum of Ireland. A vehicle was stopped on the N2 near Carrickmacross near the Irish border on Wednesday. On Friday, a 25-year-old

woman was charged in relation to the same incident. At the sitting of the Special Criminal Court, Det Sgt Shane Noone said he arrested O'Donovan at 17:07 local time on Friday and informed him he would be charged with the offence. Solicitor Darragh Mackin said he had not taken instruction from O'Donovan as he was observing a strike over changes to criminal legal aid fees and was only appearing in court out of courtesy. O'Donovan told Judge Patrick McGrath that he had "no representation at all", and had asked for "the services of this gentleman beside me", referring to Mackin.



Firefighters struggle to control wildfires threatening French city as hotter weather looms

Left-wing Democrats are on a winning run - but can they lure back crucial swing voters?

On a Saturday evening in Michigan, the skies still hazy from drifting Canadian wildfire smoke, hundreds of voters packed into Detroit's opulent 104-year-old Opera House, rising from their seats to cheer loudly as Senator Bernie Sanders and Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez took the stage. As two of the leading figures on the American left, Ocasio-Cortez and Sanders were there to champion Senate hopeful Abdul El-Sayed - a doctor running on a platform of universal healthcare. His supporters carried signs with El-Sayed's slogan "Medicare for All", and wore shirts urging the end of immigration enforcement and US aid to Israel. But they were not the only ones tuning in.



Voters and politicians across the country are watching to see if El-Sayed can earn the Democratic nomination to run for Senate in November's midterm elections. His opponent - Congresswoman Haley Stevens - is an experienced politician with deep pockets, thanks in part to large corporate campaign donations. The two represent the divisions within

the Democratic Party as it seeks to take back control of Congress. On one side is the centrist establishment, backed by traditional power players. On the other is the left wing of the party, exemplified by Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez as well as New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani. But while left-wing Democrats have seen a wave of victories during this summer's primaries

- including in New York and Colorado - what remains to be seen is if they can claw back support from disillusioned working-class voters, who flocked to President Donald Trump in 2024. In Michigan - which voted for Democrat Joe Biden in 2020 but Trump four years later - the open Senate seat is a must-win for Democrats. The seat had been held by one of their own, and if the party hopes to make gains in the Senate, and halt Trump's agenda, they will need to keep a hold of it. Whoever wins the primary on 4 August will be competing against Trump ally Mike Rogers come 3 November. At Saturday's rally, some in the crowd felt hopeful, as Ocasio-Cortez promised El-Sayed represented the "politics of the future".

RISHIKANTA SINGH: INDIAN ARMY WEIGHTLIFTER WHO WON HISTORIC SILVER WITH CWG SNATCH RECORD

Weightlifter Rishikanta Singh Chanambam won India's second medal at the ongoing Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow. He secured a silver medal in the men's 60kg weightlifting event after registering a combined lift of 264kg across the snatch and clean and jerk disciplines. Rishikanta, who broke the Games record in the snatch with a lift of 121kg, managed 143kg on his only successful clean and jerk attempt. However, he had to settle for silver as Malaysia's Mohamad Aniq bin Kasdan claimed gold after setting Games records in both the clean and jerk (152kg) and total lift (273kg). Kenya's Joshua Amunga Mboya took bronze with a total lift of 260kg (115kg + 145kg), edging out Sri Lanka's SDSS Wiriduwa, who recorded 244kg (109kg + 135kg). Who is Rishikanta? Raised in Imphal West, Manipur, Rishikanta's journey to the



top has been shaped significantly by the training, guidance, and support provided by the Indian Army's sports programme. Currently, he is also representing the Indian Army. His breakthrough moment came at the 2025 Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships in Ahmedabad, where he clinched the gold medal in the 60kg category with a combined lift of 271kg. The impressive performance not only earned him the top podium spot but also set a new national record and

secured his direct qualification for the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. The upcoming edition is Rishikanta's second appearance at the Games, having previously represented India in the men's 55kg event at Birmingham 2022 before transitioning to the newly introduced 60kg weight class. Earlier, at the 2024 National Weightlifting Championships, he had underlined his potential by establishing a national snatch record of 124kg while competing in the 61kg division.

Mirabai Chanu Shatters Big Record To Clinch India's First Gold At Commonwealth Games 2026



Mirabai Chanu shattered the Commonwealth Games record to clinch the gold medal in women's 48kg weightlifting event in Glasgow on Sunday. Chanu first broke the Games record in snatch with a brilliant 85kg attempt and then followed it up with a 105kg attempt in clean and jerk - another Commonwealth Games record. It took her total to an impressive 190kg. This was her third consecutive gold medal at the Commonwealth Games and India's first gold medal at Commonwealth Games

2026. The result was never really in doubt; the only question was how far Mirabai would push the limits. And the Manipuri superstar answered in emphatic style, rewriting the record books with a stunning display of strength and composure. The 31-year-old shattered the Commonwealth and Commonwealth Games records in the snatch, while also setting new CWG marks in clean and jerk and total. She lifted a commanding 190kg, with a best effort of 85kg in snatch and 105kg in clean and jerk.

VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI, MAYANK YADAV SHINE AS INDIA SWEEP ZIMBABWE 3-0 IN T20I SERIES

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's remarkably adaptive 81 and an equally solid effort from bowlers led by pacer Mayank Yadav ensured India's smooth 35-run win over Zimbabwe in the third and final T20I in Harare on Sunday. Along with the victory, India also completed a 3-0 sweep, a fine step-up after surrendering the previous two series to England (0-4) and Ireland (0-2). Zimbabwe had to bat out of their skin to chase down 193 on a rather sluggish pitch. But they did not have enough patience or nous for it, ending up at 157 for seven despite Ryan Burl making a fine unbeaten 54. Just like in the previous matches, Zimbabwe lost one too many wickets early as they could not properly use the Power Play segment. Pacer Yash Thakur (2/45) got rid of Dion Myers and skipper Sikandar Raza off successive balls in the fourth over as the hosts slipped to 34 for three. Earlier Mayank (3/29), who bowled with heaps of pace and accuracy, had ousted Brian Bennett in the first ball of the innings as



Zimbabwe struggled for an early move-on. It became a trend as the innings progressed despite Indians grassing as many as four catches and conceding couple of boundaries in another sloppy fielding effort. Burl played a nice innings of assurance and formed a good 60-run alliance with Wesley Madhevere (28) for the fifth wicket. The Zimbabweans played some forceful shots around the park, but the early damage was too big to mitigate. India too suffered an early jolt, los-

ing a struggling Abhishek Sharma for 2 after opting to bat. But Sooryavanshi showcased another side of his batting during the 49-ball innings on a slightly tacky pitch at the Harare Sports Club, and The 15-year-old started in a relatively subdued fashion - first 10 balls produced a mere 11 runs, the next 10 saw the arrival of 15 runs, and eventually his second T20I fifty came in 31 balls. There were a few stunning shots as one would expect in a Sooryavanshi innings.

MALAYSIA RETURNS TO F1 CALENDAR AFTER 9 YEARS, TO HOST 'BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX' IN OCTOBER 2026

The Bahrain Grand Prix, which was cancelled in April due to the Middle East war, will be held in Malaysia in early October, Formula One organisers announced on Sunday. "Formula 1 and the FIA can confirm that Malaysia will host the... Bahrain Grand Prix at the Sepang International Circuit from October 2-4 2026," F1 and motorsport's world governing body said in a statement. The original F1 calendar featured 24 races but those in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia were cancelled because of the war. Upcoming events in neighbouring Qatar and Abu Dhabi also remain in doubt. Sepang circuit, to the south of Kuala Lumpur, returns to the calendar for the first time since 2017 to host what will be called the "Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix in Malaysia".



"This is fantastic news for our fans. They will continue to enjoy a full and exciting Formula 1 calendar, while also seeing the sport return to a great venue," said Formula One chief executive Stefano Domenicali. "Malaysia is an incredible

country, and Sepang holds a special place in Formula 1 history. "It will provide a spectacular setting for racing and an unforgettable experience for fans at the circuit and watching around the world." Uncertainty still hangs over the end of the sea-

son, as the last two rounds are supposed to take place in Qatar and Abu Dhabi on November 29 and December 6. These two races could be cancelled, and several options are on the table to replace them, such as staging two consecutive Grands Prix

in Las Vegas at the end of November, or even holding one or two final races in Europe. In that case, the Imola (Italy) and Portimao (Portugal) circuits are the most likely candidates, several sources within the paddock told AFP. No final decision on the last two rounds in the Gulf is expected before late September or early October, with authorities opting to wait and see how the situation develops. Formula 1 has added Malaysia to its 2026 schedule as the host of the Bahrain Grand Prix that was postponed earlier in the season. The sport's bosses had hoped to reinstate the event to the calendar, but the continuation of conflict in the Middle East, which was the original cause of the cancellation of April races in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, has forced a change of plan.

Shaheen Afridi Threatens To Quit T20 League, Lodges Complaint After 'Impact Player' Usage Goes Wrong



Pakistan pacer Shaheen Afridi found himself in the centre of drama in the ongoing Lanka Premier League (LPL) 2026. According to multiple reports, Afridi lodged a complaint with the anti-corruption unit of the LPL after being denied the chance to play in a match due to an unusual error. Playing for Kandy Royals, Afridi was seemingly set to feature as

an 'Impact Player' in a match against Colombo Capitals. However, a mistake led to his name not being included in the team list. As per Pakistan-based news reports, the head coach of Kandy Royals apologised to Afridi during their batting innings, stating that a mistake by the team analyst caused Afridi's name to not be included. After the incident, Afridi reportedly not only lodged a complaint to league officials, but also flew back to Pakistan immediately. An apology from team officials and league organizers reportedly convinced the player to stay in the tournament. Afridi went on to play in Kandy Royals' next game against Jaffna Kings, picking up three wickets with the ball and also slamming 22 with the bat. However, Kandy Royals lost the game, leaving them bottom of the table. Further controversy in LPL 2026 Former India Under-19 cricketer Manjot Kalra, one of the co-owners of Lanka Premier League franchise Jaffna Kings, was arrested in Sri Lanka on Friday for allegedly trying to induce a player into corrupt practice, according to local media reports in Colombo.

Shikhar Dhawan Hails Anahat Singh After Historic World Junior Squash Win

Former India cricketer Shikhar Dhawan congratulated teenage squash sensation Anahat Singh after she scripted history by becoming the first Indian to win the World Junior Squash Championship. The 17-year-old achieved the milestone on Saturday at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada, defeating Egypt's Ruqayya Salem in straight games to secure the biggest title of her career and end Egypt's 15-year dominance in the women's event. Reacting to the landmark achievement, Dhawan took to X to applaud the youngster's accomplishment and its significance for Indian sport and wrote, "History created! Congratulations to Anahat Singh on becoming the first Indian to win the World Junior Squash Championship. A phenom-



enal achievement that will inspire generations. Keep shining!" Anahat entered the tournament as the top seed and lived up to expectations with a commanding 11-3, 11-7, 11-9 victory over second seed Ruqayya Salem in the final. The triumph also made her the first non-Egyptian player to lift the women's World Junior title since American Amanda Sobhy achieved the feat in

2010. The Indian had already signalled her title ambitions by reaching the final on Friday, becoming the first player from the country in 21 years to make it to the championship match. She earned that place with a four-game semifinal victory over Egypt's Barb Sameh before overcoming another Egyptian opponent in the title clash.

TAIWAN'S CHOU TIEN-CHEN SNATCHES CHINA OPEN TITLE AT AGE 36



Taiwan's Chou Tien-chen overpowered his opponent in the China Open men's singles final on Sunday, becoming the oldest tournament champion in the category at age 36. World number six Chou vanquished 27-year-old Toma Junior Popov of France in three games, 21-15, 7-21, 21-13, to claim his first Super 1000 title since winning the Indonesia Open in 2019. The veteran needed just

over an hour to seal the outcome in the championship matchup in Changzhou, eastern China. When an official video review showed that a final return from Popov had dropped out of bounds, an exhausted and emotional Chou kneeled face-down on the court, hands outstretched in victory. Popov, ranked 16th worldwide, had been chasing his first victo-

ry at a Super 1000 tournament. His younger brother Christo, ranked fifth, was eliminated in the round of 16 at this year's China Open. Earlier on Sunday, Japan's Akane Yamaguchi defeated host-country hope Chen Yufei to win the top prize in the women's singles final with an efficient 21-18, 21-16 performance. The final pairing represented a rematch of last year's World Championship in Paris, which was also won by Yamaguchi.

Ahead Of CWG 2026 Athletics, Neeraj Chopra Makes Stunning 90m Remark



Two-time Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra says he is not "obsessed" with breaching the 90-metre mark every time he competes, insisting that winning major titles and delivering consistently in difficult conditions matter more than chasing a magical number. The reigning world champion, who finally

crossed the coveted 90m barrier with a personal best throw of 90.23m at the Doha Diamond League last year, said his priority at any championship is to finish on top, with distance being secondary. "No, I don't feel that pressure, nor do I obsess over a specific distance. As an athlete, my goal is always to improve my distance," Chopra said in response to a PTI query. "I always feel in major Games, the main challenge is winning gold among the best athletes in the world. The second thing is distance. So I feel I need to keep increasing my distance." The 28-year-old acknowledged that weather and other external factors often influence javelin competitions, making consistency just as important as throwing big. "But when the conditions are tough, we are not able to get the distance. In that case, we have to be consistent. So I feel I should maintain my consistency and see how I can also increase my distance," he said.

Rs 10 Crore + Dube And Brevis: Report Hints At CSK's Sensational Offer To MI For Hardik Pandya

The Chennai Super Kings (CSK) seem to be pushing their pursuit of Hardik Pandya, who is all set to leave the Mumbai Indians ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2027 season. A report has claimed that MI had asked for Ayush Mhatre plus cash from CSK in the trade deal involving their captain. However, CSK are reportedly not keen to trade Mhatre for Hardik. Rather, they have reportedly offered Dewald Brevis and Shivam Dube plus Rs 10 crore for the MI all-rounder. According to a report in Hindustan Times, Mumbai Indians are seeking a heavy return for their star all-rounder. Their ideal package includes seasoned hard-hitter Shivam Dube alongside rising top-

order prodigy Ayush Mhatre. MI view Mhatre, who impressed in his brief IPL 2026 campaign with a strike rate near 180, as a vital long-term asset to rebuild their squad balance following an underwhelming season. However, Chennai Super Kings are said to be fiercely protective of Mhatre's future with the franchise. Reluctant to part ways with the 19-year-old batter, CSK have reportedly countered with an alternative arrangement. The Men in Yellow are said to have offered Dube, South African dynamic batter Dewald Brevis, and a cash payment of Rs 10 crore to pull off the deal. If finalized, the proposed counter-offer from CSK could represent a total asset evaluation

exceeding Rs 20 crore, marking a potential windfall for Mumbai Indians. Hardik remains an exceptionally rare commodity in Indian cricket as a pace-bowling, middle-order leader who does not occupy an overseas slot. However, his recent performance in IPL 2026, scoring just 206 runs and picking up four wickets, has raised questions about whether CSK are paying for potential rather than immediate output. With neither team confirming an official agreement, the standoff highlights a classic trade dilemma: Mumbai's demand for verified young talent versus Chennai's intent to preserve their core while adding elite all-round utility. Should negotiations

between the two powerhouses stall, rival franchises such as Kolkata Knight Riders are reportedly monitoring the situation, ready to swoop in if the deal Hardik's reputation inevitably carries a premium. There are very few Indian players capable of batting at No.5 or No.6 and providing genuine pace-bowling overs, and that scarcity alone makes him more valuable than a conventional comparison of runs and wickets would suggest.



'AGADHA' Publicity Campaign Begins with the Blessings of Balkampet Ellamma–Pochamma : Grand Worldwide Release on August 14, 2026

The publicity campaign of the much-awaited Telugu mystical thriller AGADHA commenced on an auspicious note with the divine blessings of Sri Balkampet Ellamma–Pochamma Ammavaru, one of Telangana's most revered and historic temples. The AGADHA team visited the temple on Sunday, July 26, 2026, and offered the traditional Bonam to the Goddess before officially launching the film's publicity campaign. Written and directed by M.S. Raju, AGADHA is presented by Ajay KR under the Sri Aadi Varaha Productions banner and produced by Kasi

Visalakshi Balusu. The film is all set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on August 14, 2026. Leading lady Kamakshi Bhaskarla, dressed in traditional Bonalu attire, offered Bonam to the Goddess with great devotion. Director M.S. Raju, producer Kasi Visalakshi Balusu, presenter Ajay KR, Executive Producer N.V.N. Subbaraju, hero Shravan Reddy, and their family members also participated in the ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, producer Kasi Visalakshi Balusu said: "AGADHA brings a fresh dimension to the divine mystical thriller genre. The film has already created tremendous excitement

with its first poster and teaser. Just as M.S. Raju garu's earlier production 'Devi' created history, we are witnessing similar positive vibes for AGADHA. It is truly auspicious that our publicity campaign has begun with the blessings of Balkampet Ellamma–Pochamma Ammavaru." **Director M.S. Raju said:** "AGADHA has a strong divine element connected to the Goddess. Beginning our promotional journey with the blessings of Balkampet Ellamma–Pochamma Ammavaru is truly special. We are releasing the film on a grand scale, and the trailer will be unveiled very soon."



The Title Announcement of Dhanush – Rajkumar Periasamy's #D55 "OM"



The title announcement of #D55, one of the biggest anticipated films in Tamil cinema is here and the film has been titled "OM." In this film, jointly produced by R Take Studios and Wunderbar Films, National Award-winning actor Dhanush plays the lead role. Following the success of Amaran, this new creation directed by Rajkumar Periasamy had its title announcement event held recently in a grand manner in the presence of members of the press and media, along with the film's team. The film is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on October 16.

HANIA AAMIR'S 1ST LOOK FROM NEW PAKISTANI DRAMA



Pakistani actress Hania Aamir, who enjoys a massive fan following across Pakistan, India and other Urdu and Hindi speaking regions, is all set to return to television with a brand-new drama. The actress has started shooting for Fanaa, and her first look from the project has already gone viral on social media, leaving fans excited. In Fanaa, Hania will be seen opposite Nameer Khan, marking the duo's first on-screen collaboration. Fans are eagerly looking forward to their fresh pairing and the chemistry they will bring to the screen. Hania Aamir's

Fanaa look The drama is produced by Geo Entertainment, written by Zanjabeel Asim Shah, and directed by Badar Mehmood. While the makers are yet to announce an official premiere date, the serial is expected to hit television screens by the end of this year. Hania was last seen in Meri Zindagi Hai Tu alongside Bilal Abbas Khan. The romantic drama emerged as a blockbuster, recording a peak 15.0 TRP and crossing 3 billion digital views, making it one of the biggest Pakistani television hits in recent years. Hania Aamir has started shooting for Fanaa.

BULGARIA ROLLS OUT THE RED CARPET FOR THE INDIAN FILM INDUSTRY

RRR Bulgaria Producer Todor Lazarov Juji Invites Indian Filmmakers to Discover Europe's Next Major Production Hub As Indian cinema continues its global expansion, Bulgaria is emerging as one of Europe's most attractive destinations for international film production. Combining competitive production costs, attractive financial incentives, world-class infrastructure, experienced crews, and an exceptional variety of filming locations, the country is increasingly positioning itself as a strategic production hub for Indian filmmakers looking to expand into Europe. Leading this initiative is Todor Lazarov Juji, Founder of TL Production and Producer and Line Producer for the Bulgaria schedule of S.S. Rajamouli's global blockbuster RRR, who is



actively promoting Bulgaria as a long-term production partner for India's rapidly growing film industry. "Bulgaria is far more than just another filming destination. It is a complete production partner capable of supporting Indian filmmakers from the earliest stages of development through post-production, while providing direct access to the European market. Our goal is to build long-term partner-

ships that make filming in Europe easier, faster, and more competitive for Indian producers," says Juji.

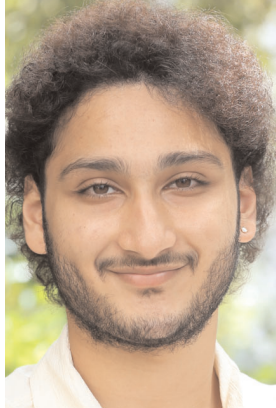
Why Bulgaria?

Instead of simply offering beautiful locations, Bulgaria provides a complete production ecosystem capable of supporting projects of every scale, from independent films to large international blockbusters. Indian producers can benefit from:

Competitive production costs 25% cash rebate for eligible productions One of Europe's lowest corporate tax rates Modern film studios and sound stages Highly experienced international crews Advanced VFX, CGI, and post-production facilities Diverse locations ranging from medieval castles and Roman ruins to mountains, forests, Black Sea beaches, and contemporary cities With decades of experience hosting major Hollywood and international productions, Bulgaria has established itself as one of Europe's most reliable filming destinations. A Vision to Bring Indian Cinema Closer to Bulgaria "My vision is simple: when an Indian producer thinks about filming in Europe, I want Bulgaria to be among the very first destinations that come to mind.

Mahesh Babu liked 'Srinivasa Mangapuram' a lot. He felt very happy: Hero Jai Krishna Ghattamaneni

Superstar Krishna's grandson and Mahesh Babu's nephew Jai Krishna Ghattamaneni is making his debut as a hero with the film 'Srinivasa Mangapuram' directed by Ajay Bhupathi. Bollywood actress Raveena Tandon's daughter Rasha Thadani is also being introduced to the Telugu audience through this film. Senior actor Dr. Mohan Babu is playing a powerful role in this prestigious film. Producer P. Kiran is producing this film and Ashwini Dutt is presenting it under the banner of Vyjayanthi Movies. The songs, teasers and trailer released so far have received a wonderful response from the audience. The film will be released in theaters worldwide on July 30. On this occasion, Jai Krishna Ghattamaneni shared the features of the film at a press conference.



When did you first start thinking about becoming an actor? -I have loved films since childhood. I decided to become an actor when I was 16. After deciding, I started training properly. I went to Mumbai for two years. Then I went to Pondicherry. After training there for some time, I went to New York. I trained there for two years too. After returning, I started listening

to stories. -Ajay garu conducted a three-month workshop for this film. Look test, screen test, dialogues... we prepared all this in advance. **How did the journey of 'Srinivasa Mangapuram' start?** -This journey started with Gemini Kiran. He introduced Ajay garu. That's how this film started. I had heard some stories before. But the story told by Ajay garu seemed very amazing. I wanted to come before the audience with a story with good emotion and good character. That's how all the elements came together in this story. **How is your family support? Has Mahesh garu seen this movie?** -I have family support. I have the encouragement of my golden grandfather at every step.

Dialogue King Sai Kumar Birthday Special

Sai Kumar is a name that needs no introduction to Telugu audiences. The moment his name is mentioned, what comes to mind is his powerful baritone, impeccable diction, and commanding dialogue delivery. Having lent his iconic voice to numerous leading actors, he went on to establish himself as a celebrated actor in his own right. It is no surprise that the Telugu film industry fondly honours him with the title "Dialogue King." Born on July 27, 1961, Sai Kumar hails from a distinguished film family as the son of veteran actor P. J. Sharma. Despite his cinematic background, he carved his own identity through sheer talent and dedication. Recently, he achieved the remarkable milestone of completing 50 glorious years in the film industry. Sai Kumar began his career as a dubbing artist, lending his powerful voice to heroes and several prominent characters in numerous



films. His first dubbing assignment was for the film Samsaram. He later made his debut as a child actor with Devudu Chesina Pelli. However, it was the Kannada blockbuster Police Story that catapulted him to stardom. The film's dubbed Telugu version also became a massive hit, earning him immense popularity among Telugu audiences. Over the years, Sai Kumar has enjoyed an illustrious career across Telugu,

Kannada, and Tamil cinema, excelling as a hero, villain, and character actor. Whether portraying a fearless police officer, an emotional father, or a powerful antagonist, he has consistently impressed audiences with his remarkable versatility and screen presence. Even in his second innings, Sai Kumar continues to stay busier than ever with an exciting lineup of projects. He is playing pivotal roles in Ravi Teja's Irumudi, Dharmasthala Niyogakavargam, Sambarala Yetigattu, Nagarjuna's landmark 100th film, S.V. Krishna Reddy's Vedavyas, a film directed by Kiran Abbavaram, Roshan Meka's Emo Emo Idi, a Vishwak Sen starrer, Siddhu Jonnalagadda's Lungi Man, the Nithiin-Nani project, Satyadev's Full Bottle, Varun Tej's Bari, Varalaxmi Sarathkumar's Kurmavaram, and Sai Prakash's Sai Baba.

When Mirai Girl Turns To Korean Girl

ritika Nayak, who impressed audiences last year with the blockbuster hit Mirai, has plenty to be excited about right now. She has two much-awaited films lined up, Duet and Korean Kanakaraju. The latter, an Indo-Korean horror-comedy, stars Varun Tej, Ritika Nayak, and Satya, and is directed by Merlapaka Gandhi. The film is all set to hit theatres on August 7, 2026. Meanwhile, Ritika recently treated social media followers to a fresh set of pictures.

SIZZLING ROMANTIC NUMBER KONCHEM KONCHEM FROM NENU READY TURNS UP THE HEAT

Young hero Havish's wholesome entertainer Nenu Ready, directed by commercial hitmaker Thrinadha Rao Nakkina, made positive impression with its teaser and other promotional material. Produced by Koneru Satyanarayana and Nikhila Koneru under Harniks India LLP, the film features Kavya Thapar playing the female lead. The makers have now started the musical journey by unveiling the first single- Konchem konchem. Composed by melody specialist Mickey J Meyer, Konchem Konchem is a breezy romantic track infused with an alluring vibe. The tune effortlessly captures the sensual mood of the song, while the beautiful instru-

mentation adds depth and enhances its appeal. Saraswathi Putra Ramajogayya Sastry pens expressive lyrics that beautifully portray the romantic chemistry between the lead pair through a mix of poetic and playful lines. Sameera Bharadwaj's soulful and expressive vocals elevate the song further, perfectly complementing its mood and turning up the heat. The song showcases the intimate chemistry between Havish and Kavya Thapar, who share an effortless screen presence. Adding to the glamour is Bollywood actress Nargis Fakhri, who makes a striking Telugu debut with her special appearance and captivating dance moves.

