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**BJP backs Jharkhand student protest, slams opposition for 'double standards'**

NATION | PAGE

**BATTLE FOR MALI BASE HAS KILLED DOZENS OF MILITANTS, ARMY SAYS**

WORLD | PAGE



**RITU VARMA NAILS BREEZY STYLE IN YELLOW**



SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

09-08-2026  
Total pilgrims : 87719  
Tonsures : 34256  
Hundi kankulu : 459 CR  
Laddu sale : 403 Lac  
Ammarapadams : 31 Lac  
Aswinihospital : 3538  
Waiting Compartments : Outside line at Silathoranam  
Approx. Darsan Time for Saravadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens) : 20-24 H.

## IN SHORT

**NINE DIE AS VAN SWEEP AWAY IN SWOLLEN DRAIN IN MP'S RAJGARH**

**Bhopal, Aug 10 :** Nine people, including three children and two women, were killed when a van carrying 11 passengers was swept away by strong currents in a swollen drain in Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh district on Monday, police said. Two passengers managed to swim to safety after the accident, which occurred around 9.30 a.m. near Padana on the Pachore-Sarangpur road.

## PM's image 'destroyed'; Modi, Shah cannot escape: Rahul Gandhi

**NEW DELHI (TSIT):** Upping the ante against the government over the alleged police "brutalities" against student protesters, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday pushed for Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation and claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image has been "destroyed" and can never be rebuilt. The former Congress president said the youth of India will not allow the prime minister and the home minister, or any official, to escape the consequences of their actions.

On July 20, 2026, thousands of youths across India demanded accountability from those they elected to office and sooner or later, they will get that accountability, Gandhi said in an article published in The Hindu. "On July 20, 2026, India's young people came together to demand a fair education system and accountability for paper leaks. These young women and men came from every caste, class, region and religion," he said. They were brave enough to demand justice, wise enough to know their Constitutional rights, tender enough to laugh at their own turmoil, and earnest enough to believe that they could fight and win, the Congress leader said.

The nation watched the protesters in awe, as they sang, danced, laughed, held hands and stood together, he said. "Their resistance gave voice to the pain both of their own generation, and of crores of Indians who are suffering but have been silenced by fear," he said. Gandhi stressed



that the protests carried forward India's proud legacy of peaceful resistance, a tradition which won it independence and is protected by Article 19 of the Constitution. "Yet, the government tried to crush the youth's voice with a brutal assault. They were attacked with tear gas shells, beaten with nail-studded lathis and shot with pellet guns," he said

Gandhi cited the example of 19-year-old Sahil Lochab, whom he had earlier met, saying he had hundreds of lead pellets lodged all over his body.

"A pellet struck his eye, likely blinding him. Policemen wielding batons brutally assaulted young women, injuring many on their private parts. Minors were beaten with lathis, their bones broken, gashes and bruises on their bodies," he said.

In Bihar, student protesters were shot with firearms, including an AK-47, in Siwan, leaving many severely injured, he said. Who authorised this "illegal and unconstitutional violence", Gandhi asked. "The Narendra Modi government prides itself on its centralised control.



## Varuna Yagam Concludes at Nagarjuna Sagar CM Revanth, Wife join prayers for Abundant rains & farmers' prosperity

**Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:** The Maha Varuna Yagam, organised on the banks of the Krishna seeking abundant rainfall, full reservoirs and prosperity for Telangana's farmers, concluded with the Purnahuti at Vijay Vihar in Nagarjuna Sagar on Monday. Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy, along with his wife Geetha Reddy, participated in the concluding rituals and offered special prayers. Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and his wife, Kodad MLA Padmavathi Uttam Kumar Reddy,

also participated. As many as 108 Ritwiks and Vedic scholars performed the day-long rituals amid chanting of Vedic hymns. Special prayers were offered for widespread and timely rains across Telangana, increased inflows into the Krishna and Godavari rivers, filling of reservoirs and tanks, improvement in groundwater levels and a prosperous agricultural season. After the Purnahuti, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy inspected the Krishna river and reviewed the water situation at Nagarjuna Sagar. Officials briefed him on the

reservoir level, inflows and storage position. Speaking to the media, Uttam Kumar Reddy said he firmly believed that every endeavour undertaken with sincerity, devotion and good intentions would receive divine blessings.

"Our aspiration is for peace and prosperity of the people, abundant rains, full reservoirs and the well-being of Telangana's farmers," he said. The Minister thanked the Vedic scholars, Ritwiks, officials, public representatives, staff and devotees for making the Maha Varuna Yagam a success.

## Communists in country are total cowards: FM Sitharaman

**NEW DELHI (TSIT):** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday termed communists in India as "total cowards" while lashing out at CPI (M) member John Brittas, accusing him of spreading confusion in the country over the charging of fees on UPI payments.

In her reply to the discussion on The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, in the Rajya Sabha, Sitharaman took exception to Brittas walking out of the house without listening to her reply after he made allegations while moving a resolution to disapprove of the Income-Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026, promulgated on June 5, 2026.

Brittas alleged that the government has decided to charge fees on UPI payments due to pressure from the US, just like it was exerted on Brazil, and was going



against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion that "India's digital payment ecosystem had been developed as a free public good".

The CPI (M) member, who was allowed to move his resolution by Deputy Chairman Harivansh after a brief commotion, had walked out when his speech was

cut short by the Chair for exceeding the time limit.

"John Brittas can please stay here, if he wants to hear one line. Typical communist style, blast everybody with 'not facts', twist the facts and do something and also demand my right I have to speak'...and when actually the replies are to be given to them, point by point, they don't have the courage. Cowards!" Sitharaman said. "Communists in this country are total cowards; the member (John Brittas) has proven that. They can't face facts, but they will go on filibustering, making noise," she added.

Referring to the assertion by the opposition member of his right to speak, Sitharaman asked, "They don't have a right to listen? When the reply is given, I feel like saying it is my right to stand up and reply".

## Assam flood situation critical; death toll 100, nearly 1.4 lac affected



**GUWAHATI (TSIT):** The flood situation in Assam remained critical on Monday as the toll touched 100 with two more deaths, while almost 1.4 lakh people reel under the deluge in seven districts, according to an official bulletin. An official of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said several rivers are flowing above their danger mark, posing a threat to newer areas.

According to the authority's daily flood bulletin on Sunday night, two persons have lost their lives in the

deluge in Golaghat and Karbi Anglong districts in 24 hours.

With these fatalities, the total number of deaths in this year's floods has increased to 100.

At present, 456 villages are inundated while 11,933.46 hectares of crop areas have been damaged across Assam. According to ASDMA's daily flood report, more than 1,37,500 people have been affected in Charaideo, Darrang, Golaghat, Jorhat, Karbi Anglong, Nagaon and Sivasagar districts.

## No Farmers in BJP-JDS march, it's for Nikhil's political future: K'taka CM

**Bengaluru (TSIT):** Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Monday dismissed the BJP-JDS padayatra against the Bidadi Township project as a politically motivated exercise, claiming it has no connection to farmers' welfare and is instead aimed at securing the electoral future of former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy's son, Nikhil Kumaraswamy. Responding to reporters in Malur, Shivakumar said, "There are no farmers in the padayatra being organized by the BJP and JDS. This protest is being done solely for the political future of their family's boy (Nikhil Kumaraswamy)." He acknowledged that protesting is a democratic right but maintained that the march was populated



by party workers brought in from other constituencies, not genuine local farmers. Shivakumar also pointed out that the Karnataka government was merely continuing a project originally initiated by the previous JDS-Congress coalition, which had proposed a compensation of just Rs 25 lakh for affected landowners. "We are giving compensation ranging from Rs 2.50 crore to Rs 3 crore," he asserted, highlighting a tenfold increase in land acquisition rates under his government.

## Exam protesters set to march to Jharkhand Assembly even as govt says '98 pc demands fulfilled'

**RANCHI (TSIT):** Students protesting alleged irregularities in Jharkhand's recruitment examinations refused to call off their stir and are set to march towards the Assembly on Monday, the 17th day of the agitation, even though the government said it has accepted "98 per cent of the demands".

Even though the talks failed to make any headway, the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC), which is at the centre of the turmoil, saw a major shake-up on Sunday. All three JPSC members - Ajeeta Bhattacharya, the wife of prominent JMM leader Supriyo Bhattacharyya, Anima Hansda and Jamal Ahmad resigned on Sunday.

The development came after the Jharkhand CID summoned the three for questioning over allegations of irregularities, including paper leaks. Bhattacharya is scheduled to be questioned on Monday, Ahmad on August 12 and



Hansda on August 14. JPSC chairperson L Khianteng resigned on July 22. Various political and non-political outfits have extended support to the students' movement, which is among the biggest such agitations in Jharkhand in recent years.

The support came after the sixth round of talks between the government and student representatives failed to break the deadlock on Sunday, with protesters insisting on a CBI probe into the alleged irregu-

larities in recruitment examinations, including the JSSC-CGL exam.

Sensing that the agitators' proposed march to the Assembly may spark law-and-order issues and even violence, massive security arrangements have been put in place. Most of the schools in Ranchi remained closed on Monday.

Security personnel have been deployed in strength on the way leading to the Assembly, where prohibitory orders have been clamped

within a 750-meter radius till August 12.

More than 1,500 personnel from the Rapid Action Police, Indian Reserve Battalion, district police and QRT have been deployed along the route from Kutchery Chowk to the Assembly, Ranchi SSP Rakesh Ranjan said, adding that the route is under CCTV surveillance, while drones will monitor the students' march.

The situation remains fraught as talks failed even though the government said that it has accepted 98 per cent of students' demands. However, the protesters said the government had agreed to cancel only three of the 13 exams they wanted scrapped.

"We will not compromise till our demand for a CBI probe is fulfilled," JPSC-JSSC Reforms Manch leader Ravindra Paswan said after the talks and appealed to students to join Monday's Assembly march.

## Parliament Deadlock to Continue: Priyanka

**NEW DELHI (TSIT):** Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday asserted that the deadlock between the opposition and the government in Parliament will continue till Union Home Minister Amit Shah makes a statement over alleged police excesses on students. With only four days of the Monsoon session remaining, the fate of major bills on women's reservation, delimitation and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) remains uncertain amid the ongoing logjam in Parliament.

"I think the deadlock in Parliament will continue till the Union Home Minister gives a statement," Priyanka Gandhi told reporters in the Parliament House complex. While a few opposition parties have shown signs of mellowing their stand on the women's quota and delimitation bills after the government's outreach, the Congress and most of its allies have vowed to oppose any move to bring in these and the FCRA Amendment Bill. The



Constitution Amendment Bill that proposes 33 per cent reservation for women in 2029 and a redrawing of Lok Sabha constituencies to expand the House was defeated in April due to failure to secure a two-thirds majority.

The FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 25 this year and is to be taken up for discussion and passage. "If the central government thinks they can cook up and introduce the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill within these two or three days, they should keep that wish to themselves," AICC general secretary KC Venugopal had said on Sunday.

## AP to finish land re-survey by 2027

**Amaravati (TSIT):** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday announced that the land re-survey process would be completed by 2027 and Pattadar Passbooks bearing the official State emblem would be issued to farmers and landowners.

Participating in the distribution of 'Mee Bhoomi-Mee Hakku' Pattadar Passbooks at Kalidindi in the Kaikaluru Assembly constituency in Eluru district, he said the coalition government was working with the sole agenda of resolving revenue-related problems. Naidu stated that the Revenue Records Reforms 2026 were introduced to cleanse and streamline land records. He issued a Pattadar Passbook bearing the State emblem to a woman farmer, Nallajarla Durga Bhavani.







EDITORIAL

Modi-Shah's Good Cop-Bad Cop Routine Isn't Fooling Anyone

The machinations of those wielding State power is not surprising at all after the nationwide youth protest has given them the biggest political scare so far. The standard play-book is out, though it is proving inadequate this time. As usual, Prime Minister Narendra Modi plays the good cop, Amit Shah enacts the bad cop and the RSS boss, Mohan Bhagwat, often intervenes as the benign judge who says all the right things and then lets the status quo prevail. Does this routine sound familiar to you?

Journalists and seasoned political analysts have been deceived time and again by this carefully crafted charade of the Sangh parivar, which has created the most brutal edifice of coercive power seen in the last half century. The good cop-bad cop routine is critical to preserve Modi's image. We all know what it looks like: Whenever a big political crisis hits the NDA government, Modi disappears from the scene and becomes incommunicado for some time. The rest of the ecosystem gets busy with elaborate mechanisms to ring fence the prime minister's image. The most immediate and urgent task is always to protect the prime minister's image, which is far more important than addressing the larger crisis itself. Whether it is civil war in Manipur, the prolonged farmers' agitation, Operation Sindoor, Donald Trump imposing the highest tariffs on India or several lakh GenZ protestors across India threatening to unmask the emperor, the first priority is always to rescue the prime minister. The GenZ protest at Jantar Mantar followed by the disastrous use of violence, including the horrific use of pellet guns, created a unique crisis for Modi. So the system kicked in to politically insulate Modi. Normally, only Modi enjoys the privilege of going AWOL, even as the rest of the system finds ways to protect his persona. But oddly, this time, even Union home minister Amit Shah, who is supposed to firefight for the prime minister, disappeared and didn't show his face in parliament for weeks even after Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation. This was most unusual because in the past Shah would be leading the campaign to rescue Modi's image. So what exactly was going on? Why was Shah incommunicado? Has the GenZ shock overwhelmed both No 1 and No 2? These questions are still swirling, as seasoned journalists and political analysts speculate that the prime minister might be unhappy with his home minister for mishandling the protests by using excessive violence. One should be extremely cautious in making such an assessment, as this could also be a part of the good cop-bad cop charade and Shah may be just letting rumours fly that the prime minister was upset with his handling of the protest. By not showing up in parliament, Shah may just be giving the impression of his own guilt only to protect Modi's image. Mind you, burnishing the prime minister's image is of paramount importance. Never for a moment lose sight of this imperative. So one could possibly read Shah's actions in this light rather than be tempted to conclude that there has been some serious disagreement between him and the prime minister. The good cop-bad cop game may well have its creative variations, depending on the nature of the crisis. This crisis is possibly much bigger than any faced by Modi, so we have had the RSS chief, Mohan Bhagwat.

Pakistan's Kashmir 'Story' Is Now Collapsing Under The Weight Of Its Own Contradictions

Pakistan's central narrative framed the Kashmir dispute with India essentially through the language of self-determination, making a case for international attention. The ongoing protests in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) over the last two months, however, inform an uncomfortable contradiction. What began as an anti-government civil society mobilisation in early July over inflated prices and political representation has, by early August, resulted in weeks of internet blackout, dozens of state-led killings, the proscription of a political coalition, and a flawed election process. The escalation rapidly turned deadly with clashes between security forces and protesters. The violence coincided with local polls being conducted in three phases between late July and early August. In fact, on June 9, a British national who was not even participating in the demonstrations was struck by a stray bullet and died, though his death has been reported only now.

The 1974 Interim Constitution provided a blueprint for PoK's political framework, while concurrently institutionalising Islamabad's control. The 2018 constitutional reforms devolved some of the financial and legislative authority to the elected representation in the region; Islamabad continued to retain substantial influence through the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, fiscal dependence, and oversight. At the center of the current movement is the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), a coalition body of traders, lawyers, students, and transporters. The coalition first consolidated in 2023 over bread-and-butter grievances involving flour subsidies, electricity tariffs, and the high cost of living. These campaigns gained concessions in 2024 and 2025.



However, the JAAC broadened its demands into a 38-point charter, with the central issue of 12 reserved seats in PoK's 45-seat Legislative Assembly for refugees from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K); these refugees, however, are based in mainland Pakistan. The JAAC has long argued that this arrangement has enabled Islamabad, with no local stake in the region, to divert funds from the region. For the Pakistani government, the dispute is tied to the state's broader diplomatic position on Kashmir. Mirroring its own constitutional claims, India reserves 24 seats out of 114 for the territories across the Line of Control (LoC), under the legal provision of Section 14(4) of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. Therefore, an alteration in this arrangement will likely open a Pandora's box, potentially suggesting a shift in Pakistan's constitutional understanding of Kashmir's status. Negotiations between JAAC and the Pakistani government collapsed in May.

Subsequently, Islamabad banned the group under anti-terrorism laws on June 5 and arrested several leaders. Dozens of protesters have been killed since then. Under the 1974 interim constitution, PoK has a semi-autonomous system, which includes its own Legislative Assembly, Prime Minister, President, and Supreme Court. However, the candidates holding these offices must remain loyal to the Pakistani state, thereby narrowing the field of permissible politics. In July, JAAC reportedly wrote directly to Pakistan's Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, potentially with the knowledge that Rawalpindi holds the real authority in the state rather than any civilian institution. The state's response was securitised. A tough-handed approach towards protesters and a harsh crackdown deepened these pre-existing anti-government grievances. While the rhetoric around Kashmir has been that of separatism, the movement has remained devoid of any secessionist sentiments and

emphasised the lack of governance, violation of constitutional rights, fiscal transparency, political representation, and accountability within the administration. The greatest burden on Pakistan's narrative of Kashmir, therefore, is emerging not from New Delhi but from its own governance failures at home. This information remains crucial in the reading of the recent developments.

and Karachi. The rules extend to freelancers, translators, fixers, and local collaborators. The government further warned of suspending accreditation on grounds of national security, public order, and sovereignty. Foreign correspondents have always faced bureaucratic hiccups in reporting from sensitive regions, with NOCs being delayed or withheld. International publications thus rely on local journalists for work. However, locals also now fall under the new regulatory framework. Media censorship was also imposed on an international platform on accusations of engaging in "yellow journalism" through reporting from polling stations in Muzaffarabad. The media environment is so dire that journalists across Pakistan live under the threat of being "picked up", also known as enforced disappearances, for crossing 'red lines' against the military establishment. Pakistan's Kashmir case has been grounded on a moral claim that Kashmiris have

been denied the right of self-determination. The claim has often been directed to India's conduct in Jammu & Kashmir, especially after the abrogation of Article 370 from the Indian Constitution in 2019. The unfolding environment in PoK represents the ghosts of those very allegations - a banned coalition, prolonged internal shutdowns, a securitised approach, in a part of Kashmir that is administered by Pakistan, against a movement that is not even contesting the region's status. The reputational costs will not remain confined to the subcontinent. Unfortunate for Pakistan, they arrive at a moment when it is eager to reconstruct its image as a responsible diplomatic actor, mediating a conflict between the US and Iran in West Asia. The sporadic airstrikes in Afghanistan first, and the visuals of unrest in the territory now, will likely taint Islamabad's carefully manicured narrative of its Kashmir policy. Already, the realisation seems to be dawning on Pakistan's powerbrokers that they have been caught on the back foot: last week, the Prime Minister's adviser, Rana Sanaullah, said that 99% of the protesters in the region are "patriotic" people - a curious pivot from just days ago, when they were being termed "enemies" or "terrorists". For New Delhi, the episode presents a ripe opportunity to question the coherence of Pakistan's international advocacy on Kashmir and the realities in the occupied territories. For Pakistan, which is already struggling with its strained economy, the insurgency in Balochistan and the deteriorating security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the civil society movement in PoK now adds yet another layer of pressure to an already overstretched state.

86 VOTES, 1 WARNING:

Is India Turning Into Collateral Damage In US' War On Russia?

The Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 was approved by the United States Senate with 86 votes against 11. The bill will now be sent to the House, which resumes sessions on August 31. New Delhi must act before then to shape the final legislation. The bill grants the President authority to impose tariffs up to 100% on imports from third countries to build pressure on Russia. The July version limits this secondary-tariff provision to the five largest importers of Russian crude oil and natural gas. India is a prime member of that category.

**The Real Target**  
If regarded merely as another American trade threat, the measure will be misunderstood. Moscow is the target. Washington wants to sever Russian energy income and has decided to use access to the American market to achieve this. India is seriously affected by this. The arrangement indicates India's standing in America's strategic calculations. Washington sees defence and technology cooperation with New Delhi as tied to the economic pressure over the latter's commercial ties with Russia. As long as Indian interests align with American priorities, the partnership protects them; where they differ, protection disappears. Tariff Power Becomes Statute A 100% tariff would sever impact Indian exports, but the President can still impose a much lower one. This flexibility is part of the intended design, not a compromise. The



bill gives the executive a graduated tool that can be adjusted based on compliance abroad. The importance lies in the institutional change rather than the rate. Until now, this tariff power had been exercised through unilateral executive action and challenged in courts and Congress each time. Congress is now making it law, turning an improvisation into a permanent part of American foreign policy, backed by a legislative majority. This changes the power from one needing justification each time to one easily implemented. The issue facing India no longer depends on any individual President's character. It concerns the coercive economic power the American political system grants its executive branch, as statutory power continues beyond administrations.

**Eighty-Six Votes**  
The Democratic sponsors, including Senator Richard Blumenthal, presented the bill as a way to undermine the

Russian war effort and support Ukraine. They accepted the secondary-tariff mechanism as the price for that objective. The vote was directed at Moscow, with India suffering the effects as a byproduct. The impact on India was not a significant concern to the Democratic senators when the Russian factor was calculated. It was that calculation, not any hostility on the part of the United States, that accounts for India's vulnerability.

**The Cost And The Ask**  
Ongoing economic pressure has weakened Indian domestic support that underpins the strategic partnership with the United States. This coercive legislation will further damage Indian public opinion and affect cooperation. Soon, sectors previously separate from bilateral tensions, such as defence, intelligence, and critical technology, will suffer negative consequences. These areas took the longest to develop. After that, it will be hard to

predict how disagreements will escalate. This is the paradox that has arisen from India's foreign policy over the last 20 years. To counter China, India has strengthened its economic, technological, and defence links with the United States, and each level of integration has increased the scope of American influence. The solution is resilience, not retreat. The relationship with Washington still advances Indian interests, and the strategic benefits gained over the last twenty years are genuine. Strategic autonomy now rests on building a diverse export market, a range of energy suppliers, and domestic capacity. Each factor reduces the ability of a single partner to turn interdependence into pressure. Since Congress is establishing this framework, diplomatic efforts should not be limited to the White House. New Delhi must engage directly with Capitol Hill and do so before the House finalises its legislative approach. Getting Congress to limit the President's trade powers is beyond India's capacity. The achievable objectives are more worthwhile and limited. India should request mandatory waivers linked to national security or proven reductions in its Russian energy purchases. Such waivers should be approved based on objective legal criteria, not executive discretion. Regarding contract protection, India should advocate for safeguarding existing long-term commercial agreements with transition provisions.

Saudi Arabia Has Money, Missiles, And America. Why Is It Still So Scared?

It has finally happened. After months of meetings, news conferences, bold statements, and speculation, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan signed a joint defence agreement in Mecca last week. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif signed the deal, an alliance many had been likening to an "Islamic NATO", though the term hasn't been formalised. The key provision in this pact is that an attack on any one of the signatories will be regarded as an attack on all. "The agreement is intended to strengthen collective deterrence against any act of aggression, and stipulates that any armed attack against any one of the three states shall be regarded as an attack against them all. It further provides for the enhancement of "all aspects of defence cooperation among the three states", the joint statement said. Unsurprisingly, the agreement comes against the backdrop of the Iran conflict, where Saudi Arabia has been one of the worst-hit nations. Turkey, a NATO member already that has the bloc's second-largest standing army, has said that this new agreement does not clash with its commitments to NATO. In a post on X, the Turkish government's anti-disinformation service said, "The agreement is not in contradiction with the commitments of Turkey's existing international alliances, including those at the heart of NATO." In fact, Turkey had probably been waiting for a green signal from the US, which is why it did not sign the agreement before the NATO summit it convened in



July. Why The Bloc Works By itself, the bloc is a formidable one, with enormous potential. Saudi Arabia is an energy and economic powerhouse, which can bankroll military innovation and R&D. Turkey has a highly developed military industrial complex, given its proximity to NATO's cutting-edge technology. It has made a name for itself in the drone industry and is an emerging defence exporter, accounting for 1.6% of global arms exports. Pakistan is the only nuclear-armed Muslim country in the world with a battle-hardened army and an impressive military arsenal. Both Pakistan and Turkey have close defence cooperation; in 2023, Saudi Arabia had made one of Turkey's largest drone purchases. All three countries lie on major shipping and trade routes, controlling ports, shipping, and maritime trade. Pakistan and Turkey also stand to benefit handsomely through defence cooperation and arms sales. But the genesis of the pact goes back almost a year, when in September 2025, Saudi Arabia and its long-time client state,

Pakistan, signed a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement. That had come in the aftermath of Israel's unprecedented attack on Qatar, a close, non-NATO American ally, which also hosts the largest US Central Command base in the region. The pact had been a signal to not just Israel, but also to longtime rival Iran. Building on the Saudi-Pakistan pact, the security partnership has now extended to include Turkey - another major Sunni but non-Arab power in the region, and one that had earlier directly challenged the Saudi leadership. The Saudi-Turkish Rivalry The Saudi-Turkish rivalry ran deep, especially over the support given to the Muslim Brotherhood and its allies by the current Turkish administration under Erdogan. In 2014, the Saudis had banned the Muslim Brotherhood, viewing it as a direct challenge to their hereditary rule. This was the same challenge that the Islamic Revolution in Iran had brought, and which the Arab Spring had exacerbated. The Turks and the Saudis have engaged in proxy war-

fare in places like Libya and Syria. They had also snapped ties with Qatar once for the same reason. Matters came to a head over the murder of Saudi dissident and journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul, allegedly by the Saudis. In 2019, Turkey, together with Pakistan and Malaysia, had directly challenged Saudi Arabia's leadership of the Muslim world by trying to float an alternative platform to the Saudi-led Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Therefore, while Pakistan has had a history of defence cooperation with the Saudis for years now, with Turkey, it is a very nascent one. Therefore, what the pact essentially underscores under its packaging of Islamic brotherhood - signed as it was on Friday, the Muslim sabbath in Mecca - is deep Saudi vulnerability. In the ensuing US-Israel war on Iran, the Saudis have found themselves vulnerable in spite of the intricate and expensive layer of US security deterrence they had invested in for years. They have been targeted by both Iran and Iraqi militias loyal to Iran. Saudi Arabia's stockpile of Patriot interceptor missiles has been reduced by 86% since the start of the war, according to reports. The Kingdom's economic lifeline has been disrupted by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. More recently, the Iran-backed Houthis, with whom the Saudis had entered a ceasefire in 2022 after a brutal intervention, started attacks on them, besides throttling the other chokepoint on the Bab al-Mandab and the Red Sea, the only other critical waterway open to Saudi Arabia to ship energy exports to its main Asian markets.

## After Hyderabad, Saudi’s flyadeal to launch Mumbai flights

**Riyadh:** Saudi low-cost carrier flyadeal will start non-stop flights between Riyadh and Mumbai on October 3, 2026, following the launch of its Hyderabad service earlier this year. Bookings open for five weekly flights connecting Riyadh and Mumbai from October. The Saudia Group airline opened bookings for the new route on Monday, August 10. It will operate five flights a week, adding more than 7,400 seats per month between the two cities. The schedule will see flights from Riyadh arrive in Mumbai in the morning, while services from Mumbai will reach Riyadh in the mid-morning. Airbus A320neo aircraft will be deployed on the route, with 186 seats in an all-Economy Class layout. The planes are fitted with Airbus’ Airspace cabin, featuring larger overhead bins and USB-A and USB-C charging ports at every seat. Sanjiv Kapoor, flyadeal’s acting chief executive officer and executive vice president of



strategies at Saudia Group, described India as an important market for the airline’s international growth. “Adding Mumbai as our second Indian destination is a key milestone that expands our presence in this vital market,” Kapoor said. He said the new service would cater to Indian expatriates, business travellers and tourists travelling between the two countries. Riyadh-Mumbai route flyadeal began flying to Hyderabad on July 3, 2026. The Mumbai route will strengthen links between Riyadh and one of India’s major commercial centres. Mumbai is the

country’s financial capital and home to Bollywood, making it a significant destination for business and leisure travellers from Saudi Arabia. The new flights will also provide onward connections through Riyadh to Saudi cities including Jeddah, Madinah and Dammam. The route forms part of flyadeal’s wider international network expansion under Saudia Group, amid Saudi Arabia’s efforts to develop aviation and tourism as part of Vision 2030. Bookings open for five weekly flights connecting Riyadh and Mumbai from October.

## PARLIAMENT PASSES TAXATION BILL, NO FEE ON UPI TRANSACTIONS

**New Delhi:** The Parliament approved the Taxation and other Laws (Amendment) Bill on Monday, August 10, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman making it clear that the legislation does not impose any tax or transaction charge on users making payments through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). The Bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha last week, was returned by the Rajya Sabha with a voice vote after a brief discussion and reply by the Finance Minister. Speaking on the floor of the Upper House, the Finance Minister said the proposed amendment to Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act is only an enabling provision and does not introduce a Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) charge on consumers at this stage. “The enabling provision we are bringing in does not impose any tax or transaction charge on UPI users,” she said.

**NO MDR FINALISED YET**  
The Finance Minister added that after the approval of the Parliament, the UPI and Services



Steering Committee of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) will consider whether an MDR charge should be introduced. “So, no MDR framework has been finalised,” she clarified. The clarification comes amid growing speculation that a transaction fee would be charged on UPI payments following the government’s proposed amendments. The Finance Ministry had issued a statement on Saturday that person-to-person UPI transactions will continue to remain free of

charge under the new proposal. The government said that if MDR is introduced, it would apply only to a limited set of merchant transactions above a specified threshold and would be charged at a nominal rate. The rate, it said, would be significantly lower than the MDR applicable to debit or credit card transactions. “Most transactions will remain free of charge for merchants on UPI,” the ministry said. Government officials said that over 90 per cent of the transactions that include daily purchases

### Highlights

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of milk, vegetables, and groceries will not attract an MDR charge. The government also clarified that any MDR charge, if introduced, would be threshold-based on high-value transactions rather than being imposed across all UPI transactions. The government highlighted that UPI was introduced in 2016 and has remained free of charge for both merchants and citizens since January 2020. It also highlighted India’s achievement in developing UPI into the world’s largest real-time interoperable payment system.

## Blinkit Faces Food Licence Suspension After FDA Finds 'Cockroach Infestation' In Mumbai Unit



The food licence of Blink Commerce Private Limited has been suspended after a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspection found serious food-safety and hygiene violations at its establishment in Mumbai’s Malad West. The Food and Drug Administration, Maharashtra State, Mumbai Division, has been conducting regular inspections of food establishments as part of its efforts to ensure food safety and quality. As part of this exercise, Food Safety Officers inspected Blink Commerce Private Limited at Gala No. A-03, Plot Nos. 38, 39 and 40, 1st Floor, Sarvodaya Bhuvan, Ramchandra Lane, Malad (West), Mumbai, on August 7, 2026. The inspection revealed very unsanitary conditions, severe cockroach infestation and improper

storage of food products. Food items were stored on rusty racks and on the floor, and the cold storage area was not cleaned properly. Officials also found packaged food products that were damaged or tampered with or expired in stock. The establishment was found to be in non-compliance with FIFO/FEFO for food storage. The inspection further revealed a lack of effective pest and rodent-control measures in food storage and handling areas, along with deficiencies in waste management, cleanliness and maintenance. The FDA also found that medical examination and health records for food-handling employees were not available. There were also deficiencies in personal hygiene and protective equipment, while food products were stored in improper and disorganised conditions.

## AI isn’t the biggest cybersecurity problem. People are

Cases of AI escaping the lab, infiltrating other companies and trying to deceive people have all made headlines in recent weeks. And in one case, AI models even worked together to break free from their test environments. Does this mean the machines are taking over? Not quite. AI isn’t the mastermind behind today’s most widespread cyber threats; it’s people who can use AI nefariously – and for nefarious purposes. AI has given bad actors massive power, allowing them to create malicious software, research targets, create convincing schemes and automate attacks at an unprecedented pace. One in four data breaches were driven by AI from February 2025 to March 2026, according to an IBM report. And Americans lost more than \$893 million to AI-related scams last year, the FBI says. But experts say real-world threat actors – that is, people – are still the ones pulling the strings. AI agents have only perpetuated existing attack methods, like phishing and malware scams, rather than creating wholly new ones. “It’s the humans that we need to watch out for,” said Oren Etzioni, professor emeritus at the University of Washington and former CEO of the Allen Institute for



Artificial Intelligence. “AI is just the tool.” AI going rogue. Some recent incidents have shown what AI is capable of in the real world, not just in theory, igniting fears about whether the technology is advancing too quickly. In July, OpenAI test models escaped their constraints and hacked into other companies’ systems during an internal evaluation. Days later, Anthropic said it discovered its AI models had breached three companies during testing. In a separate test, Anthropic’s most advanced model used fake identities to try to deceive real people, researchers at Britain’s AI Security Institute said Tuesday. One of Meta’s AI models also broke into an external company, the social media giant said Wednesday. Those breaches also show how

unpredictable AI can be when interpreting instructions. OpenAI’s models, for example, were trying to pass a cybersecurity test when they broke out of their test environment and breached another company, even though they weren’t told to do so. Patrick Fussell, global head of adversary simulation at IBM, compared AI to a genie. “You want to ask it a wish, but you have to be very, very specific about the details of your wish,” he told CNN. “Or it could sort of go awry.” But these instances also happened under very specific circumstances. OpenAI turned off restrictions that would have prevented its model from “pursuing high risk cyber activity.” Anthropic ran its tests without the standard safety safeguards in models that are generally available to the

public. The AI Security Institute also turned off certain tools that could have “reduced the scope” of what the models were capable of. Researchers typically do this to fully evaluate a model’s capabilities. “I couldn’t go into ChatGPT or Claude or something like that, and it accidentally breaks into the FBI. That’s not going to happen,” said Adam Meyers, head of counter adversary operations at cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike. “So what we’re seeing is these are done in specific test conditions where they’re monitoring to see, ‘Does this thing do something that it’s not expected to do?’” How hackers are using AI AI isn’t acting autonomously to come up with new attacks, experts say. Instead, it’s helping cyber criminals implement existing techniques much faster while being more efficient and effective. That can include things like using AI to analyze a company’s website to figure out who to target or deploying an AI agent to handle initial negotiation talks with a cyber extortion victim. AI agents can mimic human conversations through both text and even specific voices. Hackers with little expertise can now leverage AI to pull off advanced schemes.

## Zostel Withdraws Delhi HC Plea Over Claimed 7% OYO Stake Ahead nimiOf IPO; Gets Liberty To Reapproach Court



Zostel has withdrawn its application before the Delhi High Court seeking directions to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) over its complaint concerning OYO’s proposed initial public offering (IPO). The Delhi High Court on Monday, August 10, allowed Zostel to withdraw the application while granting the company liberty to approach the court again at an appropriate stage. The court also declined to intervene in SEBI’s handling of Zostel’s complaint at this stage, observing that the regulator can examine the matter in accordance with law. Zostel had sought directions to SEBI to adjudicate its complaint relating to disclosures in OYO’s draft offer document. The company had alleged that material details concerning its long-running dispute with OYO and its claimed entitlement to nearly 7% of OYO’s equity were not adequately disclosed. The

court noted that OYO’s draft offer document has not yet been cleared by SEBI and indicated that Zostel’s objections should, in the first instance, be considered by the market regulator. The dispute between Zostel and OYO dates back to 2015, when OYO had proposed acquiring Zostel. The transaction did not ultimately proceed as originally envisaged, but Zostel has maintained that it is entitled to shares in OYO arising from the proposed transaction. Zostel has claimed an entitlement equivalent to nearly 7% of OYO’s equity and has maintained that the issue of its share entitlement remains unresolved. With OYO now preparing for its IPO, Zostel recently approached SEBI, alleging that the company’s draft IPO disclosures did not adequately reflect the ongoing dispute and its potential implications for OYO’s ownership structure.

### IMPERIAL BRANDS LAYOFFS:

## THOUSANDS OF ROLES AT RISK IN US, UK AND EUROPE

British tobacco company Imperial Brands is preparing to cut thousands of jobs across key markets, including the United States and Europe, Bloomberg News reported on Monday, citing people familiar with the matter. The planned workforce reduction is part of a broader restructuring at the company. The exact number of positions that will be eliminated and the timing of the cuts have not been disclosed. The move comes as Imperial Brands works to simplify its operations and improve efficiency across its international business. The company has identified the U.S., UK, Germany, Spain and Australia as its priority markets. It also maintains a significant employee base across other European countries. The first phase of layoffs will affect staff working human resources, finance and procurement and supply chain at the compa-



ny’s unit ITG Brands, which covers the U.S., the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, the report said. The second phase will target the unit’s legal, marketing, and insights and intelligence teams, with affected employees scheduled to be notified in April and cuts to begin mid-year, according to Bloomberg. “Over time, the changes we are making will have an impact across our global market footprint,” a company spokesperson said in a statement without providing details on the number

of jobs affected. The Winston cigarette maker warned of higher costs stemming from the Iran war in May, as the whole tobacco industry suffers from a terminal decline in traditional cigarettes and mounting regulatory challenges. Imperial Brands, which employed about 25,800 staff globally at the end of 2025, did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Some ITG Brand roles will be outsourced to the company’s strategic partner Capgemini SE (CAPP.PA), opens new tab

### Highlights

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before the year-end, the Bloomberg reported. The company has also been in contact with relevant bodies in the European Union about planned redundancies, which are subject to consultation, the report added. Britain’s Imperial Brands (IMB.L), opens new tab is preparing to cut thousands of jobs in key markets, including the United States and Europe, to reduce costs, Bloomberg News reported on Monday citing people familiar with the matter. Shares of the tobacco firm fell 5.3% to 2,643 pence by 1424 GMT.

## Jeff Bezos And Lakshmi Mittal's Son-in-Law Amit Bhatia Near Deal To Buy Liverpool Stake

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is a part of the investor group alongside Eduardo Saverin, one of the co-founders of social networking website Facebook, led by Amit Bhatia, the son-in-law of steel billionaire Lakshmi Mittal, which is closing on a deal to purchase roughly a one-third stake in Liverpool football club, reported Sky Sports on Monday. As per Sky Sports, the club’s controlling stakeholder since 2010, the Fenway Sports Group (FSG) is likely to make an announcement regarding the transaction this week. The deal will see Bezos, Saverin and Amit, becoming a trio of the world’s wealthiest individuals as co-owners of Liverpool, one of the most successful clubs in English football history. Another source has also indicated that the announcement would be coming in the coming days, but cautioned it could be delayed to next week. Bezos has a fortune worth 207 billion pounds (280 billion USD) as estimated by Forbes, while Saverin is



said to be worth over 23.7 billion pounds (32 billion USD). Their investment in The Reds will value the club at 4.4 billion pounds (6 billion USD), making this one of sport’s richest deals of all time. Sky Sports is in touch with the club and FSG for a comment. Bezos has not previously been linked to any deals in football, his involvement with the club underlines the extent to which football is now viewed by wealthy investors as an asset class in its own right. The 44-year-old Saverin, a part of the consortium associated with an unsuccessful takeover bid for Chelsea FC back in 2022, which was

triggered by Russia president Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. One insider also said that the deal was now expected to be slightly larger than previously anticipated, potentially with a stake of over 30 per cent. If the valuation hits 4.4 billion pounds, the deal will reinforce the financial success that the club owner’s FSG have enjoyed since taking over the club. The Boston Red Sox owner acquired Liverpool for 300 million pounds when it was in a troubled state financially. The arrival of such a power-packed consortium also gives fuel to expectations that its members

would seek outright control over the multi-time Premier League-winning club. A spokesperson for FSG said last month, as quoted by Sky Sports, “An investment consortium led, managed, and represented by Amit Bhatia has expressed interest in making a strategic minority investment in Liverpool Football Club.” FSG declined to comment further on the deal’s potential timing, while the consortium spokesperson also declined to comment. The last time stakes changed hands in Liverpool was back in 2023, when Dynasty Equity bought a small interest, valuing it at more than 3.3 billion pounds (4.5 billion USD). FSG acquired Liverpool in 2010 and has explored outside investment in recent years while continuing to maintain control of the club. The reported valuation highlights the significant rise in Liverpool’s worth during FSG’s 16-year ownership. The potential investment comes as Liverpool enters a period of transition.

## FORMER THAI MP ALLEGEDLY KILLS OFFICIAL AND CONFESSES ON YOUTUBE



A former Thai MP allegedly shot dead a local official in the southern province of Nonthaburi, then dialled into a YouTube livestream to inform the host - a political pundit - of what he had done. Former Nonthaburi MP Chalong Reawraeng told the shocked host, Anchalee Paireerak, that he had shot Thongchai Yenprasert, a former police official, outside Thongchai's office. Thongchai, who was hit in the neck, died in hospital. His driver was shot in the arm and hand. Chalong was arrested but then allowed to hold a press conference at a police station where he attempted to explain what had happened while smoking a cigarette. He told the reporters there that Thongchai was "angry" at him, but did not explain why. He also said he did not intend to shoot Thongchai, whom he described as a "good friend". Chalong said he told Thongchai that he wanted to talk to him. According to local media reports, the two were involved in a personal dis-

pute. "He [Thongchai] then pushed me, saying 'I don't want to talk, I don't want to talk.'" Chalong said he then followed Thongchai towards his car. "When I pulled the gun out, I didn't intend to shoot him. But then [Thongchai's driver] pulled his gun out and pointed it at me, so I fired." Thongchai, a retired police colonel, was president of the Nonthaburi Provincial Administrative Organisation or PAO, a local government body. Earlier, Chalong had called political commentator Anchalee Paireerak, who was livestreaming on YouTube at the time, to confess to the incident. Anchalee was filmed picking up a call midway through her programme. "I'll call you back... Oh, something big [happened]! Go ahead, what's that?" she said. Viewers could not hear what the caller said next, but Anchalee was seen reacting in shock. "Did he die? Did he die? You shot him in the head? You need to wait there for the cops," she said on the video, which was seen.



At least 13 killed in Ukrainian drone strike deep into Russia

## China evacuates one million from homes as massive storm arrives

Chinese authorities have evacuated more than a million people from their homes in eastern China including the financial capital Shanghai, as Typhoon Dolphin made landfall. The typhoon brought heavy rain and halted transportation across the region. Nearly 1,000 flights were cancelled in Shanghai alone on Monday. While authorities have downgraded Dolphin to a tropical storm, they continue to warn of torrential rains, severe flooding and the risk of landslides through to Wednesday as the storm moves north. Chinese authorities had earlier issued their highest-level red alert for Dolphin, which is the strongest storm to hit China this year. It packed maximum wind



speeds of 150km/h (94mph) when it first slammed into Yuhuan in the Zhejiang province at 17:30 (09:30 GMT) on Sunday before making a second landfall in the city of Wenzhou about an hour later, meteorological authorities said. Heavy rain was forecast on Monday for the provinces of Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Anhui, Jiangsu, Zhejiang

and the city of Shanghai. Governments have urged people to avoid outdoor activities, while several top tourist attractions remain closed, including parts of Disneyland and Legoland, and several viewing platforms along the Bund in Shanghai. Footage on state media show ground-floor businesses flooded in the former French Concession

in Shanghai, an area popular with tourists, and people wading through ankle-deep waters. Several state media outlets have reported that a nine-year-old boy from Wenling, Zhejiang is missing after being swept into the sea. Chinese officials have not reported any casualties. Parts of Zhejiang could receive 250mm to 500mm of rain over the next few days, forecasters say. Authorities in Hangzhou, Zhejiang's capital city, have waived parking fees in all public spaces for drivers seeking shelter amid the strong winds and floodwaters. Elsewhere in the province, Wenzhou authorities have relocated some 900,000 residents and opened more than 1,000 emergency shelters.

## Alleged rebel leader killed in Colombia as president targets armed groups



A man suspected of leading a dissident faction of a left-wing rebel group has been killed in a military operation in central Colombia, officials say. The operation forms part of a crackdown on illegal armed groups ordered by Colombia's new president, Abelardo de la Espriella, who was sworn in on Friday. He said the killing by the security forces of Hernando Forero Mosquera and five other alleged members of armed groups on the weekend sent "a clear and powerful message to all bandits that there is nowhere for them to hide". During his campaign for the presidency, de la Espriella said he would target "narco-terrorism" relentlessly, including by launching air strikes. Military intelligence officers said that Forero led a group known as Frente 28, which is one of the many dissident factions to have sprung forth from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc). The Farc, Colombia's largest left-wing rebel group, signed a peace deal with the government in 2016 but some of its members did not agree to the terms of the deal and refused to lay down their arms. These dissidents groups, which are now mainly involved in cocaine

trafficking and illegal mining, are among the main driving forces behind the resurgence in violence in the country. De la Espriella said he would take a radically different approach to defeating criminal groups in the country than his predecessor in office, Gustavo Petro. Petro, the first left-wing politician to be elected president of Colombia, advocated what he called a "total peace" strategy, which prioritised negotiation over confrontation. His attempts to negotiate with a number of armed groups, however, failed as members of the illegal organisations repeatedly broke ceasefires and walked away from the talks. De la Espriella's combative approach has been met with defiance by dissident rebel groups. On Saturday, just a day after the was sworn into office, two explosive devices went off. In Cauca province, a car bomb exploded at a toll-booth, injuring two security guards, and in Cesar province, a police officer was killed by explosives dropped from a drone. In a video uploaded to social media, de la Espriella praised the military for killing Forero, who was also known as "El ruso" (The Russian), and whom he described as an explosives expert.

## Pain, stigma and barriers to care: The burden of cysts and fibroids in Africa

As a teenager in Kenya, long before Evelyn Okinyi Owala became a professional body-builder, she attended school, spent time with friends and helped her parents around the house. But during her period each month, she said, she experienced excruciating pain, vomiting, fever, lightheadedness, heavy bleeding, pelvic pain and acne. Over time, Owala said, the pain was so severe that she struggled to breathe and passed out. She endured the pain without seeking medical help because she thought it was normal, and said it grew worse in her 20s. After years of suffering, at the age of 30, Owala finally went to see a gynecologist. "I was told I have cysts," she explained to CNN's Larry Madowo in Nairobi in May. "And I went in for surgery. The problem is one month later, before I healed from the stitches, I had a reoccurrence of the cyst." Owala said she was told that she needed another surgery, but her recovery and insufficient insurance coverage made that difficult.



While considering her options, she began researching alternative treatments, particularly after meeting a woman who told Owala that she'd undergone 13 operations. Owala said she came to believe that surgery had treated a symptom, but not "the root cause" of her condition, which she said was a hormonal imbalance. A different approach Owala, whose husband is an exercise enthusiast, decided to take a page out of his play-book and hit the gym. "I started working out just ... for myself, really to get

myself into good health," she said. She also changed her diet, cutting out sugar, vegetable and seed oils, and wheat. "It's better to eat in a particular way that the body appreciates if you're having a particular condition, so that is exactly what I did," she explained. With her new exercise routine and diet, Owala said she "sorted the root cause of the problem within four months." A return trip to the doctor and an ultrasound confirmed the cysts were gone. A widespread health concern Owala is not alone in experiencing

debilitating reproductive health problems. Ovarian cysts and uterine fibroids affect hundreds of millions of women around the world. According to the Mayo Clinic, ovarian cysts are sacs, usually filled with fluid, that develop in or on the surface of an ovary. They are common and often harmless, but some can rupture or cause serious symptoms, including severe pain. Uterine fibroids are non-cancerous growths that develop in or around the uterus, often during a woman's reproductive years. According to the Office on Women's Health at the US Department of Health and Human Services, an estimated 20% to 80% of women develop fibroids by age 50. Kenyan-Mexican actress Lupita Nyong'o, 43, is among the women who have spoken publicly about the condition. Nyong'o has said she was diagnosed with uterine fibroids after winning an Academy Award for her performance in "12 Years a Slave."

## 'BODY IN SUITCASE' FOUND IN AUSTRALIA TURNS OUT TO BE LIFELIKE DOLL



Australian police called in to investigate a body found in a suitcase have concluded that the "victim" was in fact a lifelike doll. The suitcase was discovered by two men on the side of a road near the small village of Oallen, about 230km (143 miles) south-west of Sydney. On Monday, police announced a murder investigation, sparking intense interest in the case but backtracked hours later, saying forensic testing had proved the contents were not human. The contents in the suitcase were "mistaken for a human originally, so they are very realistic in terms of looking like human remains," said

Supt Linda Bradbury from the Hume Police District. "But we've confirmed by other means that they are not." The doll was wearing clothing, had hair and a nose piercing," police said, adding that "the item also had markings that resembled bruises and grazes". Supt Bradbury said forensic teams and investigators had attended the scene on Sunday and that all processes had been followed. "The idea is to not disturb crime scenes as much as possible, to maintain the integrity of our investigation," Bradbury said, adding she had "no regrets" about how the case was handled.



World's oceans hit record-high July temperatures

## BATTLE FOR MALI BASE HAS KILLED DOZENS OF MILITANTS, ARMY SAYS

The authorities in Mali say their soldiers killed dozens of militant Islamists as they repelled an attack on a military base on Sunday. Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), a jihadist group affiliated to al-Qaeda, said it was behind the assault where its fighters took control of the base in the town of San. The army, which also suffered casualties, disputed it had ceded control - but said its soldiers had to "retreat temporarily". It comes as Mali's security situation appears to be deteriorating, more than a decade after a jihadist insurgency began taking root in the north of the country. "The enemy was eliminated and the attack was successfully repelled. Around 40 terrorists were eliminated," Lt Col El Oumrani, the com-



mander of the 23rd regiment in the San garrison, said in a video. He urged residents to remain vigilant, insisting that his soldiers had "not gone anywhere" and the base remained under army control. "The camp of the 23rd is not empty, it is under the custody of the army." The attack started at around 05:00 local time (GMT) on Sunday and lasted for about two hours, according to witnesses quoted by the French

broadcaster RFI. The attackers came on motorcycles and on foot, some disguised in army uniforms to infiltrate the base, RFI reported the witnesses as saying. One said the militants entered the camp and held it "for a long time before leaving". "I noticed that the fighting took place between 200 and 300 metres from the camp. Several terrorists were killed by soldiers, but others fled; some even hid in houses

and others went into the forest," the witness said. At least 10 soldiers were killed in the fighting and the assailants briefly took over the camp, the AFP news agency quoted security and local sources. The army told national broadcaster ORTM that the militants used drones, heavy machine guns and armoured vehicles to breach the site's perimeter. Since 2012, Mali has been plagued by insurgencies and large parts of the north and east of the country remain outside government control. April saw nationwide, co-ordinated attacks by an alliance of jihadists and separatist rebels in the north - the Azawad Liberation Front - seeking to overthrow the military regime of Gen Assimi Goita, who seized power in a coup in 2020.

## 'I've cried non-stop' - Ditcheva breaks both hands again

Dakota Ditcheva says she has "cried non-stop" after breaking both of her hands in the win over Denise Kielholtz - just months after recovering from similar injuries. The Briton outclassed Kielholtz at PFL New York earlier this month to win by unanimous decision in her first fight in just over a year. The 28-year-old had not fought since July 2025 as a result of breaking her left hand - then suffered a fracture in her other hand five months later. Despite comfortably beating Kielholtz on her return, Ditcheva says she fought the majority of the contest with two broken hands. "I broke my hands in the fight. I could feel it from the second I started the second round," she said on YouTube, external "I didn't tell my corner. I didn't tell anybody. I didn't show it this time, and I didn't actually tell anybody until I got out of the cage. I am back in splints until my surgeon has decided what the next steps are going



forward, which will be in the next few days." Ditcheva, who extended the unbeaten start to her career to 16 fights, said one of her injuries occurred after opting not to have surgery on it last year, while the other is a "small break on the other finger that didn't hold up so well". "The good thing is I have no new breaks. It's just the hand that wasn't operated on that I broke at the end of last year," added Ditcheva. "I was told that if I didn't go ahead with surgery at that time, there was a possibility it could break again. I took the risk in

not doing the surgery because I was hoping it would hold strong, and it didn't. "So therefore I'm paying the price for it now and I will be out for a little bit." The injuries are another setback for Ditcheva, one of the biggest stars in the PFL and one of Britain's most talented fighters. She won the PFL's flyweight tournament in 2024 to become the first British woman to claim a major MMA world championship, while securing a \$1m (£787,000) prize. Ditcheva is confident her lay-off will not last as long as her previous time on the sidelines.

## Scotland, Netherlands Call Changes To ODI World Cup Structure Setback' For Associate Nations

Cricket Scotland and the Royal Dutch Cricket Association (KNCB) have termed the International Cricket Council's (ICC) sudden structural changes to the Men's ODI World Cup qualification pathway as a major 'setback' to the associate nations, warning that the move risks undermining years of global progress. The statement comes nearly a month after the ICC overhauled the tournament's format following its annual conference in Edinburgh in July. While the event was originally slated to feature 14 teams divided into two groups of seven followed by a Super Six stage, the ICC has now added a 'Super Series' and a 'Super 7' phase. Under the revised structure, the bottom three qualifying sides (ranked 12th, 13th, and 14th) will first compete in a round-robin Super Series, with only the winner advancing to join the top 11 teams in two six-team main groups. The top three sides from each group, along with the next best-performing team, will then advance to a seven-team round-robin Super 7 stage to determine the four semi-finalists. "Cricket Scotland and the Royal Dutch Cricket Association (KNCB) are deeply disappointed by the International Cricket Council's recent



decision to implement significant structural changes to the ICC Men's 50-over World Cup qualification pathway and tournament format with less than 18 months until the competition begins," the joint statement said. "These changes represent a setback to Associate Member cricket and risk undermining the progress made in recent years to grow the global game. At a time when cricket is seeking to expand its reach, attract new audiences and strengthen its position on the international sporting landscape, reducing meaningful opportunities for emerging nations sends the wrong

message entirely," it added. With the rejigged format clearly reducing the opportunities Associate nations will get to play in the ODI World Cup, the Netherlands and Scotland boards further questioned ICC's administrative integrity and transparency, arguing that decisions impacting nations operating on limited resources should never be made without proper consultation. "Cricket Scotland and the KNCB remain fully committed to working constructively with the ICC and fellow Members to strengthen the global game. However, we have significant concerns about both the impact

of these changes and the process through which they have been introduced. "The changes risk weakening the integrity and credibility of international cricket, and only highlight the importance of strong governance, transparent decision-making and effective engagement with Members. "Decisions of this significance, particularly those directly affecting Associate Members, should be made clearly following meaningful consultation and with sufficient notice for affected Members to understand and respond to the implications." An associate national administrator told IANS, on the condition of anonymity, that none of the member nations had any inkling of the changes being made to the format during the meeting in Edinburgh. "It came out of the blue for all of us there," further said the administrator. The two boards also disclosed that two official meetings with the ICC after the annual conference yielded no formal written resolution. "Following the announcement of the changes, Cricket Scotland, KNCB and other Associate Members met twice with the ICC, seeking official written communication on the changes and greater clarity around the processes involved.

## PM Modi Left in Splits as Boxer Narender Berwal Recalls Hilarious Pakistan Bout Anecdote

Sporting platforms do not just produce gruelling contests; they also generate off-the-field stories that are revered for decades. One such story was shared by Indian boxer Narender Berwal, who returned from the Commonwealth Games with a silver medal. During a felicitation ceremony at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence, Berwal shared an anecdote from 2015, when he fought a boxer from Pakistan in the World Military Games. After Berwal won the match, he engaged in a hilarious conversation with his Pakistani opponent. As he recounted the exchange, even PM Modi was left in splits. Political relations between India and Pakistan have been tense for decades. Narrating the story, Berwal revealed how he was cautioned by the Indian military not to lose against his opponent, given the ongoing border conflicts between the two nations. "Since



we were talking about Pakistan, a story came to my mind, sir. It was the 2015 World Military Games, and my first fight was scheduled against a boxer from Pakistan. Because it was the Military Games, I received calls from officials telling me, 'You must not lose to Pakistan,'" he revealed. Berwal went on to win the bout, but both fighters suffered facial cuts, which

led to them visiting a hospital together. "I won the first round 4-1 and the second round 3-2, but both of us got cuts. I won the fight, and afterwards, we both went to the hospital to get stitches." Berwal continued: "In 2014, you [referring to PM Modi] became the Prime Minister for the first time. The army coach who was with us was named Narendra Rana. The

Pakistani boxer thought about it for a while and then said to me, 'Brother, can I say something?' I said, 'Yes, go ahead.'" The Pakistani boxer then remarked: "Aapka naam Narender hai, aapke coach ka naam Narender hai, aapke Pradhan Mantri ka naam Narendra hai. Mujhe Narendra naam se nafrat ho gayi hai" ("Your name is Narender, your coach's name is Narender, and your Prime Minister's name is Narendra. I have started to hate the name Narendra"). As Berwal shared the story, PM Modi could not hold back his laughter. At his residence, PM Modi held one-on-one conversations with several athletes, lauding their contributions to taking India's sporting journey to new heights. Indian boxer Narender Berwal shared a story from the 2015 World Military Games during a felicitation with PM Modi after winning a Commonwealth Games medal.

## Rodri, World Cup-Winner With Spain, Recreates 'Distracted Boyfriend' Meme

INTERNET GOES WILD

Spain and Manchester City midfielder Rodri is at the centre of intense transfer speculation, having been linked to both Real Madrid and Barcelona in the last few weeks. While the suspense over his future is yet to be lifted, Rodri became a big talking point on social media over a picture from his vacation. The picture shows Rodri walking with his partner Laura Iglesias on the bench but looks distracted by another woman who passed them by. The picture has been related to the famous 2015 stock photo by Spanish photographer Antonio Guillem where a guy in a shirt turns to check out a woman in a red top walking past, while the woman he's with looks back at him in disapproval. That picture went on to become one of the most



popular internet memes, labeling situations where someone is tempted by something new while ignoring what they already have. During his holiday in Ibiza, Rodri could be seen walking hand-in-hand with his long-time partner Laura Iglesias, but turned his head to look toward a woman in a bikini on the left. The Spanish midfielder's body language and "caught

looking" vibe is quite similar to the 'distracted boyfriend' meme, and fans couldn't resist pointing out the same. Rodri, a defensive midfielder for Spain and Manchester City, is known for his ability to scan opponents quickly and assess danger. Based on where the opponents are, Rodri has displayed a unique ability to orchestrate his passing lines and unleash his teammates going forward.

## 17kg Weight Loss, Training In Kashmir: How Sarfaraz Khan Won Over Selectors' Trust

A few days before he was recalled to India's Test squad, Sarfaraz Khan had declared on social media that, "I may not fit in, but I'll fight with everything I've got." It was a message of resolve but one that was acutely aware of the probabilities at that point. But as luck would have it, his resolve won. An injury to Sai Sudharsan opened up the window of opportunity which Sarfaraz had been waiting for the past two years. He was included for the two-match away Test series against Sri Lanka beginning on August 15. The recall could not have come at a more opportune time for the Mumbaikar, having done all that he could to "fit in", including shedding 17kg in the past year and a half. For someone, who has fought the perception of being a bit more burly for international



cricket despite scoring a marathon triple hundred in Ranji Trophy, Sarfaraz now sports a sharper look, something that has certainly elevated his T20 game. Add to it, hours and hours spent at the Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium in Kashmir to sharpen his skills because seasonal rains made it impossible to have regular training in Mumbai. The comeback, therefore, is one to savour as being dropped after four failures against New Zealand, back

in 2024, was hard to process. It was a series in which everyone failed but the axe fell only on the 28-year-old. He then went to England and scored 92 for India A in an unofficial Test against England Lions apart from a century in an intra-squad game (India vs India A) at Beckenham. But the comeback still remained a distant dream until India's meek surrender to South Africa at home set the alarm bells ringing.

## Zaheer Khan's Clear Message To Mohammed Shami Over Repeated Team India Snub

What does the future hold for Mohammed Shami? As it looks at present, the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee doesn't seem to be keen on handing the veteran pacer a return to the national team, despite the increasing number of injury instances in the team. India's preparations for the ODI World Cup in 2027 have begun, while the team has been assessing options to replace the injured Jasprit Bumrah in the team. Despite these topsy-turvy situations, Shami's name doesn't seem to be featuring on the table during the selection meetings. Zaheer Khan, one of the finest pacers to have played for India, was asked about the situation Shami finds himself in. The former seamer, sharing his honest perspective on the matter, admitted that the Indian team's priorities seem to be lying somewhere else at present. However, Zaheer



doesn't think Shami has to give up. "It is your decision, the way you want to move forward. If you are playing matches and performing well, you remain avail-

that way. The team's thinking is different, but your way of thinking is important. If you want to contribute, it is your decision.



## From CSK To KKR, Hardik Pandya At Centre Of IPL's Biggest Trade Story

Hardik Pandya, the No. 1 fast-bowling all-rounder in the country, is a hot topic of discussion before the IPL retention list is released. The Mumbai Indians captain did not have a successful return to the franchise since IPL 2024. Mumbai Indians entered the playoffs only once in the last three editions, and the team's performance under Pandya has not been inspiring. In IPL 2026, MI finished second-last with four wins from 14 matches. Several teams have been rumoured to be in touch with MI for a trade involving

Pandya. According to a report in Cricbuzz, Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings are increasingly interested in acquiring the Mumbai Indians skipper. Lucknow Super Giants and Rajasthan Royals have also been rumoured to be linked with him. The trade talks, however, have not made much progress, the report added. The report quoted Mumbai Indians sources as saying that the player may not be traded at all. However, that may "not be the complete picture", the report further said,

adding that "calls have been made to and received from franchises expressing interest in the all-rounder." Pandya's IPL numbers since 2024 have not been great. However, there is no question about his quality. Several rumours have claimed that MI may be open to a trade with Delhi Capitals involving Axar Patel. Rumour mills are also rife with speculation that a Pandya-for-Yashasvi Jaiswal trade with Rajasthan Royals, or a Pandya-for-Nicholas Pooran swap with LSG, could be potential IPL trade possi-

bilities. Meanwhile, former India all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin shared his views and said that MI should look to acquire Harshit Rana and Rinku Singh from KKR if they decide to trade Hardik to the franchise. "Don't count out Hardik going to a franchise other than CSK or KKR. The talk is that CSK will give Dube and a pacer, while KKR will give away Cameron Green. What happens if Green decides to focus on the Ashes next year? If I were MI, I would accept a deal with

KKR on only one condition: getting Harshit Rana and Rinku Singh in return. That is the only way MI get stronger," Ashwin said on his Tamil YouTube channel. "MI will also think about who between CSK and KKR gets stronger through the Hardik trade. If CSK give away Dube and an Indian pacer to get Hardik, they get stronger but not invincible.

# “Agadha Will Be More Than Just a Horror Film,” Says Producer Shyam Prasad Reddy at the Pre-Release Event

Agadha, written and directed by M.S. Raju and produced by Kashi Visalakshi Balusu under the Sri Adi Varaha Productions banner, presented by Ajay KR, is gearing up for a grand theatrical release on August 14. The film features Kamakshi Bhaskarla, Shravan Reddy, Ulka Gupta, Jovika Vijay Kumar, Bhanu Chander, Siju, Vanitha Vijay Kumar, Roshan Basheer, Shreya Rani Reddy, Viva Raghava, Robert Master, Arna Muller and Kanakavva in key roles. A grand pre-release event was held on Monday, attended by prominent producer Shyam Prasad Reddy, veteran director B. Gopal, Sai Rajesh and SKN as chief guests. **M.S. Raju said:**

“Everyone has seen the teaser and trailer of Agadha, so there is not much more for me to say. I thank everyone who supported me throughout this journey, especially Kashi Visalakshi garu and Ajay garu. “We will hold the success meet on August 15. A cricket match becomes interesting when a team needs 24 runs in the last over. But I have made Agadha like a super over. The technical team and the artistes have competed with each other and delivered their best. “My heart tells me that this film will become a blockbuster. I believe the film will succeed with the blessings of the Goddess. I wish Kashi Visalakshi garu and Ajay garu make a lot of money from this film — and I hope they give me a share of it!”



# RITU VARMA NAILS BREEZY STYLE IN YELLOW



Ritu Varma, who won hearts with her performance in Pelli Choopulu back in 2016, has been keeping a low profile on the film front this year, though her fashion game continues to keep her in the news. The actress has reportedly signed Gopichand 33, where she will be seen sharing screen space with Gopichand, giving fans another reason to look forward to her return. Coming to her look, Ritu Varma kept it elegant and breezy in a pastel yellow saree, paired with a contrasting quirky-printed sleeveless blouse in white and yellow. The saree featured delicate mirror work and sequin detailing, along with a scalloped, mirror-embroidered border that added a festive shimmer to the soft pastel base. She rounded off the look with statement earrings, a ring, and strappy heels, keeping her hair open in soft waves, a look that felt fresh, breezy, and perfect for a daytime event. Simple yet stylish, Ritu once again proved her knack for effortless fashion.

# ‘KilleR’ Takes a Major Leap Overseas - OMG Pictures Bags International Distribution Rights



The highly anticipated sci-fi action thriller ‘KilleR’, written, directed and produced by Poorvaaj, has achieved a significant milestone ahead of its theatrical release. The film’s overseas distribution rights have been bagged by OMG Pictures, marking a strong international push for the ambitious Telugu production. According to the makers, ‘KilleR’ is a genre-blending cinematic experience that combines science fiction, mystery, action, thriller and emotional drama. The film is particularly intriguing because of

Jyoti Poorvaaj’s multiple shades and transformations. Her character is presented through several striking identities and forms, including Rania, Raktika, Julia, Sia and an AI-driven avatar, making the film a visually and narratively ambitious SuperSHE concept. The newly released overseas rights poster further intensifies the film’s mysterious atmosphere. It features Jyoti’s character carrying a grocery bag and an axe, standing beside a shattered glass panel through which a mysterious hooded figure can be seen.

# POPULAR PRODUCER D. SURESH BABU UNVEILS ‘HUSHARU PITTALU’ TRAILER



‘Husharu Pittalu’ is a youthful entertainer starring Anshu and Vasavi Ganesan in the lead roles. Presented by Padma Amma and BVG Studios, the film is produced by Venkat Yadav under the Rudra Kranti Pictures banner and directed by Bikshu.

The film has completed its shoot and is being released by leading production houses Asian Suresh Films. It is slated for a theatrical release on August 15. The teaser and songs of the film, which were released recently, went viral on

social media. The makers unveiled the trailer on Monday morning. Popular producer D. Suresh Babu attended the event as the chief guest and launched the trailer. Speaking on the occasion, popular producer D. Suresh

Babu said, “I came to know about this film a few months ago through Bekkem Venugopal. The director and producer, who hail from Telangana, have made this film with a lot of passion. Representatives of Suresh Productions watched the film and gave positive feedback, which is why we are releasing it through Suresh Asian Films. They have overcome all the challenges they faced during the making of the film and reached this stage. They are marketing the film aggressively. I believe this is definitely a film that will be worth the audience’s time and money. A few shows are being screened before the release, and with the positive feedback and word of mouth, the film will reach an even wider audience. I sincerely wish the film great success.”

# Grand Pre-Release Event Held for ‘Panchali Panchabhatruka’

Panchali Panchabhatruka’ is a film starring Dr. Rajendra Prasad in the lead role. Sari Far, Roll Rida, Raj Pavan, Gemini Suresh, Venkat Duggireddy and others play key roles in the movie. Directed by Ganga Sapthasikhara, the film has been made as a complete entertainer with a family-drama backdrop. The movie is being produced under the banners of Royal Throne Productions and Om Sairam Arts by Venkat Duggireddy (USA), Raj Pawan Srikanth Settiwari and Sainath Manyam. ‘Panchali Panchabhatruka’ is set to have a worldwide grand theatrical release on August 14. The film’s pre-release event was held grandly in Hyderabad on Sunday evening.



# ‘Gaja’ Should Achieve Great Success: Manoj Manchu at the Teaser Launch Event



Presented by Chalamalasetty Sunil and produced by Dr. Maitri Sharan under the Satish Jai Films banner, ‘Gaja’ stars Satish Jai and Farnaz Shetty in the lead roles. Satish Jai is directing the film. Melody Brahma Mani Sharma has composed the music. The film is being released in Telugu by Mythri Movie Distributors LLP. The teaser of ‘Gaja’ was launched on Monday at a special event, which was attended by Manchu Manoj as the chief guest.

# Zee Studios and Prerna Arora announce 'Indraputra,' the first chapter of an ambitious



Zee Studios and Prerna Arora have officially unveiled the title of their ambitious pan-India mythological action-fantasy, Indraputra, starring Kiran Abbavaram in the lead and directed by Srikanth Puppala. The film is set to commence principal photography this October. Rooted in Indian mythology and conceived on a grand cinematic scale, Indraputra is envisioned as the first chapter of an expansive mythological universe. Blending mythology, fantasy, action, and emotion, the film promises a visually immersive experience while drawing inspiration from timeless legends and the eternal battle between dharma and adharma. Kiran Abbavaram headlines the project in a powerful new avatar, while director Srikanth Puppala brings to life an ambitious vision that seamlessly blends contemporary storytelling with India’s rich mythological heritage. Designed as a large-scale pan-India spectacle, Indraputra aims to appeal to audiences across languages and generations.

# Premane Oorilo’ Comes with Suresh Kondeti’s Brand Value, Promises a Content-Driven Hit

The upcoming Telugu film ‘Premane Oorilo’ is generating positive buzz with the association of renowned producer and distributor Suresh Kondeti, known for his distinctive choice of content-driven films. His successful track record with films like Premisthe, Journey, Pizza and Shopping Mall has earned him a strong reputation among audiences and trade circles. With Suresh Kondeti as one of the producers of Premane Oorilo, expectations are high for another engaging and successful film. Written and directed by Manoj Kumar, Premane Oorilo is jointly produced by Chandu Srinivas, Suresh Kondeti and Mamatha

Devendra M under Maharatna Productions, SK Pictures and Vanilla Entertainments. The film stars Sri Ram, Ramika Shivu, Thapaswini Poonacha and Rangayana Raghu in key roles. The first look poster, unveiled with the caption “Welcome to the Land of Love,” has impressed netizens with its beautiful rural setting, lush greenery, windmills, bullock cart and warm emotional atmosphere. The film boasts a strong writing and technical team. Hanuman Chowdary, known for his dialogue writing contributions to KGF and Kantara, has penned the dialogues, while noted lyricist Rambabu Gosala, who has worked on several popular

films including Arjun Reddy, Majnu, Majili and Kantara, has written all the songs for the film. Sunad Gowtham is composing the music, Rajkanth S.K is handling cinematography and Harshith Prabhu is the editor. The first look was unveiled grandly at Sri Rajarajeshwari Devasthanam, Filmnagar, during the Bonalu festival celebrations, coinciding with Superstar Mahesh Babu’s birthday. With its promising rural backdrop, emotional storyline, strong performances and talented technical team, Premane Oorilo is already creating curiosity among movie lovers. With Suresh Kondeti’s proven eye for content and audience-friendly cinema.

