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OM NAMO

VENKATESAYA

05-08-2026

Total pilgrims : 77502
Tonsures : 34465
Hundi vanloads : 546 CR
Laddu sale : 424 Lac
Annaspradams : 250 Lac
Aswin hospital : 2205
Waiting Compartments : Outside line

Approx. Darshan Time for Sarvadarshanam

Cybercrime Police arrest 49 accused in July

Hyderabad, Aug 7 : Cybercrime Police of Hyderabad arrested 49 individuals from 15 states during July in connection with 25 cyber-crime cases. It successfully refunded Rs 98,89,202 to the victims during the month. Cybercrime Police Station received multiple complaints on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP), out of which 70 FIRs were registered, police said in a statement on Friday. The nature of cases for the 49 arrested individuals includes trading fraud (29 accused), social media (5), digital arrest (3), WhatsApp DP fraud (3), matrimonial fraud (2), and one accused each for APK fraud, crypto trading impersonation, investment fraud, job fraud, POCSSO, and purchasing old coins. The state-wise breakdown of arrests consists of Telangana (13), Maharashtra (7), Rajasthan (6), West Bengal (5), Uttar Pradesh (4), Bihar (3), Delhi (2), Haryana (2), Jharkhand (2), Andhra Pradesh (1), Karnataka (1), Odisha (1), Punjab (1) and Uttarakhand (1).

Shooting in Thailand leaves eight dead, over 30 wounded

Bangkok, Aug 7 : Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said on Friday afternoon that eight people were confirmed dead, including the gunman and his grandparents, and over 30 people were injured, with nine in critical condition, as a gunman opened fire at a school and home in Nonthaburi province earlier the day. Local police were notified around 10 am local time after a gunman opened fire at Debsirin Nonthaburi School in the Bang Kruai district of Nonthaburi province on the northwestern outskirts of Bangkok, Xinhua News Agency reported. A witness at the scene said the gunman wore a purple tracksuit and fired dozens of shots in the school. Video footage released by the media shows continuous gunfire heard throughout the campus.

New Delhi (TSIT)

: With China repeatedly renaming some places in Arunachal Pradesh, India on Friday formally identified 27 places and features in the state by their standard names on the official Indian map.

"Identifying them formally on the Survey of India map of Arunachal Pradesh is aimed at facilitating their accurate recognition and better awareness among the public at large," an official statement said. China's act of renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh has always been categorically rejected by New Delhi which has consistently termed such moves "vain and preposterous" while asserting that these will not alter the "undeniable" reality that the state "was, is, and will" always remain an integral part of India.

The 27 locations formally marked on the official map of



India include Long Ju located along the Line of Actual Control which was one of the earliest flashpoints between India and China in 1959 when Chinese forces entered the area. Maja, a village near Long Ju in Upper Subansiri district, has also been marked on the map, the statement said. The list also includes Bisa village, a strategically important high altitude mountain passes in the region Dzo La, Riza La, Pukur La.

One of the most strategically important high altitude passes Thag La, where one of the opening battles between Indian and Chinese forces took place in 1962, has also been formally identified on the official map.

So is Jairampur, an important logistics hub in Changlang district which is known as the gateway to the eastern border region supporting movements of security forces towards eastern

Arunachal and the Myanmar frontier. The list also includes Sambho Sarovar (a high-altitude lake), Bara Kundun and Chhota Kundun on Eastern Arunachal Pradesh, Dhan Bari, Pritnagar, Teritnagar, Ramnagar Jaswant Garh that houses memorial of Indian martyr Jaswant Singh Rawat on Tawang Road, villages of Sagar, Padma, Jyotinagar and Baisakhi.

Sher-e-Thapa Memorial commemorating Trilok Singh Thapa, 1962 war hero, Chhota Ropuk and Bara Ropuk, Shivaji Nagar, Sunpura, Kamlang Nagar located near the Kamlang sanctuary and Buddhamandir are also there.

New Delhi has been dismissing Chinese efforts to assign "fictitious names" to Indian territory, asserting such attempts to create "baseless narratives" cannot alter "undeniable reality" and could derail efforts to normalise bilateral ties.

Do good work instead of crushing voice of Gen Z: Kejriwal's advice to Modi govt



New Delhi, Aug 7 : Firing a fresh salvo at the Centre over the students' stir, former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday claimed that the Modi government is scared of the nation's youth and is hence 'inventing new ways' to silence their voice.

The AAP National Convenor also dished out advice to the government, in a video blog, as he asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to focus on constructive and notable works rather than muzzling the voice of the nation's youth.

Kejriwal claimed that the Modi government has brought a new law, which mandates that any social media post or video 'critical or disapproving' of the government conduct will be

removed on the latter's directions. "They have brought a new law. If the government asks any social media platform to delete a post or any article any video, they will have to delete it within 3 hours. This means if you speak against paper leaks, ethanol blending and corrupt practices of the government, your post will be deleted within hours," he said. The AAP leader said that this law implies that you can't speak against the Prime Minister or the NDA government. "But, those sitting in power think that they have the right to abuse, insult and harass the young students including girls without being called out, he added, suggesting that this is a clear attempt to muzzle and silence the voice of the country's youth.

He said that the Jantar Mantar protest was a manifestation of the people's anger that has been building up for the past ten years and claimed that the government was scared of the country's youth and hence was trying to restrain their voice.

12th National Handloom Day



President of India, Droupadi Murmu visits the exhibition showcased on the 12th National Handloom Day celebrations held at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, in New Delhi.....

62 India-bound ships sailed safely out of Hormuz amid West Asia crisis: Minister

New Delhi, Aug 7 : Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, informed Parliament on Friday that as many as 4,052 seafarers have been repatriated from the Gulf region and 62 India-bound vessels have successfully transited Strait of Hormuz (as on August 3), out of which 23 were Indian flagged and 39 under foreign flags.

The minister highlighted that considering the evolving maritime security situation, the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA) progressively updates its advisories to enhance the safety and security of the Indian seafarers amid the Middle East conflict.

In view of renewed attacks on merchant vessels, the Directorate General of Shipping has mandat-



ed the implementation of full International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code security measures and advised against the deployment of Indian seafarers on voyages transiting through the Gulf region, the minister said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

A DGMA advisory has also been issued for Indian and foreign flagged vessels carrying Indian seafarers operating in the Black Sea, requiring enhanced caution, voyage specific security assessments, strict adherence to security advisories and immediate reporting of incidents.

Besides, an advisory has been issued for vessels operating in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, Southern Red and adjoining Yemen waters, directing ship-owners and masters to exercise utmost caution, continuous monitor security, developments and implement additional risk mitigation measures.

Further, from the onset of the security situation in the Strait of Hormuz, several measures have been taken to safeguard Indian seafarers. These include the establishment of a dedicated 24x7 Control Room, maintenance of a live vessel-and crew database, and issuance of a Situation Report (SITREP) every 24 hours to monitor the movement of vessels, Indian seafarers, incidents and casualties.

DGP C.V. Anand Lauds Cyber Security Team as Telangana Tops Nation in Cybercrime Control

Hyderabad TSIT: Telangana has secured the top position in the country in cybercrime control, leading across nine key performance parameters assessed during a national PRAGATI review.

DGP C.V. Anand congratulated Telangana Cyber Security Bureau Director Shikha Goel, Commissioners of Police, Superintendents of Police and Cyber Security Bureau officers and personnel for their coordinated efforts in achieving the distinction.

Telangana recorded 88 per cent performance in cyber-crime complaint disposal and 81 per cent in recovery of victims' money. The State also achieved 88 per cent performance in removing objectionable and crime-related



online content through the Sahyog portal. The State completed 97 per cent of CIAR requests, uploaded profiles of 5,500 cyber offenders and identified nearly 15,000 interstate crime links. Cyber safety awareness initiatives have reached over 8.5 lakh people, while another two lakh people were sensitised specifi-

cally about digital arrest scams. DGP C.V. Anand appreciated the collective efforts of the police and cyber security teams and called upon them to maintain the momentum by effectively using advanced technology to further strengthen Telangana's leadership in cybercrime prevention.

FMCON strengthens academic ties through two more strategic MoUs on palliative care, counselling

Mangaluru, Aug 7: Reinforcing its commitment to holistic nursing education, interdisciplinary learning, and community-oriented healthcare, Father Muller School & College of Nursing (FMCON) signed two significant Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Ave Maria Hospice - A Centre for Palliative Care, Vamanjoor, and Roshni Nilaya – School of Social Work during ceremonies held on August 5 and August 7, respectively. The collaborations are aimed at fostering academic excellence, collaborative research, interdisciplinary education, faculty and student exchange, community outreach programmes, and joint initiatives aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The MoU ceremonies were presided over by Fr Faustine Lucas Lobo, director, Father Muller Charitable Institutions (FMCI), who, as the institutional head and administrator of the Father Muller School and College of Nursing, formally endorsed the partnerships. The initiatives were spearheaded by Sr Dr Dhanya Devasia, principal, Father Muller School and College of Nursing, whose vision and leadership were instrumental in bringing both collaborations to fruition.

On August 5, Father Muller College of Nursing entered into an MoU with Ave Maria Hospice - A Centre for Palliative Care, Vamanjoor, represented by Dr



Lavina Noronha, founder & director, Ave Maria Palliative Care Centre who conveyed her heartfelt gratitude to Father Muller Charitable Institutions for partnering in an area that she described as 'the need of the hour'.

She noted that palliative care extends beyond medical management, embracing compassionate, patient-centred care that preserves the dignity and quality of life of individuals facing life-limiting illnesses. She expressed confidence that the collaboration would strengthen education, clinical exposure, research, and community-based palliative care services while preparing future nurses to provide holistic and compassionate end-of-life care.

Ave Maria Palliative Care Centre, Vamanjoor, is among the

pioneering institutions in the coastal region dedicated exclusively to palliative and hospice care. Guided by the philosophy of preserving the dignity of life and dignity of death, the centre provides comprehensive medical, psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual support to patients with chronic, terminal, and life-limiting illnesses while extending compassionate care to their families. The institution has become a beacon of hope for countless families by emphasizing comfort, pain relief, emotional healing, and quality of life during the final stages of illness.

Dr Lavina Noronha, an accomplished palliative care physician and academician, has been actively involved in advancing palliative medicine through clinical ser-

vice, education, training, and community outreach. She has been recognised on numerous occasions for her contributions towards compassionate healthcare and end-of-life care advocacy.

Kenita, social worker of Ave Maria Palliative Care Centre accompanied and was present during the signing

On August 7, Father Muller College of Nursing signed its second MoU with Roshni Nilaya – School of Social Work, represented by Dr Saritha D'Souza, IQAC coordinator and head of the Department of Criminology and Forensic Science.

Expressing her gratitude, Dr Saritha D'Souza appreciated Father Muller Charitable Institutions for initiating the collaboration and looked forward to a wide range of joint academic and extension activities that would enrich both faculty and students through interdisciplinary learning, research, counselling services, and community engagement.

Accompanying her was Dr Rosa Nimmy Mathew, IQAC co-coordinator and head of the Department of MSc Counselling, whose expertise includes adolescent counselling, child counselling, psychotherapy, and psychological first aid. She expressed optimism that the partnership would create meaningful opportunities for counselling education, mental health promotion, and collaborative outreach initiatives.

L&T holds Manthan Drone Demo Day in Bengaluru



Bangalore : L&T Innovation Fund, L&T's Group-wide innovation platform, identifies, evaluates and scales emerging technologies that can create business value across the organisation. Within this broader innovation agenda, drones have emerged as a strategic focus area, driven by rapid advances in autonomy, artificial intelligence and unmanned systems, alongside growing adoption across defence, infrastructure, construction, logistics and public services.

Against this backdrop, L&T hosted L&T Manthan - Drone Demo Day in

Bangalore, bringing together 21 drone and uncrewed systems startups for live demonstrations. The event enabled L&T teams to evaluate deployment-ready technologies, identify Proof of Concept opportunities and explore co-development and IP-led partnerships.

A key highlight of the event was the unveiling of two indigenously developed uncrewed systems platforms by L&T Precision Engineering and Systems business. Vedh Mk1 is a high-altitude, runway-independent remotely piloted aircraft system designed for operations in

challenging terrain, while Chanakya is a decentralised collaborative mission autonomy framework engineered to enable coordinated operations across multiple unmanned platforms. Both platforms have been developed entirely in India and reinforce L&T's growing capabilities in indigenous defence and unmanned systems technologies.

The strategic focus on drones is aligned with the rapid expansion of Indias UAV ecosystem. The market is projected to grow from approximately USD 1.2 billion in 2025 to around USD 3.2 billion by 2030, supported by initiatives such as Drone Shakti, Production Linked Incentive schemes and continued defence modernisation. This creates opportunities for L&T to engage with emerging technology companies, evaluate innovative solutions early and accelerate deployment across its businesses.

Several Memoranda of Understanding were signed during the Drone Demo Day to explore future collaboration with startups and technology partners.

CM D.K.shivakimar hails Karnataka US relations & seeks stronger collaboration in Innovation, skills and research

INDIA'S FIRST QUANTUM CITY TO COME UP AT HESARAGHATTA

Bengaluru : Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Thursday, speaking in the presence of US Ambassador Sergio Gor, praised US-Karnataka relations & emphasised city's growing importance as a technology and innovation hub and its deepening ties with American companies and institutions.

Speaking at the inauguration of the QUANTUM exhibition at Science Gallery Bengaluru, the Chief Minister said Bengaluru is home to more than 1,000 US companies, 80,000 American citizens, 10,000 startups and a technology workforce of over one million. Karnataka building quantum ecosystem at Hesaraghatta

Highlighting Karnataka's initiatives in quantum technology, the Chief Minister said sustained collaboration between governments, universities, scientists, investors, startups and established industries was essential for the development of the sector. He said Bengaluru already had a growing ecosystem of startups and global technolo-



gy companies, anchored by the Karnataka Quantum Mission. At Hesaraghatta, the State was building India's first Quantum City, which would serve as an ecosystem of research laboratories, he said.

Under the Local Economy Accelerator Program (LEAP), the Government has also established a Centre of Excellence in Quantum Artificial Intelligence and Computing at IIIT Dharwad, the first such centre outside Bengaluru.

He said quantum science would play an important role in the future of computing, communication, healthcare and advanced manufacturing.

"It is our responsibility to ensure our young people can engage with these developments. That is why an institu-

tion like this matters to us," he said.

The Chief Minister said Science Gallery Bengaluru was closely connected with the State's vision of promoting public engagement with science. He congratulated Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Dr. Jahnvi Phalkey and their team, along with the partners involved in establishing the institution and the exhibition. Focus on Karnataka-US academic and innovation ties The Chief Minister sought the US Ambassador's support in building partnerships in innovation and skilling with leading academic and innovation hubs in the United States.

He said Karnataka was developing a network of Educational, Skill and Innovation Corridors with leading ecosystems across the US. "Our objective is simple: to connect classrooms to laboratories, laboratories to startups, and startups to global markets," he said.

The State intends to foster partnerships between its universities and leading American universities and

research institutions through joint research, curriculum development and industry-aligned learning, he said.

Such collaborations would help young people acquire globally relevant skills while remaining connected to Karnataka's innovation ecosystem, he added. Karnataka would also seek partnerships with Centres of Excellence, incubators, accelerators and research parks in major US innovation hubs such as Silicon Valley, Boston, Austin and Pittsburgh. "These collaborations will give Karnataka's startups access to world-class mentorship, advanced research facilities, venture capital networks and international markets. They will also let American innovators tap Karnataka's extraordinary talent pool, manufacturing capabilities and vibrant startup ecosystem," he said. US Ambassador to India Segio Gor, IT, BT and Home Minister Priyank Kharge, Transport Minister Byrathi Suresh, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Science Gyalery Founder Director Dr Jahnvi Phalke and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Rebellion in hand: Ministers lobby for influential portfolios

Bengaluru: The discontent that erupted over the cabinet expansion has almost cooled down, and Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah have held discussions regarding the allocation of portfolios. Those who were lobbying for ministerial posts till now are now eyeing influential portfolios and putting pressure on them. Many are eyeing the social welfare, finance, agriculture, housing, education, cooperation, excise and forest departments.

K.H. Muniyappa, who is already a senior in the cabinet, has insisted that his food and civil supplies department be changed to social welfare. Many people, including P.M. Narendra Swamy, Shivraj Thangadgi, Basavanthappa, are eyeing this portfolio. There is a severe lack of women representation in the state cabinet. If Rupakala is given a ministerial position, it will be beneficial in many ways, including women's quota, left-handed quota for Scheduled Castes and representation from Kolar district. For this reason, Congress leaders have requested K.H. Muniyappa to give up the ministerial post to his daughter.

But Muniyappa has insisted that he will be the minister for the

remaining period and is demanding that he provide social welfare instead of food and civil service.

Meanwhile, Basavaraja Rayareddy, who is close to Siddaramaiah, has demanded the finance department. The Chief Minister should retain the power to prepare and present the budget, transfer officers and staff. I will only handle the responsibilities of collecting and using financial resources. My intention is to honestly implement the report given by Prof. Govinda Rao Committee for managing regional imbalances and to give priority to balanced development. I have requested that I be given adequate responsibility for that.

Basavaraja Rayareddy said that he is requesting the finance department based on his long political experience and the ability to work as an economic advisor in Siddaramaiah's government in the past. However, Basavaraja Rayareddy is likely to be given the responsibility of the law, parliamentary affairs and planning departments.

Former ministers in Siddaramaiah's government are likely to be confined to the following departments: Cheluvarayya Swamy (Agriculture), S.S. Mallikarjuna

(Horticulture, Mines and Geology), Madhubangarappa (School Education and Literacy), Zameer Ahmed (Minority Development, Haj and Waqf), Santosh Lad (Labour, Muzrai), and Shivraj Thangadgi (Kannada and Culture).

T. Raghumoothi (Scheduled Classes Welfare), Nagendra (Fisheries and Ports), Puttaranga Shetty (Animal Husbandry), Rizwan Arshad (Higher Education), H.C. Balakrishna (Forests), Rudrappa Lamani (Excise), Ajay Singh (Small Industries and Public Enterprises), Vijayananda Kasappanavar (Agricultural Market, Textiles), K.N. Basavanthappa (Municipal Administration), Lakshman Savadi (Cooperatives, Sugar), K.M. Shivalingegowda (Housing), P.M. Narendraswamy (Social Welfare) are likely to be allotted portfolios.

Among those who joined the cabinet with D.K. Shivakumar, Ramalinga Reddy is pushing for a change of portfolio. He is likely to be given an additional portfolio along with the Water Resources Department. It is said that Satish Jarki Holli and M.B. Patil, who lobbied for the post of Deputy Chief Minister, may be given additional portfolios.

VIP party ready to contest 2028 Karnataka state general elections- State President Mohan Kumar B. K

Bengaluru: Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP) is set to strengthen its foothold in Karnataka politics and has expressed confidence of contesting and winning 50 assembly seats in the upcoming elections.

Top party leaders announced this important decision at a press conference at the "Uttara Bharatiya Milan Samaropa" program organized in Bengaluru.

Unity of more than 2.5 crore backward classes

The party leaders said, "For the last 20 years, the VIP party has had good support across North India and in various states. We belong to the 'Nishad Samaj', and the population of our society across the country is about 23 crore. The total population of North Indians and the most backward classes in Karnataka has increased to more than 2.5 crore. All these socialites will fight the upcoming elections together and will win at



least 50 seats," they assured.

Plan for a grand convention in November:

It has been two months since the VIP party entered Karnataka, and the organization is currently being strengthened in all the dis-

tricts of the state. The selection process for district presidents and office bearers of various units is in progress. After completing these organizational tasks, it is planned to organize grand programs in Bengaluru and Kalaburagi

in the coming month of November, which will be visited by the entire state government and other political parties, the leaders said.

The leaders expressed their anger that other political parties are only

using the backward classes as a vote bank and are not giving them proper political power. "The leaders and workers of our society, who are being neglected without being recognized in other parties, should resign from their positions and join the VIP party. North Indians are not alone in this country, the VIP party will always be with you. The time has come for us to claim our rights and take the helm of power," they called.

Prashanth A.H. State General Secretary, Sonali K. Povaiah - District President of the Women's Department of the Bangalore unit, Ramanajappa B. K. State Treasurer, Shanthappa Kudi - Kalaburagi District President, Smt. V. Malathi - President of the State Backward/Most Backward Classes Department were present at the program.

Grand Inauguration of 'KALA VANA' at Lalbagh – A Vibrant Celebration of Art in the Lap of Nature

Bengaluru : KALA VANA Rotary's Step Towards Artists, a unique open-air art exhibition organized by Rotary International Districts 3191 and 3192, was inaugurated today with great enthusiasm at the iconic Lalbagh Botanical Garden. Set amidst the breathtaking beauty of Lalbagh's renowned Flower Show, the exhibition beautifully brought together the splendour of nature and the creativity of artists, creating an unforgettable cultural experience for visitors.

Inaugurating the exhibition, Rtn. Dr. Anil Gupta, District Governor, Rotary International District 3191, said that art is the soul of society and encouraging artists is a shared social responsibility. He noted that the exhibition has been thoughtfully organized in the serene surroundings of Lalbagh to bring artists and the public together. The concept of



"Rotary's Step Towards Artists" aims to provide a common platform for artists to showcase their talent, inspire creativity, and open new avenues of recognition and opportunity.

Addressing the gathering, Rtn. Ravishankar Dakoju, District Governor, Rotary International District 3192, said that the colourful grandeur of the

Lalbagh Flower Show and the vibrant artworks on display reflected a remarkable confluence of nature, art, and culture. He observed that the harmony of blooming flowers and artistic expressions offered visitors a truly unique visual experience while promoting environmental awareness and appreciation for creativity.

EDITORIAL

Jairam Ramesh Alleges US Pressure in UPI Fee Bill, Rejects FM's Defence As 'Dubious Claims'

Congress MP Jairam Ramesh has sharply criticised the government's proposed changes to India's digital payments framework under the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, alleging American heavy-handedness and trade pressure in influencing domestic policy decisions. In a scathing reply to Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman – who previously hit back at Ramesh for what she described as “spreading a canard” – the veteran Congress leader on Friday (August 7) reiterating his position that the bill dismantles Unified Payments Interface's (UPI) statutory zero-fee guarantee, adversely affecting Indian customers. In his rebuttal, Ramesh argued that the government had failed to adequately answer why it was doing away with the legal guarantee of zero merchant discount rate (MDR) on UPI transactions and why it was especially doing so now. He pointed at the recent objections raised by the United States Trade Representative (USTR) as a potential catalyst for the move.

THE BILL IN QUESTION

The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, proposes to amend Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. The 2007 act presently bars banks and system providers from imposing any charge on transactions carried out through electronic modes of payment that are “prescribed under Section 269SU of the Income Tax Act, 1961.” This provision has kept UPI free of MDR since 2020. However, under the proposed amendment, this provision is replaced by a clause empowering the government to specify, by notification, “one or more electronic modes of payment” on which charges may apply. The change will come into effect from the date of publication in the Official Gazette. Even though the bill, in itself, does not impose a fee on UPI, it removes the default, law-backed protection against charges that UPI has enjoyed so far by giving the government the discretion to decide which payment modes remain free and which do not. The government will do so through executive notification and not via fresh legislation or having to return to the parliament. The eminence given to administrative decisions under the amendment is at the heart of the ongoing row.

Congress argues legal protection is being removed

On Thursday (August 6), Ramesh took to social media to call out government's attempt to alter the legal protection enjoyed by citizens under the existing 2007 act.

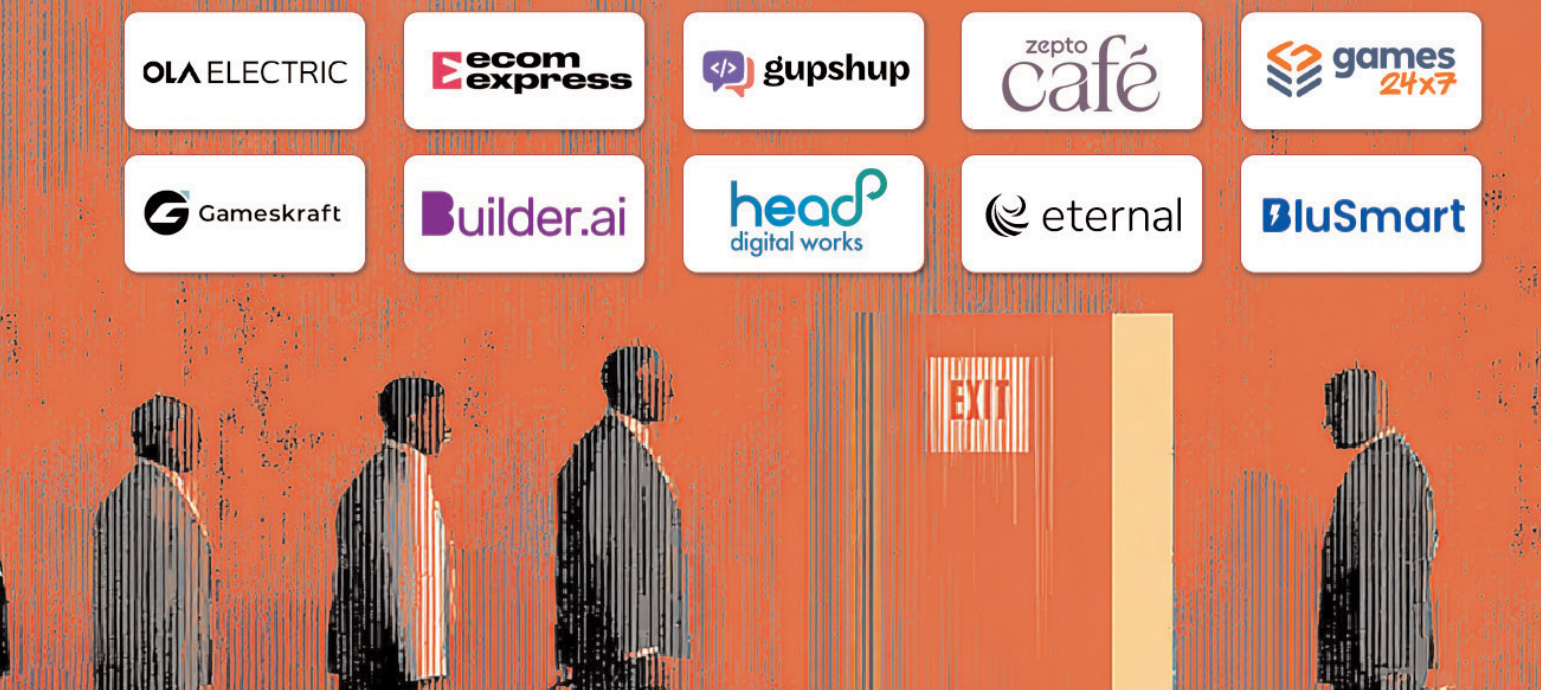
“It paves the way for imposing a merchant discount rate (MDR), which could easily be applied in the future to all types of digital payments. The burden of this will ultimately fall on ordinary people, who may now have to pay even for using UPI,” he said. He argued that Narendra Modi-led government's claim that the proposed amendment was the only method to keep UPI “financially sustainable” was false.

“The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has sufficient capacity to maintain the UPI system on a financially sustainable basis without imposing any additional fees on merchants or consumers,” he wrote on X, “In 2025-26, the RBI had transferred a surplus of Rs 2.86 lakh crore to the Modi government. Just a small portion of this amount would be enough to support this vital digital public infrastructure.”

AGE OF THE PINK SLIP:

India's Brutal IT Layoffs Are No Longer About Cost-Cutting

On the morning of July 29, a lot of Visa staff in India opened their laptops to an HR email telling them not to come in. Their jobs were gone. Visa is cutting about 2,600 roles worldwide, about 7% of its people, and India, its biggest tech base outside America, took a real hit. By early August, the axe had climbed the org chart to vice-presidents, senior directors, and engineering leads. A US filing on July 31 logged 320 losses at its California headquarters alone. One India team of 28, employees told reporters, lost ten. Visa's official line is that this is about efficiency and reinvesting for growth, and that AI is only one reason among several. Worth noting the company is making plenty of money and isn't leaving India. This isn't a struggling business trimming fat. It's a profitable one, deciding it needs fewer humans. Visa is not an outlier either. TCS, the country's largest private employer, said this summer it would let go of about 12,200 managers under a "future-ready transformation". Look at the full year, and the picture is uglier: net headcount down 23,460, ending March at 584,519. The four biggest IT firms, TCS, Infosys, HCLTech, and Wipro, removed a net 9,100 people in the April-June quarter this year. A year earlier, in the same quarter, they had added 22,622. Oracle has cut roughly 30,000 globally, many of them in India. Microsoft has gone back for more. Freshworks dropped 11% of its staff and named AI as the reason. Beneath the announced figures sits what nobody files paper-



work for: freshers at Infosys, Cognizant and Accenture whose joining dates keep slipping, benches quietly emptied. A Very Different Storm This round of layoffs feels different from 2023. Back then, firms were just unwinding pandemic over-hiring. This time, they are shrinking while the money still rolls in. NASSCOM puts the sector's FY26 revenue near \$315 billion, up around 6%, yet headcount rose only 2.3%. Revenue grew three times faster than the number of people earning it. For thirty years, Indian IT ran on one sum: revenue equals people times hours times billing rate. Win a client, hire a hundred engineers. That sum is what's breaking. The firms are shifting to charge for outcomes instead of bodies, and the old edge - paying an Indian company to throw more cheap people at a problem -

stops meaning much once one AI agent does the work of ten analysts. Some reck- on half a million jobs could go in the next two or three years. I don't buy the apocalypse, though, and nor should you. The Indian tech workforce actually grew last year, to roughly six million. The pain is landing on particular work: repetitive, process-heavy tasks, and the mid-career engineer keeping some decade-old system alive that a coding assistant can now half-run by itself. Meanwhile, the hiring is real in AI, cloud, cybersecurity, and platform work, and the global capability centres, the in-house tech arms multinationals run out of India, are still adding people. Look At The Fine Print TCS was careful to call its cuts a skills mismatch rather than an AI dividend, and that wording matters more than it looks. The trouble isn't machines

wiping out work wholesale. It's that the work keeps mutating faster than people can retrain for it. The number that should worry everyone: India may need over a million AI professionals, yet by the government's own estimate, only about 16% of the current IT workforce is genuinely AI-skilled. The bottleneck was never the supply of engineers. It's how few of them are ready for the job that exists today. Which is where the response has to go, and to be fair, some of it already is. A relook and reassessment is being undertaken at many levels, and two areas that need attention are below. The first task is retraining people and actually moving them into the roles that are hiring. FutureSkills PRIME, run by the IT ministry with NASSCOM, now claims over 25 lakh registered learners across 3,000-

odd courses in AI and cloud. The IndiaAI Mission is pushing AI teaching from undergraduate to PhD level, and the Skill India Digital Hub has pulled training onto one platform. Companies are doing their bit, with close to half of tech workers now saying they get AI training on the job and Infosys running its own programmes. But a certificate is not a career. The real test is whether a laid-off maintenance engineer lands in a GCC or product team, or just collects another badge that changes nothing on payday. The Fixes Lie Outside The Workplace The second task is fixing the pipeline before it reaches the workplace, so graduates turn up already fluent instead of needing a retrofit. In July, the government and NASSCOM confirmed they are rewriting the AI syllabus for undergraduate courses, a job expected to

take about six months. Get it right, and the gulf between what colleges teach and what employers want starts to close. Get it wrong, and we keep minting graduates trained on last decade's tools for jobs that have already vanished. None of this makes the layoffs painless. Behind every "restructuring" is a person locked out of their own inbox, a fresher watching a start date drift into the fog. But India is not a passenger here. It has the youngest big workforce on the planet - two in three Indians are under 35 - and the deepest bench of AI skills of any country. The real contest is one of speed: how fast AI swallows the routine jobs against how fast the country can push its people up into the harder ones. It can't slow the first. It can win the second, if it stops treating retraining as a press release.

'WHO KILLED MY FAMILY?':

11 Years After Rajasthan's Dangawas Dalit Massacre, Court Acquits All 40 Accused

Jaipur: Standing in front of the police tent outside his house in Rajasthan's Nagaur district, Arjunram Meghwal appeared inconsolable. For the last 11 years, the sight of the tent and the police personnel standing guard before his house each day reminded him of his dead father, Ratnaram Meghwal, and four other deceased relatives. “I had hoped that those who murdered my father and other relatives would be punished. But today, after the court's decision, I don't know what to do. If nobody is guilty, then who killed my family? Did they die themselves?” Arjunram, a Dalit man who is a resident of Dangawas village in Nagaur district told The Wire on Wednesday (August 5). Hours earlier, the special court for SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act cases in Nagaur district's Merta had acquitted all 40 accused against whom chargesheets were filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for the murder of Arjunram's father Ratnaram along with his relatives Pancharam, Ganeshram, Ganpatram and Pokarram. “I saw them killing my family members. I was also injured in the attack, and yet they will now walk free,” said Arjunram, as he stood before the police tent, which was installed near his house to provide protection to his family after the massacre. Known as the Dangawas Dalit massacre, the attack on Arjunram's family on May 14, 2015 over a 50-year-old land dispute and the subsequent death of five Dalit men

had resulted in nationwide outrage, leading to the then Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Rajasthan handing the investigation to the CBI. Apart from the five Dalit individuals, another person, identified as Rampal Goswami – not a Dalit person – had also died after sustaining bullet wounds during the confrontation in Dangawas on May 14. In a separate case, a counter FIR over the death of Goswami by bullet injuries was filed wherein members of the Meghwal community including Kishnaram – whose father Pancharam was one of the deceased Dalit persons in the massacre – were made the accused. In the counter FIR, it was alleged that the Dalit persons had opened fire which caused the death of Goswami. The court on Wednesday made it clear in its judgment that it was not determining who caused the death of Goswami. The court on Wednesday made it clear in its judgment that it was not determining who caused the death of Goswami and the related CBI case will be disposed of independently on their own merits and will not be prejudicially affected by this decision. A 50-year-old land dispute leading to a massacre. As per the judgment, the CBI found during its investigation that the root cause of the dispute, which lead to the murders in 2015, was a 23-bigha piece of land, allotted by the Rajasthan government to Bastaram Meghwal – a Dalit man – in 1961. Later, the ownership of the land was transferred to Ratnaram, who was the adopted son of Bastaram. The CBI also found that in

1964, Bastaram mortgaged the land to Chimmaram Jat in exchange of Rs 1,500 on the condition that Jat would not get interest for the loaned amount and Bastaram would not get any share of the agricultural produce from the land. Subsequently, it is alleged that Ratnaram, with an intention of taking back possession of the land, had built a hut and a permanent room on the disputed land some time before the incident and started living there with his family. A panchayat was convened by villagers on May 10, 2015 over the issue which the complainants didn't attend and then, on May 14 another panchayat was called, before the dispute spiralled into the massacre on the same day, says the judgment. In the FIR lodged after the incident, Arjunram – the complainant in the case – had said that around 200 people armed with sharp and blunt weapons had attacked his family. The FIR said that the accused had used tractors to demolish the constructions and shanties made by the Dalit family over the land and also allegedly attacked Arjunram and his family members including women, which led to the death of his father and four others. ‘Heart-wrenching mass violence but perpetrator is disproven’ In his judgment on Wednesday, special judge Ashish Bijarnia noted the heinous nature of the crime but said that the prosecution has failed to prove the involvement of the 40 men who were chargesheeted for the massacre. “The essence of the entire above discussion is

that in the present case, the incident is proven, but the perpetrator is disproven. What occurred on 14.05.2015 on the disputed farm in village Dangawas was, on the records of this court, beyond any doubt, a heinous and heart-wrenching mass violence in which five persons lost their lives and many others were seriously injured,” said the court in its judgment. “This court has never, at any point, doubted this fact. What has not been proven is the connection, beyond any doubt, through admissible evidence, of any particular accused among these forty accused to that violence,” the judgment mentioned. Further, the court highlighted procedural lapses on part of the prosecution, which led to the acquittal of the 40 accused, who were predominantly from the Jat community. ‘Failure not because of skill of defence, it arises from the prosecution's own evidence’ The court noted in its 245-page judgment written in Hindi that there is no doubt that the crime had taken place and also directed the state government to ensure that the victim families receive appropriate compensation under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995. “Although the accused are being acquitted, it is undeniably proven that five persons died and several others were seriously injured in the incident of 14.05.2015. An acquittal does not mean that the crime did not occur – it merely means that the perpetrators could not be ascertained by legal evidence,” said the court.

From Punjab To Karnataka, Congress Just Can't Stop Hitting Self-Goals

Indian politics has a habit of discovering national turning points in municipal wards, assembly by-elections, and stray remarks made outside Parliament. Sometimes, the instinct is justified. More often, a local rebuke is inflated into a national rebellion because the Opposition is hungry for hope, and television studios are hungry for narratives. The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) recent defeats in Bankipur and Datia deserve attention. Prashant Kishor has broken the party's three-decade hold over Bankipur, winning 64,151 votes and defeating the BJP by 19,324. In Madhya Pradesh, the Congress retained Datia by 6,016 votes. But on the same day, the BJP retained Manjalpur in Gujarat by more than 30,000 votes. The verdict was, therefore, a warning, not a collapse. The temptation for the Congress will be to celebrate Datia and interpret Bankipur as evidence of a wider anti-BJP mood. It should, however, resist both impulses. Bankipur was not won by the Congress. It was won by a political entrepreneur who recognised a vacant space, invested himself in it, and convinced voters that neither the ruling alliance nor the established Opposition deserved their loyalty. That should worry the Congress more than it does the BJP. In the immediate political future, the road to the 2029 Lok Sabha election will pass through Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand in 2027, and Karnataka in 2028. Together, these four states account for 126 Lok Sabha

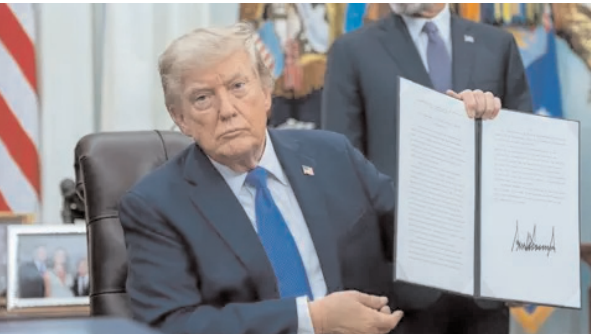
constituencies. They will test whether the Congress can manage leaders, choose winnable candidates, and preserve alliances - the three areas in which it remains most vulnerable. Two Defeats Isn't A Wave The 2024 Lok Sabha verdict altered the psychological balance of Indian politics. The BJP fell from 303 seats to 240 and lost its independent majority; the Congress rose from 52 to 99 and regained the status of the official Opposition party. The INDIA grouping demonstrated that Narendra Modi could be challenged when regional arithmetic, candidate selection, and local grievances worked together. But the elections that followed have produced a far less reassuring picture for the Congress. In Bihar in 2025, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won 202 of 243 Assembly seats. The BJP became the largest party with 89 seats, the Janata Dal-United (JD-U) won 85, and the Congress was reduced to six. In the 2026 Assembly elections, the BJP captured West Bengal with 207 seats and secured 82 of 126 seats in Assam. The Congress's decisive Kerala victory, where it emerged as the largest party with 63

seats, demonstrated what it can achieve with an identifiable state leadership, a durable coalition, and an organisation that exists between elections. But its two seats in Bengal, 19 in Assam, and five in Tamil Nadu exposed the geographic narrowness of its recovery. The BJP, in other words, is neither invincible nor remotely exhausted. It has lost important battles, but it continues to acquire territory. Congress leaders often speak as though anti-incumbency is a natural resource that will eventually

towards them. Bankipur offers the opposite lesson. When the principal Opposition fails to provide an address for public dissatisfaction, voters may find another recipient. Punjab, Uttarakhand, And The Missing 'Command' Punjab should, on paper, offer the Congress its clearest opportunity in 2027. The party won seven of the state's 13 Lok Sabha seats in 2024. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government must defend its five years in office, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) remains diminished, and the BJP has yet to establish a statewide social coalition. Even then, the Congress appears determined to turn an opportunity into an internal referendum. The leadership issue is nowhere near settled. Amarinder Singh Raja Warring continues as the Pradesh Congress chief, while Charanjit Singh Channi, Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, and their supporters have demanded change.



Trump again tries to limit US birthright citizenship with new executive orders



Donald Trump is trying again to scale back birthright citizenship in the US, weeks after the Supreme Court shot down his previous attempt to eliminate the right. The president signed two executive orders on Thursday, including one that expands the existing definitions of non-citizens whose children are not eligible for birthright citizenship. The second order bans so-called birth tourism, the practice of pregnant mothers coming to the US to give birth so that their babies will be citizens. "This should have happened years ago, but we're taking care of it now," Trump said from the Oval Office, criticising the Supreme Court's rejection of his previous bid to end the 150-year-old policy. "My Administration has guarded against the risks posed by malign foreign actors who attempt to swindle American citizens by taking advantage of the generosity of our Nation," the first executive order says. That order prohibits the automatic citizenship of babies born in the United States to two non-citizen parents where one

of the parents is: a member of a foreign terrorist group, a foreign government employee, has attempted to gain citizenship through fraudulent means, or is living in US territories where citizenship is not conferred by federal statute. Birthright citizenship for people born in US territories such as Puerto Rico is codified by federal statute. Trump and members of his administration have repeatedly railed against birth tourism, including accusing Russian and Chinese adversaries of taking advantage of birthright citizenship to infiltrate the US. While announcing the executive orders from the Oval Office on Thursday, Trump said that hundreds of thousands of babies have been born through birth tourism in the US. The Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan research group, has said that the most expansive census-based estimate accounts for about 22,000 to 26,000 babies born in the US from birth tourism every year. Government data, according to the institute, showed that there were 9,600 births to mothers with foreign addresses in 2024.



Thousands of migrants still in Ceuta after border crisis, local leader says

Australian aviation crew carries out daring midwinter Antarctica rescue

An Australian aviation crew has carried out a daring midwinter mission to rescue a US expedition member from a station in Antarctica in freezing temperatures and total darkness. Skytraders said the "extraordinary" mission took place last Friday after a request for urgent help with a medical evacuation from McMurdo Station. After an initial delay due to the weather, the aviation company said it was able to land its Airbus A319 in "extremely challenging conditions" including temperatures of -43C (-45.4F). The patient was then safely transferred onto the plane, known as Snowbird 1, which carried on to Christchurch in New Zealand, where the patient was treated. He is now recovering well. Captain Louise Robertson, one of four



pilots on the flight which took off from the Tasmanian city of Hobart, told the BBC it was the first ever to have taken place in July and to be completed in total darkness. "We completed it on the 31 July, and the first day of any sort of sunlight, which was very minimal, would be on the 1 August," she said. Her husband of 18 years, Rod Robertson, was the pilot who

landed the plane at the US research station on Ross Island. "He was in the left seat and I was in the right seat," she said, adding that it was the most complex operation she had ever been involved in during her seven years at Skytraders and 25 as a pilot. Skytraders had received the evacuation request from the US Antarctic Program via the Australian Antarctic

Division on Wednesday afternoon, Robertson said. It was a "major operation" for the plane to be correctly configured in time by engineers and a design team, who fitted a stretcher in the back. The configuration took 24 hours, Robertson said, but takeoff was then delayed for another 12 hours while the crew waited for a suitable window in the weather. "We had quite a narrow time frame that we could actually fly down to Antarctica because there was a snowstorm on the first day that we were intending to go down which stopped the operation." The storm prevented crew at the station from getting to the runway, made of compacted snow, which had to be graded and groomed to make it smooth - a six-hour job.

Trump-backed Republican congressman loses primary in Tennessee

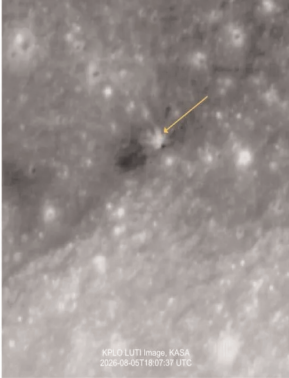
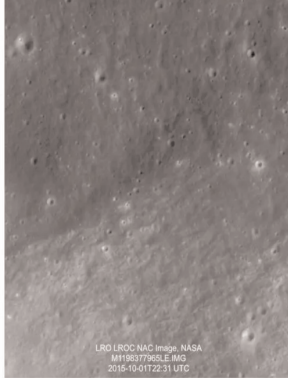


Republican Congressman Andy Ogles has lost his House primary in Tennessee, becoming the second Trump-endorsed candidate to be defeated this week. Former Tennessee agricultural commissioner Charlie Hatcher defeated the two-term congressman in Thursday's Republican contest for the state's 5th congressional district. Hours before polls closed, US President Donald Trump said Ogles had his "complete and total endorsement for re-election". It follows the defeat of a Trump-backed Republican candidate in Michigan on Wednesday, although there were also several wins for candidates he endorsed. The winners of the primaries will go on to contest November's midterm elections. All 435 House seats and 35 of the 100 Senate seats will be up for election. Hatcher is expected to face Columbia mayor Chaz Molder, who won the Democratic primary, in November. Ogles, who has represented Tennessee's 5th district since taking office in 2023, has been at the centre of a number of controversies during his time in Congress. He was investigated over alleged campaign finance violations but was not charged with a crime. He has denied wrongdoing. He also sparked backlash for anti-Muslim comments, including posts on X in which he said "Muslims

don't belong in American society" and "America and Islam are incompatible". In his latest endorsement of Ogles in a Truth Social post on Thursday, Trump said: "Congressman Andy Ogles is doing a fantastic job," adding: "Andy is a Conservative Warrior who has strong support from his Community." In Tennessee, Trump-backed Amir Hassan finished significantly behind Tom Smith, who had suspended his campaign in July and endorsed another candidate. But Trump's endorsement is still highly sought after in Republican primaries and he had a string of wins this week. John James won Michigan's Republican nomination for governor despite being heavily outspent by his wealthy opponent. Trump not only spoke out in support of James but appeared on stage with him last week. In Kansas, Republicans opted for Trump's choice for governor and in a Washington state House race, Amanda McKinney, the president's pick, also finished first. This year's primary season has seen an unusually high number of incumbents lose their party's renomination. Six Democrats and three Republicans have been defeated, the highest number in a non-redistricting election cycle since 1970, according to Vital Statistics on Congress.

South Korea space agency shares Moon images after SpaceX rocket debris crash

South Korea's space agency has released images that show the Moon after part of a SpaceX rocket crashed into its surface on Wednesday. The Korean AeroSpace Administration (KASA) said lunar orbiter Danubri captured images after the impact, which it shared alongside photos of what the Moon's surface looked like before the crash. Rocket debris struck the Moon at around 06:35 GMT on Wednesday, according to the South Korean space agency. SpaceX has said the impact was not intentional. Re-usable Falcon 9 rockets were designed to allow part of the rocket to return to Earth (the upper stage) and other sections to be shed in space. SpaceX has used this type of rocket on several missions. The empty upper stage of this Falcon 9 rocket, which scientists predicted would hit the Moon at a speed of about 5,400mph (8,700km/h), is about the size of a five-storey building and weighs approximately 4,000kg (630st) on Earth. The short, dramatic flash created when the rocket



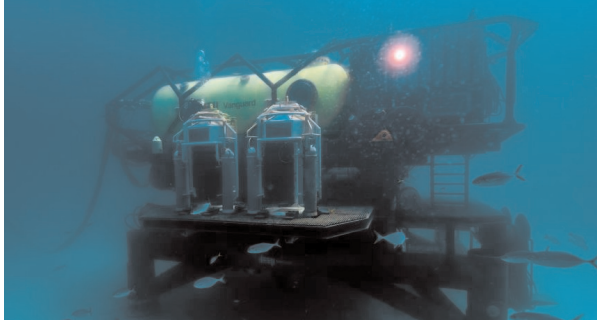
Highlights
■ South Korea's space agency has released images that show the Moon after part of a SpaceX rocket crashed into its surface on Wednesday.

part hit the Moon would have been hard to catch by amateur astronomers even with high-end telescopes, but larger observatories - including Seoul's space agency - are analysing the information. While the impact did not pose any danger to Earth, Matt Bothwell, astronomer at the University of Cambridge, raised concerns about space debris. "Space is getting more and more crowded," he said, as each year "we launch more stuff into space". "It could feasibly be within a few decades that it's actually quite hard to get past Earth's orbit because space is so crowded,"

Bothwell warned. This Falcon 9 was in orbit since January last year, when it blasted off from Florida. The same booster section from the January 2025 mission is due to set off on its 18th flight on 10 August. SpaceX says the mission hopes to launch 29 Starlink satellites to low-Earth orbit. The rocket that blasted from Florida last January was carrying two lunar landers into space. Its job was to fire the upper stage hard enough to send both of the landers out of Earth's orbit and onto a path towards the Moon. The spent stage was left drifting in a long,

looping orbit that swung out towards the Moon and back again. Over the next 18 months, the gentle gravitational tug of the Earth, Moon and Sun, along with light from the Sun, gave it a faint push. Astronomers tracking the rocket part eventually worked out that those small nudges had put it on a course towards the Moon, and it was picking up speed every day. The impact on Wednesday happened in broad daylight for many parts of the world, but the tiny flash it produced would have been far too faint to see, even through a telescope.

The first new underwater habitat in decades may spark the next race to the bottom



The ocean holds many secrets. For the few humans who have lived at its depths, one of those secrets is where all the poop goes. In years past, crew aboard the Aquarius Reef Base, off Florida, reported leaving the habitat to conduct their business, swimming to an underwater outhouse for privacy. The locals didn't always get the memo. "Fish, unfortunately, would know why you were out there and they would swarm," recalled Dawn Kernagis, who lived aboard Aquarius as part of a NASA mission in 2016. Another former resident, Garrett Reisman, described it as "like the dinner bell going off." All this, despite the base having a toilet on board. Aquarius now boasts two toilets and no out-house restroom, said the director of communications at Florida International University, which operates the station (who took a lengthy fact check in good humor). But after decades without a contender to the throne, there's a new underwater base in town. DEEP, the company behind Vanguard station, is keen to show off its plumbing, though restroom facilities are hardly the main talking point. According to UK-based DEEP, the Florida-based station is the first sub-sea human habitat deployed in US waters in 40 years.



Thai teenager kills at least seven and injures more than 30 as PM calls shooting 'well prepared'

GERMAN AIRPORT DRONE-BOMB: COULD RUSSIA BE INVOLVED?

As Germany investigates how a drone loaded with explosives reached a runway at Leipzig airport, there is renewed talk in Europe of hybrid war. The interior minister is warning of a "new level of danger" from an attack that "may involve foreign powers". There is no proof at this stage to link the flying bomb directly to Russia, which denies any role. But as well as the means and the motive, Moscow does have form. The BBC has seen details of the investigation into a plot in 2024 in which Russian-linked proxies in Poland and Lithuania not only handled drones and explosives but also delivered them to Germany. The flying bomb The quadcopter was discovered at Leipzig airport late on Tuesday



night, forcing one runway into lockdown as a bomb disposal robot rolled into action. On the tarmac close by were several Ukrainian Antonov cargo planes, stripes along their enormous bodies in the blue and yellow of the country's flag. One reads, "Be Brave Like Kherson", the southern city now on the frontline of Russia's invasion. Pictures published by German media

suggest the drone was a relatively small device which airport staff spotted "floating" between the Ukrainian planes. Around the same time, a DHL cargo plane collided with an "unidentified object" as it pulled up into the sky, unable to land in Leipzig. Teams are still working to establish whether that was a second drone. They are also trying to trace who launched the

devices and why. A previous Russian-backed plot involving Leipzig airport could provide clues. In 2024, a parcel containing a sophisticated incendiary device caught fire at the airport's DHL hub shortly before it was loaded onto a plane. Similar packages then ignited in the UK and Poland, causing extensive damage. A group of men are currently on trial in both Lithuania and Poland, where prosecutors believe they were part of a substantial network of proxies recruited by Russian military intelligence. But there was a subplot that has been little discussed before. Last September, Lithuanian prosecutors said that investigators had also seized RDX explosives meant for "other terrorist attacks".

Anmol Ekka To Lead Indian Men's Hockey Team In Junior Asia Cup

Defender Anmol Ekka will lead an 18-member Indian men's hockey team at the AHF Junior Asia Cup to be held in Moqi, China from August 30 to September 13. The Hockey India selectors also named two alternate players for the tournament in Arjun Santosh Hargude and Ritik Lakra. The squad is currently training at the Sports Authority of India centre in Bengaluru under the guidance of newly-appointed coach Frederic Soye. As part of their build-up to the tournament, the team recently completed a productive exposure tour of Belgium, where they competed against strong international opposition. The tour offered the players valuable match experience and key takeaways, enabling the squad to assess their progress, refine their combinations and further strengthen their preparations ahead of the AHF Junior Asia Cup. The team



is gaining further competitive exposure through friendly matches against the Malaysian U-21 team at the SAI centre in Bengaluru. "We are pleased with the balance and depth of the squad selected for the Junior Asia Cup. The players have worked hard over the past few months, showing commitment, discipline and a strong desire to improve. Selection was based on consistent performances, attitude and the ability to execute our game plan under pressure," coach Soye said in a release. "It will be a high-

ly competitive tournament, and we respect every opponent. Our focus will be on playing disciplined, attacking hockey while staying true to our structure." Highlighting the significance of the tournament in the players' development, the coach said, "This tournament is also an important step in the players' development, and we are confident this group has the potential to deliver strong performances and make the country proud." The squad: Goalkeepers: Vivek Lakra, Kunal Tewatia.

'Pakistan Media Ran A Fake Story': Ex-India Star Makes Stunning Revelation



Former Indian cricketer Irfan Pathan opened up on facing trolling and fake news, saying that once a fake story about Pakistani batter Babar Azam refusing him was run in Pakistan. The former all-rounder said that he does not respond to anything, since doing that with everyone would not let an individual live his life. Pathan was speaking on JioHotstar's 'Cheeky Singles'. Speaking during the programme, Pathan said that instances of "trolling and fake attribution" happen every day,

and once a story about Babar refusing him an interview was run, by photoshopping his face on someone else's picture. "The trolling and fake attribution happen every day. The media in our neighbouring country once ran a story claiming that I had gone to interview Babar Azam, and that he refused because, according to him, 'He trolls our country, so I won't give him an interview.' It was a complete lie. Someone had photo-shopped my face onto a picture," he said.

R Praggnanandhaa Seals Grand Chess Tour St Louis Rapid And Blitz Title

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa secured the Grand Chess Tour St. Louis Rapid and Blitz title on Thursday. The 20-year-old played out a draw against Javokhir Sindarov in the penultimate round to seal the tournament with a score of 23/35 points, finishing 1.5 points ahead of the rest of the field. Sharing the update on X, ChessBase India wrote, "Its 2:16 AM in India right now, and we have huge news coming in from the USA. R. Praggnanandhaa is the Champion of Grand Chess Tour St. Louis Rapid and Blitz with a round to spare! Praggnanandhaa drew against Javokhir Sindarov in the penultimate round to seal the tournament win with a score of 23/35 points - 1.5 points ahead of the field! Big congratulations to Praggnanandhaa and his team on this amazing victory - this is the first Rapid and Blitz tournament which Pragg has won!" Its 2:16 AM in India right now, and we have



huge news coming in from the USA. R. Praggnanandhaa is the Champion of Grand Chess Tour St. Louis Rapid and Blitz with a round to spare! Earlier in June, Praggnanandhaa scripted history by claiming the Norway Chess 2026 title in Oslo after defeating Germany's Vincent Keymer in the 10th and final round. The victory completed a remarkable late surge by the Indian star, who registered four consecutive classical

wins to secure one of the biggest titles of his career. Following that triumph, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay felicitated the Indian Grandmaster on Monday and presented him with a cash reward of Rs 50 lakh on behalf of the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu. The felicitation ceremony was held at the Chief Secretariat in Chennai, where the Chief Minister also played a game of chess with the 20-year-old.

NORWAY CALL FOR INFANTINO TO RESIGN AS MEXICO AND ARGENTINA BACK PRESIDENT

Norway have called on Fifa president Gianni Infantino to resign following his aborted attempt to sell off stakes in the World Cup to private investors, but Mexico and Argentina have voiced their support for the 56-year-old. Norway have gone a step further than the football associations of England, Wales, Croatia and Albania, all of whom have withdrawn support for Infantino without explicitly calling for him to resign. "He [Infantino] does not have the institutional trust required to govern Fifa stably in the times we are in," Norwegian Football Federation (NFF) president Lise Klaveness said on Friday. "There is no going back for Gianni Infantino. The international football cooperation is very much in trouble, and we must have a reason to get together now, and we want to ask the Fifa president to resign now. "We will see which other countries eventually join in, if that becomes the strategy from the Uefa board. We are not going to ask for an extraordinary



[Uefa board] meeting, we will ask him to resign in our dialogue with Fifa." Klaveness, who is a qualified lawyer, went through a list of concerns that the Norwegian FA has expressed to Fifa during her four-year tenure. Among them were questions around the awarding of tournaments, the inaugural Fifa peace prize that was awarded to US President

?Donald Trump in December, and the overturning of a ban for American forward Folarin Balogun during the recent World Cup following a phone call from Trump. Meanwhile, earlier on Friday the Mexican Football Federation broke ranks with its regional governing body Concacaf to come out in support of Infantino. Concacaf, which runs

football in North and Central America and the Caribbean, called for a "comprehensive reckoning" of Infantino's presidency after he aborted plans to sell off stakes in the World Cup to private investors. However, 2026 World Cup co-hosts Mexico have backed Infantino's leadership amid widespread calls for him to resign. "The FMF [Mexican FA] supports president Infantino's leadership in continuing to promote the development of football through institutional strengthening," a statement read. It echoed a statement from Conmebol - South America's governing body - in saying it would reject any attempt to remove Infantino without a vote involving all 211 Fifa members. "The FMF will neither recognise nor approve any process convened outside of that institutional framework, and it joins the call made by president Infantino to collectively continue developing football for the benefit of the 211 member associations," it added.

Why Is Shubman Gill Not Playing For India On Day 1 Of Warm-Up Match Against Sri Lanka XI

Indian cricket team captain Shubman Gill will not take the field on Day 1 of the warm-up match against Sri Lanka XI after he suffered an impact injury on his right ring finger during practice on Thursday. The decision was taken as a precautionary measure by the team management ahead of the first Test match against Sri Lanka starting August 15. In Gill's absence, KL Rahul will be leading the side and he was the one who came out for toss. Sri Lanka XI won the toss and opted to bat. "Captain Shubman Gill sustained an impact injury to his right ring finger during India's practice on Thursday. As a precautionary measure, he will not take the field on Day 1 of the warm-up game against SLC XI. The BCCI Medical Team is monitoring his progress. KL Rahul will lead the team in Gill's absence," BCCI posted on social media. Reduced from four days to three, the warm-up fixture marks a critical preparation window for India ahead of the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka



Ranjit Bajaj Sparks Fresh Row, Rejects India U15 Team Job: "There Is No Point"

Minerva Academy owner Ranjit Bajaj rejected the role of Indian U15 football team manager just hours after his appointment. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) took a big call as they appointed Bajaj as the team manager while Bibiano Fernandes retained his position as head coach. Bajaj has been one of the most vocal critics of AIFF in the recent past and he has been a big advocate of developing the game at the grass-root levels in the country. However, Bajaj pointed out the difference between his style of football and the kind of football that Bibiano has played with the junior team in the past. "They sent me a letter stating that I have been appointed manager. So people have been calling me up and congratulating me. However, I am not happy. I am very unhappy. This is the worst thing that they could have



done. You have kept both of us together in the team. I do not have any problems with Bibiano. We just have different playing styles and different visions. A low-block counter-attacking style is completely different from a high-press style. I am not saying the other system is wrong but those are very different systems. So, that is a preparation for disaster," Bajaj said in a video posted on social media. "We are not on the same page or same thinking.

That is why there is no point," he added. Bajaj made it clear that his decision had nothing to do with Bibiano and said that the team and coach will have his full support. "If you had an ultimate winner or treble champion, you would have appointed that person. You did not have anyone like that and that is why, you appointed your biggest critic and hater. I know how to win. But I win because of my world-class team and world-class processes.

Ignored India Star Posts Cryptic Message Ahead Of Sri Lanka Test Series: "May Not Fit In"



Ignored Indian cricket team batter Sarfaraz Khan took to Instagram to post a cryptic message after not getting included in the squad for the upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka. Sarfaraz last played for India back in 2024 during the three-match home Test series against New Zealand. He scored 171 runs in 6 innings but failed to find a spot in the team after that

series. However, it seems like the batter has not given up hope and is ready to fight for his position. He posted a picture from a movie along with the caption - "I may not fit in, but I'll fight with everything I've got". Meanwhile, Shubman Gill did not take the field on the opening day of the practice match against SLC XI on Friday after sustaining an injury to his right finger during

practice. Gill picked up the niggle during a training session here on Thursday and as result, KL Rahul is leading the side in his absence. SLC XI has won the toss and opted to bat in the three-day practice game. "Captain Shubman Gill sustained an impact injury to his right ring finger during India's practice on Thursday. As a precautionary measure, he will not take the field on Day 1 of the warm-up game against SLC XI. The BCCI Medical Team is monitoring his progress," the BCCI posted on its 'X' handle. "KL Rahul will lead the team in Gill's absence." India are touring Sri Lanka for a two-Test series, starting at Galle on August 15. The second Test will be played here from August 23.

Mohammed Ashfaq Breaks U20 National Record In 400m At World Athletics



Mohammed Ashfaq broke the U20 national record to qualify for the men's 400m semifinals while Amanat Kamboj finished sixth in women's discus throw finals with a personal best effort on the second day of the World Athletics U20 Championships. The 19-year-old Ashfaq clocked 45.81 seconds to finish second behind USA's Jayden DeLeon (45.63s) in the first round heat 5 and fourth overall to make it to the semifinals. Ashfaq bettered his own previous national record of 46.05 seconds, set earlier this season in April. Compatriot Piyush Raj, however, failed to proceed after finishing fifth in Heat 6 and 35th overall with a time of 47.78 seconds. In the women's discus final, the 18-year-old Kamboj's first round throw of 53.24m, her lifetime best, was good enough for a sixth-place finish. Su Yixin of China won the gold with 61.06m, while Jaslene Massey (58.41m) of USA and Marina Hadjicosta (54.88m) of Cyprus took the silver and bronze respectively. In

men's high jump, Basant qualified for the finals after finishing fifth in the qualification round Group A and 11th overall with a best clearance of 2.14m. Compatriot K Ambriesh, however, bowed out as he managed to clear just 2.05m for a 12th place finish in the qualification round Group B and 24th overall. He failed to clear 2.10m in all three of his attempts. Meanwhile, Anshu missed out on a place in the women's shot put final after finishing ninth in her qualification group and 14th overall with a throw of 15.24m. Tanu Chaudhary failed to make it to the women's 400m hurdles semifinals after finishing fifth in her heat and 33rd overall, clocking 1:00.03s. Amit Kumar finished eighth and last in his heat in the men's 400m hurdles, clocking 54.01 seconds. Both P Royshan and Dhanush Raj also failed to qualify for the men's triple jump final after finishing 25th and 34th overall respectively with efforts of 15.20m and 14.71m.



LE COURT WINS STAGE SIX OF TOUR AFTER MECHANICAL FAILURE

Kimberley Le Court overcame a mechanical failure before winning a sprint finish to seal victory in stage six of the Tour de France Femmes on Thursday, as Swiss rider Marlen Reusser held on to the overall lead. Le Court of AG Insurance-Soudal, who also crashed early on in the stage, was forced her to change bike just 15 km from the end. The Mauritian fought her way back into contention shortly before the day's final climb, forming part of a small eight-rider breakaway group 10 km from the finish. Le Court, 30, had just enough perform-

ance left to launch a sprint with 300m to go, holding off French rider Cedrine Kerbaol on the line to seal victory, with Puck Pieterse of the Netherlands taking third place. Movistar's Reusser retains the yellow jersey after the 153.4km ride from Montbrison to Tournon-sur-Rhone, holding a 12-second lead over Dutch rider Demi Vollerig. Friday's stage seven - the queen stage - on the nine-stage event is 146.8km from La Voulte-sur-Rhone to the summit finish at the famous Mont Ventoux in the French Alps. This was Le Court's

second stage victory in the Tour de France Femmes following her win in stage five last year from Chasseneuil-du-Poitou to Gueret. Le Court said her team was "amazing" during her bike change, adding: "They brought me back slowly but surely to the bunch, and I got back on top of the [second-to] last climb, which was a really big effort. "Then I just tried to stay patient and recover from this big effort. "I had to close the gap myself and I was really, really dead, I was on the limit. I can't believe I still had the legs to sprint." England defender Lucy

Bronze says a Uefa boycott of Fifa competitions would be the "right thing" for the future of the game, despite the impact it could have on women's football. After Fifa president Gianni Infantino announced a plan to sell stakes in competitions to private investors, European football's 55 member associations voted to boycott all Fifa competitions until the proposals were dropped. The plans have since been aborted - with Infantino apologising for his "errors" - but in a statement on Thursday, Uefa said the boycott could still go ahead.

Suriya’s ‘Vishwanath & Sons’ Trailer Promises a Heartwarming BIG-SCREEN EXPERIENCE

The much-awaited trailer of Vishwanath & Sons, starring Suriya, is finally out and it promises a happy, emotional, pleasant and wholesome big-screen experience. Directed by Venky Atluri and produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya, the film is gearing up to be one of the biggest family entertainers of the year. The trailer opens the doors to the world of Sanjay Vishwanath, an international pistol shooter who continues to chase his dreams even in his 40s. Suriya effortlessly balances style, warmth, humour and emotion, delivering a perform-

ance that instantly strikes a chord. His charismatic screen presence, coupled with Venky Atluri's heartfelt writing, promises one of his most endearing performances in recent years. Mamitha Baiju brings her signature charm to the screen, while Radhika Sarathkumar, Raveena Tandon and the stellar ensemble cast add depth to this emotional journey. G. V. Prakash Kumar's soulful music, Nimish Ravi's rich visuals and Venky Atluri's signature storytelling further elevate the trailer. During the grand audio launch event in Coimbatore, the team confidently spoke about the film's emotional strength and its ability to connect with audiences of all ages. The trailer now validates every bit of that confidence, leaving viewers with the promise of a memorable theatrical experience. Produced under Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, and presented by Srikara Studios, Vishwanath & Sons is all set for a grand worldwide release on August 14, 2026, promising audiences a world of unforgettable emotions this Independence Day weekend.



POOJA HEGDE PUTS THE PEST IN BUDAPEST



Pooja Hegde is currently living her best life on a holiday in Budapest, Hungary, and her latest pictures are proof of just how much fun she's having. Sharing a fun set of candid clicks, the actress captioned her post "Put the pest in Budapest," giving fans a peek into her vacation diaries. From golden-hour smiles in an oversized tee to a mirror selfie in lace and a cheerful yellow dress moment at a quirky café, Pooja's pictures capture the perfect mix of relaxed and radiant. Known for keeping her social media candid and fuss-free, Pooja once again proves she doesn't need elaborate settings to make heads turn. Her easy smile and effortless styling throughout the album have fans flooding the comments with love. On the work front, Pooja has an exciting lineup coming up. She will next be seen in the Telugu romantic drama Sri Sri Sri, co-starring Dulquer Salmaan and directed by Ravi Nelakuditi, which explores love, friendship, and campus-life nostalgia. She also has the Tamil horror-comedy Kanchana 4 in her kitty, keeping her calendar packed through the year.

Agadha Locks Strong Release Plan Amid Positive Trade Buzz

With its worldwide theatrical release scheduled for August 14, Agadha is reportedly witnessing encouraging business activity across multiple territories. According to industry buzz, the film has attracted interest from several distributors following its promotional campaign, with the recently released trailer generating a positive response for its mystical premise and impressive visuals. Despite receiving multiple distribution offers, director M. S. Raju has reportedly decided against selling the film outright. Confident about the film's content and its theatrical potential, the veteran filmmaker is understood to be backing a self-release strategy rather than parting with the rights at this stage. This film is being released on the own through Geetha arts and Annapurna



Studios. Trade sources indicate that the film's release has now been locked across all major territories, paving the way for a wide release on August 14. The makers appear to have put together a strong distribution network to ensure the film reaches audiences on a grand scale during the Independence Day holiday period. One of the biggest highlights on the business front is the film's USA release, which will be handled by Moksha movies. Landing a reputed distribution partner for the North American market is seen as a significant development, adding further strength to the film's overseas prospects. In the Telugu

Highlights
■ With its worldwide theatrical release scheduled for August 14, Agadha is reportedly witnessing encouraging business activity across multiple territories.

drop. Its reverse chronological storytelling, elaborate production design, extensive CGI work and haunting background score have all contributed to the growing curiosity surrounding the film. Shravan Reddy and Kamakshi Bhaskarla play the lead roles, while the supporting cast is also expected to play pivotal parts in the

mystical narrative. Written and directed by M. S. Raju, Agadha is produced by Kasi Visalakshi Balusu under the Sri Adi Varaha Productions banner and is presented by Ajay KR. The technical team comprises Rakesh Venkatapuram as the music composer, Nani Chamidishetty as the cinematographer, Junaid Siddiqui as the editor and Rajeev Nair as the production designer. Chaitanya Vegi has provided the additional screenplay, while NVN Subbaraju serves as the executive producer. With business falling into place, distribution locked across key markets and promotions entering the final stretch, Agadha is gearing up for a grand worldwide theatrical release on August 14, carrying strong confidence from its makers and growing curiosity among audiences.

”I work with the sole aim of doing justice to every rupee audiences spend on me”: ‘Dhandha’ fame Dora Sai Teja

Actor Dora Sai Teja has created a major trend as the lead in the series 'Dhandha', produced by Chai Shots in the vertical storytelling space. Directed by Aditya Devulapally, the series is currently trending at no. 1 on the microdrama OTT platform. As the show continues its wildly successful run, lead actor Dora Sai Teja shared key insights about his journey and career. Here is what he had to say



Tell us about your cinematic journey?
I dubbed for the child artist playing the younger version of Prabhas sir in the movie 'Adavi Ramudu'. I acted in projects like 'Kotha Bangaru Lokam' and the series 'High School'. I also played a small role in 'Ala Modalaindi'. My association with RGV sir began in 2016 when I acted in an unreleased film titled 'Sridevi'. That was where I truly got introduced to cinema. After that, my serious journey on YouTube began in 2018. I gained strong recognition with the 'Back Benchers' series and kept doing shows. Last year, I launched my own content creation company, and recently, success hit again with 'Dhandha'.

How does it feel to achieve so much at such a young age as an entrepreneur, actor, and content creator?
From the moment I wake up, I constantly think as a content creator, director, actor, and producer. This is my way of introducing myself in new ways, which is why I try my hand at everything.

ANANYA PANDEY PROVES SAREES ARE HER SUPERPOWER



Ananya Pandey continues to prove that she can nail a look no matter the setting, and her latest appearance at the Filmfare Marathi Awards is fresh proof. The actress was spotted in a stunning royal blue silk saree featuring an intricately woven pallu with peacock and floral motifs in a traditional Paithani-inspired style. She paired it with a backless blouse, minimal jewellery, and a sleek bun adorned with fresh flowers, giving the ensemble a graceful, old-world charm. Ananya's styling once again struck the perfect balance between traditional and chic, and fans couldn't stop praising how effortlessly she carried the six yards. Her calm expression and elegant pose added to the overall regal appeal of the picture. On the work front, Ananya's last release Chand Mera Dil failed to make a mark at the box office. However, that hasn't stopped her from staying in the spotlight, with her fashion choices consistently keeping her in the conversation. Fans are now waiting to see what she picks up next to bounce back on the big screen.

Renowned Director Venu Udugula Launches the Trailer of "Stuartpuram Students"

Bigg Boss Fame Divi's Action and Dance Performance Set to Be a Major Highlight
Produced under the Shiva Sai Productions banner, presented by D. Nireekshana, and directed by D. Ramakrishna, Stuartpuram Students is an emotional action entertainer starring Nikhil and Bigg Boss fame Divi in the lead roles. The film is produced by Praveen Kumar and B. Srinivas Reddy. Having completed 80% of its shooting, the film is currently in the post-production stage. The film's trailer and a song were officially launched by renowned director Venu Udugula. Speaking on the occasion, Venu Udugula said, "I watched the trailer of Stuartpuram Students and also listened to the songs. They are very impressive. I



am happy to launch both the trailer and the song. The trailer looks excellent, and Divi's performance in particular is very innovative. Director Ramakrishna has mounted the film on a grand scale. I wholeheartedly wish the film becomes a big success."

‘SPIDER-MAN: BRAND NEW DAY’ SCORES BIGGEST FIRST WEEK IN BOX OFFICE HISTORY



Rakul Preet Is Every Bit A Showstopper

Rakul Preet Singh is turning heads with her latest jaw-dropping look, and fans simply cannot stop gushing over it. The actress was spotted in a stunning leopard-print sequined gown featuring a thigh-high slit and a sleek sweetheart neckline. Posing on a grand staircase against a backdrop of golden chandeliers and an ornate carpet, Rakul brought major old-money glamour to the frame. She kept her hair pulled back and accessorised with statement earrings, letting the outfit take centre stage.

