

NATION | NEWS

Deepak Mhaskey replaces Amit Malviya as BJP IT Cell chief

WORLD | NEWS

Trump says US to reduce military drills with South Korea after it stayed out of Iran war

CINEMA | NEWS

The globally popular cooking celebration is now in Tamil homes. Star heroine Samantha Ruth Prabhu to host Celebrity MasterChef Tamil

SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

11-06-2026
Total pilgrims : 97,014
Tonsures : 37,108
Hanul kamukals : 3,93 CR
Ladies sales : 4.61 Lac
Annaprasadam : 3.22 Lac
Aaravikhopal : 3,757
Present Situation on 17-06-2026:
Waiting Compartments - Out
side line adding at Krishna Raja
guest house.
Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam
(with out SSD Tokens) : 18 H.

Short Takes

Bengal hotel fire: Death toll rises to 7, owner arrested

Kolkata.: The death toll in the hotel fire at Tarapith in West Bengal's Birbhum district on Monday rose to seven, confirmed the police, adding that the owner of the building has been arrested. Birbhum District Police Superintendent Vidit Raj Bundesh confirmed that the toll has risen and that Kalyan Paul, the owner of the hotel named 'Bideshini', has been arrested. The police are investigating whether the hotel's firefighting system was in proper condition and whether all the fire safety-related rules were followed.

Prashant Kishor takes oath as Bankipur MLA at Bihar Assembly



Patna (TSIT): Jan Suraj leader Prashant Kishor formally took the oath as the new MLA from the Bankipur Assembly constituency on Monday. Bihar Assembly Speaker Prem Kumar administered the oath to him in his chamber, allowing Kishor to officially participate in legislative proceedings and begin his responsibilities as an elected representative. Prashant Kishor reached the Assembly accompanied by senior leaders and supporters of the Jan Suraj Party.

7 killed in stampede at Ashok Dham temple in Bihar's Lakhisarai

Lakhisarai, Aug 17 : At least seven people were killed, and more than 12 were injured in a stampede outside the Ashok Dham Temple in Bihar's Lakhisarai district on Monday. The incident triggered chaos at the temple premises as a large number of devotees had gathered to offer prayers and perform rituals on the third Monday of the holy month of Sawan. An electric wire reportedly fell, triggering panic among the crowd. Rumours then spread among the devotees, causing panic. Many devotees rushed in different directions in an attempt to escape. A stampede ensued, leaving several devotees trapped and crushed under one another.

Rahul hits out at NTA over UGC-NET re-exam

New Delhi (TSIT) : As the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced the re-examination for the UGC-NET papers for three subjects after multiple errors were found in the question papers, Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi on Monday took aim at the Central government and claimed that the years of the students are being stolen because of these examination irregularities.

Earlier on Sunday, the NTA announced that it will re-conduct the University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) for English, Sociology and Commerce after several errors were found in the question papers. This added to the growing criticism over the testing agency's handling of competitive exams.

Rahul, in a post on X, said, "Modi ji, look at what your NTA has just done. UGC-NET exams for Sociology, English and Commerce were held between 22 and 30 June. Nearly two months later, NTA has cancelled all three because it set faulty papers and repeated old questions." "Thousands of candidates



who prepared for years, filled forms, paid the fees, travelled to distant centres, must now do it all again in September. NTA makes the mistake, but the student serves the sentence," he said.

The LoP recalled that during his Chhatron Ki Goonj programmes held in Kota, Dehradun and Prayagraj, he had stated that "this is no longer an education system", but an "extraction machine".

"It takes your money, your years, your mental health, and your confidence and returns nothing. Not even a job. NTA still won't answer the real question - were these papers leaked before the exam?" he said.

Jharkhand students win, govt cancels JSSC-CGL exam, probe by CID

Ranchi (TSIT): Amid a massive protest by job aspirants over alleged irregularities in recruitment exams in the state, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren said on Monday, August 17, that the state government would cancel the JSSC-CGL examination.

He said that in a special meeting, the state Cabinet decided

called. TDPL is a Lucknow-based private recruitment agency at the centre of the scandal in the state.

Students rejoice

In Ranchi, students were jubilant at the government's decision to scrap the JSSC-CGL exams. However, maintaining a stoic stance, student leader and activist Devendra Nath Mahto,



that, since 2014, whatever mistakes have happened, big or small, will be investigated, and the CID would conduct the probe. Adding that several companies active in Jharkhand appear to be involved in a huge exam racket, Soren said that all the exams conducted by the TDPL (TSR Data Processing Private Limited) will be can-

who spearheaded the agitation, said, "I have seen many instances where CBI or CID investigations were ordered and then cancelled." Speaking to the media, he said, "We, the students, will continue to support this investigation... If our issues are resolved and our demands met, why would we need to hold further protests?"

No deviation in Mega DSC recruitment process: CM Naidu

■ Recruitment details placed online; YSRCP indulging in "hit-and-run" politics, says Chief Minister

Visakhapatnam (TSIT):

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday asserted that there was no deviation in the Mega DSC teacher recruitment process and that all stages of the selection were conducted transparently. He accused the YSRCP of spreading misinformation through what he described as "hit-and-run" politics and challenged the Opposition to debate the issue in the Legislative Assembly. Speaking in the Assembly, Naidu said education and skill development had always been priorities for the Telugu Desam Party. He recalled various initiatives undertaken during successive TDP governments, including residential schools, women's universities, expansion of educational institutions and measures to improve academic standards.

The Chief Minister said the previous government had not undertaken teacher recruitment for five years, while the present coalition government completed the recruitment of 15,941 teachers through the Mega DSC within 148 days of



assuming office. He said the recruitment process, including the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), DSC notifications, reservation procedures and examinations, was conducted in a transparent manner. Examinations covering 13 subjects were conducted through the Computer-Based Test (CBT) system at 154 centres, with around 42,000 questions selected as part of the examination process.

Naidu said candidates were selected strictly according to merit-cum-roster principles. Zonal and State-level committees, along with an appellate authority, were constituted to address grievances and ensure fairness in the recruitment process. He also said the sports

quota was implemented in accordance with Central Government guidelines and maintained that no deviation had occurred from the procedures specified in the recruitment notification. The Chief Minister alleged that repeated accusations and legal cases were being used to create obstacles to the recruitment process. He criticised the Opposition for raising allegations outside the Assembly rather than participating in legislative debates.

"Come to the Assembly and debate the issue," Naidu said, challenging the YSRCP to present its concerns on the floor of the House. He maintained that the government was accountable to the people and would continue to strengthen transparency in recruitment examinations and introduce further reforms in the education sector. Naidu expressed confidence that attempts to create controversy would not affect teachers appointed through the Mega DSC and reiterated the government's commitment to transparent and accountable recruitment.

73 lac voters deleted from Telangana electoral rolls, Hyderabad records highest

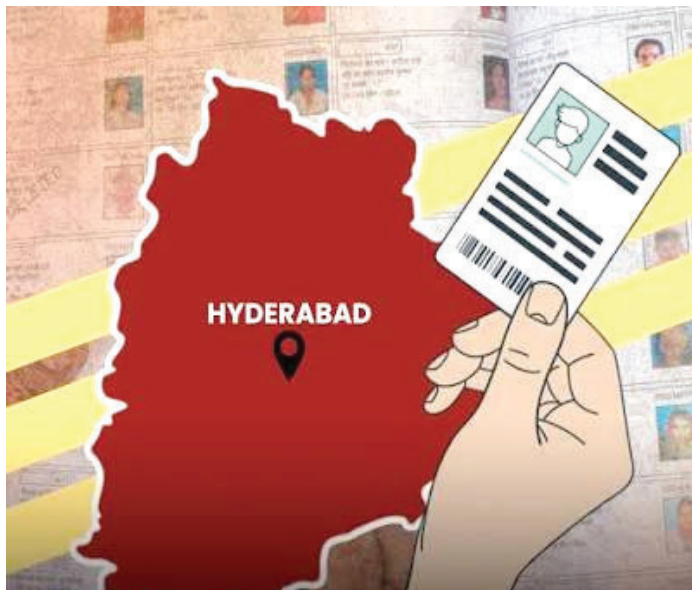
FROM THE VOTER LIST OF HYDERABAD, 19,41,444 NAMES HAVE BEEN DELETED.

Hyderabad (TSIT):

The ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has resulted in the deletion of 73,39,235 names across Telangana, with Hyderabad recording the highest number of deletions at 19,41,444.

The deleted names have been categorised under ASDD — Absent, Shifted, Duplication and Death. In Hyderabad, 1,56,392 voters were marked deceased, 2,99,850 were untraceable, 13,45,333 had permanently shifted, 99,264 were found to be already enrolled, while 40,605 were removed for other reasons.

Among Hyderabad constituencies, Jubilee Hills recorded the highest number of deletions at 1,79,510, followed by Yakutpura with 1,54,982 and Chandrayangutta with 1,48,869. Charminar recorded



the lowest number at 94,174. In percentage terms, Musheerabad had the highest deletion rate at 45.17%, followed by Malakpet at 44.76%.

Rangareddy district record-

ed the second-highest number of deletions at 12,87,091, followed by Medchal-Malkajgiri with 10,71,566. Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri recorded the lowest number at 26,121.

BJP reshuffle: Bandi Sanjay dropped, Smriti back as general secy

New Delhi (TSIT):

As part of an organisational reshuffle ahead of elections in many states, BJP president Nitin Nabin on Monday, August 17, appointed the party's national office-bearers. In a major upset for Telangana, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, who was a national general secretary, has been dropped. He serves as the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs. He had earlier served as the party's Telangana chief as well. Representing the Karimnagar Lok Sabha constituency, he is a party heavyweight who takes keen interest in state politics as well.

In Telangana, Bandi Sanjay has been in the news over the



POCSO case involving his son, Bandi Sai Bhageerath.

A minor's mother filed an FIR this May, alleging that Bhageerath had sexually assaulted her daughter. Bhageerath denied all allegations, filing a counter-complaint claiming that the girl's family threatened him and attempted to extort Rs 5 crore from him. The BJP shared the lists on X.

Indian Army contingent departs for India-Thailand joint military exercise MAITREE-XV

New Delhi (TSIT) : An Indian Army contingent left for Thailand on Monday, where it will participate in 15th edition of India-Thailand Joint Military Exercise MAITREE-XV, slated to be held from August 18 to 31 at Vibhavadi Rangsit Camp in Surat Thani.

The bilateral military exercise is aimed at strengthening defence cooperation between India and Thailand and enhancing the ability of the two armies to conduct joint operations in challenging environments.

The Indian Army and Royal Thai Army contingents participating in the exercise will comprise 85 personnel each. The



Indian contingent will be represented primarily by troops from the 9 Gorkha Rifles, while the Royal Thai Army contingent will comprise personnel from

the 3rd Battalion, 25th Infantry Brigade, 5th Division.

The exercise will focus on company-level joint training for operations in jungle and

semi-urban terrain. The training is designed to enhance the combined capabilities of the two forces in conducting joint counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations in jungle and semi-urban environments under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

The exercise will include a range of training activities, including field exercises, combat discussions, lectures and demonstrations. The two contingents will also participate in a culminating validation exercise to assess the operational capabilities developed during the training.

Telangana's Food Security Push Fulfils Congress Dream Meenakshi Natarajan

Hyderabad TSIT: AICC Telangana in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan on Monday said the Telangana Government's food security and welfare initiatives represented the fulfilment of the Congress party's long-standing vision of ensuring food, shelter, healthcare and dignity for every vulnerable family.

Addressing a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee of the erstwhile Nalgonda district at Bhongir, Natarajan linked the protection of voting rights with safeguarding the welfare entitlements of ordinary citizens. Ministers N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Adluri Lakshman Kumar participated in the meeting.

Referring to the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, she asked Congress workers to remain vigilant and ensure that no genuine voter, particularly from poorer and vulnerable sections, was excluded.

Natarajan said protecting the name of a poor citizen on the electoral roll was not merely an electoral exercise but part of the larger responsibility of safeguarding the citizen's dignity and access to welfare benefits.

She cited the Telangana Government's fine rice distribution, Indiramma



Indlu and Aarogyasri programmes and stressed that eligible beneficiaries must continue to receive these benefits without disruption.

Drawing a connection with the Congress's historic welfare agenda, Natarajan said the fight against hunger and poverty had been central to the party since former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's "Garibi Hatao" campaign. She said the present Telangana Government was carrying that philosophy forward by providing quality food with dignity to poor families.

Under the State's food security programme, six kilograms of fine rice is being provided free every month per person to eligible Food Security Card beneficiaries. Around 3.42 crore people covered by

more than 1.06 crore Food Security Cards are part of the State's food-security network.

She said the introduction of Smart Ration Cards, launched by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at Sangareddy on Independence Day, would further strengthen transparency, convenience and accountability in the Public Distribution System.

Natarajan also linked Telangana's initiatives with the rights-based welfare approach pursued under Sonia Gandhi's leadership, noting that the National Food Security Act during the UPA era marked a major transition towards treating food security as a right.

On the organisational front, she called upon booth-level Congress

workers, particularly BLA-2 representatives, to closely examine electoral rolls and assist genuine voters during the SIR process. Those performing exceptionally well in protecting and enrolling eligible voters would be identified and recognised by the party, she said.

Natarajan also signalled that Congress was preparing its grassroots organisation for the 2028 Assembly elections, with greater emphasis on a direct political contest with the BJP. Traditional Congress strongholds such as the erstwhile Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar and Khammam districts would be further strengthened while the party expanded its organisation in areas where the BJP was seeking to grow.

She also stressed that

loyal grassroots workers who stood by the Congress during its years in opposition should receive due recognition in district-level government nominations. Long-serving district, mandal, municipal and frontal-organisation workers should be given appropriate priority, she said.

Explaining the organisational restructuring underway in Telangana, Natarajan said the process had entered its next phase following the appointment and training of District Congress Committee presidents. The party would assess DCC working committees and strengthen its organisational network down to the mandal, gram panchayat and booth levels.

District Political Affairs Committees comprising senior leaders have also been constituted as part of efforts to improve coordination between the party organisation and the Congress Government's programmes.

Natarajan said the ongoing zonal meetings across the erstwhile combined districts, attended by AICC and Pradesh Congress leaders, were aimed at building a stronger grassroots organisation while ensuring that voting rights and welfare rights were protected together.

St. Ann's High School holds Har Ghar Tiranga cycle rally

Hyderabad: St. Ann's High School (CISCE), Petbasheerabad, celebrated the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign on August 14 with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm. The programme began with the National Anthem, sung collectively by students and led by 150 NCC cadets. The rendition created a strong sense of unity, pride and love for the nation among the participants. Following the anthem, the NCC cadets organised a cycle rally to spread awareness among the public about the importance of the Tiranga, patriotism and



national identity. Carrying the message of Har Ghar Tiranga through the streets, the cadets encouraged citizens to respect and proudly display the National Flag. The rally was aimed at inspiring students and members of the public to uphold the values of unity, patriotism and respect for

the National Flag. It also highlighted the importance of responsible citizenship and contributing towards the nation's progress. The event provided students with an opportunity to actively participate in the Independence Day celebrations while spreading the message of national pride and unity.

Stop False Propaganda on Kalyana Lakshmi Indira Shobhan Tells KTR

Hyderabad, TSIT: Senior Congress leader Indira Shobhan on Monday strongly criticised BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) over his allegations concerning the implementation of the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes, accusing him of spreading misinformation against the Congress Government.

She said the government headed by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy remained committed to the welfare of poor families and asserted that Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak would continue as usual.



"Stop misleading people with false claims. The schemes are not being discontinued," Indira Shobhan said, alleging that KTR was attempting to create confusion for political gains. She questioned why the

previous BRS government, despite being in power for nearly a decade, had not provided statutory backing to Kalyana Lakshmi through legislation in the Assembly and had instead implemented it through a government order.

Indira Shobhan claimed that the absence of such statutory backing had contributed to the legal issues now arising before the High Court. She accused the BRS of portraying the legal developments as an attempt by the Congress Government to stop the welfare schemes.

She also questioned the previous BRS government's decision to discon-

Gowlidoddi Gets C&D Waste Transfer Station to Keep Cyberabad Roads Debris-Free



Hyderabad TSIT: In a major step towards scientific management of construction debris and cleaner urban surroundings, the Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste Transfer Station established by Re Sustainability was inaugurated at Gowlidoddi in Serilingampally Zone of the Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) by Jayesh Ranjan Special Chief Secretary, Government of Telangana.

The inauguration was attended by Dr. Srijana CMC Commissioner, Additional Commissioner (Health & Sanitation), Serilingampally Zonal Commissioner and officials of various departments.

The new facility is designed to strengthen the collection, transportation, processing and recycling of C&D waste and prevent indiscriminate dumping of construction debris on roads, open spaces, drains and other public areas.

CMC already has a C&D waste processing facility at Jeedimetla. The Gowlidoddi station will function as a strategically located transfer and aggregation point catering to rapidly developing areas including Narsingi, Nallagandla, Gachibowli and Madhapur.

Officials said the facility would facilitate faster lifting of construction waste, reduce transportation distances and costs, improve vehicle utilisation and strengthen CMC's overall C&D waste management network. The station will also support implementation of G.O.Rt.No.626, which promotes scientific

management, recycling and reuse of construction and demolition waste. The provisions include authorised collection and transportation, disposal certification for applicable projects and use of recycled C&D material in eligible government works.

Emphasising a circular-economy approach, the Special Chief Secretary said C&D waste should be viewed as a resource rather than waste. Agencies executing cement concrete roads and other civil works were advised to ensure that debris generated during construction is handed over to authorised processing agencies.

The cost of collection, transportation and processing of C&D waste should also be incorporated appropriately into project estimates in accordance with government procedures, ensuring accountability from waste generation to recycling. The Gowlidoddi facility is expected to curb illegal dumping, protect drains and water bodies, encourage reuse of processed construction material and reduce dependence on virgin raw materials.

The authorised service will also provide doorstep collection and processing of C&D waste on payment of prescribed user charges.

Officials said the initiative marks an important step towards shifting Cyberabad's approach from "waste disposal" to "resource recovery and circular sustainability," with the larger objective of achieving "No C&D Waste on Roads" and building a cleaner.

Sundeep Makthala Eyes UAE as Global Hub for Graphene, Advanced Materials

Hyderabad TSIT: Indian technology entrepreneur and global business strategist Sundeep Kumar Makthala is charting an ambitious UAE expansion for RI Advanced Materials, with plans to develop a regional ecosystem for graphene, advanced materials, research and next-generation manufacturing.

Makthala, Managing Director and CEO of RI Advanced Materials, is working with scientist Dr. Rajendra Prasad Joshi, the company's CTO, and mining and minerals expert Biyyani Ravindar, CMO, to explore opportunities across the UAE. The initiative is aligned with the country's Operation 300bn industrial vision, which seeks to increase the industrial sector's contribution to GDP to AED 300 billion by 2031.

The team has held strategic engagements in Sharjah and Ras



Al Khaimah, assessing opportunities in research, innovation, manufacturing, investment and commercialisation.

At the Sharjah Research, Technology and Innovation Park, discussions focused on potential collaboration in graphene and advanced materials, including applications in energy storage, water treatment and desalination, advanced coatings and construc-

tion materials. The team also explored the possibility of connecting research and prototyping with industrial applications and global market opportunities.

Engagements with the Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone (RAKEZ) ecosystem focused on infrastructure, investment and manufacturing requirements. RI Advanced Materials is evaluating different emirates for future R&D

and production facilities.

Graphene is expected to be one of the company's key focus areas, with potential applications in electronics, semiconductors, energy storage, hydrogen technologies, coatings, construction and ceramics. Its broader advanced-materials portfolio includes nanomaterials, graphite, quartz, silica, feldspar, silicon-related materials and advanced coatings.

Under its phased expansion plan, RI Advanced Materials proposes to initially establish an R&D Centre and Centre of Excellence, followed by deployment of specialised machinery and commencement of production. The long-term plan envisages a multi-location manufacturing network serving UAE, regional and international markets through 2031. Dr. Rajendra Prasad Joshi praised Makthala for quick-

ly transforming discussions into an actionable business initiative, describing his "speed, clarity and execution" as commendable. Biyyani Ravindar said the initiative brings together technology, advanced materials and strategic mineral-resource expertise and could create significant opportunities in the UAE and global markets.

"Our vision is to connect advanced technology, scientific research, strategic resources and manufacturing with global markets from the UAE," Makthala said, adding that graphene would be an important part of the company's plans. RI Advanced Materials is also inviting graphene researchers, technology companies, manufacturers, investors, universities and research institutions to explore collaboration as it builds its UAE and international operations.

German Doner Kebab enters Indian market with first outlet in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, August 2026 : German Doner Kebab (GDK), a globally recognised premium quick-service restaurant (QSR) brand, has entered the Indian market with the opening of its first outlet at Film Nagar, Tollywood Lane, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. GBC India, the master franchise partner of GDK in India, announced the launch on Monday, marking the beginning of the brand's planned expansion across the country. GDK is targeting more than 450 restaurants in India as part of its long-term growth strategy.

Founded in Berlin and headquartered in the United Kingdom, GDK has a presence across the UK, the U.S., the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Sweden and Ireland. The brand is known for its contemporary take on doner, combining flame-grilled meat, fresh ingredients, signature sauces and toasted waffle bread.

The company said its



India proposition would focus on flavour, freshness, quality and protein-oriented food choices. It also aims to establish a connection with younger consumers through its association with music, fashion, sport, fitness and contemporary youth culture. GDK India is being launched by GBC India, which brings experience in food manufacturing, product development, supply chain and franchise

development. The partnership between GBC and GDK has developed over more than a decade, with a focus on product quality and operational standards.

Vikrant Tomer, Chief Executive Officer, GDK India, said the company's objective was not merely to establish a restaurant. We aim to bring a globally benchmarked doner experience to Indian consumers," he said. He said the company's target of more

than 450 restaurants would be supported by consistent global standards, fresh ingredients and an experience tailored to India's young consumer base.

Ginny Sahni, Managing Director, GBC India, said the company's association with GDK over the past decade had helped it understand the brand's standards and operating culture. "Launching GDK in India is a natural next step, bringing freshness, flavour and a global dining experience to our local audience," she said.

Following the Hyderabad launch, the company plans to expand into markets such as Mohali and Chandigarh, besides other emerging Tier-I and Tier-II cities. The expansion will include a combination of company-owned and franchised outlets.

As part of its cultural positioning in India, GDK has also partnered with musician, actor and filmmaker Parmish Verma as

Collector calls for youth participation in development



Jogulamba Gadwal TSIT: District Collector Rizwan Basha Shaik has called for concerted efforts by various departments to empower youth with awareness of government schemes and opportunities and encourage them to play an active role in nation-building.

The Collector made these remarks at a coordination committee meeting with representatives of My Bharat held at the IDOC conference hall here on Monday. He directed the officials of the Youth Affairs Department and other concerned departments to work in coordina-

tion to involve young people in developmental programmes and nurture them into responsible citizens.

The Collector said the Youth Affairs Department should organise programmes every year in coordination with the Medical and Health, Education, Panchayat Raj, Industries and other departments. Such programmes should focus on creating awareness among youth about health, education, employment, social responsibility and various Central and State government welfare schemes.

Stock markets decline in early trade amid rising crude oil prices

Mumbai: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty drifted lower in early trade on Monday, August 17, amid rising crude oil prices and persistent geopolitical tensions in West Asia. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 284.85 points to 77,717.05 during initial trading. The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 69.25 points to 24,297.05. From the Sensex pack, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever and State Bank of India were the biggest laggards. Bharat Electronics and Titan were the only winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.43 per cent higher at USD 88.86 per barrel. "Crude oil remains the principal concern, with Brent holding near USD 88 a barrel after renewed US warnings against Iran pushed prices higher on Friday, keeping the geopolitical risk premium firmly embedded in energy



markets," Hariselman Radhakrishnan, Founder & CEO of HST Wealth, a research analyst firm, said. In Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index traded higher. US markets ended lower on Friday. "Indian equity markets are expected to remain range-bound with a cautious bias as persistent geopolitical tensions in the Middle East continue to restrain risk

appetite," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 508.12 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. On Friday, the Sensex was down 70.71 points, or 0.09 per cent, to settle at 78,009.25. The Nifty dipped 29.85 points, or 0.12 per cent, to end at 24,366. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 284.85 points to 77,717.05 during initial trading.

Jio Reintroduces Rs 299 Prime Membership Plan After Airtel Rejig



Reliance Jio has reintroduced its Rs 299 Prime membership plan, days after Bharti Airtel discontinued its popular Rs 299 prepaid offering and raised the entry price of its unlimited plans to Rs 349. Jio said the Rs 299 Prime membership will remain available to existing prepaid and postpaid customers, with the price guaranteed until Sept. 5, 2027. The membership will also provide subscribers with dedicated priority customer support. The move comes as telecom operators continue to rationalise their prepaid portfolios and seek to improve average revenue per user (ARPU). Airtel's decision to withdraw its Rs 299 base plan, which offered 1GB of daily data for 28 days, effectively lifted the entry-level unlimited plan price by 16.7% to Rs 349. The new plan also offers 1.5GB of

data per day. Analysts at Centrum Broking described Airtel's latest changes as one of its biggest single-day prepaid portfolio cleanups in recent years, calling it part of a broader tariff rationalisation exercise. Several less-popular plans across 56-day and 90-day validity periods were also discontinued. Jio's decision to retain the Rs 299 price point could help it position the membership as a value proposition as the industry moves toward higher tariffs. The company's move also comes against the backdrop of stronger subscriber monetisation across the sector. Notably, Airtel had reported an 11.5% sequential rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 8,167 crore for the June quarter, while revenue from operations increased 5.7% to Rs 58,539 crore.

Vedanta Power Reaffirms Commitment to India's Energy Security on Independence Day

Andhra Pradesh, August 17th: As India celebrated its 80th Independence Day, Vedanta Power Limited, India's fifth-largest private thermal power producer, reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the nation's energy security by delivering reliable power, securing domestic fuel supplies and investing in long-term capacity expansion. With a total power generation capacity of 4.78 GW, including 4.18 GW operational capacity and 0.6 GW under commissioning, Vedanta Power has established a significant presence across Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Around 74% of the company's capacity is backed by long- and medium-term Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), while approximately 85% of its operational capacity has domestic coal linkages, providing greater fuel security and stability of operations. Fuel security remains a key pillar of Vedanta Power's approach to reliable generation. Approximately 85% of its operational portfolio is backed by long-term domestic coal linkages through Coal India subsidiaries, including Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) and Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL). This includes



100% linkage coal from SECL and NCL for the Vedanta Power Talwandi Sabo Thermal Plant in Punjab and 100% linkage coal from MCL for the Vedanta Power Jharsuguda Thermal Plant in Odisha. Vedanta Power is also strengthening fuel flexibility across its portfolio. At Meenakshi Energy Limited in Andhra Pradesh, the company is transitioning the plant from its original imported-coal-based fuel mix towards domestic coal. This transition is aimed at enhancing fuel security and reducing exposure to global fuel market volatility.

Commenting on the occasion, Rajinder Singh Ahuja, Whole-Time Director and CEO, Vedanta Power Limited, said, "Energy security is fundamental to the country's economic independence and its aspirations for a developed India. At Vedanta Power, we are committed to playing our part by ensuring reliable and secure power, strengthening domestic fuel linkages and expanding our generation capacity. As India's power requirements continue to grow, we believe dependable thermal power will remain an important part of the energy mix,

alongside emerging clean energy technologies. Our focus is to build a resilient and diversified power portfolio that can support India's growth ambitions for decades to come and contribute towards Viksit Bharat by 2047." K Binu Raphael, Acting CEO, Meenakshi Energy Limited, said "Independence is also about building greater resilience and reducing dependence on external resources. At Meenakshi Energy Limited, our transition towards greater use of domestic coal reflects this larger national objective.

Airtel Payments Bank Announces Board Transition; Shabnam Sinha To Succeed Sunil Mittal



Airtel Payments Bank on Monday announced a leadership transition, with Shabnam Sinha, who brings more than three decades of experience across development finance and financial services, including a stint with the World Bank, set to succeed Sunil Bharti Mittal as chairperson from Oct. 1, 2026, subject to Reserve Bank of India approval. Mittal will step down as non-executive chairman and leave the bank's board effective Sept. 30, bringing an end to his tenure that began in April 2016. Sinha, currently an independent director on the bank's board, will serve as chairperson for a three-year term. During Mittal's tenure, Airtel Payments Bank expanded its presence across consumer and enterprise banking and emerged

as India's largest payments bank by revenue, according to the company. The bank now has more than 121 million monthly active users and nearly 30 million bank account customers. Its banking network spans more than 500,000 banking points across the country, reaching three out of four villages, the company said. Airtel Payments Bank has also positioned itself as India's second-largest mobile bank and UPI Autopay player. Sinha currently chairs the board's Special Committee for Monitoring Frauds and is a member of its Risk Management and IT Committees. She brings more than three decades of experience across development finance, financial services, public policy and institutional transformation.

PAYTM BLOCK DEAL:

Resilient Asset Management To Sell Up To Rs 4,900-Crore Stake; Floor Price Fixed

Paytm shares will be in focus on Tuesday as Resilient Asset Management is set to sell a stake of up to 5% in One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, through block deals, according to sources. The proposed stake sale is expected to be worth up to Rs 4,900 crore, with the transaction set to take place on Tuesday. The floor price for the block deal has been fixed at Rs 1,535 per share, representing a 3% discount to Paytm's current market price. The base deal size comprises around 19.2 million shares, while an additional 12.4 million shares could be sold through a greenshoe option. The overall transaction could therefore cover up to 5% of Paytm's equity. Goldman Sachs is acting as the banker for the transaction. The proposed sale comes after a strong run in Paytm shares, with investors



closely watching the company's shareholder structure and potential changes in promoter-linked holdings. Resilient Asset Management held a 10.2% stake in Paytm as of the quarter ended June, according to the shareholding data. Resilient had acquired a 10.2% stake in Paytm from Antfin in 2023 against optionally convertible debentures, or OCDs. The proposed transaction could significantly reduce Resilient's holding if the

full 5% stake is sold. Paytm Q1 Results The parent company of Paytm reported a 8.1% jump in its consolidated revenue for the first quarter of fiscal 2026-27 to Rs 2,448 crore sequentially, compared to Rs 2,264 crore, according to an exchange filing. The firm's net profit saw a 20% increase to Rs 220 quarter-on-quarter from Rs 184 crore. Its earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda) increased by 54% to Rs

Highlights
■ Paytm shares will be in focus on Tuesday as Resilient Asset Management is set to sell a stake of up to 5% in One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, through block deals, according to sources.

203, compared to the previous quarter's Rs 132 crore. The Ebitda margin expanded to 8.3% from 5.8% in the quarter prior. The company has clocked a profit for the fifth straight quarter. Paytm Share Price Today Paytm shares closed 1.42% lower at Rs 1,580.20 per share on Monday. The shares have fallen 0.25% in one week but rose 17.23% in one month. The shares were up 22.33% year-to-date and 37.25% in the last one year.

FERRARI'S FIRST EVER ELECTRIC CAR SOLD FOR RECORD \$40M



Ferrari's first ever electric car has fetched \$40m (£29.5m) in a charity sale, setting a record for a new vehicle sold at auction. The sale of the Ferrari Luce - brainchild of the British iPhone designer Sir Jony Ive - raised more than 35 times the usual price of the car at the event at RM Sotheby's in California. The Luce faced a backlash when it was launched in May. Some commentators said it strayed from the marque's traditional designs and lost part of the brand's identity by being battery-powered and having five seats. Sotheby's said all proceeds of the sale will be donated to the Ferrari Foundation's educational programmes.

Sotheby's did not name the buyer of the custom Luce which features a unique finish and bespoke parts. The BBC has contacted the auction house and Ferrari for comment. The unveiling of the Luce was seen as one of the biggest launches of a new car in recent years. It marked the prancing horse's first entry into the electric vehicle (EV) market - a sector dominated by Elon Musk's Tesla and China's carmakers. Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Pope Leo were invited to view the luxury brand's new vehicle. But Ferrari's share price dropped the day after the Luce's launch, following backlash over the car. Among those criticising

the car were Italy's deputy prime minister Matteo Salvini and former Ferrari chairman Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, who said the car was "risking the destruction of a legend". Ferrari's chief design officer Flavio Manzoni said in an interview in May that critics are part of the innovation process and that he believed people would come to appreciate the Luce. The company has not disclosed its target for Luce sales but, according to a Financial Times report, it has hit this year's goal thanks to strong demand from China. Sotheby's said in a statement that the auctioned vehicle marked an "unbeatable opportunity" to own the first production car

of the Luce. The car has special wheels, customised brakes and a white finish. The charity sale marks a "tangible expression of innovation, responsibility, and long-term vision for future generations," Sotheby's said. Ferraris often attract some of the highest prices at car auctions. A bespoke Ferrari Daytona SP3 supercar raised \$26m for the carmaker's education initiatives at an auction in 2025. At the time it set an auction record for the highest-price paid for a new car. The current record for the highest price paid at auction was an ultra-rare 1955 Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR Uhlenhaut Coupé, which was sold for \$142m in 2022.

Trump envoy Kushner meets Netanyahu after Hamas talks on peace plan



A meeting between Donald Trump's Middle East envoy Jared Kushner and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ended, the premier's spokesperson has told the BBC. Kushner arrived in Israel on Sunday night after holding rare talks with Hamas to discuss the implementation of the US-backed Gaza peace plan. Last week, Israel rejected Trump's 15-point plan for peace, which also calls for Israeli troops to withdraw and for Gaza to be rebuilt under a new civilian Palestinian administration. The rejection came after the president's Board of Peace said it had reached an agreement for the "complete disarmament" of Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza last month. Trump leads the Board of Peace, which was created as an international organisation originally intended to bring peace to Gaza, but later expanded to include conflicts worldwide. According to Israeli media reports, Board of Peace envoys Nickolay Mladenov and Tony Blair are also meeting Netanyahu on Monday, with the aim of

advancing Trump's plan. In a phone interview with Fox News on Monday, Trump is reported to have said that Hamas "are giving up their guns" and that Israel should not be carrying out strikes in Gaza. The US outlet did not elaborate further on his comments. Many Israelis remain sceptical that Hamas is ready to disarm. The US-led Board of Peace wants to show that the peace plan for Gaza can still move forward - despite Netanyahu's firm rejection of a new roadmap. Hamas has agreed to give up its weapons in exchange for a phased Israeli troop withdrawal. But Israel has insisted that Hamas must fully disarm before any Israeli pullout. It also wants any weapons that Hamas gives up to be destroyed, rather than stored by a Palestinian technocratic committee, so that Hamas cannot reclaim them. In addition, there is opposition to Turkey and Qatar being involved in checks on whether Hamas is meeting its requirements under the deal. Pushing Netanyahu to change his position will be an uphill struggle.



■ Aid shortages and fears of starvation as Indonesia reels from deadly earthquake

Trump says US to reduce military drills with South Korea after it stayed out of Iran war

President Donald Trump has said the US will "substantially reduce" joint military exercises with South Korea, citing his "very good relationship" with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un. He also noted on Truth Social that South Korea had recently declined to join the US in the "denuclearisation" of Iran. "These exercises are not only costly, with much of these costs paid for by the United States of America (as usual), but send a signal that is totally inappropriate and hostile," Trump posted. Seoul said it was reviewing Trump's comments, adding it hoped a favourable relationship between Washington and Pyongyang could lead to meaningful talks. Pyongyang has not yet commented. Earlier, South Korea said the drills with



the US would proceed "as scheduled". It comes after North Korea this month conducted ballistic missile tests banned by the United Nations. Trump said in his social media post on Sunday that it was "too late to cancel", as the US and South Korea were due to start their annual military exercises on Monday. He added: "While somewhat unrelated (?), I recently asked the

presidential Blue House said it would continue diplomatic consultations on US-Korea military cooperation related to the Strait of Hormuz, while discussing details on joint military drills with the United States. Experts suggest the walking back of joint military exercises could carry a high cost with relatively little benefit. "US-South Korea combined defence exercises are essential for military forces to be ready and capable of doing their jobs," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "Scaling them back can damage alliance coordination, slow the process of South Korea taking on greater responsibility for its own defence, and weaken deterrence against possible conflicts in Asia.

Two dead and hundreds evacuated after twin fires break out on Greek island



Two people died and hundreds were evacuated after two fires broke out "almost simultaneously" on a Greek island near Athens on Sunday afternoon, officials said. About 200 firefighters were deployed to keep the twin fires from converging on the island of Salamina, which was under a high wildfire risk on Sunday. The first blaze was reported at 14:40 local time (11:40 GMT) near the island's south coast and spread rapidly due to high winds, followed by a separate fire some 20 minutes later in the east. Their cause is not yet known. One of the fires had been brought under control and evacuations completed by Sunday evening, Greek media report, with 500 people having left the island by sea. The first blaze broke out in a forested residential area in Peristeria, a southern city on the island, fire official Vasilios Vathrakoyannis said in a statement. Firefighters attending the blaze found two bodies at the scene, he said. The city's mayor told Greek media they were believed to have been a couple. Officials continued to battle scattered blazes there late on Sunday, while the second fire which began in the eastern town of Selinia was said to have "no active front". Two coast guard vessels and a fire department vessel will remain in the area for surveillance and assistance. At least 10 other people suffered burns or showed "symptoms of smoke

inhalation", five of whom had been taken for treatment locally, Greek Health Minister Adonis Georgiades said on X. A number of aircraft and 50 fire engines, assisted by water tankers and construction machinery, were deployed to try and tackle the two fires. Salamina Deputy Mayor Thodoris Zannis earlier said this was to keep the fires from burning over a mountain on the island and meeting to form a single blaze. Five patrol boats and several other private vessels were sent to the area for assistance. Salamina sits just west of Athens and has some 37,000 residents, many of them elderly. Firefighters across Europe have been facing a series of wildfires this weekend, including officers in Belgium spending a third day beating back flames in the country's largest nature reserve, Hautes Fagnes. The wildfire - described as the largest in the country's recent history - has more than doubled in size in 24 hours. Meanwhile, at least one person died and dozens were injured in a wildfire that tore through Croatia's coastline overnight on Friday. It was described by Croatia's fire chief Slavko Tucakovic as "one of the worst" blazes in the country's history and saw around 1,200 residents and tourists evacuated. The EU's climate monitoring service, Copernicus, has confirmed that western Europe experienced its hottest June-to-July period on record.

Top Zambian opposition figures arrested days after presidential vote

Security forces in Zambia have seized weapons and arrested 11 people, including senior opposition figures, allegedly involved in an insurrection plot, the government has said. The leading opposition candidate in last Thursday's presidential election, Brian Mundubile, was also found at the scene of the raid in the capital, Lusaka, according to the country's top civil servant Patrick Kangwa. In an interview with the BBC, Mundubile dismissed the accusations as "total fabrications", alleging security forces staged an assassination attempt on his life during a raid at his home on Friday. With results from more than half of the constituencies announced, he is trailing incumbent Hakainde Hichilema. Hichilema, who is running for a second five-year term, has 62% of the votes. Mundubile, one of 13 challengers, has 36%. But the 55-year-old opposition leader had earlier claimed victory and alleged, without sharing the evidence, that there had been voting irregularities.



Giving details about the raid, Kangwa said the individuals arrested were connected to "military plans involving foreign nationals and illegal military training camps". He added that they posed "a serious threat to state security" and held "high-grade military weapons", ammunition and other materials intended for use in an armed insurrection. He alleged that shots were fired at law enforcement officers leading to an exchange of fire. Mundubile however told the BBC that there was no militia at his home. "It's unfortunate that senior government officials would present themselves before the entire nation to make such

falsehoods," he told BBC Focus on Africa. According to Kangwa, among those arrested were Patrick Mwansa, the husband of Tasila Lungu, the daughter of former Zambian President Edgar Lungu, and other politicians. The suspects are being held in custody at various police stations in Lusaka. Mundubile described the raid to the BBC saying armed personnel knocked down the gate with an armoured vehicle, broke doors and windows and opened fire. "They were basically shooting indiscriminately. They directed two shots towards me. Like I've always said, it was just by God's grace that I survived.

"So they came in to kill us," he said. Mundubile said former minister Mutotwe Kafwaya was shot while he and his wife were present. He said Kafwaya, whose whereabouts remain unknown, was bleeding and he urged the officers to take him to hospital. Mundubile said his family remains traumatised. "My children saw their uncle... bleeding profusely and being dragged like an animal... 80 soldiers coming into the house, shooting indiscriminately and breaking doors and windows down is not an experience anybody would want to go through." He said he and his family had not returned home since Friday and felt unsafe. On the day following the election, he maintained that his campaign's parallel vote tabulation showed him in the lead and repeated allegations of irregularities, without providing detailed evidence. The authorities denied the claims of vote rigging and in preliminary statements observers described election day as largely peaceful and orderly.

MOVIE THAT WENT VIRAL FOR TERRIBLE ANIMATION BECOMES CHINA BOX OFFICE HIT



It's so bad, it's become a box office hit. Niu Lai, a low-budget animation film about a cow in a dream sequence has seen a huge jump in ticket sales after going viral for its confusing plot and terrible graphics. It grossed just 7,705 yuan (\$1,140, £343) in the first 10 days after its release, but has now made more than 11.4 million yuan, according to movie tracking site Mao Yan. That means it is holding ground against Hollywood blockbusters like The Odyssey and Spider Man: Brand New Day. "You may regret for 80 minutes if you watch it, but if you don't, you'll regret it for life," one popular social media post about the film said. Other

social media users have hailed the movie as the antidote to the AI slop that is taking over social media algorithms. They are sharing clips praising Niu Lai's "hand-crafted" method - a reference to the poor animation quality - as "proof" that its creators did not use AI. "That's some serious craftsmanship," a Weibo user wrote. Another social media user called it "pure handmade" and the biggest "dark horse" of the summer movie season. Others say they are rooting for the movie because they desperately hope for a "bullish" stock market - a reference to the fact that the words "bull" and "cow" share the same character in Chinese.



Russia and Ukraine trade more deadly strikes

Ebola outbreak in DR Congo becomes deadliest in its history

The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is now the deadliest in its history, according to public health officials. A total of 2,325 people have been killed by the virus since it was declared on 15 May, surpassing the death toll of the country's 2018-2020 outbreak. The outbreak was already the fastest growing on record, UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher said last week, warning that "the epidemic is killing someone every 30 minutes". There is currently no approved vaccine available for the Bundibugyo species that has caused the current epidemic but several are in development, including one based on technology used to develop the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine. DR Congo's Institute of Public Health on



Sunday said it had recorded 4,945 confirmed cases, including 101 in the previous 24 hours. Comparatively few cases have been identified outside the country: as of 12 August, 20 cases were confirmed in neighbouring Uganda, while two people were treated in Germany and one case was declared in France. However, the pace of the virus's transmission in

DR Congo, where it has spread to six of 26 provinces, has been described as "exceptional" by the World Health Organization. According to Reuters, it took close to five months for the world's deadliest outbreak of 2014-2016 in West Africa to reach 1,000 fatalities. The current outbreak reached 2,000 deaths in three months, though researchers say it may have

been spreading undetected since February. The outbreak is the 17th to have emerged in DR Congo since Ebola was discovered 50 years ago. Years of conflict and a highly mobile population have added to the country's challenges in controlling the spread of the disease. The WHO has said it hopes to reverse the spread of the disease within three months but warned that this meant bringing transmission under control and not ending the outbreak entirely. Ebola is a rare but deadly viral disease and the Bundibugyo species is even rarer, with only two known prior outbreaks. Symptoms of Ebola, which are similar to the flu or malaria, include fever, headache and tiredness, and can begin suddenly within two to 21 days of infection.

AYUSH SHETTY: INDIA'S BADMINTON STAR WHO STUNNED WORLD NO. 1 SHI YUQI AT BWF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

India's 21-year-old badminton star Ayush Shetty stunned defending champion and World No. 1 Shi Yuqi of China 21-14, 13-21, 21-19 in the BWF World Championships 2026 Round of 64 clash. The youngster, who hails from Karkala in Karnataka, looked in sensational form as he came up with brilliant smashes and terrific defence to pull off a stunning win in front of the home crowd in New Delhi. This was his first-ever win over Shi Yuqi after three successive losses, including a straight-game loss in the final of the Asia Badminton Championships earlier this year. Ayush was off to a flying start with a 21-14 win in the first game and although he dropped the second game, the youngster did not give up. He fought back brilliantly and was able to finish the match in style. Who is Ayush Shetty? Shetty found himself in the headlines earlier this year after he became the first Indian men's singles player to



reach the Badminton Asia Championships final in 61 years. While he was defeated by Shi Yuqi in the final, he pulled off a brilliant win over Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the semi-final. It was a result that truly announced his arrival on the global stage. He comes from the small town of Sanoor near Karkala in Karnataka and was introduced to badminton at the age of 8 by his father, who coached him in their backyard. The family later relocated to Bengaluru in order to provide proper training to Shetty and under the guid-

ance of coaches at the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy, he honed his skills. Shetty's breakthrough came in 2025 when he won the US Open title after beating Brian Yang in straight games. It was his maiden BWF World Tour title. He followed it up with wins over top-10 players like Li Shi Feng and Chi Yu Jen at the Asia Championships. Earlier, he won the bronze medal at the 2023 World Junior Championships in Spokane, USA, won the Denmark Junior International in 2021.

Formula E To Match Formula 1 In Speed? Co-Founder Says Gen4 "Will Be Very Close"

Formula E is entering its Gen4 era with a clear ambition to close the performance gap with Formula One, with championship co-founder Alberto Longo believing the all-electric series could be running at near-F1 pace on several circuits by the end of the next four-season cycle. Formula E bid farewell to its Gen3 cars at the London E-Prix on Sunday, and CEO Jeff Dadds believes its rapid evolution could eventually see electric racing outpace Formula One. "What is fascinating in Formula E is to see the steps. Because every two-three years, we have a step in technology which is so big that it's even difficult to compare to the previous generation," Longo said. "It was difficult to compare Gen3 to Gen2. It will be very difficult to compare Gen3 to Gen4. Because we speak to another level in terms of racing level, technology." The Gen4 cars are expected to reach around 335 kmph, with lap times improving by six to 10 seconds at circuits through increased downforce, powertrain development and new tyres. Longo expects the performance gap with Formula One to



narrow substantially during Gen4's four-season cycle. "By the time we end Gen4, in the fourth season of Gen4, we will be very close to times of Formula 1 in many tracks," he said. CEO Dadds, who has worked in the Formula One ecosystem and describes himself as an F1 fan, believes Formula E's progress should not be measured simply by its proximity to the established championship. Formula E is only 12 years old, compared to F1's 76-year history, Dadds pointed out, and said the

younger championship had experienced "hyper-growth" while developing a fundamentally different proposition. "We don't need Formula 1 to fail for us to be successful or vice versa. We absolutely think there is room for both organisations to continue being incredibly successful," he said. Dadds believes Formula E's technological trajectory could eventually give it a performance advantage over combustion-powered racing. "We already accelerate much faster than a Formula 1 car. We are at

the infancy of the technology here at Formula E. The combustion engine's been around for 130 years, so that's been iterated to within an inch of its life," he said. "So over the next four, five, six, seven years, we are going to get to a point where the technology in Formula E can outpace a Formula 1 car. No question about that." At the heart of Formula E's argument is efficiency. Dadds said the most efficient F1 combustion engine operates at roughly 55 per cent efficiency, while Gen4 technology is expected to be in the region of 97-98 per cent. That, he argued, explains the absence of the traditional engine roar associated with motorsport. "When people say to me, it would be great if these cars sounded noisier, like a Formula 1 car. What you're asking me is to make a car sound like the past. To make it sound less efficient, less performant, less technologically innovative," Dadds said. "We're going to make our cars sound like this car. Our children... are likely to only exist driving a hybrid or an electric car. This needs to be a sound that they associate, not what my father associates with."

High On Confidence, Indian Women's Hockey Team Eyes World Cup Win Over South Africa

High on confidence after holding Olympic silver medallists and world No. 4 China to a draw, India will look to strengthen their bid for a top-two finish in Pool D when they face South Africa in their second Women's Hockey World Cup match on Tuesday. India, ranked ninth in the world, produced a disciplined display to secure a 2-2 draw against a fancied Chinese side in their tournament opener. The result has given them a valuable point and put them in a good position to qualify for the second round. England currently lead Pool D following their 4-0 win over South Africa, with China and India next in the standings, while South Africa are fourth. For the semifinal race the top two teams from each pool will be divided into two groups (E and F) of four teams each. Each team will play matches against the opponents they did not face in the first round. A team's result in the first round against the progressing team from its pool will



be carried forward in second round. It means that India and China will not play each other if they reach the second round and their one point each from the draw will be carried forward. For India, Tuesday's game is, therefore, an opportunity to put themselves firmly in control of their qualification hopes. A win over 18th-ranked South Africa would not only boost their chances of finishing

in the top two but also provide momentum ahead of their final pool game. "We don't have to worry about the other teams' positions, but we need to maintain this momentum in the upcoming matches while avoiding complacency," coach Sjoerd Marijne said after the China game. India showed plenty of promise in their opening match. Dragflicker Deepika converted a penalty

corner and also earned another, while World Cup debutants Sunelita Toppo, Ishika and Shilpi Dabas displayed composure well beyond their experience. Navneet Kaur, who was named Player of the Tournament at the World Cup Qualifiers, has also carried her impressive form into the tournament and will be one of India's key attacking threats. However, Marijne knows there is room for improvement, particularly in possession and ball retention. India controlled the opening quarter and went into half-time with a 2-1 lead, but their intensity dropped after the break. They sat deeper in the third quarter, allowing China to take control and eventually find the equaliser. "We scored a penalty corner and a field goal, but I'm not happy with the third quarter. We need to work on ball possession and ball retention. The team must have felt relieved after the draw in the first match," Marijne said.

ONE DECISION, JUST TWO RUNS: SHUBMAN GILL, GAUTAM GAMBHIR'S GALLE STRATEGY UNDER FIRE

India finished the second day of the first Test against Sri Lanka at Galle on 460/9. It was expected that India would declare at the overnight score to gain the maximum advantage of bowling in the first hour of the morning session. However, the Indian team management took a surprising call as they sent overnight unbeaten batters Kuldeep Yadav and Prasidh Krishna to start the proceedings. The move was a defensive one, and former India player Dodda Ganesh raised an important question. "Why would you bat on the third day morning with two tailenders? #SLvIND," Ganesh wrote on X. India were bowled out for 462 in their first innings on the third day of the opening Test

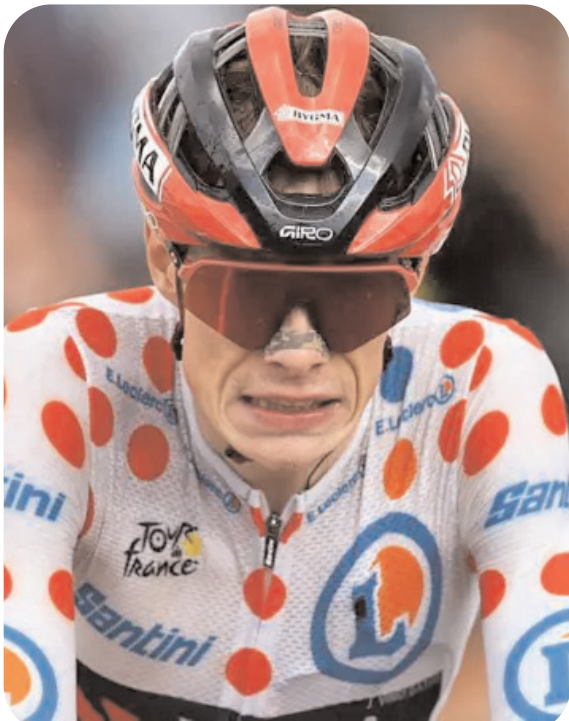


against Sri Lanka on Monday. Devdutt Padikkal top-scored for India with a mammoth knock of 167 that ended on Sunday. Resuming their innings at 460/9, India managed to add just two runs before the final wicket fell, with Asitha Fernando dismissing Prasidh Krishna. For Sri Lanka, Prabath Jayasuriya was the pick of

the bowlers, finishing with figures of 4/109. Keshara Nuwantha claimed 3/175, while Fernando took 2/63. India's total was built around Padikkal's outstanding knock of 167, which anchored their first-innings effort. On the second day of the Test, the first two sessions were washed out due to incessant rain.

Vingegaard out for rest of season with Tour injury

Two-time Tour de France winner Jonas Vingegaard will miss the rest of season as he continues his recovery from a broken collarbone sustained in this year's race. On stage 15, the 29-year-old Visma-lease a Bike rider was tackling a tight right-hand bend off a roundabout when his front wheel slid out, causing him to land on his shoulder. The injury required surgery and ruled the Dane out of challenging for a third Tour victory, with Tadej Pogacar going on to win a record equalling fifth yellow jersey. Vingegaard will be absent from September's UCI Road World Championships in Montreal, Canada, when Pogacar will go for a third straight world title.



Ricky Ponting Shows The Mirror To Australia After 'Embarrassing' Bangladesh Defeat

Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting has called for a change in the Test team after their recent loss to Bangladesh in Darwin on Sunday. Australia's batting has been facing growing scrutiny recently, and it all compounded when the Aussies were catapulted in their own backyard despite being at full strength as Bangladesh scripted a nine-wicket victory. Ponting advocated for injecting youngsters into the batting order and believed that there was enough evidence for a change. "This ends up being a very embarrassing defeat. I think it's inevitable they have to make a change. I was on the record at the end of last summer thinking that this was the ideal time to start to regenerate this team because of the performances from some of the



players," Ponting told Channel 7. Ponting stated that he would be the last one to call for a change, but looking at the performance, he thinks it is inevitable. "Look, I'm the last one I want to make change. As a captain or as a player, I wanted to keep the group together. It has to get to a bad point before I start saying you ought to leave somebody out. But there had been enough evidence for me

coming here to suggest that they weren't going to lose anything or much at all by starting that regeneration, by maybe bringing in another opener, by maybe bringing in someone at No.3. I think that that has to happen," he added. Meanwhile, former Australia bowler Trent Copeland emphasised that losing a Test to Bangladesh in Australia is 'unacceptable. "The players themselves will be, I'm sure, distraught with how this has gone," he told SEN. "I also think there is an element of them not sitting in this like the world is over either, but this is a completely unacceptable Test match result for Australia. When you are in your own conditions, I don't care about the preparation, I don't care who's playing for Australia even.

Aryna Sabalenka Squeezes Out A Win On Sixth Match Point In Cincinnati



Top seed Aryna Sabalenka fought through 62, 76 (7/2) against Talia Gibson on Sunday to join two other elites in the third round of the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Masters. The world number one needed six match points, Australia's Gibson saving five in the 12th game of the second set before Sabalenka managed a final winner to get the job done in just under two hours on a windswept Grandstand Court. "I'm super tired, this is crazy weather," the Belarusian said. "Talia played great tennis and was more aggressive in the second set. She put more pressure on my service games. I'm glad I stayed calm and pulled it out in straight sets." Sabalenka, who won the Cincinnati trophy in 2024, is looking for a solid build-up to the US Open, where she'll be seeking her first Grand Slam title of the year. She's won three titles in 2026, but none since Miami in March. She joined a pair of reigning Grand Slam champions in advancing, with Australian Open winner

Elena Rybakina and Roland Garros titleholder Mirra Andreeva also reaching the third round. Second seed Rybakina, coming off a runner-up finish to Iga Swiatek in Toronto, defeated Taylor Townsend 6-3, 6-4. Andreeva crushed Oleksandra Oliynykova with the loss of just one game, breaking five times and saving all seven break points against her own serve in a 65-minute 6-1, 6-0 rout. Rybakina said that she is concentrating on recovery after a tough Toronto run and was glad to get off to a low-stress start. "Today I'm happy with the serve," she said. "Definitely it helped me a lot. Last week in Toronto was very difficult. A lot of three set matches." Seventh seed Swiatek, the defending champion who bagged her first title of a rocky season in Toronto, hammered Emiliana Arango of Colombia 6-3, 6-0. Swiatek went down an early break but recovered quickly to prevail in 71 minutes over the player who ousted Venus Williams in the first round.

MAKHACHEV SECURES RECORD-SETTING WIN AGAINST MACHADO GARRY

Islam Makhachev (29-1 MMA) has successfully defended his UFC welterweight championship, defeating Ireland's Ian Machado Garry (17-2 MMA) via unanimous decision (49-46, 49-46, 48-47) while also setting an impressive record in the main event of UFC 330 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. With the victory on Saturday night, Russia's Makhachev etched his name in the UFC record books, extending his winning streak to 17 consecutive fights and surpassing UFC Hall of Famer Anderson Silva's historic 16-fight mark set from 2006 to

2013. Makhachev dictated the tempo throughout the 25-minute championship tilt, neutralising the challenger with suffocating top control and chain wrestling while mixing in dynamic striking, including a damaging second-round head kick. Machado Garry, bidding to become only the second undisputed UFC champion hailing from Ireland, stayed diligent in defensive scrambles on the mat to survive danger but could not mount enough offence to sway the judges' scorecards. "I have nothing but respect for Islam. ... He

won. I have no complaints, no excuses," Machado Garry said inside the Octagon after the decision. "It's always hard," Makhachev said of grinding out the victory against the challenger in the championship rounds. In the co-main event, UFC women's strawweight champion Mackenzie Dern (17-5 MMA) successfully defended her title for the first time, using dominant grappling and relentless submission threats to defeat Canada's Gillian Robertson (17-9 MMA) via unanimous decision (49-46, 49-46, 48-47). Dern, a Phoenix native who

fights out of Southern California, controlled the pace on the mat across 25 minutes, constantly threatening transitions and clinching attacks against her fellow Brazilian jiu-jitsu standout. Dern's most dangerous moment came in the opening frame, nearly securing a buzzer-beating rear-naked choke just before the horn sounded. While Dern had voiced confidence throughout fight week that she would finish Robertson inside the distance, the champion was pleased with her complete five-round performance.





HERO SRIRAM (SRIKANTH) STARRER OUTSTANDING PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER "THE MAZE" RELEASES REVERSE TEASE

Hero Sriram (Srikanth), who has earned a strong following among Tamil and Telugu audiences, is coming up with a new film titled "The Maze". Priyanka, Hrithika Srinivas, and Kamal Kamaraju will be seen in other key roles. The film is presented by Dr. Naimisha Reddy Kasireddy and produced by Dr. Uday K. Reddy Palvayi, Dr. KSR (Kareddy Sridhar Reddy), Dr. Bharat Reddy Gopu, and Dr. Anirudh Reddy Soma under the Shrousha Kamala Arts and UR Creations banners. "The Maze" is being made as a fresh psychological thriller, directed by Dr. Ravikiran Gadalay. The film is currently in regular production. The reverse teaser of "The Maze" was released today. The makers have impressed with a novel promotional idea by presenting the teaser almost entirely in

reverse, marking a unique attempt. The "The Maze" reverse teaser opens with an intriguing dialogues that question reality. The protagonist suddenly wakes up from sleep, with numerous incidents flashing through his mind. He sets out in search of proof for certain truths that nobody else believes but him. He also follows several people in his quest for answers. Are the things others believe are merely hallucinations actually illusions? Or are they real, just as strongly as the protagonist believes? Who is responsible for this confusing situation? Who stood by him and supported him throughout this journey? How did he get injured? And who is the Homicide Intervention Team investigating in an attempt to prevent murders? These are among the many questions that create

curiosity in the teaser. The teaser becomes even more intriguing when the protagonist is shown being arrested and taken away by the police in the final sequence. Except for the final scene, the entire teaser has been presented in reverse, making it a genuinely fresh and innovative attempt. Overall, the reverse teaser successfully raises expectations and curiosity around "The Maze", promising an intriguing psychological thriller filled with mystery, uncertainty, and unexpected twists. The Maze is an engaging thriller that revolves around a man whose life takes an unexpected turn over the course of a single night. As reality begins to blur and every moment takes him deeper into the unknown, he must navigate through a maze of fear, mystery, and unforeseen twists.

Shravan Reddy surprises us with his range as both Hero & Anti Hero in AGADHA

Agadha is a film that is so different from the regular breed of movies that come and go, especially within the horror genre. In fact, to simply call it horror would almost be a disservice. It is an atmospheric thriller steeped in mysticism and the supernatural, elevated by some towering performances from its cast. Shravan Reddy plays a character that is remarkably layered. He begins at a place that feels seemingly normal and familiar, but as the film progresses, the character slowly reveals shades that allow Shravan to showcase both his range and his understanding of the role.



There is something increasingly unsettling about his performance — not because he overtly

plays for menace, but because he never quite lets you comfortably read where the character stands. He moves effortlessly between the positive and negative shades, inhabiting that difficult grey zone with aplomb. Even in his quieter moments, there is an undercurrent that keeps you watching him, wondering what lies beneath. By the time the film ends, Shravan has taken the character somewhere far removed from where we first encountered him. It is a controlled, assured performance — and one that stays with you long after the end credits roll.

Sunil and Akhil Uddemari's Psychological Thriller 'Fight Maha' Trailer Released

The Film is Set for a Worldwide Theatrical Release on August 21

Sunil and Akhil Uddemari play the lead roles in the upcoming psychological thriller "Fight Maha," featuring Dr. Srivani Gopichand, Vaishnavi, Siddharth, and Srikanth Ayyangar in key roles. "If dreams come true, whose truth is it?" is the intriguing tagline of the film. Directed by Anand Chandra, the film is being presented as a fresh and innovative psychological thriller. It is produced by AVS Raju, R. Kumar Raju, and Anand Chandra under the banner of New I Movies LLP. The teaser, which was released last month by renowned filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma, received an excellent response and has crossed more than a million views. Today the makers have now unveiled the 2-minute-20-second theatrical trailer, further raising curiosity around the film. "Fight Maha" is scheduled to release worldwide in theatres on August 21.



The globally popular cooking celebration is now in Tamil homes.. Star heroine Samantha Ruth Prabhu to host Celebrity MasterChef Tamil



A new take on the popular cooking format with a Tamil nativity.. Samantha Ruth Prabhu is bringing together several celebrities from the Tamil entertainment industry to celebrate food, flavors, emotions and connections on Sony Vela and Sony Liv - Sony Pictures Networks India has recently announced 'Celebrity MasterChef Tamil'. This globally recognized cooking format will be hosted by star heroine Samantha Ruth Prabhu on Sony Vela and Sony Liv for the Tamil

audience. Celebrities, food, competition... 'Celebrity MasterChef Tamil' is being made by bringing these three worlds together. Many celebrities from the Tamil entertainment industry are going to step into the kitchen from the sets for the first time... and face the challenges, unexpected twists and pressure of tough cooking. In addition to pleasing the audience... they are going to prove their talent by preparing delicious dishes to win every challenge.



HUMA QURESHI OWNS THE COVER, EFFORTLESSLY

Huma Qureshi is proving she is a true fashion powerhouse with her latest magazine cover, and it's impossible to look away. The actress, all set to impress fans with her upcoming film Toxic, brought serious glam to the shoot with multiple striking looks. She switched between four bold outfits, a black and white feathered dress, a rich maroon pantsuit, a flowing white gown with dramatic sleeves, and an elegant black gown covered in crystal embellishments. Each look showed off a different side of her style, from edgy to classic

elegance. Huma completed her looks with statement earrings and soft, glowing makeup, letting her confidence shine through every frame. With Toxic creating buzz, this cover comes at the perfect time, proving Huma is ready to own the spotlight both on screen and in fashion. Our cover girl for this high on fashion issue is none other than the warm and bubbly Huma Qureshi. The star, who lives by her own rules and gives power-packed performances, believes in empowering others. She's also a lot of fun to shoot with and oozes confidence.

Ameer Log Will Be a Complete Family Entertainer: Director Ramana Reddy Soma

Ameer Log is the first production venture of Madhavi Reddy Soma under the banner of Awwal Number Productions. Directed by Ramana Reddy Soma, the film has Manohar Reddy Manchuri as its co-producer. MC Hari, Manoj and Sasidhar play the lead roles, while Vedha Jalandhar, Ravan Nittoor, Vishwender Reddy and Saiyogi appear in key roles. Rana Daggubati's Spirit Media is releasing the film grandly in Telugu on August 21. As part of the promotions, director Ramana Reddy Soma interacted with the media and shared several interesting details about the film.

■ TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND: I am from Raghavapuram in Nalgonda district. I came to Hyderabad in 1997 for higher studies and pursued Architecture at JNTU. I was an avid movie watcher even during those days. I started my own office in 2007 and have around two decades



of experience in the architecture industry. During the COVID period, I went back to my hometown. Since I had plenty of free time then, I started watching many more films on OTT platforms.

■ HOW DID YOU DEVELOP AN INTEREST IN FILMMAKING? I have always loved reading and writ-

ing stories. I started writing stories around six or seven years ago, drawing from my own experiences and things I had observed around me. Later, with the help of a friend, I learnt how stories should be written for cinema. I also picked up a few things through YouTube. Eventually, with the support of some friends, I got an opportunity to visit a shooting set. That is how my journey into cinema gradually began.

■ TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRST FILMMAKING ATTEMPT: I made a short film around three years ago. I wrote the story at night and shot it the following morning. We ended up with around 33 minutes of footage shot across a village and the city. After watching the output, I felt that I could do much better and decided that I should make a film only after preparing a proper bound script. During a podcast, I once heard Manoj Bajpayee mention the phrase 'Ameer Log'. That stayed with me, and that is where this journey began.

Rhea Chakraborty says father lost job over her surname

Rhea Chakraborty has opened up about the price her family paid following the controversy that engulfed her after actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death in 2020. While her own career came to a standstill, Rhea revealed that even her father lost a major job simply because of his surname. During her appearance on Farah Khan's vlog, Rhea spoke about rebuilding her life and the struggles her family faced amid intense public scrutiny. She revealed that her father, Indrajit Chakraborty, had secured a senior position at a reputed hospital, but the opportunity was taken away after his connection to her became known. "Papa got a very big job as a medical superintendent at a very big hospital in town. And then they found out his surname and said, 'Sorry, aap Rhea Chakraborty ke papa ho toh...'" she shared. Who is Rhea Chakraborty's father? Indrajit Chakraborty is a retired Army officer who served as a doctor in the Armed Forces Medical Corps. Despite his experience, Rhea claimed that the controversy surrounding her became the reason he was removed from the hospital job. Her revelation shows how the fallout of the case extended beyond her personal and professional life, affecting members of her family who had no connection with the film industry.



UNIQUE SURVIVAL DRAMA THRILLER "CHIRANJEEVI" TRAILER RELEASED



Chiranjeevi" stars Kiku Yanamala and Kashish Khan in the lead roles. Eeswari Rao, Tanikella Bharani, Sreekanth Bharat, Viva Raghava, and others play key roles in the film. Produced by Deepti Nadiminti under the

Kiku Entertainments banner, the film is directed by Shubha Sai Venkat. "Chiranjeevi" is gearing up for a grand theatrical release on the 28th of this month. The makers released the film's trailer today.

Rakul Preet Singh Drips In Sequins, Sass

Rakul Preet Singh is proving age is just a number with her latest stunning photoshoot. The actress, gearing up for her much-awaited role in Ramayana, dropped a set of pictures that instantly caught fans' attention. She wore a shimmering black sequinned gown with a sheer crystal-studded neckline and a bold cutout back with lace-up detailing. She kept it simple with a sleek bun, ear cuffs, and dewy makeup, letting the gown steal the show. Nearing her 40s, Rakul continues to impress with her fitness and style. With almost two decades in the industry, she has built a strong name in Tollywood and is now steadily making her mark in Bollywood too.

