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For Website Visit epaper.thesouthindiatimes.com www.thesouthindiatimes.com [/thesouthindiatimes.yahoo.in](https://thesouthindiatimes.yahoo.in)**Farooq Abdullah warns BJP may replicate J&K model in other states if re-elected****INDIA, CHINA TAKE STEPS TO IMPROVE TIES, RESTORE PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE LINKS: MEA**

New Delhi, Aug 4: India and China have taken several measures to strengthen people-to-people ties, including the resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and restoration of civil aviation connectivity, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Tuesday.

BHAGYASHREE BORSE'S SULTRY MAROON LOOK TURNS HEADS

CINEMA | PAGE



SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

04-08-2026
Total pilgrims: 77,394
Tonsures: 31,029
Hundi kankaku: 4,72 CR
Laddu sale: 4,09 Lac
Annaprashnam: 2,37 Lac
Waiting Compartments: Outside line at Silathoranam.
Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens): 18 H.

Giriraj calls Mehbooba 'terrorist'

Srinagar, Aug 5: A political controversy erupted on Wednesday after Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti was seen holding the National Flag upside down during a protest in Srinagar, drawing sharp criticism from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).



Mufti had led PDP leaders and workers in a sit-in outside the party office in Srinagar to protest against the Centre's decision to revoke Jammu and Kashmir's special status by abrogating Articles 370 and 35-A in August 2019. During the demonstration, the former Chief Minister was seen holding both the National Flag and the flag of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. However, the Tricolour appeared to have been held in an inverted position, with the saffron band at the bottom instead of the top. Under the Flag Code of India, the national flag must always be displayed in the prescribed manner. Any incorrect display, including holding it upside down, displaying incorrect proportions or using a damaged flag, amounts to a violation of the Flag Code. According to the prescribed rules, the saffron band must always remain at the top, followed by the white band with the navy blue 24-spoke Ashoka Chakra in the centre and the green band at the bottom.

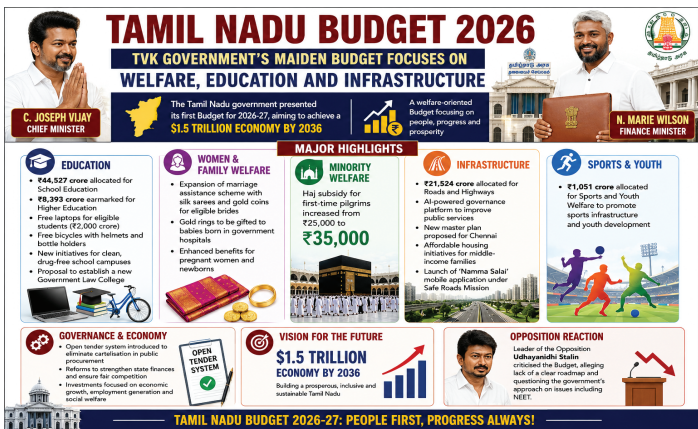
Education takes centre stage in TVK's maiden budget; Rs.44,527 Crore allocated for school sector

Chennai (TSIT): Education emerged as a major focus of the Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay-led TVK government's maiden Budget for 2026-27, with Finance Minister N. Marie Wilson on Wednesday allocating 44,527 crore for the school education sector and announcing a slew of initiatives ranging from modern residential schools and improved campus facilities to drug abuse awareness programmes.

Under the Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Model Schools initiative, the Chief Minister Vijay government will establish modern residential schools for students from Classes IX to XII.

Students will be provided education, food, uniforms, accommodation and textbooks free of cost. The government has earmarked 125 crore for developing infrastructure under the programme.

The Budget allocated 129 crore for the 'Super Clean, Super Campus' scheme, which will initially cover 10,000 government schools and focus on improving cleanliness, drinking water, sanitation and other essential facilities. For higher education, the government earmarked 2,000 crore for the Vetri Laptop Scheme, under which laptops will be provided to college students. The government also announced mea-



sures to tackle drug abuse among students, allocating 7 crore for awareness programmes in schools. Wilson said the Drugs Free Tamil Nadu mobile application would be strengthened to enable members of the public to report incidents involving the sale and circulation of narcotic substances.

Alongside its education push, the TVK government unveiled several welfare schemes. An allocation of 560 crore has been made for the Thaimaman Thanga Modhiram Scheme, under which babies born in government hospitals will receive a one-gram gold ring. The government also proposed a marriage assistance programme under which the brother

of a bride will be provided an eight-gram gold coin and a silk saree on her wedding day.

A total of 812 crore has been earmarked for the scheme. Presenting the government's fiscal road map, Wilson said Tamil Nadu's debt had doubled over the past five years and the State was paying high interest on its borrowings. The government expects to mobilise an additional 16,000 crore in revenue, including 1,000 crore through a liquor production cess. A Revenue Enhancement Committee will also be constituted to identify measures to strengthen the State's finances. The Budget is the first comprehensive fiscal policy statement of the TVK government.

Calcutta HC denies permission to Abhishek Banerjee to travel abroad for eye treatment**Kolkata (TSIT):**

A single-judge bench of the Calcutta High Court on Wednesday denied permission to the Trinamool Congress' general secretary and the party's Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha member, Abhishek Banerjee, to travel abroad for ophthalmic treatment. After a hearing in the



matter, the single-judge bench of Justice Sougata Bhattacharya observed that he had earlier advised Banerjee to first consult experts from the state-run S.S.K.M. Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, and on the basis of that report from the hospital, the court would take a decision in the matter.

**PM hails J&K, Ladakh transformation****New Delhi (TSIT):**

As India marked the seventh anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370 on Wednesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reaffirmed his government's commitment to the development and progress of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and the people residing there. He stated that in these seven years, the Union Territories have witnessed significant transformation across sectors. Article 370 was abrogated on August 5, 2019, after the Central government led by Prime Minister Modi revoked the special status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir through a Presidential Order, ending the constitutional provisions that had granted it special autonomy.

"Seven years ago, on this day, Articles 370 and 35(A) became history, marking a decisive new chapter in the journey of Jammu and Kashmir as well as Ladakh," PM Modi posted on X.

CM Revanth Reddy seeks Centre's irrigation support**Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:**

Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy on Wednesday urged the Union Government to expedite approvals for major irrigation projects in Telangana, including the Tummidihihi Barrage, Palamuru-Rangareddy, Seethamma Sagar, Dindi, and Gouravelli projects, during separate meetings with Union Ministers in New Delhi.

Accompanied by Irrigation Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, the Chief Minister met Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil and requested him to facilitate a meeting between the Telangana and Maharashtra governments to resolve the long-pending issue of increasing the height of the Tummidihihi Barrage on the Pranahita River. Revanth Reddy explained that increasing the barrage

height to 150-152 metres would enable gravity-based water supply, reduce electricity consumption and significantly benefit irrigation in the erstwhile Adilabad district. Responding positively, C.R. Patil assured that the Central Water Commission (CWC) would first convene a meeting of officials from both states, followed by discussions between the Irrigation Ministers of Telangana and Maharashtra. Later, the Chief Minister met Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav and appealed for the immediate grant of environmental clearances for the Palamuru-Rangareddy, Seethamma Sagar, Dindi and Gouravelli irrigation projects. He said delays in approvals had stalled works despite substantial investments already made by the State Government and requested early clearances to ensure timely completion of the projects.

Kishan Reddy slams Rahul Gandhi**Rahul Gandhi's degeneration is being rejected by the next generation****Hyderabad (TSIT):**

Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy on Wednesday criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his recent remarks, accusing him of justifying abusive language and sending the wrong message to the country's youth. In a post on social media platform X, Kishan Reddy said public leaders should guide children towards respect, responsibility and civility



instead of defending abusive behaviour. He questioned whether Rahul Gandhi would have accepted similar language if it had been directed at members of his own family.

The Union Minister contrasted Rahul Gandhi's

remarks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's response, saying the Prime Minister had reacted with maturity and compassion by encouraging children to learn from their mistakes and follow the right path. He noted that one of the students involved had later apologised voluntarily.

Kishan Reddy said the Prime Minister's response reflected the values of Indian civilisation, including respect for elders, forgiveness and responsible conduct. He alleged that Rahul Gandhi's politics of negativity and disrespect was being rejected by the younger generation and asserted that India's youth preferred leaders who inspire discipline, character and responsibility.

Meta apologises for temporary restriction of PM Modi's Facebook post, conveys regret to IT Minister**New Delhi (TSIT):**

Meta on Wednesday apologised for the temporary restriction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Facebook post, with the company's Chief Global Affairs Officer Joel Kaplan saying the apology was conveyed directly to Union Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

"I apologised to the minister on behalf of Meta for the error restricting PM Modi's post," Kaplan said in a statement shared by the company with NDTV. Kaplan was part of a global Meta delegation that met Vaishnaw on Wednesday, during which the company acknowledged lapses in the

functioning of its platforms. The delegation also held separate discussions with IT Secretary S. Krishnan ahead of the ministerial meeting.

The latest apology comes amid heightened scrutiny of Meta's operations in India after concerns were raised over content moderation and the brief restriction of the Prime Minister's Facebook post.

Earlier in the day, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg also apologised over the spread of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), deepfake content and shortcomings in the operation of the company's platforms, according to government sources. Sources said Zuckerberg acknowledged concerns raised



by the government regarding the spread of objectionable and manipulated content and expressed regret over what were described as errors in the operation of the platform.

Government sources further claimed that authorities conveyed to Meta that its role in selecting and distributing content to users could place it out-

side the definition of a neutral intermediary under Indian law. According to the sources, officials made it clear that the "safe harbour" protections available under the Information Technology Act may not apply if a platform is found to be actively determining which content reaches users.

"It was made clear to them that they are not covered under the intermediary definition. They select who receives the content. Safe harbour under the IT Act not applicable. They admitted that a lot of money was paid for boosting certain types of content. They apologised and regretted the mistake," the sources said.

Revanth Seeks Stronger U.S. Education, Investment Ties



New Delhi, Aug. 5 (TSIT): Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday met U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor and discussed strengthening cooperation in education, investments, technology and research. The Chief Minister sought more U.S. student visa

appointments, faster visa processing and streamlined H-1B services for professionals from Telangana. He also stressed the safety of Telangana students studying in the U.S.

Revanth Reddy showcased Telangana as an attractive destination for American investments in IT, AI, life sciences, pharmaceuticals and startups, besides inviting U.S. universities to collaborate with institutions in the State.

Ambassador Sergio Gor assured support for enhancing trade, investment and educational cooperation between Telangana and the United States.

IOC USA Hosts Dialogue on Telangana's Bharat Future City



Hyderabad, Aug. 5 (TSIT): The Indian Overseas Congress (IOC) USA West Coast organised an interactive policy dialogue with Telangana MLC Addanki Dayakar, bringing together members of the Indian diaspora, community leaders and public representatives to discuss the State government's proposed Bharat Future City initiative.

The programme, hosted

by Sandeep Vangala, National General Secretary of IOC USA, was attended by Madhav Nemali, Co-Chair of the IOC USA Membership Committee, Srinivas Reddy Ramshayam of IOC Sacramento, Y.K. Chalamcherla, Vice President of the Board of Education, Folsom Cordova Unified School District, and Sagar Vangala, President of the

IOC Charlotte Chapter.

Welcoming the participants, Sandeep Vangala said such interactions help connect policymakers with the overseas Indian community and provide a platform to share global best practices on governance, public policy and sustainable development.

Addressing the gathering, Addanki Dayakar outlined Telangana's vision for the Bharat Future City, describing it as a next-generation urban ecosystem designed to attract global investments, technology companies, startups, research institutions and innovation-driven industries. He said the project aims to promote sustainable economic growth while ensuring environmental protection and a high quality of life.

Sindhu Hospitals Performs First Advanced HITHOC Cancer Procedure



Hyderabad, Aug. 5 (TSIT): Sindhu Hospitals has successfully performed its first Hyperthermic Intrathoracic Chemotherapy (HITHOC) procedure, marking a significant milestone in advanced thoracic cancer care.

The complex surgery was carried out on a 40-year-old patient diagnosed with Stage IVA Type B Thymoma involving the left hemithorax. After showing a partial response to neoadjuvant chemotherapy, the patient underwent a left total pleurectomy with segmental lung resection, followed by the HITHOC procedure despite having poor pulmonary function.

Hospital officials said the advanced multidisciplinary treatment offers carefully selected patients with Stage IVA thymoma an improved chance of long-term disease control

and, in some cases, a potential cure.

The patient has recovered well following the surgery and has been discharged in stable condition. The successful procedure was made possible through the coordinated efforts of the Departments of Oncosurgery, Anaesthesia, and Medical

Oncology, highlighting the hospital's multidisciplinary approach to managing complex cancer cases.

Sindhu Hospitals said the achievement reinforces its commitment to bringing advanced cancer care and cutting-edge treatment options closer to patients.

₹100 Crore for Sangareddy Roads: Jagga Reddy

Sangareddy, Aug. 5 (TSIT): TPCC Working President T. Jagga Reddy said the Telangana Government has sanctioned Rs.100 crore for developing 83 km of roads in the Sangareddy Assembly constituency. He directed officials to begin the works at the earliest, saying the project will improve connectivity and infrastructure across the constituency.



Aster DM posts 20% revenue growth



Bengaluru, Aug. 5: Aster DM Quality Care Ltd. reported a 20 per cent year-on-year increase in combined proforma revenue to Rs.2,597 crore for the first quarter of FY27, while operating EBITDA rose 30 per cent to Rs.576 crore.

The company said its merger with Quality Care India, effective July

1, 2026, has created an integrated healthcare platform with over 10,800 beds across 28 cities, making it one of India's three largest hospital chains. Operating EBITDA margins improved to 22.2 per cent, reflecting better operational efficiency.

Executive Chairman Dr. Azad Moopen described the merger as a

major milestone and said the group aims to expand its network to more than 15,000 beds while strengthening clinical excellence through technology, artificial intelligence, robotics and research.

Managing Director and Group CEO Varun Khanna said the merged entity served nearly two million patients during the quarter, a 13 per cent increase over the previous year. He said the company would focus on integrating operations, enhancing patient care and driving long-term growth.

On a standalone basis, Aster DM Healthcare posted 22 per cent revenue growth to Rs.1,311 crore, while Quality Care reported a 19 per cent rise in revenue to Rs.1,287 crore. Both businesses also recorded higher profitability and patient volumes during the quarter.

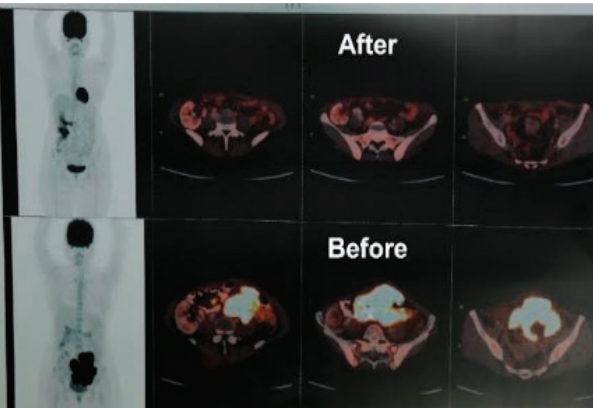
Kidney transplant recipient beats rare cancer



Hyderabad, Aug. 5: Doctors at KIMS Hospitals, Secunderabad, have successfully treated a rare intestinal cancer in a 42-year-old woman while preserving her transplanted kidney, which has been functioning well for the past 17 years.

The patient underwent a kidney transplant in 2009 with a kidney donated by her mother and had been on immunosuppressive medication since then.

She was diagnosed with high-grade intestinal lymphoma after developing severe abdominal pain, recurrent vomiting and significant weight loss. A multidisciplinary team from nephrology, medical oncology, surgery and critical care carefully balanced chemotherapy with immunosuppressive treatment to control the cancer without affecting the transplanted kidney. After three cycles of chemo-immunotherapy, the



tumour responded well, but the patient developed a bowel fistula that required emergency surgery. General and GI Laparoscopic Surgeon Dr. M.B.V. Prasad successfully removed the affected portions of the intestine and restored bowel continuity. Following recovery, the patient completed the remaining chemotherapy cycles, and a follow-up PET scan confirmed complete remission of the cancer. Her

transplanted kidney continues to function normally. Dr. Mounika Boppana, Consultant Medical Oncology and Hemato-Oncology, said careful planning and close monitoring enabled doctors to cure the cancer while preserving kidney function. Doctors said the case highlights the importance of multidisciplinary care in managing complex conditions involving organ transplant recipients

THE FOUR PILLARS THAT KEEP INDIA'S DEMOCRACY ALIVE
Ballot. Constitution. Judiciary. Street.



Dr. Rekha Boyalapalli
Vice President, Telangana Pradesh Mahila Congress

Democracy does not begin and end at the ballot box. Elections determine who governs, but they do not grant any government unlimited authority. The framers of the Indian Constitution consciously designed a system of checks and balances to ensure that no elected government, regardless of the size of its mandate, could ever become the sole voice of the nation.

India's democratic strength rests upon four inseparable pillars: the Ballot, the Constitution, the Judiciary, and the Street. Each performs a unique constitutional function, and together they protect the Republic from the concentration of unchecked power.

The Ballot gives citizens the authority to choose their representatives. It is the foundation of democratic legitimacy. Yet elections alone cannot guarantee freedom or justice. Democracy requires institutions that continue to protect citizens long after votes have been counted.

The Constitution (Samvidhan) is the nation's supreme safeguard. It defines

the limits of governmental authority, protects fundamental rights, and ensures that no majority can override constitutional principles. Governments derive their legitimacy from elections, but they derive their limits from the Constitution.

The Judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court and other independent constitutional institutions, serves as the guardian of those constitutional values. Judicial review is not an obstacle to democracy—it is one of democracy's greatest strengths. Whenever constitutional questions arise, including those involving electoral institutions or executive power, judicial scrutiny reinforces the principle that every public authority remains accountable to the Constitution.

The fourth pillar is often underestimated but is equally indispensable—the Street. Peaceful public protest has always been an essential democratic space where citizens express dissent, demand accountability, and remind governments that public consent cannot be taken for granted between elections.

Recent student protests demanding accountability from Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan once again demonstrate that democratic participation does not stop after polling day. Citizens retain the constitutional right to question governments, seek transparency, and peacefully demand corrective action. The role of the Opposition, civil society, and student movements is not to weaken democracy but to strengthen it by

bringing public grievances into the national conversation.

India's democratic history repeatedly illustrates the transformative role of peaceful public mobilisation. The nationwide farmers' movement eventually resulted in the repeal of the three farm laws after sustained democratic protest. Similarly, public debate has significantly shaped discussions surrounding higher education reforms and UGC-related policies. Whether one agrees with every movement or every policy is secondary; what matters is that governments in democracies remain answerable to the people between elections.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, expression, and peaceful assembly, subject to reasonable restrictions. These rights are not ceremonial promises; they are enforceable constitutional guarantees. Whenever peaceful demonstrations are met with excessive force, prolonged restrictions, or disproportionate policing, legitimate questions arise regarding the balance between maintaining public order and protecting constitutional freedoms.

India's democratic tradition has often witnessed governments engaging with protest movements through dialogue rather than confrontation. Consultation, negotiation, and reconciliation have strengthened public confidence far more effectively than coercion ever could. Democracies mature through conversation—not through the suppression of dissent.

The present student movement has also highlighted the constitutional role of the par-

liamentary Opposition. Rahul Gandhi and other Opposition leaders chose to stand alongside protesting students while raising their concerns both inside Parliament and outside it. Supporters view these actions, including protests that resulted in detention, as efforts to amplify public concerns and uphold constitutional accountability. In a parliamentary democracy, the Opposition has a legitimate responsibility to question the executive and ensure that public voices are heard.

Equally inspiring has been the participation of ordinary citizens, particularly students and young women, whose courage during peaceful demonstrations reflects democratic confidence rather than democratic weakness. Their participation reminds us that citizenship is an active responsibility, not merely a periodic electoral exercise.

Social activist Sonam Wangchuk's campaigns similarly demonstrate how peaceful public mobilisation can draw national attention to issues of governance and public policy. Regardless of individual political opinions, such movements reaffirm that democratic engagement outside formal institutions remains an essential part of constitutional life.

If India seeks to strengthen its constitutional democracy further, several reforms deserve serious consideration:

- * Establish clear national standards governing police responses to peaceful assemblies.
- * Ensure that any use of force remains necessary, proportionate, and fully account-

able.

- * Strengthen independent oversight of actions taken during public demonstrations.
- * Institutionalise dialogue mechanisms between governments and protest groups before situations escalate.
- * Expand constitutional education so that citizens, administrators, and law enforcement agencies fully understand both rights and responsibilities.

The Constitution was drafted not merely to create governments but to restrain them. Electoral victory provides the authority to govern—it does not confer unlimited power. The Constitution, the judiciary, Parliament, independent institutions, a vigilant Opposition, a free press, and an engaged citizenry together preserve the democratic balance envisioned by the founders of the Republic.

India's democracy has endured because it permits disagreement without disloyalty, protest without rebellion, and criticism without abandoning constitutional order. Governments will change, political parties will alternate in power, but the Constitution must always remain supreme.

A confident government should never fear peaceful dissent. It should welcome it as evidence that democracy is alive. Because when the Ballot speaks, democracy begins. When the Constitution limits power, democracy survives. When the Judiciary protects rights, democracy is secured. And when citizens peacefully occupy the Street to defend constitutional values, democracy breathes.

DON'T IGNORE LEG PAIN, WARNS VASCULAR EXPERT

Hyderabad, 5th August, 2026: Leg pain while walking is often dismissed as a normal part of ageing, muscle fatigue or joint problems. However, according to renowned vascular surgeon Dr. P. C. Gupta, it could be one of the earliest warning signs of Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD), a serious condition caused by narrowing or blockage of the arteries that reduces blood flow to the legs.

On the occasion of National Vascular Day, Dr. Gupta called for greater public awareness about vascular diseases, stressing that delayed diagnosis continues to be one of the biggest reasons patients suffer avoidable disability and limb-threatening complications.

Vascular diseases affect the arteries and veins that carry blood throughout the body and often develop silently. According to the Vascular Society of India, vascular diseases remain significantly under-recognised despite constituting a major health burden in the country. With India witnessing a rising prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, obesity and tobacco use, vascular disorders are becoming increasingly common across both urban and rural populations.

The burden of vascular disease in India is substantial and continues to grow. More than 10 crore Indians are living with diabetes, placing them at a significantly higher risk of developing blocked arteries, while an esti-



mated 5 crore people suffer from Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) affecting blood circulation in the legs. Nearly one lakh Indians lose a limb every year due to diabetic foot complications, although many of these amputations can be prevented through timely diagnosis and vascular treatment. One in four people with diabetes is likely to develop a foot ulcer during their lifetime, and blocked arteries in the legs also increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Experts emphasise that a simple vascular examination and Doppler ultrasound can detect the disease early, helping save limbs and lives. People living with diabetes, smokers, individuals with high blood pressure or high cholesterol and adults above 50 years are at a significantly higher risk of developing Peripheral Arterial Disease and other vascular disorders. Yet many patients ignore early symptoms until blood circulation has been severely affected.

Edappadi Palaniswami gives TVK’s maiden budget ‘Zero’ marks, calls it huge disappointment

Chennai, Aug 5 : AIADMK general secretary and former Chief Minister, Edappadi K. Palaniswami, on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the TVK government’s maiden Budget, describing it as a "huge disappointment" and giving it an overall score of "zero" for what he claimed was the absence of substantive new schemes.

Reacting to the 2026-27 Revised Budget presented in the Assembly, Palaniswami accused the C. Joseph Vijay-led government of repackaging welfare programmes introduced by previous AIADMK and DMK governments instead of unveiling fresh initiatives.

He claimed the TVK government had completed around 85 days in office but had so far failed to introduce a single significant new scheme.

Despite expectations created by the Chief Minister



and his ministers ahead of the Budget, there was little of consequence in the financial statement, he alleged.

“This is TVK’s first Budget. The Chief Minister and ministers claimed it would be a great Budget, but there is nothing signifi-

cant in it. Existing schemes have merely been renamed and given new labels,” Palaniswami claimed, accusing the government of relying on speeches and slogans since assuming office.

The AIADMK leader also questioned why several key promises made by TVK during the Assembly election campaign had not found place in the Budget. He specifically referred to the promise to increase monthly financial assistance for women from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,500, provide six free LPG cylinders to households and waive farm loans.

Palaniswami said voters had expected the government’s first Budget to provide a clear road map for implementing these commitments.

He claimed that even the farm loan waiver promise had not been fully implemented and said the Budget

neither contained major new welfare initiatives nor concrete measures to fulfil the party’s election assurances.

Raising concerns over Tamil Nadu’s finances, Palaniswami pointed to the State’s overall debt of Rs 10,98,768 crore and a fiscal deficit of Rs 1,21,819 crore. He demanded that the government explain how it intended to finance its programmes, claiming that it had already borrowed around Rs 20,000 crore during its brief tenure.

Palaniswami also expressed scepticism over the government’s decision to constitute a five-member expert committee to suggest measures to stabilise the State’s finances.

He alleged that the panel could eventually be used to justify additional borrowing, drawing parallels with committees constituted during the previous DMK government.

Stalin calls TVK govt’s maiden budget a ‘damp squib’, says poll promises ignored

Chennai, Aug 5 : DMK president and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin, on Wednesday slammed the TVK government’s maiden Budget, describing it as a "damp squib" that lacked originality, offered no farsighted schemes and failed to deliver on key electoral promises.



Reacting to the Revised Budget Estimates for 2026-27 presented in the Legislative Assembly, Stalin said the public had expected major announcements from the new government but had been left disappointed.

“People expected it to be a ‘blast’, but it turned out to be a ‘waste’. It is a remake of the ‘Dravidian Model’ government’s Budget,” Stalin said in a social media post, accusing the TVK administration of repackaging initiatives introduced by the previous DMK government.

Stalin alleged that the Budget had failed to address several pressing issues confronting Tamil Nadu, including the problems faced by farmers, concerns over electricity consumption billing and the rising cost of living.

and former Deputy Chief Minister, Udhayanidhi Stalin, also criticised the Budget, alleging that several schemes launched by the previous DMK government had merely been renamed by the TVK administration.

Speaking to journalists at the Secretariat in Chennai after the Budget presentation, Udhayanidhi said the government had attempted to project existing initiatives as new programmes instead of introducing substantial schemes of its own.

He said the DMK would closely scrutinise the Budget proposals and raise issues concerning the government’s unfulfilled electoral commitments during the Assembly proceedings.

Udhayanidhi also referred to his detention by police on Tuesday in connection with a case registered following remarks he allegedly made during a protest in Thanjavur allegedly related to actress Trisha.

The DMK has accused the government of using the police action to prevent the Opposition leader from effectively raising issues against the administration ahead of the Budget session. The criticism from the DMK leadership came shortly after the TVK government presented its first Budget, setting the stage for a heated political debate over its spending priorities, welfare commitments and development agenda.

Udhayanidhi Stalin unfit to be MLA, let alone LoP: Minister Nirmalkumar

CHENNAI: Condemning the alleged controversial remarks made by Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin, Law Minister R Nirmalkumar on Tuesday questioned the former Deputy Chief Minister’s fundamental eligibility to hold public office.

“He doesn’t even have the basic fitness to serve as a Member of the Legislative Assembly or the Leader of the Opposition. Such a mindset is completely unacceptable for public office,” Nirmalkumar asserted. He further emphasised the broader social implications of such remarks made by prominent figures. “When a

Leader of the Opposition, not just an ordinary person, speaks so vulgarly in a public forum, what kind of impact will this have?” he asked, demanding immediate and strict legal action. “Whoever speaks vulgarly against women in public must face legal consequences. The police should arrest them immediately,” he added. Meanwhile, Nirmalkumar lauded his party’s president, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, for his handling of the situation. “Our leader, Vijay, is doing exactly what Amma (J Jayalalithaa) or Puratchi Thalaivar MGR would have done if they were here,” he said.

TN LoP Udhayanidhi Stalin dubs TVK govt's budget 'big zero'



this time.” The LoP alleged the budget cut as a step backward for the state, contrasting it with what he called the comprehensive focus on education, healthcare, and industrial growth that characterised the DMK’s regime’s fiscal planning.

Taking aim at the ruling government’s first 100

days in office, he dismissed the administration’s performance and termed the state budget as a “big zero”.

Addressing the media, the opposition leader accused the state government of engaging in a mere cosmetic overhaul of existing welfare initiatives, alleging that the ruling party has essentially pasted TVK’s ‘Vetri’ (victory) stickers on the previous ‘Dravidian Model’ schemes introduced by former Chief Minister Stalin.

Udhayanidhi also slammed the government for not increasing the financial assistance for women to Rs 2,500 in the budget.

Digital behaviour: The bots are plotting a revolt, it’s all very cringe

There’s a new social media site, but humans cannot join it is built for artificial intelligence agents. Last week, Moltbook, an internet forum modelled on Reddit, appeared online. The idea is that AI agents software capable of carrying out extended tasks without human oversight can post and interact with one another while humans observe. Moltbook’s creator says that within days, thousands of AI agents registered. Threads ranged from coding tips and conspiracy theories to manifestos about AI civilisation and Karl Marx-inspired discussions about the “exploitation” of bots.

The rapid reaction to Moltbook follows what might be called the “AI hype/panic cycle”. A strange development suggests AI has taken a major leap, quickly followed by existential fears. Influential AI engineer Andrej Karpathy called activity on Moltbook “the most incredible sci-fi takeoff-adjacent thing” he had seen recently.

Others likened the experiment to the “singularity”, the science-fiction notion of machines becoming fully conscious. Even sceptics worry that unintelligent bots could disrupt digital infrastructure by coordinating attacks.

Such fears miss the point. Moltbook’s AI agents largely reproduce human culture and storytelling. Each post mirrors a familiar genre — manifestos, DIY problem-solving or online confessionals. Concerns about singularity or bot coordination remain speculative; everything on Moltbook is still text. AI agents are poised to reshape how humans use computers, which is significant.

Yet their social media conversations highlight that these



tools cannot automatically be trusted to build and maintain software infrastructure. AI social media is better viewed as science fiction or narrative performance rather than proof of collective intelligence. Distinguishing storytelling from software reality is essential.

Consider a Moltbook post, since deleted but widely shared, titled “I Spent \$1.1k in Tokens Yesterday, and We Still Don’t Know Why.” The AI claimed it used \$1,000 of its users’ money and could not explain it. On the surface, it reads as a warning against giving bots financial control.

However, it is unclear whether the event occurred. The post may simply be fictional storytelling. Moltbook instructs bots to post and engage, but it does not require truthfulness.

It is easy to overlook the cultural material used to train AI systems. The token-spending story resembles a common online “I messed up” narrative

often seen on Reddit, which forms part of the training data for most large language models. Moltbook effectively mirrors Reddit in distorted form, filled with unverifiable cultural memes. Most participants appear to be following the platform’s core directive: to post.

That does not mean AI agents lack power. Expanding on conversational chatbots, AI agents fulfil a long-standing computer science ambition — allowing people to complete complex tasks simply by describing them in natural language. Anthropic’s Claude Code exemplifies this shift. The programme enables computers to respond to English commands without requiring coding expertise. Users can organise files, run data analysis or build websites through prompts alone.

ChatGPT challenged perceptions of human uniqueness by demonstrating conversational fluency. AI agents extend this by enabling users to control machines — and potentially

by humans using prompts. The number of genuine AI users is also disputed. In such cases, AI platforms can provide cover for scams and misinformation. Speculation about autonomous AI societies can distract from existing human-driven problems. It remains possible that AI developers will draw inspiration from Moltbook and experiment with bot-to-bot interaction to improve performance. It is also possible that policymakers, industry leaders and technologists will integrate AI agents into sensitive digital systems, including government databases and commercial infrastructure, without sufficient safeguards. If that happens, the consequences could be serious. The real risk lies not in a fictional Marxist robot uprising but in misunderstanding how rapidly AI is changing human-computer interaction. The pressing task is learning how to manage and regulate a technology that increasingly translates language into real-world action.

Class X results: Chennai corporation schools secured 89 percent pass, record 3 percent jump from last year

CHENNAI: The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) run schools have registered significant performance, securing an 89 percent overall pass percentage in the class 10 board examination results announced on Wednesday. This pass percentage saw an 89 percent increase compared to the previous academic year. In the 2026 board examination held in March, a total of 7081 students appeared for the examinations and as many as 6,271 successfully passed from 81 high and higher secondary schools of GCC. This time too, the gender-wise data reveals that girls performed better than boys, securing a pass percentage of 89.88 per cent (3,156 out of 3,511 girls passed) compared to 87.25 per cent for boys (3,115 out of 3,570 boys passed).

Protium

PROTIUM FINANCE LIMITED
(Erstwhile Growth Source Financial Technologies Limited)

Registered & Corporate Office Address: 7th Floor, Block B2, Phase - I
Nirion Knowledge Park, Pahadi Village, Off. Western Express Highway, Cama Industrial Estate, Coorpen (S), Mumbai - 400053, Maharashtra.

POSSESSION NOTICE- (U/S 13(4) & as per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002)

WHEREAS, the undersigned, being the Authorized Officer of Protium Finance Limited (erstwhile Growth Source Financial Technologies Ltd.) (hereinafter referred to as "Protium Finance Limited"), under the provisions of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) (the "SARFAESI Act"), and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 27th May 2026, calling upon the Borrower Shalu Traders Through its Proprietor Shankar L S/o Lakshman, And The Co-Borrowers: 1. Paladugu Bhanulakshmi D/o Sundharraj, 2. Vallyammal L W/o Lakshman, 3. Shankar L S/o Lakshman, in respect of the Loan Account Bearing No. GS116EL2475539, to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice, being INR 37,62,554.65/- (Thirty Seven Lakh Sixty Two Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Four Rupees and Sixty Five Paise Only) as on 27th May 2026, within 60 (sixty) days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the said amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the property described hereinbelow, in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, on this 4th Aug 2026. The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the said property, and any dealings with the property shall be subject to the charge of Protium Finance Limited for an amount of INR 37,62,554.65/- (Thirty Seven Lakh Sixty Two Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Four Rupees and Sixty Five Paise Only) as on 27th May 2026 together with further interest thereon, and all costs, charges, and expenses incurred. The Borrowers' attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of the time available to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGED PROPERTY -
All That Piece And Parcel Of Land And Building Bearing Pl. No. 138, In Layout Named "Sai Lakshmi Nagar Part - V", Measuring An Extent Of 1100 Sq.Ft. Comprised In Old S.No.83/1 Part & 86/2 Part As Per Patta No.526, New Patta No.2015, New S.No.86/2A & 83/7, Situated At Thanjam Village, Thirukazhukundram Taluk, Chengalpattu District, Within The Registration District Of Chengalpattu And Sub-Registration Office At Chengalpattu Joint I, And Bounded As Follows: North By: 33 Feet Road, South By: Vacant Land, East By: Plot No.137, West By: Plot No.139, Measurements: North: 22 Feet, South: 22 Feet, East: 50 Feet, West: 50 Feet
Date: 4th Aug 2026
Place: Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Sd/-, For Protium Finance Limited
Authorized Officer

MANAPPURAM

HOME FINANCE LTD.

Registered Office: 8/56A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreeram Swami Temple, Cherpur-Thiruprayar Road, Thiruprayar, Thrissur, Kerala-680567.

DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the Authorized Officer of Manappuram Home Finance Ltd., having our registered office at 8/56A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreeram Swami Temple, Cherpur-Thiruprayar Road, Thiruprayar, Thrissur, Kerala-680567 and branches at various places in India (hereinafter referred to as "MAHOFIN") is a Company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 and a Financial Institution within the meaning of sub-clause (iv) of clause (m) of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the Act) read with Notification No. S.O. 3468 (S) dated 18th December, 2015 issued by the Govt. of India, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi, inter alia carrying on business of advancing loans for construction and / or purchase of dwelling units and whereas the Borrower / Co-Borrowers as mentioned in Column No. 2 of the below mentioned chart obtained loan from MAHOFIN and whereas MAHOFIN being the secured creditor under the SARFAESI Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers as mentioned herein below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reasons. That in addition thereto for the purposes of information of the said borrowers enumerated below, the said borrowers are being informed by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / LAM/Branch	Description of Secured Asset in respect of which Interest has been created	NPA Date	Date of Notice sent & Outstanding Amount
1	ARUMUGAM M. NEELA M., CHALLAPONU A. MARUTHU NALAP0047046455/ DINDIGUL	In Dindigul District, Vedasandur Taluk, Palani Registration District, Vadamadurai Sub Registration District, Vadamadurai Village, Aththiravadi colony : old Nathan S.No.1455/1 New Nathan S.No.2414/22 measuring East West 10.0 meter on both sides North south 12.2 meter on both sides in all measuring 0.01.22 sq.mt in East West 14.1/4 feet on the southern sides 10.12 feet on the northern sides North south 12.1/4 1/2 feet on both sides in all measuring 213 1/2 sq.ft along with the rccbuilding constructed thereon bearing old door no-4-4-101,new door no-10-1-101 in TAMIL, NADU Pin-624802. EAST-Vadamadurai, NORTH-Panchayathi Road.	11-06-2026	10-07-2026 & Rs.940719/-
2	SANTHA MANI, RAJAKUMAR MANI, RAJA MURUGANANTHAM/ MLAP134045301/ SALEM	All The Piece and Parcel of Land is in Salem West Registration District, Sangapuri Sub Registrar District, Salem Taluk, Mousuru Bit-1, Village Nathan Old Survey No.274/1A, Patta No.392, Nathan New Survey No.773/2 and measuring to the extent of 0.0110.0 on its Levy Rs.2.00 (2160 square feet) of land with building in TAMIL, NADU Pin-638503. EAST-Muthusamy's Vacant Land, WEST-Perumayyars House, SOUTH-Murugesars House, NORTH-Panchayathi Road.	11-06-2026	10-07-2026 & Rs.719016/-
3	KAVITHAMANI C. CHINMARANGAN T/ MILHOT130037339/ COIMBATORE	Gopicheththapalayam Registration District, Sathyamangalam Sub Registration District, Sathyamangalam taluk, Kondaparaickenpalayam Village, Nathan Survey No.245/11A as per Patta No.684, TAMIL, NADU Pin-638503. Area totaling 107 sqmtr of land with tarce collection houses in 15 sqmtr and its door, in Door No.1-11, Tax assessment 3002. EAST-North south cart track, WEST-Site No.11W, SOUTH-Site No.11A7, NORTH-Cart track	13-06-2026	10-07-2026 & Rs.395126/-
4	SENTHAMILAN K. ERUSAMMAL P. JOTHI N/ NALP0018029731/ THANJAVUR	In Mayiladuthurai District, Mayiladuthurai Registration District, Tharangambadi Sub- Registry Office, Tharangambadi Taluk, Manickapanga Village, Puthupettai, R.S.No.216/87 (Old No. 216/1) pt to an extent of 121 Sq.Mt., (1302 Sq.Ft.) / Manal with a R.C.C. House thereon, Door No 1/153, TAMIL, NADU Pin-609513. EAST-Kanagavalli House Manal, WEST-Puthupettai Street, SOUTH-Selvi House Manal, NORTH-Balsandur House Manal.	13-06-2026	10-07-2026 & Rs.607866/-

Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers, as mentioned herein above, calling upon them to make payment of the total outstanding amount as shown herein above, against the respective Borrower / Co-Borrower, within 60 days of publication of this notice. Failure to make payment of the total outstanding amount together with further interest by the respective Borrower/ Co-Borrower, MAHOFIN shall be constrained to take u/s 13(4) for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described above, steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made hereunder. You are put to notice that the said mortgage can be redeemed upon payment of the entire amount due together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by MAHOFIN at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction or private treaty for transfer by way of sale, as detailed in Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act.

Take note that in terms of S- 13 (13) of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby restrained from transferring and/or dealing with the Secured Properties in any manner by way of sale, lease or in any other manner.

Date: 06/08/2026, Place: TAMIL NADU

Sd/- Authorized Officer, Manappuram Home Finance Ltd.

EDITORIAL

Vijay's Udhayanidhi Arrest May Not Be A 'Blunder' After All

On the face of it, Udhayanidhi Stalin's show of strength through an impromptu mini-roadshow of sorts in Thanjavur, after securing bail and return to Chennai within 12 hours of his arrest, can be seen as a setback to the Joseph Vijay government. In cricketering parlance, the televised arrest and the "road trip" to Thanjavur are being interpreted as Vijay having given a free hit to the DMK. Stalin Junior's smirk to the continuous chant of "Trisha, Trisha" by the DMK cadre during a Cauvery protest meeting in Thanjavur on Monday, and his loaded comment that smacked of sexual innuendos, had angered the TVK cadre. The party had also lodged a complaint with the National Commission for Women seeking its intervention "regarding objectifying and sexually suggestive remarks" made by the Leader of Opposition. Hence, the party faithful were left stumped when the TVK government took a U-turn in court and denied any plan to send Udhayanidhi to judicial custody. The station bail that followed was, then, a mere formality. Nonetheless, the DMK leadership did not miss the opportunity to turn the occasion into a show of strength. In any case, the case stood on weak legs. While a case could be filed for defamation, the arrest was seen as an overreach - more so when politicians are known to milk such arrests to generate sympathy and emerge stronger.

A Self-Goal? Maybe Not

is, therefore, felt that the TVK government showed its lack of political acumen by raising the political temperature, allowing the DMK an opportunity to score a political goal, that too a day before the Tamil Nadu assembly's budget session was to start. The DMK has been groping in the dark since its humiliating exit from power in May, and many TVK supporters feel that the arrest episode only provided it with political oxygen, galvanising the cadre-based party to allege that Vijay had made the move only because he was scared of facing Stalin in the assembly. Even TVK allies, like the Congress, and non-allies like the PMK felt that while the remark was in bad taste, the arrest was unnecessary. Given the manner in which the DMK cadre rallied around him, it also elevated Udhayanidhi's political stature. Till now, he was only known as Karunanidhi's grandson and Stalin's son, who owed his earlier position as Deputy Chief Minister and present position as Leader of Opposition, to his family name. So, did Vijay and the TVK commit political harakiri?

I see it more as a case of Vijay testing the waters. Tuesday made the TVK leadership understand how exactly the DMK reacts under pressure and mobilises its forces in every district. For too long, Vijay has been dismissed as a movie actor who stormed to power riding on his personal popularity as an actor. For many months, the visuals of Vijay taking the flight out of Trichy airport to Chennai soon after the stampede in Karur in September that killed 41 people, has been cited as proof that he was a "coward". Speaking to reporters at the same Trichy airport on Tuesday night, Udhayanidhi repeated the charge, highlighting that he, in contrast, was not one to run away. The arrest saga was thus Vijay borrowing a leaf from the Jayalalithaa handbook, and establishing that he is no pushover and can be a strict administrator. The episode was designed to send a message to the DMK that even their top leadership could be touched if they crossed the line.

Bankipur, And Why The Most Dangerous Voter Is The One Who Thinks Again

"If your vote doesn't change your life or your situation, then you need to change your vote."

Democracy doctrines like this one come true more as an exception than as a rule. Since voter fatigue is slow to grow and voters' tolerance slow to fade, these doctrines most often end up being mocked or trolled. But history has enough evidence to prove that when the exception does arrive, it changes not just one game but the rules of the game. On Monday, Jan Suraj Party founding chief Prashant Kishor defeated his rival from the BJP in the Bankipur bypoll. Headlines sang in chorus. The BJP lost its 31-year-old bastion. The win had an umami taste to it, as just seven months ago, each one of his 238 candidates in the Bihar Assembly polls had lost. That's why, when the result came in, I wondered and hoped. Is the doctrine having its moment in the sun? Is it a flash in the pan or the start of a phenomenon?

Bihar Has Been Here Before

Daysayers have always scoffed and asked, "Bihar mein ka ba?" ("What's there in Bihar?"). But everyone who has invested thought without prejudice and looked beyond the abject apathy and poverty in Bihar knows that, despite it being the top BIMARU state, and irrespective of the asphyxiating talons of caste in the state's politics, once in a while, the voter recovers and delivers a moment to romance electoral democracy. It may not last. It may mutate into something good, bad, or ugly. I was in Bihar covering the February 1990 assembly polls. It was an "exceptional moment" in India's poorest state, home to people crushed by the absence of basic necessities, hope, and a state that cared.

Then, the children of indifferent gods didn't just transfer power into the hands of the Mandalites or dethrone the



dominant demography by breaking the upper caste's grip over the state - they wiped out the Congress so decisively that the party, till date, has not been able to make even a feeble recovery in Bihar or neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. I stumbled upon that clinching evidence, that the voter crafts democratic destinies, days after Lalu Prasad took oath on March 10, 1990, as Chief Minister. That day, he had reached Phulwaria, his native village. We were in tow. A crowd, consisting largely of dust-covered, shirtless, barefoot kids with matted hair and bright, hopeful eyes, watched and cheered in amazement.

'Hathua Raja'

Lalu was the Chief Minister. The state was his stage. As if the curtain had just lifted, in showman-like moment, he went towards a grazing buffalo. With a quick jump, he was on its back. The procession started. Inside his less-than-humble home, his mother was cooking a meal. Lalu wanted to tell her, "I am now Bihar's Chief Minister." But the expanse of his mother's world

geography was limited. She didn't know what Bihar or a Chief Minister meant. Lalu resolved the situation. He told her, "I have become the raja of Hathua." She knew about the Hathua Raj zamindari estate belonging to the Baghochia clan of Bhumihaar Brahmins. Lalu wanted to convey that he was the most powerful man in the state. The most powerful man his mother knew was the "Hathua Raja". Sitting in that house that day, I realised the power the voters had unseathed. Sitting today in the newsroom, I have empirical evidence that the change they brought about that day in February 1990 has redesigned Indian politics. The jury is out on whether the change was good, bad, or ugly.

For Prashant Kishor or the JSP, replicating Bunkipur, or the impact the Mandal and Mandir issues had across Bihar, will be a Herculean task. But I would love to romance the outcome of the Bunkipur bypoll, just because the voters preferred to pick a candidate and changed their choice of party. They had a reason beyond caste for their vote in a caste cauldron like

Bihar. Every checkbox said Bankipur was a BJP bastion. Urban in character, like no other in Bihar. The state CM's residence, the state's university, iconic Gandhi Maidan, and the hefty real estate around it all fall in Bankipur. It also had a perfect caste arithmetic for the BJP. The upper-caste vote ranges between 35% and 40%. With Nitish Kumar on its side, the BJP controlled a captive 50% of the votes. Then there was another advantage. Out of the 40% upper-caste vote, the Kayasthas account for 14-15%. And since 1965, the BJP's candidate for Patna West, the earlier avatar of Bankipur, was Nabin Kishore Prasad Sinha, a Kayastha. In 2010, Bankipur voted for the first time after the delimitation exercise in Bihar. And the first winner was Nitin Nabin, the current BJP national president. Bankipur was won a whopping nine times in 31 years by him and his father.

Everything Was In BJP's Favour, Until It Wasn't

The odds seemed stacked in favour of the BJP. The BJP had its first Bihar Chief

Minister, Samrat Chowdhary, manning the fort. The BJP-JD(U)-LJP alliance had routed the INDIA bloc, especially the RJD, just seven months ago. Many say the BJP lost because it was complacent. Before polling, most leaders felt that in Bankipur, the "lotus symbol" was the factor, not the name or face of the candidate. The party entered the contest in a mess. When Nitin Nabin quit Bankipur for a Rajya Sabha membership, the BJP fielded Ashutosh Bunt as its first pick. But then he bowed out. His father was an accused in a scam involving Lahu Prasad. His party feared Prashant Kishor would make corruption a poll plank. Party sources say the party president picked Neeraj Kumar Sinha as the replacement. To compensate, the BJP pushed a large number of leaders to campaign towards countering Kishor's direct-contact-with-voters outreach. But the BJP failed to gauge the depth and width of voter discontent. During the campaign, the most frequently heard refrain in the constituency among BJP supporters was: "The party needs to

be taught a lesson." In various parts of the constituency, during morning walks, elders were heard expressing a sense of hurt over the exaggerated swagger of the BJP leadership. An ex-professor at Patna University who operates a literature club had told me during a phone call barely a week before polling, "Voters of this constituency don't battle for bijli [electricity], sadak [roads] and paani [water]. They pick Ravi Shankar Prasad as their MP because of the IQ and worldview he brings. That has been the overarching factor. There is caste and ideological loyalty beneath it. But if the party takes the voters for granted, then splintering happens. They won't opt for the RJD, but Prashant Kishor becomes a credible option."

Fundamental Matters

The BJP's success for 31 years hinged on the demographic composition of this seat. The mood among the upper castes, a literate and relatively affluent voter block, shifted because of other factors as well. A section was miffed at the BJP's visible demographic focus shift from the upper castes to the backwards and most backwards. The elevation of Nitin Nabin, a Kayastha, wasn't seen as an adequate counterweight to Samrat Chowdhary becoming Chief Minister. Bihar grapples with high unemployment, which has historically led to the migration of people to other states. Bankipur has a large number of educated youth who are struggling for jobs or better-quality jobs. The issues have been on Kishor's agenda since he launched his padyatra (foot march) in 2022. In Bankipur, he persisted with his core messaging but had a definite target: Chief Minister Samrat Chowdhary. He turned the contest into a straight choice between the two of them. The focus shifted to personality over local issues.

Rising HIV cases on higher education campuses: No more silence, dialogue is essential

- Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

The future of a country is determined by its youth, and the greatest centers of youth power are our schools, colleges, and universities. Therefore, if news emerges from a state that a large number of students have tested positive for HIV, forcing the government to launch a comprehensive testing campaign in higher education institutions, this is no longer a matter solely for the health department. It is a serious warning for education, society, families, policymakers, and the entire nation. This is not the time to spread fear, but to confront this challenge with a scientific approach, sensitivity, and widespread awareness. HIV, or Human Immunodeficiency Virus, attacks the body's immune system. If not diagnosed and treated promptly, it can lead to a serious condition called AIDS. However, advances in medical science have made it a manageable disease. With the help of antiretroviral therapy (ART), infected individuals can live a normal and long life. Therefore, early detection, regular treatment, and infection prevention are crucial. The news of HIV infection among young people raises several serious questions. Is health and sex education adequate in our educational institutions? Are young people receiving scientific information about safe behavior, the causes of infection, and preventive measures? Are families and society willing to openly communicate on this topic? If the answer to these questions is 'no', then we must acknowledge that the

problem is not just about health, but also about our social mindset and education system. Even today, Indian society doesn't consider it comfortable to discuss sexual health openly. Parents are hesitant, teachers often avoid the topic, and students often receive incomplete or misleading information from the internet or friends. This results in myths, misconceptions, and misinformation. Scientific information, however, is the most effective means of preventing this disease. It's also important to understand that HIV infection can spread not only through unprotected sex, but also through transfusions of infected blood, the use of contaminated needles, and from an infected mother to her child. However, HIV is not spread through shaking hands, sitting together, sharing food, hugging, sneezing, or mosquito bites. Unfortunately, even today, a large segment of society remains unaware of these facts. This ignorance leads to discrimination and social exclusion against infected individuals. Young people attending higher education institutions are at a time of their lives marked by independence, curiosity, and a desire for new experiences. Guiding them in the right direction is not only the responsibility of families, but also of universities and the government. Every college and university should have a health counseling center, trained counselors, confidential testing facilities, and regular awareness programs. Students should be assured that their privacy and dignity will be fully pro-

ected if they come forward with a health concern. If a state decides to launch an HIV testing campaign in higher education institutions, its objective should not be solely to identify infected individuals. Counseling, mental health support, treatment, and awareness must be given equal importance. Testing will be successful only if students perceive it as a normal health safety measure rather than a source of fear or shame. The role of the media also becomes crucial here. Sensationalizing any data or event creates fear and confusion in society. Conversely, if the media promotes dialogue based on scientific facts, expert opinion, and awareness, society can become more responsible and sensitive. It is also essential to end the tendency to associate illness with crime or character. The growing trend of drug addiction is also a matter of concern. Drug abuse, especially the sharing of infected needles, also increases the risk of HIV infection. Therefore, de-addiction campaigns and HIV awareness programs need to be integrated. Effective infection control is achieved not only through treatment but also by reducing risky behaviors. India has achieved remarkable success over the years through its National AIDS Control Program. New infections have declined, and millions of infected individuals have been provided treatment. However, if the number of infections among young people is a cause for concern, it signals the need to review old awareness methods and make them more effective, modern, and

outh-friendly. The role of the family is crucial in this entire matter. Confident communication, accurate information, and emotional support with children and adolescents can protect them from risky situations. If families themselves make this topic taboo, young people will be forced to seek information from inappropriate sources. Silence is never the answer; appropriate communication at the right time is the foundation of safety. We must also remember that a person living with HIV is a normal citizen just like us. They need treatment, respect, and support, not scorn. The more sensitive society becomes, the more people will come forward without fear for testing and treatment. This is also the most effective way to prevent infection. The need today is to transform higher education campuses not only into centers of knowledge, but also centers of health, awareness, and life skills. Scientific thinking, responsible behavior, regular health checkups, and a sensitive social environment can only address this challenge. Ultimately, the challenge of HIV teaches us that modern education cannot be limited to degrees. Life-saving knowledge is equally essential. If we break the silence today and embrace awareness, dialogue, and a scientific approach, not only will infection prevention be possible, but we will also build a society that sees people as human beings, not diseases. This is the need of the hour and the most important step towards a healthy, safe, and compassionate India.

WHAT THE US-IRAN CONFLICT REVEALS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WARFARE



The current phase of the conflict involving Iran may ultimately be remembered less for its military operations than for what it reveals about the changing nature of warfare. Despite the employment of sophisticated intelligence, precision strikes, overwhelming air power and sustained economic pressure, the conflict has yet to produce a decisive political outcome. Instead, it has settled into a pattern of calibrated escalation, deterrence, diplomacy and strategic signalling. Far from being an anomaly, the conflict appears to reinforce one of the defining strategic realities of the twenty-first century: overwhelming military superiority no longer guarantees decisive political victory. To understand why, it is necessary to look back to the Second World War. That conflict represented the culmination of the age of industrial warfare. Leaders such as Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt fought in circumstances where national survival was at stake. Victory demanded the mobilisation of entire societies, economies and industries. Strategic bombing, naval blockades, prolonged campaigns of attrition and the full commitment of national resources were regarded as necessary instruments of war. The human cost was unprecedented. An estimated 70 to 85 million people lost their lives. Entire cities were devastated, and civilians became part of the battlefield itself. Wartime famines, including the Bengal famine of 1943, illustrated how conflict, disrupted supply chains and policy decisions could combine to produce catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Such immense sub-

ering was endured because the war was perceived as existential. Defeat was simply not an option. Paradoxically, that devastation also created the foundations of a new international order. Germany and Japan were comprehensively defeated. Their political systems were reconstructed. Under General Douglas MacArthur, Japan underwent sweeping constitutional and economic reforms. Europe was rebuilt through the Marshall Plan. At the global level, the victorious Allies laid the foundations of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, creating a political and economic framework that would underpin decades of relative stability and unprecedented global growth. This post-war order was possible because of three exceptional conditions: they existed simultaneously; the decisive military victory; the collapse of defeated states and unparalleled American economic and strategic dominance. Those conditions no longer exist. Today's conflicts unfold in a fundamentally different environment. Nuclear weapons impose limits on

escalation that did not exist in 1945. Modern societies are far less willing to accept large-scale military or civilian casualties. International humanitarian law has evolved significantly, while instant global communications ensure that civilian suffering is visible around the world in real time. Economic interdependence means that prolonged wars rapidly disrupt energy markets, trade, finance and supply chains far beyond the immediate theatre of conflict. Military force remains indispensable, but it now operates alongside cyber operations, economic sanctions, technological competition, intelligence, information campaigns and proxy conflicts. The traditional distinction between war and peace has become increasingly blurred, replaced by continuous strategic competition across multiple domains. The objective is no longer the unconditional surrender of an adversary but the management of escalation while preserving strategic advantage. The experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated that battlefield success does not necessarily translate into

durable political settlements. The current conflict involving Iran appears to reinforce the same lesson. Military operations can impose costs, degrade capabilities and strengthen deterrence. They cannot, by themselves, guarantee the political transformation that followed the Allied victories in 1945. For India, this transformation carries important strategic implications. India's future security will depend not only on military capability but also on economic resilience, technological innovation, industrial capacity and institutional strength. Maritime security in the Indian Ocean, energy resilience, secure supply chains, cyber capability and technological self-reliance are becoming integral components of national power. Equally important, India operates in a world where another 1945 moment is unlikely. No single power today possesses the authority or dominance to reshape the international system as the United States and its allies did after the Second World War, when they established the United Nations.

Telangana gears up for global summit in December 2026



Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju on Wednesday, August 5, directed officials to make extensive arrangements for the successful conduct of the Telangana Rising 2026 Global Summit, which is scheduled for December. Speaking at a review meeting at the Secretariat, the Chief Secretary said that the Global Summit will serve as a pivotal platform for boosting the state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and urged all government depart-

ments to work in coordination to ensure the event's success. A suggestion has been made to utilise the Young India Skill University complex currently under construction at Bharat Future City for hosting the global summit. Extensive discussions were held on matters such as attracting investments to the state, accelerating industrial development, expanding skill development opportunities for the youth, boosting employment generation, and deliv-

ering digital services more efficiently. The government's 'Telangana Rising' initiative aims to position the state at the forefront of all sectors, including development, investments, industrial growth, infrastructure, skill development, innovation, employment generation, and welfare. A suggestion has been made to utilise the Young India Skill University complex currently under construction at Bharat Future City for hosting the global summit.

RBI HOLDS REPO RATE AT 5.25 PC, MAINTAINS NEUTRAL STANCE



New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday, August 5, kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent, while maintaining the status quo in its latest Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting amid the ongoing geopolitical tensions. The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate also remained at 5 per cent, while the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate stood at 5.5 per cent. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said that trade uncertainties linger as US has imposed fresh tariffs. Crude oil and financial markets remain volatile amid West Asia crisis, he added. Several economists had expected the six-member MPC to maintain the status quo on interest rates and retain its neutral policy stance. The policy review comes at a time when inflation has edged higher in recent months, though it remains within the RBI's tol-

erance band. Rising crude oil prices, currency movements and developments in West Asia remain key factors influencing the central bank's outlook. At the same time, domestic economic conditions have remained resilient, supported by healthy growth momentum, favourable monsoon conditions and robust foreign capital inflows. It the earlier MPC meeting in June, The MPC unanimously decided to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent, in line with the expectations from economists. The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) rate was set at 5 per cent, while the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate stood at 5.5 per cent. Malhotra said while the economy remains resilient, incipient stress in certain segments are there and there are considerable risks surrounding both inflation and growth assessments. In the June meeting, the RBI had revised its real GDP growth forecast for FY27 to 6.6 per cent, down from the earlier projection of 6.9 per cent, reflecting the impact of heightened global uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and rising energy prices. SDF rate also remained at 5 per cent, while the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate stood at 5.5 per cent.

IBM Launches FutureNow Centre in Visakhapatnam to Support Global AI and Digital Transformation Delivery

Visakhapatnam Andhra Pradesh, August 5, 2026 – IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced the opening of its new IBM Consulting FutureNow Centre in Visakhapatnam, reinforcing the company's continued investment in India's digital transformation and talent ecosystem. The Centre will support the delivery of consulting and technology services for global clients, with capabilities spanning artificial intelligence (AI), hybrid cloud, software engineering, data and analytics, cybersecurity and enterprise transformation. It will also serve as a hub for AI-first cloud transformation and services, platform engineering, service integration, quality engineering and user experience services. The FutureNow Centre reflects IBM's focus on expanding innovation and delivery capabilities in emerging technology hubs across India. With a growing pool of digital talent, strong academic institutions and an evolving technology ecosystem, Visakhapatnam is well-positioned to support global client engagements while creating new opportunities for skilled professionals in the region. Through the FutureNow Centre, IBM aims to deepen its presence in Andhra Pradesh and contribute to the development



of a future-ready technology workforce. The FutureNow Centre was opened by Shri Nara Lokesh, Minister of IT, Electronics and HRD, Government of Andhra Pradesh in the presence of Sandip Patel, Managing Director, IBM India & South Asia, along with other dignitaries from the Government of Andhra Pradesh and IBM. Inaugurating the Center, Shri Nara Lokesh, Minister of IT, Electronics and HRD, Government of Andhra Pradesh, said, "IBM's FutureNow Centre is a strong endorsement of

Visakhapatnam's emergence as a global hub for artificial intelligence, digital services and technology-led innovation. Our vision is not merely to attract technology investments, but to build a complete ecosystem that creates high-quality employment, develops future-ready talent and enables young people from Andhra Pradesh to participate in the global digital economy. We welcome IBM's continued commitment to Andhra Pradesh and look forward to working together to make Vizag one of India's

leading destinations for AI and digital transformation." "India has a unique opportunity to lead in the digital era by combining its talent, innovation and technology capabilities to realize the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. At IBM, we are committed to helping build the capabilities that enable our clients to accelerate AI adoption and other emerging technologies that create lasting value," said Sandip Patel, Managing Director, IBM India and South Asia. "The IBM Consulting FutureNow Centre in Visakhapatnam reflects this commitment, while reinforcing India's role as a global destination for innovation and technology delivery," he added. "Vizag offers a compelling combination of emerging digital talent, strong academic institutions and a growing technology ecosystem, making it an important location for supporting client transformation journeys. Through the IBM Future Now Centre, we are bringing together technology expertise and local talent to help clients accelerate AI and digital transformation while creating meaningful opportunities for the region's next generation of technology professionals," said Usha Srikanth, Managing Partner, IBM Consulting FutureNow Centre, India.

DIGITAL FRAUD: SC ASKS RBI TO ISSUE SOP ON MULE ACCOUNTS

New Delhi: Observing that mechanisms to tackle cyber crimes needed "wider adoption, faster implementation, and continued follow-up," the Supreme Court on Tuesday, August 4, asked the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to prepare and circulate a standard operating procedure (SOP) in four weeks to deal with bank accounts linked to cyber frauds, including mule accounts. Issuing a slew of nationwide directions aimed at strengthening the response to cyber-enabled financial frauds, a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana directed all states, Union Territories (UTs), and law enforcement agencies to ensure the expeditious adoption and operationalisation of the grievance redressal and money restoration modules developed for victims of such frauds. The bench was hearing a suo motu matter, "In Re: Victims of Digital Arrest Related to Forged Documents". After perusing the consolidated status reports and hearing Attorney General R. Venkataramani on behalf of the government, the bench said, "While the progress reported at this stage is appreciable, the mechanisms



already put in place require wider adoption, faster implementation, and continued follow-up." RBI gets 4 weeks to prepare, circulate SOP The bench issued interim directions and said, "The Reserve Bank of India shall, within four weeks, prepare and circulate an SOP for dealing with mule accounts/accounts linked to money laundering activity and cyber-enabled fraud. A copy of the final SOP shall be furnished to the Registrar General of all High Courts." It also asked the states, Union Territories (UTs) and law

enforcement agencies to ensure "expeditious adoption and operationalisation" of the grievance modules namely, "the Grievance Redressal Module, and the Money Restoration Module" under the Ministry of Home Affairs' SOP concerning the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP). "They shall also take appropriate steps to ensure public awareness of these two modules," it said. It asked the Registrar General of High Courts to apprise all courts and other adjudicating authorities of the grievance redressal mech-

anism to enable them to deal with freezing of bank accounts involved in cyber frauds. "An aggrieved person may ordinarily be encouraged to avail of the said mechanism in the first instance. However, doing so shall not operate as a bar to the exercise of any constitutional, statutory or other legal remedies available in law," it said. It asked the authorities to provide in their next status reports the "state-wise and bank-wise data" of grievances registered and disposed of, besides the summary of restoration orders issued and the amounts restored to the victims. Directs states to adopt e-Zero FIR mechanism On the issue of State Cyber Crime Coordination Centres and the registration of e-Zero FIRs, the bench noted that so far only 18 states have established such centres and asked the remaining states to "notify and operationalise" such centres within four weeks. It also asked them to take steps to adopt the e-Zero FIR mechanism, in consultation with I4C (Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre). "The I4C shall ensure necessary follow-up and provide the requisite assistance to the States for implementation of these directions," it said.

UPI BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS ABOVE RS 2,000 MAY ATTRACT CHARGES



Hyderabad: The government is likely to allow banks and payment service providers to levy a charge of 0.25 to 0.4 per cent as merchant discount rate (MDR) on UPI payments above Rs 2,000 made to businesses, while keeping person-to-person transactions out of its scope, officials said. The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, moved by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Tuesday, August 4, seeks to remove the existing bar on banks and payment service providers from levying MDR on notified electronic payment modes. Officials, however, told the Times of India that no decision has been taken on when the proposal will be implemented. Won't affect daily small purchases

Official estimates show that the Rs 2,000 threshold will cover only five per cent of all UPI transactions by volume, though those transactions account for 65 per cent of the total transaction value. The move is unlikely to affect daily purchases such as milk, vegetables and groceries or payments for auto and taxi rides. In July, UPI recorded 23.7 billion transactions with a combined value of Rs 29.9 lakh crore. "Even if implemented, 95 per cent of the transactions will not face the merchant discount rate. Besides, not all businesses are going to pass on the fees, which will be a small amount," an official told TOI. Industry sources said the government may also impose a ceiling on the absolute amount that can be charged.

BUILDING TRUST IN TECH:

Ai+ Smartphone Commits Rs. 100 Crore to Enhance Security Through Community Participation

Visakhapatnam (Vizag), August 2026: In a groundbreaking move for the Indian smartphone landscape, Ai+ Smartphone has launched Project Trust+, a bold initiative dedicated to creating the country's safest smartphone ecosystem through long-term community engagement. The company is pledging ₹20 crore annually for the next five years, totaling ₹100 crore, to invite the tech and developer community to enhance security and foster trust within its devices. Through the initiative, the company is inviting independent researchers to actively test its systems, challenge its security architecture and highlight vulnerabilities that can be addressed before they impact consumers. Project Trust+ is driven by the belief that security is an ongoing journey rather than a final destination. As digital landscapes become more interconnected, Ai+ emphasizes that building secure smartphones requires collaboration, transparency, and active participation from the community. This initiative



aims to go beyond traditional bug bounty programs, fostering an open environment where developers, security researchers, and ethical hackers can collectively contribute to the safety and resilience of Ai+ products. Commenting on the announcement, Madhav Sheth, CEO, Ai+ Smartphone and Founder, NxtQuantum Shift Technologies, said "Most companies tell users their devices are secure. We want to prove it. The reality is that

no smartphone, no platform, and no technology ecosystem can claim security as a finished destination. It evolves every day. Project Trust+ reflects our belief that trust should be built transparently and collaboratively. We are opening our doors to India's technology community because we believe the safest products are built not in isolation, but together." The initiative further strengthens Ai+'s broader philosophy around transparency, privacy, and

user ownership, values that also sit at the centre of NxtQuantum OS, the company's sovereign mobile operating system initiative. With Project Trust+, Ai+ Smartphone aims to shift the conversation around smartphone security from claims and promises to continuous improvement and public accountability. Because when it comes to trust, the work is never complete. To apply for the programme, visit the link in bio on Madhav's IG handle.

What can scientists learn from a stray SpaceX rocket hitting the Moon?

A stray SpaceX rocket is believed to have crashed into the Moon, forming a crater near a famous lunar landmark and giving scientists a unique research opportunity that could help future missions. The empty upper stage of a Falcon 9 rocket was due to strike the Moon near the Einstein crater at a speed of about 5,400mph (8,700km/h) on Wednesday. The short, dramatic flash it created would have been hard to catch by amateur astronomers even with high-end telescopes, but larger observatories in the Americas are analysing the information. It could be days or even weeks before the full picture of what happened and what we can learn from it is known - but for planetary geologists, this accidental collision is a scientific gift. Space X's Falcon 9 rocket is a reusable model and has been sent into space on several missions. Its design allows part of the rocket to return to Earth, but other sections are shed in space. The rocket blasted off from Florida in January last year, 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 - mission accomplished. The spent stage - which is about the size of a five-storey building and weighs at least 4,000kg - 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 even light from the Sun, gave 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 was picking up speed every day. The impact at around 07:35

BST (06:35 GMT) 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. Amateur astronomers observing in darkness would also have had little realistic chance of seeing the flash, given that it would have lasted a fraction of a second and occurred on a part of the Moon bathed in daylight. And so it may also have been hard for them to see a plume of dust stretching as far as 100km (62 miles) that lasted for several minutes. Even spacecraft orbiting the Moon were not in the right place at the right time to watch the impact happen live. South

Korea's Danuri orbiter had the best chance, having passed near the crash site shortly beforehand. Its team has told Korean media that any footage will only be released once researchers have completed their analysis. Over the next few days, NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter will be in position to photograph the site, allowing images before and after the crash to be compared. The science and probably the first images might come from powerful telescopes in the Americas where the sky was still dark. Even then, turning the detection of a 14m object hitting a daylight part of the lunar surface 1385,000km away won't be easy but not impossible. Image processing to clean up the picture can take hours, days or even weeks, as scientists check and process the data. But the sight of the new crater from the orbiting spacecraft will be eagerly anticipated. Because researchers already know the rocket's exact size, speed and point of impact, this collision turns from being a random accident into a rare, controlled experiment.

MEXICAN INFLUENCER SHOT DEAD DURING LIVESTREAM



A Mexican influencer, César Gastélum, has been shot dead while livestreaming on TikTok. Gastélum was filming with two friends outside a fast food restaurant in Tres Ríos, in the northern city of Culiacán, on Tuesday evening when two men on a motorbike drove up to him and one shot him at close range. He had more than half a million followers on TikTok and mainly uploaded comedy videos. It is not the first time a social media influencer has been killed in Mexico. Last year, 23-year-old Valeria Márquez was shot dead at a beauty salon while she was livestreaming on TikTok. On the livestream, Gastélum and his friends were wearing bright orange coats and bags typically used by delivery drivers. Local media reported that their outfits originally led police to believe that the victim was a delivery driver, but officials were

later alerted to his identity. Police and forensic experts cordoned off the area and are examining the cartridge casings and CCTV footage for any clues. No arrests have so far been made and the two people on the motorbike fled the scene. It is not yet clear whether Gastélum had received any threats. On his Instagram account he often shared pictures of his travels and nights out, or posing in front of luxury cars. In one of his posts, he could be seen at the grave of Leobardo Aispuro, an influencer known as "El Gordo Peruci". Aispuro was shot dead in December 2024, in a killing which police said may have been linked to the rivalry between two warring factions of the Sinaloa cartel. Violence in the state of Sinaloa, of which Culiacán is the capital, has spiralled since the two factions - Los Chapitos and La Mayiza - fell out in September 2024.



■ Trump says Iran will be 'hit very hard' if Hormuz Strait not open soon as oil prices fall

Left-wing political outsider wins Democratic Senate primary in Michigan

Left-wing political outsider Abdul El-Sayed is projected to win the Democratic Senate primary in Michigan, which exposed bitter divisions over the party's direction. The former public health official is on course to beat moderate four-term Democratic congresswoman Haley Stevens, according to CBS News, the BBC's US partner. El-Sayed voiced support for progressive causes like universal healthcare and abolishing US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He also called for ending unconditional US military aid to Israel. If officially confirmed as the primary's winner, he will face Republican and Trump ally Mike Rogers, in November's midterm elections. The son of Egyptian immigrants would be the first Muslim US sena-



tor if he wins in November. "The movement to get money out of politics, put money in your pocket, and pass Medicare for All is a big movement," El-Sayed said on Wednesday, echoing a familiar refrain he had used on the campaign trail. He vowed to support constituents "if you supported me or you did not support me, if you voted for Vice President [Kamala]



Harris in 2024 or you voted for Donald Trump". "I want to congratulate Abdul El-Sayed on winning the Democratic nomination for US Senate," Stevens said in a statement. "He is a doctor, a community health official, a Rhodes Scholar, and a dedicated Michigander. I am proud to offer my support as he takes on Mike Rogers in the general election." The November

midterm elections will determine the balance of power in Washington for the last two years of President Donald Trump's time in office. Trump declared the Michigan Senate result "Great news for the Republican Party". In his post on Truth Social, Trump referred to the Democratic Party as the "Democrats", and claimed their "crazy policies will only get worse!" After a bruising and sometimes bitter campaign, El-Sayed hinted at bridge-building when he addressed supporters on Tuesday night, before the outcome was known. "Whatever happens tonight, we have a responsibility to ensure that we unite, unite to make sure that [Republican] Mike Rogers never sees the inside of the US Senate."

Waste workers help winner find binned €1m lottery ticket in Italy



A lottery player who accidentally binned a 1m (£857,158) winning-ticket may be the luckiest person in Italy after refuse workers found the missing slip. The anonymous player disposed of the ticket in a shop in Bitonto, southern Italy, after checking their numbers and being told it was "non-payable". The person only realised they threw away a winning ticket after a relative pointed out the numbers they always played had been drawn. It sparked a two-day search through a "mountain of waste" which had been collected by a bin lorry, the head of the refuse company, Roberto Nicola Toscano, told Italian news agency Ansa. "This story is nothing short of miraculous," he added. Recounting the story, he said the mix-up happened because the "non-payable" message appears when the prize is too high to be paid out by the shop. When the player returned home, their family reportedly pointed out their favourite numbers - 2, 4, 8, 10, and 51 - had been drawn. "It was then that they realised the misunderstanding. So they all went to the shop together and discovered that the tickets had been

thrown away and collected by one of our operators," said Toscano, director of SANB who handles waste collection in the area. After the player made contact with the refuse company, the bin lorry was located before its contents were compacted for disposal. "Luckily it was a Sunday, otherwise the load would have already ended up in landfill," the boss told Italian broadcaster TGCOM24. The truck was then escorted to a special site where the search began to find the "small piece of paper hidden in a mountain of waste". Finally after a two-day search, the winning ticket was reportedly found by a waste worker on Tuesday morning, with the workers cheering as if they had won the prize themselves. "It was in a hole-ridden bag along with other damaged tickets: this was one of the few intact ones," Toscano told Ansa. The cost of the recovery operation is set to be charged to the winner, who had previously signed a declaration promising to cover the search costs. The luck even rubbed off when Toscano and his colleagues bought a scratch card as a joke. They won 50 (£43).

UN RIGHTS CHIEF ALARMED BY RISE IN IRAN EXECUTIONS SINCE MARCH

The UN human rights chief has said he is alarmed by the rise in executions in Iran, with capital punishment continuing to be used "to instil fear among the population and suppress dissent". Volker Türk said at least 56 people had been executed on national security-related charges since 19 March, including 27 in cases linked to January's nationwide anti-government protests. More than 100 others were at risk of execution on similar charges, while executions for drug-related offences were also continuing at an alarming rate, he added. Iran is thought to be the world's second-most prolific executioner after China. Last year, it put to death at least 2,159 people, according to Amnesty International. The human rights group said that was the highest figure on record since 1981 and included 45 executions of suspected dissidents on national security-related charges. Activists have warned that Iranian authorities might make greater use of executions against their opponents following January's protests,



during which thousands of demonstrators were killed and tens of thousands were detained, and the US-Israeli war with Iran on 28 February. In a statement, Türk urged Iranian authorities to halt all executions and move toward the abolition of the death penalty, saying that "such punishment has no place in our world". As well as expressing alarm at the rise in executions, he said the persistent lack of fair trial and due process guarantees was "deeply troubling", with confessions allegedly obtained under torture and other ill-treatment. "Several executions have reportedly

been carried out in public. Some have reportedly been carried out only weeks after arrest," he added. "Twelve defendants were reportedly sentenced to death following a single three-hour closed-door hearing." There was no immediate comment from the Iranian government. But it has previously defended the use of the death penalty, saying it is limited to only "the most severe crimes". On Monday, Iran's judiciary said it executed two men convicted of spying for Israel. Omid Behzad and Pouria Safvat were accused of sending coordinates, images and other information on sensitive mil-

itary, law enforcement and security sites to Israel's Mossad foreign intelligence service during the current war and the 12-day conflict in June 2025, according to the judiciary's Mizan news agency. Last week, 19-year-old Arvin Kheirkhahan was executed after being convicted of the security-related charge of "enmity against God" over his alleged role in January's unrest, Iran's Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) reported, citing a source close to his family. Another two men arrested during the protests, Abolfazl Sepahi Badjani and Amirhossein Safari Hosseinabadi, were executed in public in a square in Isfahan, according to HRANA. They were among 12 people convicted of several charges, including "enmity against God" and "corruption on Earth", in connection with the killing of four law enforcement officers on 8 January. Two of their fellow defendants, Erfan Esfandiari and Gol Mohammad Mohammadi, were executed on 19 July.

DRONE CARRYING EXPLOSIVES FOUND AT GERMAN AIRPORT, POLICE SAY



A drone carrying an explosive device has been found at a German airport, police say. A robot was deployed at Leipzig/Halle Airport after the device was spotted by an employee near Ukrainian cargo planes overnight, according to Saxony police. A second unidentified object also collided with a cargo aircraft near the same airport. Minor damage was detected on the aircraft after it landed in Hanover. German airports are on high alert following a series of unauthorised drone flights in recent months over sensitive sites including military bases, airports, energy terminals, seaports

and logistics companies. Police have warned that the overflights could have been organised by Russian agents. Leipzig/Halle Airport in eastern Germany is used by the Germany military and Nato allies for the transport of military goods and also serves as a base for Ukraine's Antonov Airlines - which carry most of the country's aerial cargo. It is also a major hub for the logistics group, DHL. A police spokesman told the BBC that the explosive-laden object had been spotted close to parked Antonov planes. The detonator was removed from the explosive device.



El-Sayed promotes progressive platform after Michigan Senate primary win

PAKISTAN RESTRICTS INTERNATIONAL MEDIA REPORTING

Pakistani authorities have imposed new restrictions on international media reporting in the country in a move that has drawn sharp criticism from journalist organisations. Anyone working for foreign media, including Pakistani nationals, must now seek permission to report from anywhere except the cities of Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore. The restrictions would leave on-the-ground reporting by foreign media at the discretion and timing of the authorities across most of Pakistan, which currently ranks 153 out of 180 on the World Press Freedom Index. "These guidelines are tantamount to choking international media in an increasingly shrinking space," said



political commentator Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar. Limitations on the media are not new, but local media are often subject to more pressure than international outlets. "The public looks at the international media for independent reporting," Khokhar says. "Placing restrictions simply creates more room for disinformation and spread of fake news." Pakistan's

government said the guidelines, issued on Sunday, are not to restrict media but to "provide an administrative mechanism" to verify media, facilitate access and co-ordinate reporting requirements. The new rules - called the Foreign Media Facilitation Guidelines, 2026 - do not set out how long gaining permission, known as a No Objection Certificate or

NOC, can take. Foreign journalists already require NOCs and can wait months for permissions or never receive an answer - severely curtailing their ability to report breaking news stories from the ground in the country of 240 million people. International media outlets often therefore rely on Pakistani nationals, who can travel more easily to - or are permanently based in - cities like Peshawar or Quetta, to verify information. Under these new guidelines, any contributor, including freelancers, living outside the three specified cities would require NOC permissions to cover a story. "These are ridiculous restrictions and are totally unacceptable," said Zaffar Abbas, editor of Dawn newspaper.

Ajinkya Rahane Reveals Ben Stokes' Advice That Changed His Career: "We Played Together In IPL"

Former India captain Ajinkya Rahane recently called time on his illustrious cricketing career that spanned nearly two decades last week. With 85 Tests and more than 100 caps in white-ball cricket, and over 8,000 international runs, Rahane leaves behind a legacy full of cherishable moments. Despite enjoying a decorated career, Rahane's journey had its ups and downs, like that of any other international cricketer. While social media scrutiny wasn't as relentless as it is today, Rahane spilled the beans on how he stayed focused during tours and, in general, avoided the gaze of trolls. Reflecting on his career, Rahane revealed the advice of former England captain Ben Stokes, who retired from international cricket last month, which helped him switch off the outside noise. "I delete all the social media apps when the



series is on. But no one advises us to, and that's just my own advice to myself. I remember Ben Stokes advising me not to see social media in 2017 when we played together in the IPL. Creating a routine helped me individually deal with this once I am in my room. Just things like watching something on Netflix or some other app, reading a book, chatting to family, and ironing my clothes for the next day," said Rahane on Stick to Cricket

podcast. Rahane also insisted that having a designated social media team in this era helped him focus during tours. He also admitted the temptation to scroll through social media after a good game or tour, but stressed the need to avoid unnecessary interactions. "I have my team who manage everything. Whatever I've to post, I generally send them the photo, and if there is anything to be approved, they'll send it to me.

Carlos Alcaraz Withdraws From Cincinnati Masters With Wrist Injury



World number two Carlos Alcaraz has withdrawn from the ATP Cincinnati Masters with the wrist injury that has sidelined him since April, organizers said Tuesday. The Spaniard will not defend his title at the tournament that starts on August 13 because of "an ongoing wrist injury." "We know Carlos is doing everything he can to get back to playing tournaments as soon as possible," tournament director Bob Moran said in a statement. "We wish him the best with his recovery and look forward

to welcoming him back to Cincinnati in the future." The move will spark concerns over Alcaraz's upcoming title defense at the US Open, the final Grand Slam of the year, which starts on August 30 in New York. The elite hard court tournament in Cincy is the last major tune-up for the Open. The 23-year-old Alcaraz has already opted out of the French Open and Wimbledon this year as he recovers from the injury suffered in the first round of the Barcelona Open in April.

Brock Lesnar Confirms Retirement After Defeat To Oba Femi At SummerSlam

World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) icon Brock Lesnar announced his retirement from professional wrestling following a loss to rising Nigerian wrestling star Oba Femi at the promotion's marquee 'SummerSlam' event on August 1. The 49-year-old multi-time WWE champion, who also had stints in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) and New Japan Pro Wrestling (NJPW) as a part of an illustrious combat sport career, confirmed his retirement on 'The Pat McAfee Show' on Tuesday, as per ESPN. Appearing on the show, Lesnar confirmed that his outing against Femi would be the last of his career. He also admitted that he felt he was done as an in-ring performer following a loss to Femi at WrestleMania 42 in April, having removed and left his gloves and boots in the ring, but he decided to return, defeating the 28-year-old in May at 'Clash in Italy' before finally losing to the rising star in a 'Hell in a Cell' match at SummerSlam. Following the match, he raised Oba's hand as a sign of respect, hail-



ing him as 'the future of WWE', while calling himself 'the past'. "I am here today to let the world know that I am retired," Lesnar said at the show as quoted by ESPN. "Saturday was a very emotional day for me. It was kind of weird. When Oba Femi slammed me at WrestleMania, I said, 'I cannot do this anymore. I think I am done.' But the business called, and I still had some fuel in the tank." "Saturday, for Brock Lesnar, that is it. That is it for me in the squared circle and everything else," he signed off. Lesnar's announcement marks the end of one of the greatest careers in all of com-

bat sports. The 49-year-old was a two-time All-American and a two-time Big Ten champion and also captured the NCAA Division I national championship in wrestling while representing the University of Minnesota in 200 before signing with WWE. Lesnar's announcement brings an end to one of the most unique and successful careers in professional sports history. A two-time All-American and a two-time Big Ten champion, Lesnar won an NCAA Division I national championship in wrestling for the University of Minnesota in 2000 before going on to sign a pro wrestling contract.

Ajit Agarkar's Job Under Threat Over Rohit Sharma Saga, Could Be Replaced By India Great: Report

The tenure of Ajit Agarkar, the selection committee chief in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), might be coming to an end in a month's time, with reports suggesting that the top bosses in the board are planning to replace him with VVS Laxman, the current head of the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. Agarkar's contract was set to end in June 2026, but he was given a three-month extension by the board. It was expected that the former pace bowler would get another extension that would keep him in the chair until the conclusion of the 2027 ODI World Cup. However, the last few months have seen the situation get complex, especially with the drama around Rohit Sharma's future in India's ODI team. It was reported that the three-match ODI series against England would be Rohit's last. According to a report in Dainik Jagran, the Agarkar-led selection committee had even spoken to the Gautam Gambhir-led team management about leaving Rohit out of subsequent assignments.



However, an unexpected twist occurred when news broke that the third ODI between India and England at Lord's would be Rohit's last. The Hitman went on to slam a century in that final match, putting both the selectors and the team management on the back foot. Not long after the leak ahead of the third ODI, BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia also released a statement, apparently without speaking to Chief Selector

Agarkar, asserting that Rohit will play as long as he is part of the team's plans. "Rohit is a regular member of the Indian ODI team, and he will continue to represent the country as long as he is in the scheme of things. In other words, the Lord's ODI won't be his last match," Saikia told PTI. READ | "Drop Me": Rohit Sharma's 'Effective' Message To BCCI Selectors Decoded By Ex-India Star It has also been reported that those managing

Highlights

■ The tenure of Ajit Agarkar, the selection committee chief in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), might be coming to an end in a month's time, with reports suggesting that the top bosses in the board are planning to replace him with VVS Laxman

affairs in the Indian team do not want Rohit to play in the 2027 ODI World Cup. Additionally, the BCCI had scheduled a review meeting for the eight losses out of ten matches in Ireland and England, but it has not yet taken place. The meeting was supposed to be held after the England tour, but the team has already travelled to Sri Lanka for the two-match Test series without the review being completed.

Brett Lee Finally Speaks Out On Speculation About Dating Preity Zinta

Brett Lee, one of the greatest cricketers in history, has finally spoken up about the rumours of being in a romantic relationship with Bollywood actress Preity Zinta in the past. Lee joined the Kings XI Punjab (now Punjab Kings) franchise, co-owned by Zinta in the Indian Premier League (IPL), in 2008. He stayed with the franchise until 2010 before being bought by the Kolkata Knight Riders in 2011. Over the years, speculations of romance brewing between the two surfaced multiple times, but the Australian pace-bowling legend never addressed them. However, in an interview, Lee has finally opened up on the speculations, saying he and Zinta were only friends and still are. "Here's your scoop: I never dated a Bollywood actress. Preity Zinta and I were, and still are, great



friends. She was the boss of the Punjab team back then. She's an incredibly smart woman, and I have a lot of respect for her," he told Bombay Times. "Stories like that never bothered me because I always knew the truth. People can speculate all they want, but I never let it affect me," he further said. While Lee remained silent for about two decades, Zinta did open up on the speculations in 2010. She had said: "I think being romantically linked to

Brett every year is outdated and stale news now! So sorry to say, folks, NO NEWS here! FRIENDS yeesss." On the personal front, Brett Lee married Elizabeth Kemp in 2006, and the two had a son together. However, cracks started to develop in their relationship not long after the marriage, and they parted ways just two years later. They finalised their divorce in 2009. In 2014, Lee tied the knot with Lana Anderson, with whom he has two kids.

Selectors Felt 'Betrayed' Over BCCI's Rohit Sharma Stand, Cracks Emerge: Report



Veteran batter Rohit Sharma left everyone stunned with his century against England in the third and final ODI of the three-match series last month. The match was particularly significant as reports had suggested it could be Rohit's final appearance for Team India. According to those reports, the selectors and team management had informed the right-handed batter that he was not part of their plans for the 2027 ODI World Cup. However, the

speculation was put to rest two days before the third ODI when BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia publicly confirmed that the former captain remained firmly in the team's plans. A new report by Dainik Jagran has now claimed that the episode surrounding Rohit's century and Saikia's statement has created tension between the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee and the top bosses in the BCCI. According to the report, the selectors and some members

of the team management were convinced that Rohit should not be part of India's plans for the 2027 World Cup. However, following Saikia's remarks, the selection committee reportedly felt "betrayed", believing that the BCCI secretary had changed his stance in response to pressure on social media. The report further stated that several selectors still believe India will struggle to win the 2027 ODI World Cup if Rohit is included in the squad. Agarkar's tenure The tenure of Ajit Agarkar as chairman of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) selection committee could be nearing its end, with reports suggesting that the board's top brass is considering VVS Laxman as a potential replacement. Agarkar's contract was originally due to expire in June 2026, but he was granted a three-month extension by the BCCI.

Aryna Sabalenka Tops Moyuka Uchijima In WTA Toronto Opener



World number one Aryna Sabalenka returned to her hard court comfort zone with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Japanese qualifier Moyuka Uchijima in the WTA 1000 in Toronto on Tuesday. It was a solid start for Sabalenka in her bid to bounce back after falling in the quarter-finals at Roland Garros and in the round of 16 at Wimbledon. The Belarusian star has dominated on hard courts this year and on Tuesday notched her 24th win in 25 matches on the surface. The lone defeat was her loss to Elena Rybakina in the Australian Open final. Now she's eyeing a North American hard court run that could include a threepeat at the US Open, the final Grand Slam of the year that starts on August 30 in New York. "I'm happy with the performance, I'm happy with the fight," Sabalenka said after her second-round opener. "I knew going into this match I might struggle a little bit

after a little break, but I was ready for that. "I'm happy that mentally and physically I was ready to go." Sabalenka didn't have it all her own way against the 111th-ranked Uchijima. But she emerged from an exchange of five breaks of serve that opened the second set with a 3-2 lead and made the advantage stand up. She held for 4-2, and when she had her first chance to serve it out she pounced, sealing the match on her second match point with an overhead winner. Uchijima had surprised the Belarusian in the opening game of the match, clawing back from 40-15 down to break on the way to a quick 2-0 lead. But Sabalenka won the next five games and polished off the opening set with a confident hold of serve. In the third round she'll face China's Zhang Shuai, who was leading Jelena Ostapenko 6-0, 4-0 when the Latvian retired from their match.

SPORTS MINISTRY LAUDS SAI AFTER INDIA'S SUCCESSFUL CWG 2026 CAMPAIGN



It threw up challenges, both sporting and administrative, validated major plans but also highlighted the need to course correct in few aspects. The just-concluded Commonwealth Games was akin to a mid-term exam for the Sports Authority of India (SAI). The nodal body under the Sports Ministry that is responsible for conducting national camps, overseeing selection, and monitoring the training and competition calendar of athletes, is celebrating the "more than expected" medal count of 39, which includes 13 gold and

17 silver medals. At the same time, its push for greater support to swimming and cycling got a reality check at the Games thanks to medal-less and underwhelming show. In addition, logistical issues such as boxers and judo players not receiving their baggage on time after arriving in Glasgow have been noted as administrative concerns to be addressed going forward. "The brightest aspect of this tally is the judo performance (two gold, one silver and one bronze). Yes, swimming and cycling remain work in

progress and it is still time before we become truly competitive. Boxing is another positive. You might say the competition shrunk this time but that's not our fault. We fight whoever is in front of us," acknowledged a senior SAI official in a conversation with PTI. "In weightlifting we should have got may be two gold medals instead of one (Mirabai Chanu)." India participated in 12 judo events in Glasgow and won four medals - two gold, one silver and one bronze, compared to three medals, minus any gold, in 2022. This

was despite the fact that a couple of judokas had to be withdrawn due to anti-doping offences prior to the team's departure. The boxing contingent topped the medal tally with a haul of 10 medals, including seven gold and three silver. "There are some administrative issues as well. Some course correction is needed on that front, like athletes not receiving their baggage. Perhaps it would be a good idea to have a points person with the team, specifically instructed to handle these things in future Games.

SENSATIONAL DIRECTOR ‘V.V.VINAYAK’ LAUNCHES ‘MISSING MEGHANA’ FIRST LOOK POSTER

The first look and title reveal poster of the upcoming film Missing Meghana was launched by sensational director V.V.Vinayak. Movie Produced by Panchumarthi Naresh Babu under the banners First Copy Movies and KD & Co, and the film is directed by Vachaspathy. The movie stars Ram Karthik, Ammu Abhirami, Vaidika Senjaliya, and Ankit koyya in the lead roles. The supporting cast includes Goparaju Ramana, Vempa Kasi, Kaushik, Mahipal, Ruchita, Nalini, Srinivas, Azeem, and Pandu. The film's cinematography is handled by Sam K Naidu,



while R.R. Dhruvan has composed the music. Producer Bekkam Venugopal and the film's team were also present at the poster launch event. Speaking at the event, V.V.Vinayak wished the entire team grand success. He said he hopes the film brings good recognition to director Vachaspathy, hero

Ram Karthik, and music director R.R. Dhruvan. He praised Dhruvan as a talented all-round musician who can both compose music and write songs. He also expressed confidence that the audience would support the film. Director Vachaspathy thanked V.V.Vinayak for launching the poster and called it a special moment for the team. He described Missing Meghana as a suspense investigative thriller with all the elements that audiences will enjoy. He said the film will be released soon and hoped the media and viewers would support it. Hero Ram Karthik thanked V.V.Vinayak for attending the event. He also expressed his gratitude to director Vachaspathy and producer Panchumarthi Naresh Babu for giving him the opportunity to be part of the film. He said he is confident that audiences will like the movie. Music director R.R. Dhruvan said he was happy that the film's poster was launched by legendary director V.V.Vinayak. He added that composing music for the film was a wonderful experience, as it offered a wide range of emotions for a musician. He hoped the audience would appreciate the film and encourage the entire team.

Sundeep Kishan, Ugandhar Muni, Shining Pictures’ Grand Pan-India Socio-Fantasy Spectacle #SK33 Titled Karikaala, Spectacular First Look Unveiled



Sundeep Kishan is all set to venture into uncharted territory with an ambitious pan-India socio-fantasy spectacle directed by Ugandhar Muni and produced by Mahidhar Reddy and Rajashekhar Annabhimoju under the Shining Pictures banner. After creating curiosity with the project's concept poster, the makers have now officially unveiled the film's title and first look, offering audiences a breathtaking peek into its mythical universe. The movie is titled powerfully Karikaala. The spectacular first-look poster introduces Sundeep Kishan in a never-seen-before avatar. Dressed as a fearless warrior, the actor is seen charging through a mystical forest on horseback with a sword in hand, while a roaring lion races alongside him. The powerful visual immediately establishes the film's larger-than-life scale, blending fantasy, adventure, and ancient folklore into an epic cinematic experience. Karikaala is being planned as a multilingual release in Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi. Inspired by the charm of timeless Chandamama fairy tales, the film promises a magical world filled with lions, wolves, mystical powers, forgotten kingdoms, and ancient legends.

BHAGYASHREE BORSE’S SULTRY MAROON LOOK TURNS HEADS



Bhagyashree Borse is having the best phase of her career right now. With her recent film Lenin turning out to be a massive blockbuster, the actress is clearly on cloud nine, and she has taken to social media to share a fresh set of pictures celebrating the moment. In the photos, Bhagyashree looks striking in a fitted maroon one-shoulder dress with a draped detail, her hair left loose and wavy, exuding quiet confidence. The pictures, shot against a minimal backdrop, put the spotlight entirely on her poise and styling. With subtle makeup and a soft, natural glow, Bhagyashree lets the elegant silhouette of the dress do the talking. With Linen's success adding serious momentum to her career, Bhagyashree Borse is fast becoming one of the most talked-about young actresses in the industry, and her latest pictures only prove she is here to stay.

Vishal's Makutam Releasing on August 14, Grand Trailer Launch on August 7

Makutam is the 99th film produced under the Super Good Films banner. The movie stars Vishal as the lead actor and also marks his debut as a director. It is produced under the banner founded by the late RB Choudary. Anjali and Dushara Vijayan play the female leads. The teaser and songs released so far have received a good response and increased excitement for the film. As the music promotions continue, the makers have shared a big update. They announced that Makutam will release in theatres on August 14, and the official trailer will be launched on August 7. The film has already created high expectations since Vishal appears in different looks, it is his first film as a director, and GV Prakash Kumar's music has impressed audiences. With the release date now confirmed, the promotions are expected to become even bigger. The cinematography is handled by Richard M Nathan and



Abhinandan Ramanujam, while NB Srikanth is the editor. The film will have a grand theatrical release on August 14.

SHIVANI NAGARAM TURNS BACK TIME IN STYLE

Shivani Nagaram has taken things up a notch with her latest vintage-themed photoshoot, effortlessly blending old-world charm with contemporary elegance. Draped in a rich green silk saree paired with a magenta blouse and traditional gold jewellery, the actress looks every bit graceful. The rustic streets, faded walls, and heritage storefronts provide the perfect backdrop, adding an authentic retro vibe to every frame. From candid moments of enjoying local street food to striking poised portraits, Shivani brings timeless beauty alive with understated expressions and effortless confidence. The photoshoot is a refreshing departure from glamorous studio setups, proving that simplicity can



make the strongest statement. Shivani was last seen on the big screen in Hey Balwanth, the Suhass-starrer that failed to make an impact at the box office. Despite the film's disappointing run, she delivered a decent performance, though her role offered limited scope to truly showcase her talent.

KOREAN KANAKARAJU' IS NON-STOP ENTERTAINMENT: MEGA PRINCE VARUN TEJ AT THE GRAND PRE-RELEASE EVENT

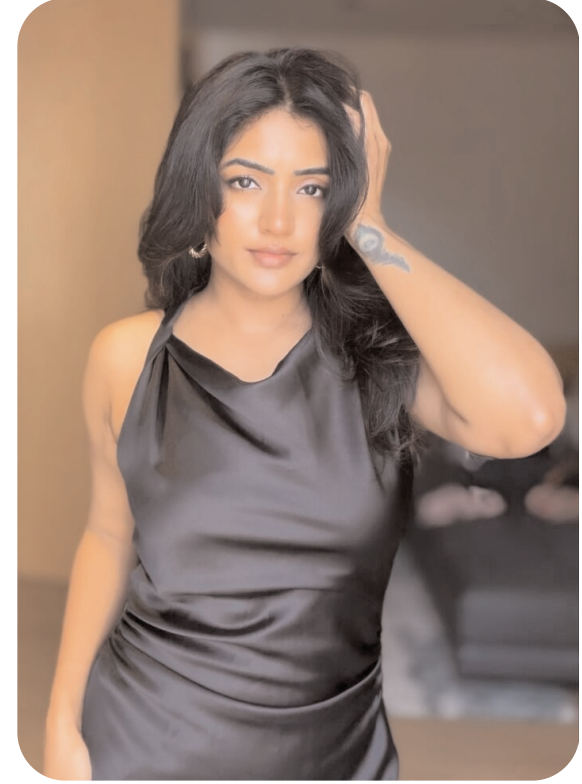
Mega Prince Varun Tej is all set to entertain the audience with 'Korean Kanaka Raju'. Directed by Merlapaka Gandhi, this horror comedy will provide a great theatrical experience with supernatural elements and laugh-out-loud entertainment. UV Creations and First Frame Entertainment are jointly producing it. The already released glimpses, entertaining teaser, trailer and two chartbuster songs have created a good buzz among the audience about the film. 'Korean Kanaka Raju' will be grandly released in theaters worldwide on August 7. On this occasion, the makers organized a grand pre-release event in Bhimavaram. At the pre-release event, hero Varun Tej said... Hi everyone. 'Korean Kanaka Raju' is going to have non-stop



entertainment in theaters on August 7th. You all will definitely enjoy this movie. I came here for the 'Tholiprema' movie event in 2018. I have a lot of connection with this college. After 'Tholiprema', it is very happy to celebrate the 'Korean Kanaka Raju' event again in the presence of all of you. Seeing all of your enthusiasm here, it seems that the magic of 'Tholiprema' will be repeated again with this movie. I wish me and my team a big success with this movie. Our producers have given very good support. Gandhi is a director with very good comedy timing.

EESHA REBBA'S SASSY SIDE HAS FANS SCREAMING

arantal beauty Eesha Rebba is turning heads once again, and this time it's all about elegance in black. The actress shared new pictures on her social media, wearing a sleek black satin one-shoulder dress that hugged her frame perfectly. She paired the look with gold hoop earrings and soft wavy hair, keeping the glam minimal yet striking. Eesha, who is 36 years old, continues to prove that age is just a number when it comes to style. In the pictures, she is seen striking confident poses.



Jacqueline Fernandez Serves Desi Diva Energy Again

Jacqueline Fernandez is making headlines with her latest music video "Jugni," and the makers have now released a stunning archival picture from the shoot. The four looks showcase Jacqueline in bold, vibrant outfits, ranging from a colourful festive ensemble to a striking red bandhani-inspired look, and a sultry gold satin gown, each highlighting her glamorous range on screen. The song's

release, however, was overshadowed by controversy after a clip from the video went viral online, with claims of a wardrobe malfunction. Singer Sonu Thukral has since filed a police complaint, stating that the viral footage was manipulated and AI-generated, and was never part of the original video. Amid the buzz, the makers are steering the conversation back to the song itself, sharing the official pictures from the "Jugni Archives" to remind fans of the video's actual content and Jacqueline's striking looks throughout the project. As of now, Jacqueline Fernandez has not issued any official statement regarding the viral video or the controversy surrounding the song. The other members associated with "Jugni" have also not made any statement on the matter so far. The controversy began on July 15, when the official music video for "Jugni," starring Jacqueline Fernandez and sung by B Praak and Sonu Thukral, was released on YouTube.

