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OM NAMO

VENKATESAYA

05-08-2026

Total pilgrims : 77502

Tonsures : 34465

Hundi vanloads : 546 CR

Laddu sale : 424 Lac

Annaspradams : 250 Lac

Aswin hospital : 2205

Waiting Compartments : Outside line

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam

**Cybercrime
Police arrest 49
accused in July**

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

**Shooting in Thailand
leaves eight dead,
over 30 wounded**

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

CM Revanth Reddy Pushes AI-Based Reforms to Plug GST Leakages

Calls for greater coordination among government departments to boost revenue without affecting ease of doing business

**Hyderabad
TSIT BUREAU:**

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has emphasised the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to identify loopholes in the GST system, prevent revenue leakages and strengthen Telangana's finances as the State economy continues to expand rapidly.

Chief Minister held extensive discussions with noted Indian economist Arvind Subramanian during a meeting at the Bodhi Pavilion of MCR HRD Institute. The discussions focused on adopting a systematic and technology-driven approach to improve the State's financial position. The meeting particularly deliberated on reforms required in the GST and Excise departments. The Chief Minister said an AI-based information system would be introduced to assist GST officials, simplify processes and strengthen revenue administration.



Revanth Reddy stressed that the new system should not create hurdles or inconvenience for businesses. Arvind Subramanian explained that technology could be effectively deployed to increase revenues to the State exchequer while simultaneously improving the Ease of Doing

Business.

The meeting also discussed the need for AI-enabled coordination among the Municipal Administration, RERA, Panchayat Raj, Energy, Finance and Commercial Taxes departments to prevent revenue leakages, particularly in the building and con-

struction materials sector.

It was suggested that for large buildings and major contract works, details relating to estimated construction material requirements and corresponding tax assessments should be captured right from the application and approval stage. Integrating such information across departments would help authorities identify discrepancies and curb tax leakages.

Chief Minister further suggested integrating this data with information available through MeeSeva, Aarogyasri and the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to improve administrative efficiency and enable better data-driven governance.

CM's Adviser K. Ramakrishna Rao, Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju, Commercial Taxes and Excise Secretary Raghunandan Rao, Excise Commissioner Hari Kiran and other senior officials attended the meeting.

Heavy rain paralyses Delhi, submerges roads, leaves commuters stranded for hours

New Delhi (TSIT) Heavy rain brought large parts of the national capital to a standstill on Friday, submerging arterial roads under up to four feet of water, leaving vehicles stranded, choking traffic and inundating residential colonies as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a red alert. WorldNews SectionFrom the Mehrauli-Badarpur Road in south Delhi to Mahipalpur, Minto Road, ITO, Shakarpur and Chhatarpur, roads disappeared beneath rainwater as commuters remained trapped in traffic for hours, motorists abandoned flooded stretches and office-goers struggled to book cabs. Some of the worst flooding was reported on the Mehrauli-Badarpur

(MB) Road near Vayusena Bad (Air Force Station), where water accumulated up to three to four feet deep, reducing one of south Delhi's busiest corridors into what residents described as a river. Traffic crawled for kilometres between Khanpur and Okhla Mor, while adjoining stretches at Sangam Vihar, Deoli and Ambedkar Nagar also remained inundated. In Fatehpur Beri's Valmiki Basti, residents waded through waist-deep water while schoolchildren, unable to cross flooded lanes, were carried by locals on a large blue plastic sheet used as a makeshift raft. Several homes were inundated, with families saying food stocks and household belongings were damaged.



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



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

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

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

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

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

12th National Handloom Day



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

EDITORIAL

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

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

THE BILL IN QUESTION

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

Congress argues legal protection is being removed

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

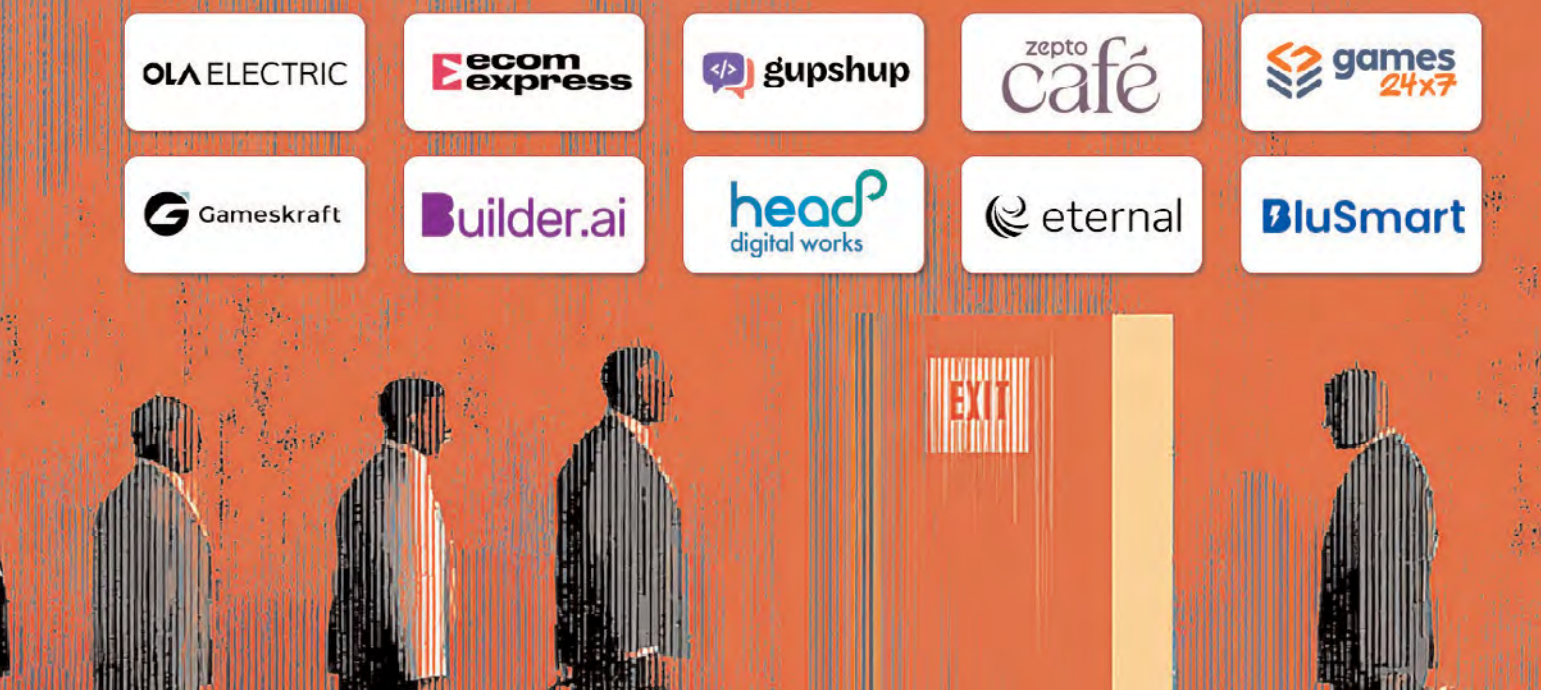
“It paves the way for imposing a merchant discount rate (MDR), which could easily be applied in the future to all types of digital payments. The burden of this will ultimately fall on ordinary people, who may now have to pay even for using UPI,” he said. He argued that Narendra Modi-led government's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

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

AGE OF THE PINK SLIP:

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

'WHO KILLED MY FAMILY?':

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



US becomes India's largest LPG supplier as import share surges to 67 pc: Hardeep Puri

New Delhi, Aug 7 : The United States has emerged as India's largest supplier of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), with its share in the country's imports rising sharply over the past few months, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Friday.

Speaking about India's energy sourcing strategy, Puri said the government had earlier decided to import around 10 per cent of the country's LPG requirements from the US.

He noted that the decision was taken independently and was not driven by concerns over possible disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, a key global energy shipping route.

According to the minister, the move had initially raised ques-



tions, particularly because India already sourced LPG from suppliers located much closer geographically. However, the country's import pattern has undergone a significant shift since then.

"Today I'm happy to inform you

that the United States accounts for something like 67 per cent of our LPG imports," Puri said.

Commenting on energy front, Puri said that under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has taken a

historic and bold step towards energy self-reliance.

"Through the Rs 84,000 crore 'Samudra Manthan' mission, hydrocarbon exploration in the deep sea will be given unprecedented momentum. This is not just an investment, but the greatest proof of faith in India's energy future," the minister stated.

"Undoubtedly, the 'Samudra Manthan' mission will write a transformative chapter in India's energy sector. It will take India to new heights on the global energy map. This nectar emerging from Samudra Manthan will infuse new strength into India's energy self-reliance," he added.

He further added that for decades, energy security was viewed through the lens of hydrocarbons.

E20 rollout backed by scientific studies, industry validation: Centre



New Delhi, Aug 7 : The Centre on Friday informed Parliament that extensive laboratory studies and field trials conducted by government agencies, automobile manufacturers and industry bodies have confirmed that E20 petrol is safe for use under prescribed standards.

In a written reply to Parliament, the Ministry of Heavy Industries said the evaluation covered key parameters such as engine durability, drivability, cold-start performance, corrosion resistance, material compatibility, fuel system reliability, emissions and fuel efficiency.

The ministry said the studies, carried out by the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) and automo-

bile manufacturers, concluded that E20 fuel is safe for use. It further informed Parliament that an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), constituted under NITI Aayog on December 26, 2020, had comprehensively examined vehicle compatibility as well as mileage and efficiency aspects of ethanol blending before the rollout of E20 fuel.

"An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), constituted on 26 December 2020 under NITI Aayog, comprehensively examined vehicle compatibility and mileage/efficiency aspects of ethanol blending. This assessment was supported by research conducted by Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL), the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) and the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM)," the ministry said.

According to the ministry, the committee's assessment was backed by scientific research undertaken by IOCL, ARAI and SIAM, with automobile manufacturers, component suppliers, testing agencies and oil marketing companies participating at every stage of the evaluation process.

The government said E20 petrol was introduced only after successful validation of fuel systems, engine durability, drivability, material compatibility and emissions performance through extensive scientific studies and phased implementation.

The ministry also clarified that the studies did not reveal any significant adverse impact on vehicle performance, durability or material compatibility in legacy vehicles when operated under the prescribed standards and conditions.

416 killed, 629 injured in road crashes across Bangladesh during July

Dhaka, Aug 7 : At least 416 people were killed and 629 injured in 458 road accidents across Bangladesh in July, underscoring the country's persistent road safety crisis driven by reckless driving, poor road conditions and weak enforcement of traffic laws, local media reported citing a Road Safety Foundation (RSF) report. In its report, the RSF recorded that 57 women and 48 children were among those killed, highlighting the devastating human cost of road crashes that continue to affect families across the country. As per the findings, motorcycles remained the deadliest mode of transport, with 159 crashes claiming the lives of 138



riders and passengers. Motorcycle-related fatalities accounted for 33.17 per cent of all road deaths, while such accidents made up 34.71 per cent of the total reported crashes, leading Bangladesh daily Dhaka Tribune reported.

The report noted that pedestrians also continue to bear the brunt of road accidents, with 106 people killed while walking on or crossing roads — accounting for 25.48 per cent of all fatalities. The figure includ-

ed 51 drivers and transport assistants, who accounted for 12.25 per cent of the total death toll. According to the report, national highways recorded the highest number of crashes, accounting for 169 accidents or 36.89 per cent of the total. Regional roads followed with 155 accidents (33.84 per cent), while urban roads reported 66 crashes (14.41 per cent), rural roads 61 (13.31 per cent), and seven accidents occurred at other locations. Among all eight divisions in Bangladesh, Dhaka recorded the highest number of accidents and fatalities, with 133 accidents resulting in 125 fatalities - nearly one-third of the nationwide death toll.

'Lack of synchronisation between BJP, RSS': CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke on Mohan Bhagwat's remarks



Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Maharashtra), Aug 7 : Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) convener Abhijeet Dipke on Friday alleged a "lack of synchronisation" between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and urged the BJP leaders to abide by RSS chief Mohan

Bhagwat's statements on the Gen Z movement.

Dipke's reaction comes a day after Bhagwat, during an interaction with Gen Z and Gen Alpha students in Mumbai, said that the Gen Z movement was not against the country and that the protesters' grievances were genuine.

Speaking to reporters at his hometown, the CJP founder said: "The most important statement made by Mohan Bhagwat ji during yesterday's interaction was that the Gen Z and youth should not be called anti-national. Those who are protesting have the right to do so, and their issues are genuine."

Living on less than Rs 5000 a month: Reviving Telangana's handloom economy

As experienced artisans retire and younger generations turn away from the loom, Telangana's traditional weaving skills are increasingly under threat.

The continuing distress among Telangana's handloom weavers points to a deeper policy failure. Successive governments have introduced welfare schemes, subsidies and marketing initiatives, yet weaving remains an economically fragile occupation. The persistence of indebtedness, declining incomes and periodic reports of weaver suicides suggest that the sector's problems are structural rather than temporary. The challenge today is not merely to preserve a traditional craft but to restore its economic viability.

Handloom weaving is woven into Telangana's social and cultural fabric. The State's celebrated textiles—Pochampally Ikat, Gadwal, Narayanpet, Siddipet Gollabham and other distinctive weaves—have earned national recognition and found international markets. Several carry Geographical Indication (GI) tags, symbolising craftsmanship refined over generations. Yet the success of these products has rarely translated into financial security for the artisans who produce them. The value added through design, branding and retail far exceeds the earnings of the weaver at the loom.

The history of Sircilla remains a stark reminder of the consequences of prolonged neglect. During the handloom crisis of the late 1990s and early 2000s, nearly 270 weavers died by suicide in Sircilla Division, according to official records cited in academic studies, with almost 94 per cent of the deaths occurring in Sircilla Mandal. Those deaths were not isolated personal tragedies but the outcome of mounting debts, shrinking demand, rising input costs and the absence of institutional support. Although conditions have improved

since then, reports of financial distress and fresh suicides continue to emerge, indicating that the vulnerabilities that produced the earlier crisis have not been fully addressed.

The latest figures underline the importance of the sector. According to the Fourth All India Handloom Census (2019-20), Telangana has 25,930 handloom weavers and 21,922 allied workers, with nearly 48,000 people directly dependent on handloom for their livelihoods. State estimates place the broader workforce, including ancillary occupations, at around 59,000. These numbers represent thousands of rural households whose incomes depend on an industry that has steadily lost its competitive-ness.

Man versus machine economic pressures confronting weavers are well known. The prices of cotton yarn, silk yarn, dyes and other raw materials have risen considerably over the years. Electricity charges, transportation costs and household expenses have also increased. However, the wages received by weavers have remained largely stagnant. A saree that requires several days of meticulous labour often fetches only a modest payment for the artisan, while intermediaries, wholesalers and retailers retain a substantial share of the final selling price. This imbalance between labour and reward lies at the heart of the sector's distress.

Competition from powerlooms has further weakened the position of traditional weavers. Machine-made fabrics now imitate handloom designs with remarkable accuracy while being sold at much lower prices. Consumers are often unable to distinguish genuine handloom products from powerloom imitations.



Weak enforcement against misuse of handloom labels, inadequate branding and fragmented marketing networks have made it increasingly difficult for artisans to secure fair returns for their work.

Income data illustrates the seriousness of the problem. National surveys indicate that nearly two-thirds of India's handloom weavers earn less than 5,000 a month. Such incomes offer little scope for savings, education or investment in improved technology. Unsurprisingly, many young people from weaving families

are leaving the profession for more stable employment in urban areas. As experienced artisans retire without successors, traditional weaving skills face gradual extinction.

Welfare schemes help, but next steps are needed. Government intervention has undoubtedly prevented a deeper collapse. Telangana's Chenetha Mitra scheme provides input support for yarn purchases, while Nethanna Bima offers insurance coverage to weavers' families. At the national level, programmes such as the National Handloom

Development Programme, marketing assistance and the India Handloom Brand initiative seek to improve market access and product visibility. These initiatives deserve recognition, but they have largely addressed symptoms rather than the underlying economic weaknesses of the sector.

The next phase of policy must therefore focus on competitiveness instead of dependence. Affordable access to quality raw materials through transparent procurement systems should become a priority. Institutional credit needs to

replace informal borrowing, which continues to trap many weavers in cycles of debt. Cooperative societies must be modernised with professional management, improved working capital and stronger market linkages. Equally important is reforming the marketing ecosystem. Digital commerce offers unprecedented opportunities for rural artisans to sell directly to consumers across India and abroad. Yet most weavers lack the digital skills, logistics and branding support necessary to benefit from these platforms.

Producer-owned online marketplaces, traceability certificates linked to GI products and stronger partnerships with organised retail can ensure that a larger share of the final price reaches the artisan rather than intermediaries. Public procurement can also play a transformative role. Government departments, schools, universities and public sector undertakings should substantially increase the use of certified handloom products for uniforms, ceremonial gifts and official events. Stable institutional demand would provide predictable employment while reinforcing confidence in the sector. Handloom should also be recognised as an important component of sustainable development. Unlike large-scale textile manufacturing, handloom weaving consumes little electricity, generates minimal carbon emissions and supports decentralised rural employment. At a time when sustainable and ethical fashion is gaining global importance, Telangana's weaving clusters possess a natural comparative advantage. They deserve strategic investment rather than periodic rescue.

The future of Telangana's handloom sector depends less on preserving tradition than on restoring economic viability. Welfare measures will remain necessary, but they cannot substitute for reforms that improve productivity, market access and fair remuneration. The lessons of Sircilla remain relevant even today. A sector that once symbolised Telangana's craftsmanship should not continue to symbolise rural distress. Reviving handloom requires treating it not as a welfare obligation but as an integral part of the State's rural economy, cultural heritage and sustainable development strategy.



Take all-party team to PM Modi: Premallatha Vijayakant to CM Vijay



CHENNAI: DMDK general secretary Premallatha Vijayakant on Friday (August 7) urged Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay to lead a delegation to New Delhi to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking a lasting resolution to the Cauvery water dispute and opposing Karnataka's proposed Mekedatu reservoir project. Participating in the debate on the Revised Budget and Revised Agriculture Budget 2026-27 in the Assembly, the Vriddhachalam MLA said political parties should remain united on issues concerning Tamil Nadu's rights, including Cauvery water sharing, the Mekedatu project and NEET.

Palani temple land fraud

case: CB-CID sleuths secure Sub-Registrar Justin Manikandan from Kodaikanal temple land fraud case: CB-CID sleuths secure Sub-Registrar Justin Manikandan from Kodaikanal

"Karnataka has a duty to release our share of water. We are not seeking surplus water; we are only demanding what rightfully belongs to Tamil Nadu," she said, urging the Chief Minister to take all political parties along while raising the State's concerns before the Centre.

Hold all-party meet to show TN stands united on Cauvery, Oppn tells govt Responding to CM Vijay's remarks saying that he was ready to "face humiliation" over any Karnataka visit to resolve the issues,

the DMDK MLA said, "If Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister is humiliated during the visit, the entire State will rise in protest. Karnataka has no authority to insult our Chief Minister. The people and farmers of Tamil Nadu will stand firmly behind him," she said, urging him not to shy away from such a meeting.

Premallatha also said welfare schemes benefiting the public should continue irrespective of which government introduced them, as they were funded by taxpayers' money. She reiterated her demand for carving out Vriddhachalam as a separate district and called for immediate steps to address delays in paddy procurement, saying farmers were bearing the brunt.

Claiming that Tasmac outlets continued to function despite the government's announcement on closures, she urged the ruling dispensation to fulfil its electoral promises.

She also appealed to Speaker JCD Prabhakar to introduce biometric attendance for MLAs and ensure supply of bottled drinking water in the Assembly throughout the session.

Ready for delimitation meet, but why not Mekedatu: DMK



CHENNAI: The Opposition DMK on Friday (August 7) said the party had no hesitation in participating in the State government's consultative meeting on the BJP-led central government's proposed delimitation exercise.

In a statement, DMK general secretary Duraimurugan said the party's stance was clear that any delimitation exercise should be carried out fairly and should not affect Tamil Nadu's interests or its representation.

Palani temple land fraud case: CB-CID sleuths secure Sub-Registrar Justin Manikandan from Kodaikanal

Palani temple land fraud case: CB-CID sleuths secure Sub-Registrar Justin Manikandan from Kodaikanal

Kodaikanal Duraimurugan said the party remained firm on the stand adopted at the all-party meeting convened by the then DMK-led government in March last year.

"No political party has the sole authority to advise on the issue of delimitation of constituencies. The DMK was the first party to raise this issue, and party president MK Stalin coordinated like-minded political parties on it," Duraimurugan said.

He, however, said the TVK-led government should convene an all-party meeting on the Mekedatu dam issue, similar to the one conducted in Karnataka.

"The DMK has no hesitation in participating in the TVK government's meeting on delimitation, as our stand

has already been made clear. However, the TVK-led government remains silent on the Mekedatu dam issue, apparently to avoid hurting its new ally, the Congress," Duraimurugan alleged, pointing out that the government is not heeding demands to convene an all-party meeting on the inter-state water sharing issue.

He said Tamil Nadu should express its united stand on the Mekedatu issue and urged the government not to indulge in what he termed "diversionary politics," casting aspersions on the decision to convene a meeting of all MPs over delimitation even as the party didn't yield to a similar demand on the Cauvery and Mekedatu issues.

Former Minister Ponmudy appears before George Town Court; NBW recalled



CHENNAI: Former DMK Minister K Ponmudy appeared before the George Town Court on Friday (August 7) and filed a surrender petition, following which the court admitted his plea and recalled the non-bailable warrant (NBW) issued against him on August 6.

The veteran politician appeared before Judge C Sundarapandian, VII Metropolitan Magistrate (FAC), George Town. Palani temple land fraud case: CB-CID sleuths secure Sub-Registrar Justin Manikandan from Kodaikanal

Ponmudy filed a surrender petition before the George Town Court. The court admitted the petition and the judge recalled the non-bailable warrant (NBW) issued against him. The case arose from alleged controversial remarks made by Ponmudy on Vaishnavism, Saivism and women during an event in the city in April 2025. The Madras High Court had earlier directed the State to register an FIR and subsequently initiated suo

motu proceedings after no FIR was registered, observing that the speech prima facie amounted to hate speech.

The proceedings were later closed after the State informed the High Court that the complaints had been investigated and closed for want of material. However, the Court granted liberty to the complainants to approach the jurisdictional Metropolitan Magistrate.

Pursuant to the liberty granted by the High Court, BJP Chennai City Councillor Uma Anandan filed a private complaint before the Metropolitan Magistrate under Sections 196 (1) (a), 299 and 302 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Finding a prima facie case, the Metropolitan Magistrate took cognisance of the complaint and issued summons to Ponmudy. Aggrieved by the cognisance order and the summons, Ponmudy filed a criminal revision petition before the Madras High Court. By an order dated July 2,

UPI will remain free for consumers, small merchants unaffected by MDR debate: Industry body

New Delhi, Aug 7 : Amid growing discussions around the future of merchant charges on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions, the Payments Council of India (PCI) on Friday clarified that consumers will continue to use UPI free of cost and small merchants will not be charged for accepting payments through the platform.

In a post on social media platform X, the industry body said UPI has remained free for consumers since its launch in 2016 and there is no proposal to levy transaction charges on individuals using the platform.

It added that UPI was designed to make digital payments accessible to all sections of society and continues to play a key role in India's digital payments ecosystem.

"UPI has always been free for consumers since its



launch in 2016. Every Indian can continue making instant digital payments without paying any transaction charges," it said.

The clarification comes amid renewed discussions on the sustainability of operating the country's rapidly expanding digital payments infrastructure.

PCI said the debate is not about charging consumers but about ensuring long-term support for an ecosystem that

now processes billions of transactions every month.

According to the industry body, small merchants are not required to pay charges for accepting UPI payments and protecting such businesses remains central to the platform's inclusive growth strategy.

UPI has enabled millions of small businesses across the country to accept digital payments without the cost barriers traditionally associated

with electronic transactions.

"Small merchants are not required to pay any charges (MDR) to accept UPI payments. UPI was designed to make digital payments accessible for even the smallest businesses across India, and protecting small merchants remains central to the ecosystem's inclusive growth," it added.

PCI noted that UPI has evolved from a new payment platform into the world's largest real-time payment system, resulting in increasing requirements for technology upgrades, cybersecurity, fraud prevention and operational resilience.

As transaction volumes continue to rise, discussions are underway on how to sustainably support the infrastructure while ensuring that consumers and small merchants remain unaffected.

Latha Rajinikanth launches 'Makkal Meddai' initiative to 'retain India's glorious past'

Chennai, Aug 7 : Film producer and educationist Latha Rajinikanth on Friday formally launched the website for 'Makkal Meddai', a citizen-led social welfare movement, under 'Bharat Seva' and Shree Dayaa Foundation, with the aim to "retain India's glorious past and culture". Speaking to IANS, Latha Rajinikanth said: "Having worked for many years across various issues in the social sector, we are now launching 'Makkal Meddai' website as 'Bharat Seva Makkal Meddai', with all our activities. We are glad to launch our logo, our banners and our membership cards."

She requested citizens across the country to join 'Bharat Seva' as "people's movement".

"So that we can put our hands, thoughts and ideas together to work for the welfare and instill a lot of patriotism in the minds of people so that this country can come together to retain the glorious past and all the participation of great leaders



who have all given their lives for this country," she added.

She asserted: "We have a great culture and we wish to take it forward in the right spirit."

The educationist mentioned that the main objective of the website is to secure the minds and culture of people of this country and to get everyone together to serve for the country's common cause.

"Bharat Seva is a national movement and 'Makkal Meddai' is a model in Tamil Nadu where we are creating 'Sabhas' in every district, location and every village for people to work with us, for ensuring that

all our programmes reach the last citizen in the villages too," she stressed.

When asked how effectively will the movement work in rural areas, Latha Rajinikanth said: "Everything regarding the welfare and culture of the villages, farmers...the agro-industry should be surviving the best in our country. All our merchants and our vendors should survive. We should improve on the cooperation of all our members first in order to secure the welfare of every region."

Moreover, she urged the youth to know and understand about ancient India and all its culture.

"Great lives have been sacrificed to sustain, retain, cherish and nourish the culture and heritage of this country. I wish everyone reads a lot about our history, or heritage and understand the greatness of our kings who contributed in the ancient past to give the glory that we enjoy today," she said.

Experts warn against leaving cut watermelon outside during summer heat



Health experts have cautioned people against consuming improperly stored cut watermelon during summer, warning that the fruit can quickly become unsafe if left outside for long periods in hot and humid weather.

Watermelon, one of the most popular summer fruits in India, is widely consumed for its cooling and hydrating properties. However, dieticians say sliced watermelon becomes highly vulnerable to bacterial contamination once cut open.

Samiksha Kalra, Senior Dietician at Madhukar Rainbow

Children's Hospital, said freshly cut watermelon is generally safe when prepared hygienically and refrigerated properly. But exposure to warm temperatures can allow harmful bacteria such as Salmonella and Listeria to multiply rapidly on the fruit's surface.

"These bacteria can increase the risk of food-borne illnesses, leading to symptoms such as stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and dehydration," she warned. Experts explained that while the thick outer rind naturally protects the fruit, cutting the watermelon exposes its soft, water-

rich flesh to air, moisture and possible contamination from hands, knives or surfaces.

The high water and sugar content in watermelon further creates conditions favourable for bacterial growth if the fruit is not refrigerated quickly.

Health experts advised that cut watermelon should always be stored in airtight containers or tightly covered before being placed in a refrigerator at temperatures below 4 degrees Celsius.

For best freshness and safety, sliced watermelon should ideally be consumed within one to two days. Experts also

stressed the importance of washing the outer rind thoroughly before cutting the fruit, as bacteria present on the surface can transfer to the edible portion through the knife. Using clean knives, chopping boards and storage containers can also help reduce contamination risks.

People have been advised to avoid consuming watermelon if it develops a sour smell, slimy texture, unusual taste, discolouration or foamy liquid, as these may indicate spoilage or bacterial growth.

Medical experts noted that food poisoning cases tend to rise during summer due to rapid bacterial growth in fruits, dairy products and cooked food exposed to heat and humidity.

Children, elderly individuals, pregnant women and those with weaker immunity are considered more vulnerable to complications arising from contaminated food. Experts said simple precautions such as proper refrigeration, timely consumption and maintaining food hygiene can help people safely enjoy watermelon and other summer fruits during the ongoing heat conditions.

Study finds antidepressants during pregnancy do not raise autism risk

The use of antidepressants during pregnancy does not increase the risk of developmental disorders such as autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children, according to a large international analysis involving data from more than 25 million pregnancies.

The findings challenge claims made by US Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has previously alleged without scientific evidence that certain antidepressants could increase autism risk in unborn children.

The study, published in The Lancet Psychiatry, was led by Dr Wing-Chung Chang of the University of Hong Kong.

"Our study provides reassuring evidence that commonly used antidepressants do not increase the risk of neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children," Dr Chang said in a statement.

Researchers analysed data from 37 previous studies involving nearly 650,000 pregnancies where antidepressants were used and almost 25 million pregnancies without antidepressant exposure. The analysis initially found that children born to mothers who



took antidepressants during pregnancy appeared slightly more likely to be diagnosed with autism or ADHD. However, those links became significantly weaker or statistically insignificant after researchers adjusted for factors such as maternal mental health conditions, family history, genetics and other related variables. Experts said the findings highlighted the importance of separating the effects of underlying mental illness from the impact of medication itself.

"This is a really important point that is easy to get wrong," said Dr James Walker, professor emeritus of obstetrics and gynaecology at the University of

Leeds, who was not involved in the study.

"If you simply compare children whose mothers took antidepressants with children whose mothers did not, you may find a difference. But that does not mean the medicine caused the difference," he added.

Researchers also observed increased risks of autism and ADHD in children whose fathers used antidepressants while the mothers were pregnant, and among children whose mothers had used antidepressants before pregnancy but not during it. Scientists said those patterns further suggested that shared family or genetic factors — rather than medication exposure during pregnan-

cy — were more likely to explain the higher risks. "A father's medication obviously cannot reach the baby in the womb, so this pattern is very hard to explain by anything other than shared family traits," Walker said. The study further found that higher doses of antidepressants did not increase the risk of developmental disorders in children, another factor researchers said weakened claims that the medicines themselves were responsible. Among women with pre-existing mental health disorders, the older antidepressants amitriptyline and nortriptyline were associated with a higher risk of ADHD and autism in children.

JLL opens Hyderabad Global Capability Centre, to create 1.6K jobs

Hyderabad: Telangana IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu on Thursday, August 6, inaugurated the Global Capability Centre of JLL Business Services. JBS is the integrated operations delivery platform of the global commercial real estate and investment management company JLL. The GCC is expected to create over 1,600 high-skilled jobs, he said. "The new GCC, which will create over 1,600 high-skilled jobs, reflects the growing confidence that global companies have in Telangana and reinforces Hyderabad's position as a leading destination for Global Capability Centres," Sridhar Babu said in a post on X. The state government is committed to attracting global investments, encouraging innovation and creating quality employment opportunities for the state's youth, he said. The 1,20,000 sq ft facility spans two floors in the Prestige



Sky Tech building in the city's Financial District, serving as JBS's second hub in India after Gurugram, and is expected to scale to 1,600 employees over the next two years, a release said. The company's choice of Hyderabad was strategic and deliberate, said Matthew Rees, Chief Shared Service Centre Officer, JLL Business Services. With operations spanning six countries

and a workforce of over 6,500, JBS has evolved into JLL's strategic operations powerhouse, he said. "By establishing our GCC in one of India's deepest talent markets, we are integrating exceptional people with standardised processes and AI-enabled workflows. This powers our commitments under the global strategy and strengthens the services we deliver to clients worldwide," he added.

Meta fined \$567m in largest child safety ruling against social media giant

A US judge in New Mexico has ordered Meta to pay another \$567m (£421m) for its failure to warn the public about dangers its platforms posed to children, marking the largest fine against the company over child safety. Judge Bryan Biedscheid said the social media giant is a "public nuisance" akin to air pollution and that it must put the money in a fund aimed at reducing future harms. Thursday's ruling is in addition to \$375m in fines Meta was already ordered to pay in the case, for a total of \$942m. Judge Biedscheid compared Meta to a factory, with advertising and content as its product and "the psychological harm and sexual exploitation of children to be the pollution that must be abated". A spokesman for Meta, which owns and operates Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and Threads, said Thursday: "We disagree with the ruling and will appeal." "We work hard to keep people



safe on our platforms and have been transparent about the challenges of identifying and removing bad actors and harmful content," they added. "We remain confident in our record of protecting teens online and will continue to defend ourselves against claims that misrepresent the facts." Regarding the earlier \$375m verdict in the case, Meta had said it intended to appeal the ruling and gave a similar explanation. It was the first time that a state had successfully sued Meta over child safety issues. Meta is

currently facing thousands of lawsuits in the US over similar issues. In addition to the New Mexico rulings, Meta earlier this year lost a landmark case in Los Angeles which found it could be held liable for building addictive platforms. Bruce Daisley, a former European vice president of Twitter (now X), told BBC Radio 4's Today programme the New Mexico fine, while large, was "a drop in the ocean" for Meta. In its latest financial results, the social media giant posted \$61bn in revenue from April to June -

Highlights

■ A US judge in New Mexico has ordered Meta to pay another \$567m (£421m) for its failure to warn the public about dangers its platforms posed to children, marking the largest fine against the company over child safety.

the way in which its platforms endangered children and exposed them to sexually explicit material and contact with sexual predators. In the first phase of the trial, Meta was found to have repeatedly violated New Mexico's Unfair Practices Act as its recommendation algorithms essentially "steered" young users toward harmful content and contacts. Recommendation algorithms are the tools that Meta uses to automatically curate the content a user sees on its platforms. In ruling on this second phase of the trial, Judge Biedscheid found that Meta's harms reached the level of "public nuisance" - or an issue of health and safety that has become so widespread it is negatively impacting a general public. In addition to being the largest fine Meta has received over child safety issues, the ruling also appears to be the first time that a social media company has been deemed a public nuisance.

TWO PEOPLE CONVICTED IN RELATION TO DEATH OF FRENCH STREAMER



Two people in France have been convicted of aggravated violence, following an investigation into the death of a French streamer known for extreme challenges. Raphaël Graven, 46, died in a village near Nice in August 2025. His death was live broadcast on the streaming platform Kick. The internet personality was routinely subjected to humiliation and abuse in his content, which the convicted men, Safine Hamadi and Owen Cenazandotti, said occurred with his consent. Hamadi and Cenazandotti have each been issued suspended prison sentences for their role in Graven's death, and ordered to pay fines of 5,000 (£4283) and 15,000 (£12,448) respectively. Neither man was charged with the manslaughter of Graven, also known as Jean Pormanove, after the prosecution said probable causes of death appeared to be related to his poor health and fragile heart.

The court also acquitted them of abusing Graven's psychological frailty, as he had told police prior to his death that he had consented to the stunts, Hamadi's lawyer told Reuters. Hamadi, who expressed remorse during the trial, received an 18-month suspended prison sentence. Cenazandotti received a two-year suspended prison sentence. Both men have been banned from posting on Kick for six months. Kick, the streaming platform, remains under investigation by French authorities. In a statement to the New York Times on Thursday, it said it was not a party to the proceedings against Hamadi and Cenazandotti, and had no comment on the outcome. It added: "The ruling relates solely to two individual content creators." Graven had more than one million followers across his various social media platforms and had built a strong community on Kick.

SBI: FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED JUNE 30, 2026 (Q1 FY27)

Highest-ever quarterly net profit of 21,121 crore, up 10.23% YoY. Operating profit increased 9.77% YoY to 33,529 crore. Net Interest Income (NII) increased 14.88% YoY to 46,992 crore. Domestic NIM at 3.00% in Q1FY27, improved by 7 bps over Q4FY26. Whole Bank NIM at 2.86% in Q1FY27, improved by 5 bps over Q4FY26. Total business crossed 110 lakh crore, with deposits exceeding 60 lakh crore and advances crossing 50 lakh crore. Whole Bank Advances growth at 18.63% YoY with Domestic Advances growth at 18.15% YoY. Retail, Agriculture and SME (RAM) segments remained key growth drivers. RAM Advances grew by 18.20% YoY, with double digit growth in all segments. Retail, Agriculture, SME and Corporate all segments continue to record strong double-digit growth. On YoY basis, Agri Advances grew by 25.43%, followed by SME Advances growth of 22.33% and Retail Personal Advances growth of 15.15%. Corporate Advances registered YoY growth of 18.05%. Foreign Offices' Advances grew by 21.38% YoY in rupee terms and 9.97% in dollar terms. Whole Bank Deposits grew by 9.73% YoY. Retail Term Deposits registered YoY growth of 14.39%. CASA

Deposit grew by 9.30% YoY. CASA ratio stands at 39.24% as on 30 th June 2026. Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) stands at 74.20%. Gross NPA ratio improved to 1.47% and Net NPA ratio improved to 0.38%, at its lowest in over 2 decades. Slippage Ratio for Q1FY27 improved by 18 bps YoY and stands at 0.57%. Credit Cost for Q1FY27 stands at 0.27%. Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) stood at 15.67% improving by 104 bps YoY. ROA and ROE for Q1FY27 stood at 1.11% and 17.87%, respectively. Mumbai August 7, 2026: State Bank of India (SBI), nation's largest Bank has announced its Q1FY27 results today. Commenting on the Bank's performance, Shri C.S. Setty, Chairman, State Bank of India, said: "At SBI, our strategic direction continues to be guided by a simple philosophy - Digital First, Customer First and Nation Always. During the quarter, we continued to simplify banking by expanding our flagship Operations Process Re-engineering project, SARAL, with the objective of making customer journeys faster, simpler and more convenient. We also introduced YONO Ji, an Agentic AI-powered virtual assistant on YONO Business, to provide our commercial clien-

tele with round-the-clock support. We have extended our Business Rule Engine, MSME Dream, to cover SME loans up to 10 crore, enabling faster and more consistent credit decisions without compromising underwriting standards. Technology is also strengthening our risk management framework. Through PRISM, our predictive stress monitoring platform, we are leveraging internal and external sources to identify early signs of stress in borrower accounts. This initiative also enhances our preparedness for the implementation of the proposed Expected Credit Loss framework. SBI is building not only for the next quarter, but for the next decade. Our subsidiaries have also continued to perform strongly and remain leaders in their respective sectors. During the quarter, the successful listing of SBI Funds Management Limited marked an important milestone for the SBI Group and reinforced the value that our subsidiary businesses continue to create for all stakeholders. As we progress towards our 75th anniversary in 2030, our focus is on creating the SBI of the future." Performance The Bank has reported its highest ever quarterly net profit of 21,121 crore. The profit

after tax is up by 10.23% year-on-year, driven by higher operating profit and lower credit costs at 0.27%. Operating profit for the quarter rose 9.77% YoY to 33,529 crore, while Net Interest Income grew 14.88% YoY to 46,992 crore. The Bank maintained healthy profitability metrics, with ROA at 1.11% and ROE at 17.87% for Q1FY27. The Bank showed its resilience in margins, with Domestic NIM at 3.00% for the quarter improving by 7 bps over Q4FY26. Whole Bank NIM at 2.86% in Q1FY27, improving by 5 bps over Q4FY26. The Bank has achieved another important milestone with total business crossing 110 lakh crores, supported by strong and broad-based YoY growth of 18.63% in advances and 9.73% in deposits. SBI's deposit franchise remained strong and diversified, with CASA deposits registering growth of 9.30% YoY. The Bank maintained a healthy CASA ratio of 39.24% despite an intensely competitive environment. Retail Term Deposits continued to gain traction, growing by 14.39% YoY. The Bank's asset quality continues to remain among the best in the industry, with non-performing assets at their lowest level in more than two decades.

Central Bank of India Organises MSME Outreach Campaign in Hyderabad; Generates Business of Rs. 150 Crore



Hyderabad, 07 August 2026: Central Bank of India, Hyderabad Region, successfully organised an MSME Outreach Campaign at the MSME Development & Facilitation Centre, Balanagar, Hyderabad, under the aegis of Dr. Himanshu Gupta, General Manager (MSME), Central Office, Sri M. Pichayya, Zonal Head, Hyderabad Zone, Sri C.S.S. Rao, IDSE, Joint Director, MSME Development & Facilitation Centre, Balanagar, and Sri Gajendra Singh Chouhan, Regional Head, Hyderabad Region. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Himanshu Gupta emphasized the Bank's commitment to strengthening MSME financing by focusing on New-to-Bank (NTB) and New-to-Credit (NTC) customers. He encouraged Branch Heads to proactively acquire new

customers and assured them of his full support in resolving MSME-related issues for faster credit delivery. The programme featured one-to-one interactions with entrepreneurs, a detailed presentation on the Bank's MSME products and schemes, and distribution of cheques, sanction letters and in-principle sanction letters. Customers were assured of transparent loan processing, prompt service and adherence to the prescribed turnaround time (TAT). The campaign achieved significant business outcomes, with MSME loan sanctions of ₹40 crore, in-principle sanctions of ₹60 crore, and fresh MSME leads worth ₹50 crore, taking the total business generated to ₹150 crore. Loans amounting to ₹25 crore were disbursed on the day of the programme.

Zydu Wellness expands Complian portfolio with Complian Powerplay; enters RTD milkshake segment

7th August, 2026: Zydu Wellness today announced the launch of Complian Powerplay, a ready-to-drink nutritional milkshake marking the brand's entry into India's ready-to-drink dairy beverages segment. The launch targets the nutritional needs of children aged 7 to 9, opening a new consumption occasion for Complian in the milkshakes and flavored milk category, which is estimated at ₹1700 crore. The launch comes amidst a broader shift in children's consumption habits, as increasingly active lifestyles create nutrition needs beyond traditional meal-times. Parents are increasingly seeking convenient, nutrient-dense options to support these routines, yet many existing snack and beverage choices are either high in sugar or fall short on meaningful nutrition. Complian Powerplay has been developed to bridge this gap, combining Complian's trusted nutrition expertise with the convenience of an on-the-go nutritional milkshake. Alongside the launch, Complian has unveiled its integrated campaign, 'Har



Passion Ko Do Poshan,' which celebrates and encourages every child's unique interests. The campaign reinforces the thought that every passion requires optimal nutrition to support children as they move through their everyday pursuits. Complian Powerplay delivers 10g of high-quality milk protein in every 160 ml serving, along with Calcium and 30% of the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin D2. The formulation also contains prebiotics and is made with no added sugar, preservatives, artificial colours or artificial flavours.

Commenting on the launch, Tarun Arora, CEO & Whole Time Director, Zydu Wellness Ltd., said: "Children's lifestyles today are fundamentally different from what they were a decade ago, and nutrition solutions must evolve alongside them. At Zydu Wellness, our innovation strategy is centered on identifying emerging consumer behaviours and creating relevant formats that seamlessly fit into everyday life. Complian Powerplay is a natural extension of the brand's trusted nutrition heritage into a fast-growing adjacent category, allowing us to

address new consumption occasions while remaining focused on delivering science-backed nutrition." The launch is supported by an integrated marketing campaign across Meta, YouTube, Snapchat and other digital platforms, anchored in a TVC (https://youtu.be/77hpg42oKIE?si=J-aXsQF8H4b-kdI) that brings the thought 'Har Passion Ko Do Poshan' to life. The film shows children navigating seamlessly between their many passions, from the playground to the dance studio, music class and beyond, while highlighting the role parents play in supporting these aspirations every step of the way. Through this narrative, it positions Complian Powerplay as the nutritional companion that powers every active moment, reinforcing that every passion deserves the right nutrition. Available in Chocolate and Vanilla variants, the nutritional milkshake is designed to support children through school, sports and hobby occasions through a convenient, balanced nutrition solution.

Samsung Launches 2026 Edition of Samsung Innovation Campus to Help Build India's AI Talent Pipeline

Aug. 7, 2026: Samsung India has announced the launch of the 2026 edition of Samsung Innovation Campus (SIC), its flagship CSR programme dedicated to equipping young people with industry-relevant skills in artificial intelligence (AI). The 2026 edition will be implemented in collaboration with the Electronics Sector Skills Council of India (ESSCI) and the Telecom Sector Skill Council (TSSC). Through these collaborations, Samsung aims to train 20,000 young people in AI across 10 states, expanding access to industry-relevant AI education and helping strengthen India's future AI talent pipeline. AI is changing how the world works—from healthcare and manufacturing to education and everyday services. As India accelerates its AI ambitions, building a skilled workforce will be essential to help more people harness the power of AI and drive innovation. Now in its fourth year in India, SIC will provide young people aged 18-25 with hands-on AI training, project-based learning, mentorship, and exposure to real-

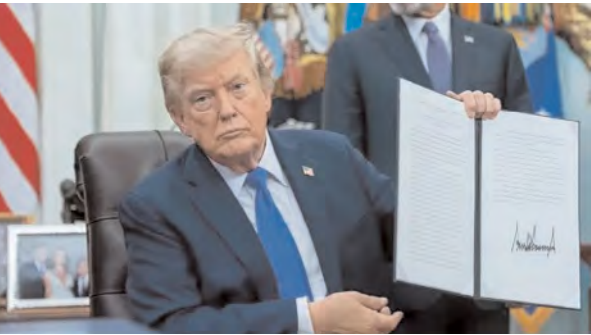


world applications, preparing them for careers in one of the world's fastest-growing technology domains "AI represents one of the greatest opportunities of our time, and India is uniquely positioned to lead this transformation through the strength of its young talent. Realising that opportunity will require sustained investment in developing the right skills, encouraging innovation and making AI education more accessible to every aspiring learner, regardless of where they come from. At Samsung, we believe technology creates its greatest impact when it empowers people. Through SIC, we are investing in the next generation of AI talent, helping

young Indians build the knowledge, confidence and practical experience needed to contribute to India's innovation journey. As we celebrate 30 years in India, we remain committed to supporting the country's vision of becoming a global AI leader by nurturing the talent that will shape its future," said JB Park, President and CEO, Samsung South West Asia. As Samsung celebrates 30 years in India, the latest edition of SIC reflects the company's long-term commitment to developing technology talent and supporting India's emergence as a global hub for AI and innovation. Beyond technical learning, the programme is designed to cultivate problem-solving,

critical thinking and collaboration, enabling participants to build practical AI solutions while enhancing their career readiness. Launched in India in 2022, SIC has trained more than 26,500 young people across the country in emerging technologies. In 2025, the programme witnessed 48% women participation making advanced technology education more accessible to aspiring learners from diverse backgrounds. SIC is part of Samsung's broader commitment to strengthening India's innovation and skill ecosystem. Alongside initiatives such as Samsung Solve for Tomorrow, which nurtures young innovators and entrepreneurs, and Samsung DOST, which develops industry-ready talent for sales and technical service roles, Samsung continues to invest in building the skills, capabilities and innovation mindset that will help power India's AI-driven future. Samsung Newsroom India: Samsung Launches 2026 Edition of Samsung Innovation Campus to Help Build India's AI Talent Pipeline

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



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

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



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

Australian aviation crew carries out daring midwinter Antarctica rescue

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



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

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

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

Trump-backed Republican congressman loses primary in Tennessee



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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



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

GERMAN AIRPORT DRONE-BOMB: COULD RUSSIA BE INVOLVED?

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

LE COURT WINS STAGE SIX OF TOUR AFTER MECHANICAL FAILURE



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

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

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

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

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

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

ance that instantly strikes a chord. His charismatic screen presence, coupled with Venky Atluri’s heartfelt writing, promises one of his most endearing performances in recent years. Mamitha Baiju brings her signature charm to the screen, while Radhika Sarathkumar, Raveena Tandon and the stellar ensemble cast add depth to this emotional journey. G. V. Prakash Kumar’s soulful music, Nimish Ravi’s rich visuals and Venky Atluri’s signature storytelling further elevate the trailer. During the grand audio launch

event in Coimbatore, the team confidently spoke about the film’s emotional strength and its ability to connect with audiences of all ages. The trailer now validates every bit of that confidence, leaving viewers with the promise of a memorable theatrical experience. Produced under Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, and presented by Srikara Studios, Vishwanath & Sons is all set for a grand worldwide release on August 14, 2026, promising audiences a world of unforgettable emotions this Independence Day weekend.



POOJA HEGDE PUTS THE PEST IN BUDAPEST



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

Agadha Locks Strong Release Plan Amid Positive Trade Buzz

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



Studios. Trade sources indicate that the film’s release has now been locked across all major territories, paving the way for a wide release on August 14. The makers appear to have put together a strong distribution network to ensure the film reaches audiences on a grand scale during the Independence Day holiday

period. One of the biggest highlights on the business front is the film’s USA release, which will be handled by Moksha movies. Landing a reputed distribution partner for the North American market is seen as a significant development, adding further strength to the film’s overseas prospects. In the Telugu

states, the release is expected to be supported by the strong exhibition network of Geetha Arts and Annapurna Studios, reflecting the confidence surrounding the project as it heads towards release. The trailer has already showcased Agadha as a visually ambitious supernatural drama with a divine and mystical back-

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

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

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

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

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



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

ANANYA PANDEY PROVES SAREES ARE HER SUPERPOWER



Ananya Pandey continues to prove that she can nail a look no matter the setting, and her latest appearance at the Filmfare Marathi Awards is fresh proof. The actress was spotted in a stunning royal blue silk saree featuring an intricately woven pallu with peacock and floral motifs in a traditional Paithani-inspired style. She paired it with a backless blouse, minimal jewellery, and a sleek bun adorned with fresh flowers, giving the ensemble a graceful, old-world charm. Ananya’s styling once again

struck the perfect balance between traditional and chic, and fans couldn’t stop praising how effortlessly she carried the six yards. Her calm expression and elegant pose added to the overall regal appeal of the picture. On the work front, Ananya’s last release Chand Mera Dil failed to make a mark at the box office. However, that hasn’t stopped her from staying in the spotlight, with her fashion choices consistently keeping her in the conversation. Fans are now waiting to see what she picks up next to bounce back on the big screen.

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

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



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

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



Rakul Preet Is Every Bit A Showstopper

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

