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RAASHI KHANNA TURNS A SHAWL INTO STYLE

Papanna Goud a symbol of Bahujan Pride CM Revanth

■ CM unveils statue at Tank Bund, promises welfare measures for Goud community and stresses education as key to empowerment



Hyderabad, TSIT BUREAU: Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy on Tuesday said Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud was a symbol of Bahujan pride and social justice whose struggle against oppression would continue to inspire generations in Telangana.

Chief Minister unveiled the statue of Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud at Tank Bund in Hyderabad on the occasion of his birth anniversary.

Addressing the gathering,

Revanth Reddy said Papanna Goud did not fight merely for his family or community but mobilised Bahujans and challenged the prevailing feudal order. He said Papanna Goud's historic struggle and association with Golconda represented the courage and self-respect of Telangana's Bahujans.

Chief Minister said the statue had been given a prominent location so that tourists and visitors could learn about Papanna Goud and draw inspiration from

his life. He directed officials to provide proper lighting and other facilities at the site and said the statue would be accorded due importance alongside other major memorials in the area. Revanth Reddy also announced that the State Government would officially celebrate the birth anniversary of Bahujan leader Panduga Sayanna on October 22.

Highlighting welfare measures for the Goud community, the Chief Minister said the government would protect the traditional occupation of toddy tappers and extend pensions to eligible workers. He said palm trees would be planted on government lands and along canal bunds to support the livelihood of toddy-tapping families.

He said 50,000 Katamayya safety kits had been distributed to Goud workers and Rs.5 lakh compensation was being provided in cases of accidental deaths of toddy tappers. Revanth Reddy, however, urged families to give top priority to their children's education while respecting and preserving traditional occupations.

SC panel members must have unimpeachable record: Saurav Das



New Delhi (TSIT):

CJP co-convenor Saurav Das said on Tuesday that members of the high-powered committee proposed by the Supreme Court to examine allegations of police excesses during protests must be independent and have an unimpeachable record.

The Supreme Court said it would constitute a committee comprising a former Supreme Court judge, a former High Court Chief Justice and a senior retired police officer to conduct a fact-finding exercise into allegations of police excesses and violence against police personnel during protests.

Das said the CJP would accept the court's decision to

constitute the panel but insisted that its members must have strong credentials and a proven record of independence.

He said the protesters, youth and the wider young generation would closely watch the functioning of the committee and the Supreme Court's proceedings. Das stressed that the panel should be seen as an independent body of the Supreme Court rather than a government-appointed committee.

The Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, along with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana, said the committee would submit periodic reports to enable the court to issue further directions.

34% BC quota to boost political representation: CM Naidu



Visakhapatnam (TSIT)

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said the State government was committed to empowering Backward Classes (BCs) through education, skill development, employment, entrepreneurship and political representation. Addressing the Legislative Assembly, Naidu said the proposed 34 per cent reservation for BCs in rural local bodies was aimed at increasing their participation in decision-making and ensuring social justice. He said BCs constitute 50.54 per cent of the State's population and deserved greater opportunities. Naidu said BC residential schools would be developed into institutions of excellence and educational facilities for BC students would be strengthened. He also stressed the need to combine traditional skills of BC communities with modern technology to create employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

17-08-2026
Total pilgrims : 79,445
Tonsures : 36,834
Handi Kamukala : 4,90 CR
Ladli sale : 3,95 Lacs
Aashil Hospital : 3,392
Present Situation on 18-08-2026:
Waiting Compartments...Out side line adding at Shilasharam
Approx. Darsan Time for Saravadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens) : 20-24 H.

Short Takes

8 UP labourers killed in Bhind truck collision

Gwalior/Lucknow: Eight labourers from Uttar Pradesh were killed and several others injured after the pickup vehicle carrying them collided with a dumper truck in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind district in the early hours of Tuesday. The accident occurred around 1 a.m. near Chhimaka village in the Gohad area. Preliminary investigations indicate that the speeding pickup driver lost control while attempting to avoid a herd of cows on the highway and collided with an oncoming dumper, officials said.

8 Andhra fishermen missing in Bay of Bengal

Amaravati, Aug 18 : Eight fishermen from Andhra Pradesh's B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema district went missing at sea, officials said on Tuesday. The fishermen, who had set out on a boat in the Bay of Bengal for fishing on August 3, were scheduled to return on August 12. The families of the fishermen were anxious as there had been no communication from them since the time they ventured into the sea. Andhra Pradesh officials have alerted the Indian Coast Guard, and the search was on for the missing fishermen.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu held a review meeting with officials regarding the incident in which a boat carrying fishermen from Odalarevu, Dummalapeta.

Several injured after blast hits school in Afghanistan's Kabul

Kabul, Aug 18 : Several students were seriously injured after a blast outside a private school in western Kabul, Afghanistan, Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadrar confirmed Monday night. Zadrar said relevant teams had arrived at the scene and an investigation into the incident was underway. According to local media, students were leaving the school when the blast occurred, with most of them being girls. A witness said around 30 injured people had been taken to a local hospital, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier in June, a child was killed and six others sustained injuries after two unexploded devices left over from the wars went off in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province, provincial director for information and culture Mullah Abdul Bari Rashid said.

India likely to reach 62 pc 5G adoption by 2030

New Delhi, Aug 18 : India is projected to reach 62 per cent 5G adoption by 2030, significantly ahead of the Asia Pacific average of 50 per cent, a report said on Tuesday. The report from GSMA said India is identified as one of the region's 'Leading Nations', alongside Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan, where regulatory modernisation is important to accelerating digital-economy growth and supporting mobile-industry sustainability.

India's connectivity challenge is increasingly shifting from coverage to usage and adoption as the South Asia coverage gap has fallen from around 30 per cent to less than 5 per cent.

It has made affordability, device access, digital skills, perceived value, trust and online safety the main barriers to mobile internet adoption.

Mobile technologies and services are projected to contribute \$1.4 trillion to the Asia Pacific economy by 2030, a 40 per cent increase from the \$1 trillion generated today. The next phase of digital growth will be shaped by how governments, operators and technology providers respond to four converging priorities: the rapid rise of artificial intelligence (AI), declining digital trust, demand for more resilient digital



infrastructure, and growing interest in digital sovereignty.

The report highlighted BharatNet and PMGDISHA as examples of India's efforts to address these challenges, with PMGDISHA having trained more than 64 million rural citizens in foundational digital skills. Digital trust is emerging as an economic priority for India, with information-security spending expected to grow 11.7 per cent in 2026, reflecting increasing demand for cybersecurity, identity, privacy and other trust-enabling services.

India's Digital Personal Data Protection Rules are contributing to the broader shift towards trusted environments for storing, processing and governing sensitive data, alongside growing interest in sovereign cloud envi-

ronments for local, auditable and secure AI workloads, the report noted.

The firm also linked network resilience with technology resilience, highlighting India's Atma Nirbhar Bharat Approach and BSNL's deployment of an indigenously developed 4G stack that is technically upgradeable to 5G.

India is also among the countries that have published a 6G spectrum roadmap, reflecting its longer-term approach to connectivity and spectrum planning. The report mentioned that 5G, AI and IoT will deliver significant productivity gains across Asia Pacific, particularly in manufacturing and services, which together are expected to account for more than half of the economic benefits generated by advanced mobile technologies.

Govt proposed five-year age extension for EVs, hydrogen, CNG commercial vehicles

New Delhi, Aug 18 : The government has proposed extending the permissible age of battery-operated, hydrogen fuel-based and natural gas-driven commercial vehicles covered under the national permit system by five years.

According to a recently issued notification by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), the proposal is part of a draft amendment to simplify national permit procedures and increase the use of digital processes.

Under the proposed changes, the existing age limits of 12 years and 15 years for vehicles covered by the national permit system would be extended to 17 years and 20 years, respectively, for battery, hydrogen and natural gas vehicles, it added.

However, the proposed extension would not apply to all commercial vehicles and would be limited to vehicles.

The decision comes amid efforts to promote cleaner commercial transport.

The government has also proposed allowing national permit holders to opt for authorisation for up to five years instead of renewing it annually. While the fee would remain at Rs 16,500 per year, making the fee for a five-year



सड़क परिवहन एवं राजमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
सत्यमेव जयते



authorisation Rs 82,500. Moreover, the VAHAN database could also be used to reduce paperwork. The draft also proposes changes to temporary registration rules.

A chassis without a body would receive temporary registration valid for six months from the date of issue. Where the chassis remains in a workshop beyond six months for body fitting or due to unforeseen circumstances beyond the owner's control, the registering authority could extend the validity by 30 days at a time on application and payment of the

prescribed fee.

For fully built vehicles being converted into adapted vehicles or registered in a state different from the state where the dealer is located, temporary registration would be valid for 45 days.

Additionally, the proposed amendments also seek additional information in vehicle registration and permit forms. The ministry has invited objections and suggestions on the proposed amendments for 30 days from the date the notification is made available to the public.

Houthis claim fresh drone attack on Saudi refinery



Sanaa, Aug 18 : Yemen's Houthi group said on Tuesday it had launched a fresh drone attack on a Saudi Aramco oil refinery in the southwestern Saudi region of Jazan. There was no immediate comment from Saudi authorities or Aramco on the Houthi claim, and no information was immediately available on possible casualties or damage.

A number of drones targeted the refinery and the strike was "precise," said a

military source within the group, cited by the Houthi-run Saba news agency.

The source said the attack was carried out in response to "Saudi violations of the airspace" over the Houthi-held northern provinces of Saada and Hajjah.

Tuesday's announcement marked the latest Houthi claim of an attack on the Jazan refinery. On Thursday, the group said two drones had targeted the same facility, also cit-

ing alleged Saudi air activity over Saada and Hajjah, reports Xinhua news agency.

The recent escalation has coincided with a series of Houthi missile and drone attacks on government-held areas in Yemen, including targets in the Red Sea port city of Mocha and the oil-rich province of Marib, as well as attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab.

Yemen has been mired in

conflict since late 2014, when the Houthis seized much of northern Yemen, including the capital Sanaa, prompting a Saudi-led coalition to intervene the following year in support of the internationally recognised Yemeni government. A UN-brokered truce that took effect in April 2022 expired six months later without a formal extension, but a fragile de facto ceasefire has largely held until the recent escalation.

South Indian states must stand united for growth: D.K. Shivakumar



Bengaluru's rapid growth, noting that the city now has a population of around 15 million and millions of vehicles. He said the government must address the city's growing requirements for water, transport, housing and infrastructure.

He said the government was working to improve Bengaluru's water security by developing and rejuvenating lakes, including Hesaraghatta, Hoskote and Tippagondanahalli, to strengthen groundwater recharge.

The Chief Minister also highlighted Karnataka's strength in IT, healthcare, science and education, and said the State must create policies to retain and utilise its large pool of skilled professionals. He said Karnataka's coastline could also be leveraged for tourism through a dedicated coastal tourism policy.

Shivakumar said his government would continue useful initiatives and development visions of former leaders, including H.D. Kumaraswamy, B.S. Yediyurappa and Basavaraj Bommai, while introducing new ideas.

He announced that the government was working on a new Praja Seve department aimed at taking government services closer to people who cannot travel to Vidhana Soudha.

Urging legislators to focus on constructive criticism and solutions, Shivakumar said political criticism would eventually fade but development works would remain. He called on both the ruling party and Opposition to prepare a long-term blueprint for Karnataka's development over the next 25 years.

Bengaluru, August 18: Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday called for unity among South Indian states to accelerate economic growth and urged the ruling party and Opposition to work together to address the State's challenges.

Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, Shivakumar said Karnataka's vast talent pool, particularly in Bengaluru, could play a major role in transforming India into an economic powerhouse. He said the State should work with the Centre while protecting its interests and promoting its strengths.

On the Bidadi Township issue, Shivakumar welcomed the Opposition's proposal for a discussion and said he had no objection to continuing the vision behind the project. He said former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy's idea of developing Bidadi as a township was not wrong and maintained that any shortcomings in Bidadi and the NICE project should be identified and corrected.

"Let us work together as Team Karnataka," he appealed, saying political differences should not come in the way of long-term development. Shivakumar highlighted

D.K. Shivakumar praises Mankal Vaidya as a gentleman

Bengaluru, August 18: Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Tuesday praised newly elected Deputy Speaker Mankal Vaidya, describing him as a "gentleman" who rose from a fisherman's family through grass-roots politics. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly following Vaidya's unanimous and unopposed election as Deputy Speaker, Shivakumar said Vaidya had built his career through hard work and continued to remain connected to his roots.

Shivakumar recalled Vaidya's political journey from being a Zilla Panchayat member in 2005 to becoming an independent MLA in 2013 and winning again in 2023 on a Congress ticket. He also praised Vaidya's three-year tenure as Minister for Ports and Fisheries.

The Chief Minister said he had personally persuaded Vaidya to accept the Deputy Speaker's post, which was initially not his preference. He urged him not to view the position as a setback, pointing out that several leaders who had occupied the Deputy Speaker's chair later became Chief Ministers or held key positions.

"Nothing is permanent in politics. Politics is the art of possibilities," Shivakumar said, responding to remarks from BJP members during his speech.

The Chief Minister also expressed disappointment over the Opposition's protests following Vaidya's election, saying the criticism had deeply hurt him. He recalled how political leaders had moved between parties and positions over the years, stressing that political circumstances could change at any time.

Recalling his own early political career, Shivakumar said he entered politics while pursuing his education and became a minister at a young age. He said elders had advised him that youth, wealth and power should not come together in one place, as political positions were never permanent. Shivakumar congratulated the Speaker and Deputy Speaker and called for cooperation among all members to strengthen Karnataka and contribute to India's development. He described Vaidya as a close and pure-hearted friend and said the government would consider measures to utilise the natural resources of his region.

HD Kumaraswamy intensifies attack over Bidadi land acquisition

Bengaluru, August 18: The protest by farmers opposing the Karnataka Government's proposed Bidadi Township project intensified on Tuesday, with JD(S) leaders and thousands of farmers staging a demonstration at Freedom Park and announcing a march towards Vidhana Soudha.

Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, JD(S) Youth Wing State President Nikhil Kumaraswamy and other senior leaders joined the protest, along with farmers from Bidadi Hobli who fear losing their agricultural land to the proposed project. A large number of women



farmers also participated. Addressing the gathering, H.D. Kumaraswamy launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, alleging that the Bidadi Township and NICE projects were being handled in the interests of private parties and involved land worth thousands of crores.

Kumaraswamy challenged the Congress leadership to an open debate on the origin, implementation and present status of the two projects. He alleged that attempts were being made to gain control of the NICE project through private or benami entities while farmers continued to face problems over land acquisition and compensation.

Kumarswamy's Low-level criticism against Sonia Gandhi for political gain: S. Manohar

Bengaluru: KPCC General Secretary S. Manohar criticized that, it is very tragic and unfortunate that Kumarswamy is son of Chennamma when we observe his low-level criticism against Sonia Gandhi for political gain.

Demanding an apology through a press release in this regard, he said that Mrs. Sonia Gandhi was originally from Italy, but after marrying Rajiv Gandhi, she assimilated the cultural practices of India and is a brave woman who is working for India along with a family of sacrifice and sacrifice.

While talking about someone else, he sarcastically asked Kumaraswamy if he



would remember his previous Taj West end Hotel culture.

Kumaraswamy himself is a current thief and a person with a bad mentality, known as the Pen Drive Brother. He sarcastically said that Kumaraswamy, who is a time-saver, has forgotten that he met Rahul Gandhi after coming to power and stated that he is my God. He questioned Bidadi

Township Nice project has been started during his tenure but now acting to save hundreds of acres of his family's land.

H.D. Kumaraswamy, do you have the morals to clarify whether you are for or against the RSS? Do you know how many times you have criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi? Isn't he the person who told people not to trust Modi and vote? When asked about the RSS, which RSS is it? Isn't he the truthful person who said that I don't know? Isn't it you who said that the BJP party is a party of selfish people? Isn't he the great leader who took the title of a renegade from the BJP party?

New Initiative for Mental Health: 'Samadhan Manachaitanya' Counselling Centre Launched



Bengaluru: Recognising the growing importance of mental health and the need to make mental wellness and counselling services easily accessible to the public, Rotary Bannerghatta Road (RBBR) has launched the 'Samadhan Manachaitanya' Counselling Centre at the Government Urban Primary Health Centre in Gottigere on Bannerghatta Road. The initiative marks an important step towards bringing mental health services closer to the community through the government healthcare system. The centre will particularly benefit economically weaker and vulnerable sections of society in and around Gottigere by making mental health counselling, guidance and support more accessible to them.

The key objective of the centre is to create greater awareness about mental health, provide appropriate counselling and guidance to individuals facing emotional and psychological challenges, and encourage people to seek professional help without hesitation whenever required. Rotary District 3191 District Governor Rtn. Anil Gupta, Health Officer Dr. A.S. Balasundar, Deputy Director of Mental Health Dr. Rajani Parthasarathy and Padma Shri awardee Dr. C.R. Chandrashekar were present as chief guests at the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. C.R. Chandrashekar said, "Mental health is as important as physical health. Mental health problems should not be

ignored, and people experiencing such issues should not be looked at with stigma. Early identification of problems, timely counselling, proper care and emotional support are extremely important."

The dignitaries appreciated Rotary Bannerghatta Road for making mental wellness services more accessible by introducing the facility at a government health centre.

With the vision of "A Strong Mind through Peace, and a Healthy Society through a Strong Mind," the initiative gives priority to mental health and community well-being.

The initiative is being carried out under the leadership of Rotary Bannerghatta Road for making mental wellness services more accessible by introducing the facility at a government health centre.

The "Samadhan Manachaitanya" initiative aims not only to create awareness about mental health but also to strengthen individuals and contribute towards building a healthier society. Rotary Bannerghatta Road stated that it will further expand mental health awareness and counselling services in the coming days, ensuring that economically weaker sections and every individual in need in and around Gottigere can receive timely and appropriate support.

Government ready to make a statement without taking any measures for drought management; R. Ashoka

Bengaluru: The government is preparing to make a statement in the House without providing funds for drought management or relief to farmers. This will serve no purpose, said Opposition Leader R. Ashoka.

Speaking to reporters, he said that the BJP has studied the severe drought and submitted a report. He himself had visited various districts and conducted a study. In the matter of Cauvery river water sharing, the Congress government failed to present a proper argument, leading to water shortage. As a result, farmers in the districts around Mysuru are unable to cultivate crops. Drought has intensified in the North Karnataka region. Yet the state government has not released even a single paisa as relief. It has not even declared a drought. Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara's statement on this will serve no purpose. If relief had been released and goshalas (cattle shelters) built, then a statement

could have been made. Issuing a statement without doing anything is not right, he said.

Discussion on this will be held in the House in coordination with the JD(S). A notice for a motion has also been given. However, it is difficult to hold a discussion while the tainted Minister B. Nagendra remains. Despite three CBI cases and one ED case against him, he has not been dropped. This issue will be taken up first, and only then will the drought matter be discussed. We will stage a sit-in (dharana) in the House until Nagendra is dismissed, he said.

On the KPSC scam, a two-day discussion had earlier been held in the House. While there are eight members in Uttar Pradesh, there are about 18 members here. Those who send chits from the government get appointed. Large-scale irregularities have taken place in examinations for departments such as Veterinary and Police. The Chairman and his team have looted



hundreds of crores of rupees. The ED raid will lead to the identification of the culprits. The Congress government appears to be under someone's influence. Former CM Siddaramaiah had said he would reduce the number of members, but that has not been implemented. The SIT investigation is being used to close the case. Had the CBI investigated, the truth would have come out. The ED's work of recovering money for the treasury is welcome, he said. The problems in Bengaluru

should first be resolved and people's issues addressed. Only then, if needed, can facilities be provided for people from other countries, said Opposition Leader R. Ashoka. Speaking in the House, he said that Bengaluru faces many challenges. There are roads full of potholes, roads filled with garbage, and other problems. Minister Krishna Byre Gowda had said that old cars parked by the roadside would be removed. Now there are lakhs of cars still there. He had said he would clear encroachments on footpaths. Looking now, encroachments have started again. Currently a "Clean Bengaluru" campaign is underway. If they show me even one road without garbage, I myself will give an award to the government. If they say they will make Bengaluru beautiful, they must first provide a peaceful life for the people here. Providing facilities for outsiders is a different matter. If the government undertakes such works, I will also support them, he said.

Congratulating Mankal Vaidya on his election as Deputy Speaker, Opposition Leader R. Ashoka said that they had extended cooperation for his becoming Deputy Speaker. His name was initially on the list of ministers. As he did not get the right "fish," the boat sank. That is why he has become Deputy Speaker. The Speaker should occasionally give opportunities to the Deputy Speaker and train him. Former CM Ramakrishna Hegde used to nurture everyone. In the same way, training should be given to Mankal Vaidya, he said.

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar is applying ghee to everyone. People are saying that the Speaker too will become CM in the future. Ultimately, he will get his work done. He has that shrewdness. Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar missed the train and boarded it halfway. In this system, implementing schemes and taking all MLAs along is a challenging task, he said.

Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) Launches ANTHE 2026: The Biggest Talent Hunt Exam

Bengaluru: For a student preparing for a competitive academic journey, knowing what to study is only one part of the equation. Understanding where they stand, what they are doing well and where they need to improve can be equally important. It is this gap between preparation and self-awareness that the Aakash National Talent Hunt Exam (ANTHE) has sought to address over the last 16 years.

With over 1 crore students having registered for ANTHE since its inception, the examination has grown into one of India's largest and longest-running student assessment platforms. What began as a talent identification initiative has evolved into a structured academic benchmark that helps students assess their preparedness, understand their competitive potential and build a stronger foundation for the journey ahead.



Unlike an assessment that measures performance only through a final score, ANTHE is designed as a comprehensive, scientifically structured diagnostic assessment. Each question is purpose-driven and mapped to specific concepts and competencies, allowing the examination to evaluate students across subject knowledge, aptitude, analytical ability and examination behaviour. This gives students a more meaningful understanding of their performance rather than reducing their preparation to a

single number.

The importance of this early assessment is also reflected in the journeys of students who have gone on to achieve strong results in national competitive examinations. In NEET UG 2026, 31 of Aakash's 41 students who secured ranks among the Top 100 had previously qualified through ANTHE. Similarly, in JEE Advanced 2026, 7 out of 11 in Top 100 JEE Adv are from ANTHE. These outcomes underline the role that early identification, structured academic prep-

aration and sustained guidance can play in a student's competitive journey.

Speaking on the significance of ANTHE, Mr. Chandra Sekhar Garisa Reddy, MD and CEO, Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), said: "For us, ANTHE has never been just an examination that determines a student's scholarship. Its larger purpose is to help students understand their own academic potential at a stage when the right guidance can make a meaningful difference.

ITL Anchors its Next Global R&D Chapter in Greater Noida Inspired by CM Yogi Adityanath Progressive Vision

Bengaluru: International Tractors Limited (ITL), India's No.1 tractor export brand and the owner of flagship brand Sonalika Tractors, is all set to establish a new 25 acre Global Research & Development Centre in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The development follows a meeting between Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath with ITL's Management in Lucknow. The new proposed Global R&D Centre by ITL is envisioned as a global advanced

engineering hub for building future-ready technologies and farmer-centric innovation.

The new greenfield facility represents a natural progression of ITL's three-decade journey of transforming agriculture through its 'Jeetne ka DUM'. The meeting centred on ITL's vision for its next phase of agricultural innovation and how the brand is aligned with Uttar Pradesh's growing role as a destination for technology-led industrial investment.



EDITORIAL

10 Years of the RPwD Act: Progress, Gaps and the Work Ahead

The success of a disability law is not measured only by what it promises. It is measured by whether a child can enter a neighbourhood school without being treated as an exception; whether a job applicant can seek accommodation without risking rejection; whether a wheelchair user can reach a public office; whether a Deaf citizen can access information; and whether a person with a psychosocial or intellectual disability can exercise legal agency without being spoken over. Ten years after the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, India has built a stronger legal foundation for these rights. But the distance between statutory recognition and everyday freedom remains substantial. The Act was a significant departure from the narrower framework that preceded it. It expanded the list of recognised disabilities from seven to 21 and brought concepts such as equality, non-discrimination, reasonable accommodation, accessibility, inclusive education, social security, and community participation into Indian law. It also strengthened reservations for persons with benchmark disabilities in government employment and higher education.

This shift mattered because it changed the language available to disabled people. Inaccessibility was no longer merely unfortunate. Refusing a necessary accommodation could be understood as discrimination. Exclusion from education, employment, transport, or public services could be challenged as a rights violation rather than accepted as an individual misfortune.

The law also helped widen public understanding of disability. It recognised conditions that had long remained invisible or poorly understood, including autism, specific learning disabilities, multiple sclerosis, thalassemia, and acid attack-related disability. This broader recognition created pathways, however uneven, for people previously left outside official systems of support.

Judicial interpretation has further developed the law's potential. Courts, particularly the Supreme Court, have clarified that equality does not always mean identical treatment. In *Vikash Kumar v. UPSC*, the court placed reasonable accommodation at the centre of substantive equality and cautioned against reducing disability rights to rigid percentage thresholds. This was an important reminder that an individual may face a real barrier even when they do not fit neatly within an administrative category. Government programmes have also moved disability higher on the policy agenda. The Unique Disability ID system has sought to standardise certification and improve access to entitlements across states. The Accessible India Campaign has drawn public attention to the accessibility of buildings, transport, and digital systems. Accessibility standards, institutional policies, and compliance requirements are now more visible than they were a decade ago. These developments should not be understated. Yet recognition is only the first stage of reform. Uneven implementation The largest weakness of the past decade has been uneven implementation. The experience of the Act depends heavily on geography, institutional capacity, awareness, and the willingness of officials to act. A right available in a metropolitan court or central university may remain largely theoretical in a rural school, district hospital, local transport system, or small workplace.

WHEN NATIONAL SYMBOLS BECOME POLITICAL FOOTBALL

National symbols belong to the nation, not to a political party. They are among the few things in public life that should rise above ideology, electoral rivalry and partisan loyalties. The Tricolour, the national anthem and the national song *Vande Mataram* occupy a special emotional space in the Indian imagination because they evoke the country's freedom struggle, its civilisational memory and the sacrifices through which India became a republic. That is precisely why any political leader who appears to disrespect or dismiss a national symbol must expect public scrutiny.

On August 15, 2026, Congress leader Sonia Gandhi was seen agitated and hand gesturing midway through a full rendition of *Vande Mataram* at the Congress headquarters entailing public wrath online. Her questionable 'conduct' and the subsequent lame defence provided by her partymen have therefore provoked questions that go far beyond the immediate political controversy. That such a misconduct has come from senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi - who had built a non-controversial public image until now - is disappointing. For common public - be it a Congress or the BJP supporter - the public disrespect shown to the national song is aggravating and demeaning.

■ **CONGRESS'S CONTENTIOUS STANCE**

The Congress has historically had a complicated but important relationship with *Vande Mataram*. The song was deeply associated with India's freedom movement and was sung at several important sessions of the Indian National Congress. It was adopted as the national song by the



Constituent Assembly on January 24, 1950, with President Dr. Rajendra Prasad declaring it equal in status to the national anthem. More so, when the Congress has long projected itself as a party with a special claim to the legacy of India's freedom movement, the misconduct of its senior leaders is puzzling. They cannot simultaneously invoke the sacrifices of the freedom struggle and appear casual about symbols that emerged from that very struggle.

There is, of course, an important distinction between legitimate disagreement over the political use of a national symbol and disrespect towards the symbol itself. In a democracy, nobody should be compelled to surrender their political beliefs. But national symbols require a degree of restraint precisely

because they represent something larger than the political moment. The larger concern is the message such gestures send. India is already a deeply polarised political society. Political parties routinely accuse one another of being anti-national, communal, elitist or authoritarian.

■ **FALSE PUBLIC IMAGE**

The controversy also becomes more significant because of Sonia Gandhi's long curated public image. For years, the Congress president and its most powerful figure was perceived, even by many political opponents, as someone who generally maintained a measured and dignified public persona. Her politics could be criticised, her decisions could be challenged, and her leadership could be opposed, but she

largely avoided the kind of theatrical political behaviour that has become increasingly common. That image appears to be changing. Recently, people were also witness to Sonia Gandhi's remark referring to her party spokesperson Pawan Khera as the "white-haired man". This too has removed the myth about Sonia Gandhi being 'graceful' in her public conduct. Such personal remarks about age or appearance does not behove the 'first family' of the Congress party towards its loyal workers as it bespeaks of their lowly and insignificant existence.

In the age of technology and social media - when every little act, sigh and murmur are audible and visible - such gross behaviour tends to diminish the dignity of the person making them. Every politician is aware of

this 24/7 scrutiny. The higher the political stature, the higher the expectation of restraint.

■ **LESSONS FROM THE CONTROVERSY**

There is a broader lesson here for India's political class. National symbols cannot become another battlefield in the permanent war between parties. The Tricolour does not belong to the ruling party, just as the Constitution does not belong to the Opposition. These are common possessions of Indians. Similarly, *Vande Mataram* can't be bracketed as a 'Congress's song' or 'BJP's song'. Indeed, one of the saddest developments in contemporary politics is the tendency to convert everything into a partisan identity marker. A song becomes a test of ideology. A salute becomes a political statement. A

national celebration becomes an opportunity for party mobilisation. The result is that things which should unite citizens become instruments for dividing them.

The answer cannot be to demand uniformity of thought. It must be to restore a culture of constitutional and national courtesy.

Criticism of Sonia Gandhi or the Congress on this issue should therefore not be dismissed as merely 'BJP propaganda'. Nor should every Congress supporter be painted as someone who blindly endorses everything the party does. Millions of Indians support political parties while retaining independent judgment. The democratic health of the country depends precisely on citizens being willing to question their own political camps.

And that is perhaps the most important point. National pride should not be a monopoly of the Right. Nor should secularism be a monopoly of the Left. Patriotism should not require party membership. A person can disagree profoundly with the BJP and still stand respectfully for *Vande Mataram*. A Congress supporter can oppose the government's policies while holding the Tricolour with pride. India is large enough for all these contradictions.

Instead of living in denial, the Congress party in all its wisdom must acknowledge the disrespect and apologise to the nation. Because ultimately, the question is bigger than Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Narendra Modi or any political party. Politicians come and go. Governments change. Elections are won and lost. Political reputations rise and fall. The nation remains.

Mumbai's 'Marathi' Test For Cabbies, And The Art Of Fixing The Wrong Problems

Mumbai has long possessed the legendary, slightly chaotic ability to absorb every dialect, dish, and economic refuge that lands upon its humid shores. It is a city whose soul is forged in transit, fuelled by cutting chai, and sustained by an army of auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers navigating standard traffic jams while keeping up a running commentary on local politics. Recently, however, the Maharashtra state government threw a linguistic spanner into the gears by insisting that non-Marathi-speaking cab and auto drivers undergo formal language training to master the local tongue. The deadline arrived, rain disrupted the classes, and political factions immediately demanded a grace period, not out of a sudden bout of leniency, but because the monsoon managed to drown the logistics before the grammar lessons could fully sink in. The controversy highlights a classic urban tension: is this policy a reasonable expectation of basic integration, or is it unnecessary provincial chest-thumping that undermines the financial capital's famous cosmopolitanism?A Valid Argument - Almost To understand the impulse behind the directive, one must first empathise with the anxieties of local cultural preservation. Language in India is rarely just a tool for commerce; it is an inheritance, a flag, and, occasionally, a battlefield. The argument for requiring transit workers to learn Marathi rests on a straightforward, pragmatic premise. If you are operating a public service within a state, possessing a rudimentary grasp of the state's primary lan-



guage is not a tyrannical demand; it is a courtesy to the millions of local residents who use those services daily. When a commuter steps into a yellow-and-black taxi after a long day in the suburbs, negotiating a fare or explaining a shortcut shouldn't require complex pantomime or an emergency translation app. Proponents of the new rule can reasonably argue that expecting a driver to learn basic vocabulary, to understand and specify directions, numbers, or addresses (and also to offer polite greetings, but cabbies are not usually known for those!) is hardly an oppressive act of cultural erasure. It is simply the baseline of civic integration, ensuring that the local culture is respected rather than treated as an inconvenient background detail in its own home. Yet, the moment one shifts focus from civil courtesy to mandatory enforcement, the logic begins to wobble under the weight of Mumbai's economic reality. The city did not become India's financial locomotive by enforcing strict linguistic purity at the entry gates. It thrived precisely because a driver from Uttar Pradesh, a passenger from Bengal, and a

street vendor from Bihar could communicate in a fluid, grammatical mutant known as 'Bambaiya Hindi', a vernacular constructed almost entirely out of shared survival instincts, a collective disregard for the niceties of grammar, and expressive hand gestures. Demanding formal Marathi proficiency transforms an informal, working solution into an administrative hurdle. Only In Mumbai The irony of the situation is heightened by the administrative rollout itself: a state mandate issued at the peak of the monsoon season and promptly derailed by heavy rains, leading politicians to plead for a hundred-day extension so drivers can learn how to say "straight ahead" in proper Marathi. The entire episode captures the theatre of Indian governance, where grand cultural crusades inevitably collide with the mundane reality of flooded schoolhouses and missing instructors. Critics also reasonably point out that targeting cab and auto drivers carries a whiff of selective enforcement, if not outright class bias. The corporate boardrooms of Bandra-Kurla Complex and the luxury high-rises of Worli are populated

by international executives, bankers, and tech entrepreneurs who haven't mastered a single sentence of Marathi - they might even order a 'vada pav' in Hindi - yet no one threatens to revoke their permits or mandate afternoon grammar classes. The burden of carrying the torch of regional heritage falls disproportionately on those at the bottom of the economic ladder, who are already working fourteen-hour shifts in stifling heat. Some of Mumbai's taxi drivers could well benefit from remedial driving lessons, but putting them into a classroom feels less like an attempt at genuine cultural enrichment and more like political theatre designed to appease local vote-banks during election cycles. When regional pride becomes an entry barrier to basic livelihood, cosmopolitanism gives way to parochialism, signalling to the rest of the country that Mumbai's famous openness comes with fine print written strictly in the local script. Whose Anxieties? And yet, framing the debate as a stark choice between total open-market globalisation and narrow nativism misses the pragmatic middle ground where Mumbai actually lives. A middle-class commuter navigating the city's streets does not require a driver to quote seventeenth-century Marathi poetry; they simply need to get to the station without a communication breakdown. Likewise, a driver attempting to make a living has little interest in ideological debates over sub-national identity; they simply want to earn their daily fare without fear of harassment or bureaucratic penalties.

Rs 1.05 Lakh Crore Lost:

INSIDE THE DANGEROUS RISE OF INDIA'S GEN Z STOCK TRADERS

India's investor profile is dynamically shifting to its core demographic dividend: a tech-savvy, enterprising youth population that seems to be taking on more risk in the stock market for higher returns. Reports indicate how the average Indian investor is barely in their early 20s, with half of them being in the under-30 age group. From being 25% of the total NSE registered investors in FY20, the Gen-Z segment rose to account for 40% of them in FY25. RBI data also confirms this sharp demographic change: the share of sub-30 age investors had jumped from 22.6% in March 2019 to 38.9% by July 2025. The National Stock Exchange's Market Pulse report for June 2026 records that the median age of the Indian investor has fallen from 38 in March 2020 to 33 today. Investors under 30 now account for 37.9% of the total investor base, up from 23.5% five years ago. They also made up 59% of all new registrations so far this financial year. The country's demat accounts, which stood at roughly 21.3 crore in November 2025, are estimated to have crossed 23 crore by June, and a large share of that growth - just brokerages alone put the figure near three in four new accounts - belongs to investors below 30. This is not a marginal trend. It is close to becoming the market's centre of gravity. What merits greater attention beyond this shift is the extent to which India's youth is walking into one of the most information-asymmetric arenas in finance, where the safeguards between risk and return on



investment are blurry. With graduate unemployment at record highs, secure jobs scarce, and asset prices outpacing incomes, equities (and especially derivatives) have become the default "Plan B" for a generation that was otherwise told that education guarantees stability in upward mobility towards higher-income and wealth accumulation. A Generation Without a Safety Net It would be tempting - and not entirely wrong - to read this as a story of desperation amongst youth, who are keen to achieve higher income-returns on risk-driven investment. The Periodic Labour Force Survey 2023-24 shows Gen Z unemployment (among those aged 15 to 26) running at 11.9%, against just 2% for millennials. Among Gen Z graduates specifically, joblessness stands at 29% for men and 36.9% for women. Barely one in five employed Gen Z workers has any social security cover at all. A college degree, which was meant to be a ticket to stability, has for a large section of India's youth become simply a longer wait

in a more crowded queue. It would be too easy to stop here. But desperation alone can not explain why so much of this new money is flowing specifically into equities, and, increasingly, into the riskiest end of equities, rather than into gold or real estate, or simply staying in a bank account, as it did for their parents' generation. Something else has changed about how young India relates to the market itself. How a Volatile Market Became The Answer Part of the answer lies not with young investors but with the system that shaped them. Over the last two decades, India quietly replaced the idea of a guaranteed pension with the market-linked National Pension System, made the Systematic Investment Plan the default answer to savings, and built, through Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar-based KYC and UPI, the easiest on-ramp into formal finance anywhere in the world. This was, by most measures, a successful and necessary reform integrating the state-society compact for better digitisation and adop-

tion of technology. But it also had a side effect, wherein an entire generation grew up being told, correctly, that fixed deposits lose to inflation and that equities are where real wealth is built. They are doing what they were taught to do. The problem is not that they entered the market. It is what happens once they are inside it. This is where India's specific moment has an interesting trajectory and where the "higher information asymmetry" reasserts at the heart of equity investing itself. Recent research on Indian brokerage apps finds that gamified features such as streaks, badges, leaderboards, and social trading feeds correlate strongly with higher trading frequency and shorter holding periods, and that the effect is sharpest among the youngest and least experienced users. Alongside this has grown the influence of the "influencer", an unregulated but highly trusted content maker for many young investors, whose advice on options and small-cap bets travels faster than any SEBI disclosure ever could.

UK 'SUPPORTS UKRAINE 100%', BURNHAM SAYS, AFTER RUSSIA'S DRONE WARNING



UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham has said his government will continue "to support Ukraine 100%", after Moscow warned of "consequences" following confirmation that British-made drones were used in recent Ukrainian strikes in Russia. "We are not fair-weather friends, we will be there in Ukraine's hour of need and that won't change," he said. The Russian embassy to the UK earlier accused Britain of "deliberately opting for an escalation of the Ukraine crisis", adding that "the deeper its involvement in the conflict... the higher the price it will

pay". Ukraine has stepped up attacks on Moscow and elsewhere deep inside Russia, particularly targeting oil refineries and logistics sites for its online retailer Wildberries. Asked about the Russian threat, the prime minister maintained the UK was "providing support so that Ukraine can defend itself and that's been the British position all the way through this conflict, by previous prime ministers - it remains the case with me". Russia has warned the UK in the past over its role in providing Ukraine with drone technology, as well as Storm Shadow missiles.



■ Student killed in Philippines Catholic school shooting

IVF staff accused of misleading UK parents about sperm and egg donors in northern Cyprus

At least 30 children, most of them British, are feared to have been conceived by IVF treatment in northern Cyprus using the wrong sperm or egg donors. In each case, the parents suspect they did not get the donors they had selected. The figure is one of several new findings in a BBC investigation that, earlier this year, uncovered the first seven cases. All the parents say they carefully selected anonymous donors based on information such as their medical history, appearance, personality, education and hobbies. However, they have concerns the requested sperm and egg donors may not have been used in their fertility treatments. Half of the 30 children were born from procedures at one clinic, Dogus IVF Centre. "It's absolutely scandalous," said one of the mothers,



Rachel, who recently learned that she received the wrong sperm donor from the clinic. Three people - Dr Firdevs Uguz Tip, Dr Sevet Alpturk, and a patient co-ordinator Julie Hodson - were involved in the care of many of these patients at Dogus. Parents suspect these members of staff may have misled them. Firdevs denies any wrongdoing and neither Alpturk or Hodson have responded to

our questions. In northern Cyprus - a territory where European Union laws do not apply and which is only legally recognised by Turkey - clinics are loosely regulated and promise patients low prices, high success rates and a wide choice of sperm and egg donors. The Turkish-occupied territory is one of the most popular destinations for British people seeking fertility treatment abroad. We first

revealed the emerging scandal in March where a small group of parents appeared to have been misled about donors. Responding to the allegations, the territory's Ministry of Health said it had launched an official investigation. However, it has not responded to our repeated requests for more information. Since then, more parents have contacted us and their stories have concerning similarities. The majority said the clinics they had used had promised them screened, healthy donors from Western Europe, but that they had become suspicious after their children were born. Eleven of the 30 children have now taken commercial DNA tests which show they have inherited genetic ancestry from Turkey or surrounding countries.

Inside secret police warehouse as Germany targets small boats gangs



Inside a warehouse in a secret location in Germany, thousands of life jackets and dozens of dinghies are stacked on top of each other after being seized in a raid on smuggling gangs. Germany has become a staging post for criminals organising crossings on the English Channel, and authorities have now carried out their first raids under a new law making it a crime to facilitate migrant smuggling to the UK. The BBC was given special access to a police storehouse, housing more than 9,000 life jackets and dozens of dinghies and boat engines in an operation in western Germany. The boats could have taken more than 2,000 migrants across the Channel illegally, the UK's National Crime Agency said. Smuggling gangs have long used garages or warehouses to store equipment in western Germany before transporting it to northern France. Until recently, however, key anti-smuggling laws in Germany only applied to nations within the EU's zone of free movement, not to third countries, which included the UK after Brexit. Raids have happened in Germany before, but often relied on French or Belgian warrants. In 2024, Germany said it would tighten its laws to make it easier to prosecute those helping to ferry migrants to the UK, as part of a new plan agreed between the two countries. It followed a

BBC investigation which exposed the country's role in the small boat supply chain. Germany's Interior Ministry confirmed that these raids marked the first time enforcement measures had been taken under the new law, but did not confirm if the law had been employed more than once. The BBC was able to see the results of the raid, which took place in the North Rhine-Westphalia region and involved French, German and UK investigators, at an undisclosed police storehouse in western Germany. The stash has been kept much as it was found. The dinghies, that officials say measure approximately 9m (29ft), are deflated and mainly packaged up in cardboard boxes. The massive haul also included 360 pumps. In June, when the National Crime Agency first revealed the raids had happened, it was estimated that the equipment could have taken more than 2,000 people across the Channel - which would work out to about 65 people per dinghy. That number is less than the so-called mega dinghies seen this summer but matches recent averages as well as the general trend of rising passenger numbers. Oxford's Migration Observatory believes the emergence of these mega dinghies is likely connected to increased enforcement, as there is an "additional incentive for smugglers to fit as many people as possible into available boats".

TUPAC MURDER TRIAL:

'ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE' NIGHT OF RAPPER'S SHOOTING, WITNESS SAYS

In the opening day of Tupac Shakur's murder trial, prosecutors painted former gang leader Duane "Keffe D" Davis as someone seeking revenge before masterminding the drive-by shooting that killed the iconic rapper. Witnesses took a Las Vegas jury back in time by three decades, to the night Shakur was shot, when gangs had a hold over '90s hip-hop and distrust in police led to a lack of cooperation. Davis, 63, is charged with Shakur's murder - one of the most famous cold cases of the last century. Prosecutors allege that although Davis did not fire the gun that killed the influential rapper, he orchestrated the killing. Davis has denied the allegations and pleaded not guilty. In its opening arguments, the prosecution portrayed Davis as the ringleader of the group responsible for the shooting - and point to a memoir he co-authored in which he wrote in detail about the night of the shooting. "Let's be clear, Duane Davis did not pull the



trigger. But he did plan the shooting in retaliation of the beating of his nephew," Chief Deputy District Attorney Binu Palal said, referring to an incident that took place earlier in the day when Shakur was shot. "Remarkably, you will learn that from Duane Davis himself," Palal told the jury. Davis's lawyers called the narrative "fiction", dubbing the case a product of a flawed decades-long investigation. Davis has distanced himself from the memoir, saying he didn't write all of it and that parts were fictionalised to sell more copies. Davis, wearing a

navy suit and blue tie, sat with his defence team as they questioned why no one had been arrested for nearly three decades and asked why "no-one corroborates any of this". "What facts do they have after 30 years?" his lawyer Michael Sanft asked. The prosecution's first witness was Garry Dale, who was working for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department at the time of the shooting in September 1996. The officer detailed travelling in an ambulance with Shakur after he'd been shot. He said the rapper refused to offer any information on what happened and who had

shot him. "We'll take care of it," Shakur said, according to the officer's testimony. At the core of the case is East Coast vs West Coast rap rivalries and turf wars between the Bloods and the Crips street gangs that were immortalised in rap lyrics and news reports in the 1990s. Police have long said said a lack of co-operation in the case led to dead ends in their investigation. Members of the rapper's entourage, though, have accused authorities of initially treating them like suspects and failing to follow important leads. Throughout proceedings on Monday, prosecutors painted that picture for the jury, explaining that there were no formal criminal charges in the shooting because in the world of guns and gangs "silence means survival". But "one person" who had a hard time staying silent was the defendant, prosecutors said, noting that Davis gave a "number" of statements on the case between 1998 and 2003.

DOCTORS REMOVE 3.1KG STONE FROM MAN'S BLADDER AND CLAIM RECORD



Doctors in Sri Lanka have removed a 3.1kg (6.8lb) bladder stone from a man - which they believe to be the largest of its kind on record. The procedure was carried out last week at a hospital in Trincomalee, in the east of the country. The 55-year-old patient had been admitted to hospital after suffering a stroke. But while receiving treatment, doctors found stones in his urinary bladder after noticing that he was experiencing difficulty urinating. During surgery, doctors removed the bladder stone - it weighed as much as a full-term baby and was around the size of an ostrich egg. "According to available records, it is the largest blad-

der stone ever documented and removed through surgery," Dr Prahalathan Balakrishnan, who led the surgery, told BBC Sinhala. He added that the patient was in "very good health". The patient remains at the hospital and is continuing to receive treatment for his other medical conditions, doctors said. Dr Balakrishnan added the stone would have been in the patient's bladder for about five to 10 years. Bladder stones are formed when minerals in the urine crystallise, turning into solid lumps. They commonly occur when the bladder does not empty completely, leaving concentrated urine that can turn into crystals.



China censors public mourning as it holds former premier's funeral

Hayden Panettiere's ex Wladimir Klitschko says family in 'profound shock and grief'

Hayden Panettiere's ex-partner Wladimir Klitschko has posted an emotional tribute to the "talented" late Heroes and Nashville star, who he said has "left this world too soon". The former world heavyweight boxing champion, who shares an 11-year-old daughter with Panettiere, said the family is going through "profound shock and grief" following her death at the age of 36. Panettiere died in Greenville, South Carolina, on Sunday and police said there were not "any signs of foul play or suspicious circumstances". She had struggled for years with substance abuse and audio from police dispatchers and crews said they were responding to a "cardiac arrest" and detailed their efforts to resuscitate the woman after a possible "overdose". The Greenville County



Coroner's Office said crews treated a woman in "cardiac arrest" and her autopsy showed "no signs of trauma", but that the cause of death has not been confirmed. Darker side of industry' Klitschko posted that the announcement of Panettiere's "tragic death saddens me deeply". "She left this world far too soon. Hayden was, although no longer my partner, an impor-

tant part of my life and the mother of our daughter, Kaya. "She built an incredible career through immense talent, while also facing the darker sides of a very demanding industry. Nothing will erase the times we shared or the place she had in our lives." The pair, who met in around 2009, announced their engagement in 2013 and had their daughter together the following year.

They never married. "To our daughter Kaya, I will always speak of her mother with respect and make sure she remembers the person she was," he continued. "I extend my deepest condolences to Hayden's parents, her friends, and her fans, who are also grieving today. Young and talented people like Hayden should not leave this world so soon. "I ask everyone to please respect our family's feelings and privacy during this incredibly difficult time. For now, this is all I wish to say. "Thank you to everyone who is supporting my family and expressing their sincere condolences. "Rest easy, Hayden. May you find eternal peace." Strong bond Panettiere met Klitschko, who was 13 years older than her, at a party in Los Angeles when she was 19.

KL RAHUL'S BROMANCE WITH DEVDUTT PADIKKAL AFTER PERFECT DRS CALL SAVES HIM VS SRI LANKA

India's intent on Day 4 of the first Test against Sri Lanka was clear: score fast. After Yashasvi Jaiswal departed in the first over, first-innings centurion Devdutt Padikkal and KL Rahul kept India going at a good pace, and India's lead swelled past the 225-run mark in the first hour of play. Rahul ultimately fell for 35, but he could have departed much earlier if not for a timely intervention from Padikkal. On the last ball of the 11th over of India's innings, bowled by Prabath Jayasuriya, Rahul was adjudged LBW. Jayasuriya got one to dart in as Rahul's forward defence was beaten and the ball struck his pads. Rahul almost started walking before Padikkal convinced him to take a review. The replays showed no bat involved, and the impact was in line. However, due to the height of the delivery, the ball was missing the stumps. A relieved Rahul



gave Padikkal a big hug. Earlier on Day 3, Sonal Dinusha's maiden Test hundred rescued Sri Lanka as the home side was bowled out for 284 in the first innings of the opening Test against India on Monday. Dinusha scored 100 off 168 balls, including four fours and two sixes, and put on 146 runs for the sixth wicket with Niroshan Dickwella (80). The duo saved the day after Sri Lanka had slumped to 90/5, but India remained in a strong position after posting 462 earlier. India's bowlers started the day

strongly, with Mohammed Siraj having Nishan Madushka caught at slip for a two-ball duck. Left-arm spinner Manav Suthar struck with the first delivery he bowled, having Dinesh Chandimal (4) caught behind. Kamindu Mendis (14) and Lahiru Udara (27) resisted with a 26-run stand for the third wicket until Suthar ended the partnership by having Udara caught at point. Three overs later, Shubman Gill took a stunning one-handed diving catch at cover off Kuldeep Yadav to send Mendis back.



David Warner Convicted And Handed Hefty Punishment Over Drink-Driving Incident

Former Australia cricketer David Warner has been fined A\$1,500 and ordered to use an alcohol interlock device on his car for 12 months after being convicted of mid-range drink driving by a Sydney court on Tuesday, reported Sky Sports. Warner, 39, pleaded guilty last month after being arrested on Easter Sunday following a random breath test on the outskirts of Sydney. He

recorded a blood-alcohol reading of 0.104, more than twice the legal limit, after driving from a friend's apartment. The Waverley Local Court heard that Warner had consumed three glasses of white wine before getting behind the wheel. He stopped his vehicle after spotting the roadside breath-testing operation and attempted to swap seats with a female passenger. While handing down the sentence, Judge Clare Farnan acknowledged that Warner was unlikely to repeat the offence but stressed the broader consequences of drink driving. "I accept Mr Warner is unlikely to re-offend," Farnan said, as per Sky Sports. "(But) regrettably, drink-driving is still a significant factor in many crashes in New South Wales." The former Australia opener was also ordered to have an alcohol interlock device installed in his vehicle. The device prevents a car from starting if it detects alcohol in the driver's system. Warner's lawyer had argued

before sentencing that his client had already faced additional punishment through extensive media coverage and should be spared a conviction. Warner did not comment as he left the court, where he was met by a large media contingent. The former cricketer retired from international cricket in 2024 after a career that included 112 Tests and more than 250 appearances across limited-overs formats for Australia. He has since continued his involvement in cricket through commentary and franchise cricket. Warner currently serves as captain of Sydney Thunder in Australia's Big Bash League and Karachi Kings in the Pakistan Super League. The incident could also have implications for his position with Sydney Thunder. The franchise is part of a New South Wales government campaign promoting safe driving, while Cricket NSW is yet to announce any decision regarding Warner's long-term role as Thunder captain.

ARSENAL PRIMED FOR PREMIER LEAGUE TITLE DEFENCE AS RIVALS FACE QUESTIONS

Arsenal and Manchester City find themselves in unusual positions heading into the Premier League season, but there is no question which of the title contenders feels more comfortable with their new status. For the first time since the 2004-05 season, Arsenal will start a campaign as English champions when they host promoted Coventry in the opening game of the season on Friday. In contrast to the buoyant mood at the Emirates Stadium, City have stepped anxiously into life without Pep Guardiola after the Spaniard ended his remarkable 10-year reign at the end of last season. After years spent in City's shadow, Mikel Arteta's side triggered a seismic shift in the Premier League's balance of power last season as they finally clinched their first top-flight title in 22 years. Arsenal finished seven points above runners-up City and are flying high as they begin their bid to win successive English titles for the first time since the 1930s. Arteta won't let his players rest on



their laurels, with the painful defeat against Paris Saint-Germain on penalties in the Champions League final in May serving to strengthen Arsenal's desire for more silverware. On the evidence of Arsenal's emphatic 3-0 win over City in the Community Shield on Sunday, the Gunners have already widened the gap between the clubs since last season. Arteta's side have added Newcastle midfielder

Bruno Guimaraes and Christos Tzolis to their title-winning squad, with both impressing in the demolition of City. "The desire comes because I want to live that moment again," Arteta said. "We know the difficulty of the task. We know that it's going to demand something special and we are ready for it." Guardiola failed to win the title in his last two years at the Etihad Stadium after taking the trophy six

times in seven seasons until 2024. Former Chelsea boss Enzo Maresca has been hired to replace Guardiola, but the Italian faces an almost impossible task to replicate his predecessor's astonishing haul of 20 trophies in an unforgettable decade in charge. Maresca won the UEFA Conference League and Club World Cup with Chelsea, but he lasted less than two years at Stamford Bridge before an abrupt departure sparked by his tense relationship with the club's hierarchy and fan frustration at his dull tactics. It's a privilege' Catching Arsenal while finishing the rebuilding job started by Guardiola, who began to replace his ageing stars with younger recruits, is a daunting prospect for Maresca. City, who host Bournemouth in their first game on Sunday, have splashed out £116 million (\$157 million) on Nottingham Forest midfielder Elliot Anderson. But the sale of World Cup-winning Spain star Rodri to Barcelona is a huge blow for Maresca.

'BOWLERS GET ANGRY': Ajinkya Rahane Lifts Lid On Rishabh Pant's Behind-The-Stumps Antics

Apart from India's dominating show against Sri Lanka in the first Test in Galle, the one thing that was back on display was Rishabh Pant's constant chatter behind the stumps. From becoming a weatherman with statements like, "Bhai chalo chalo jaldi, waha se badal bhi aa rahe hain (Brothers, let's get going quickly, clouds are approaching from there)," to egging on the bowlers with one-liners such as, 'Phir sabhi milkar talwar chalayenge! (Then we'll all swing the sword together)," Pant just didn't stop. Ajinkya Rahane, who has played with Pant for a long time, said that while it is entertaining, it can sometimes be distracting too. "He is always like this. He is very entertaining. The Sri Lankan players don't understand Hindi, but if you keep talking like this, the batter's



focus wavers. You have to focus in the slips and at short leg, and the bowlers start getting angry. If there is an edge and the ball goes by your side, and you are not able to put in your best effort, the bowlers get angry. Ashwin and Jadeja were there (when Rahane was part of the Indian team). You had to tell him to disturb the batter and not our own players," Rahane said on Sony

Sports. On Day 3, India wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant and substitute fielder Sarfaraz Khan left everyone in splits with their hilarious conversation, which was caught on the stump mic during the first Test against Sri Lanka on Monday. India found themselves in a brilliant position as the bowlers, led by Manav Suthar, reduced Sri Lanka to 99/5 at lunch.

WHAT'S GOING ON AT CADILLAC AND HAAS?

After a four-week summer break, Formula 1 returns with the Dutch Grand Prix this weekend. Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli has a 50-point lead in the drivers' championship going into the race at Zandvoort. There are 12 races remaining on the 2026 schedule, though uncertainty remains over whether Qatar and Abu Dhabi will go ahead because of the conflict in the Middle East. Before the season resumes, our F1 correspondent Andrew Benson answers your latest questions. Is the Cadillac reorganisation too hasty? Surely the team would have been better served by evaluating at the end of the debut season? - Tim.



Badminton World Championships Day 2 Highlights: Lakshya Sen, Treesa Jolly-Gayatri Gopichand Emerge Victorious

Lakshya Sen overcame early jitters to prevail over Collins Valentine Filimon of Bulgaria in three games to progress to the second round of the men's singles event at the BWF World Championships. Sen registered a 16-21 21-8 21-4 win over Filimon in his opener that lasted 45 minutes. Sen will next play the US' Garret Tan, who defeated Switzerland's Tobias Kuenzi 21-4 21-15. The unseeded Indian pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand stunned 16th seeds Lauren Lam and Allison Quynh Lee of the United States in straight games to sail into the pre-quarterfinals of the women's doubles event. Treesa and Gayatri took just 38 minutes to beat their



fancied opponents 21-15 21-12 and progress to the next round. India witnessed a disastrous outing in the mixed doubles event with the pairs of Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika Shivani Gadde, and Ashith Surya and Amrutha Pramuthesh crashing out in the opening

round. Rising Indian women's singles shuttler Unnati Hooda progressed to the second round with a hard-fought 22-20 21-16 win over Thet Htar Thuzar of Myanmar in a 40 minute contest. Unnati will next take on 13th seed Michelle Li of Canada.

HAALAND'S MAIN RIVALS FOR THE PREMIER LEAGUE GOLDEN BOOT



The Manchester City striker has won the Premier League's Golden Boot in three of his four seasons in English football. The Norwegian scored a record 36 goals in 2022-23 and won it in the next campaign - and again last season - with 27 each time. With 112 goals in 132 English top-flight games, he will take some stopping again - even if he is now under a new manager in Enzo Maresca. The 26-year-old comes into this campaign after a seven-goal World Cup for Norway - a total which would have won the Golden Boot in more than half of the previous tournaments. Alexander Isak (Liverpool) It is almost easy to forget about the British record signing in this discussion, after the Swede spent so much of last season injured. The 26-year-old finished second in the Golden Boot race in 2024-25 with 23 goals, outscoring Haaland and only finishing behind Salah. But he only managed four goals in 22 games in all

competitions for Liverpool last season after his £125m move from Newcastle. If he can stay fit and new Reds manager Andoni Iraola can provide him with the service he was sorely lacking last season, he will hope to show why Liverpool paid £125m for him. Thiago will hope to avoid being a one-season wonder for Brentford - assuming he stays with the Bees. The 25-year-old scored 22 Premier League goals in his first proper season playing in England - having missed most of the previous season through injury. He finished second only to Haaland in the Golden Boot race. That form led to him playing for Brazil at the World Cup, having never been capped before this year. Manchester United are among the clubs reportedly interested in him. Joao Pedro (Chelsea) Joao Pedro will be hoping to build on his 15 Premier League goals last campaign for Chelsea following his move from Brighton.

WILLIAMS SISTERS CRASH OUT OF CINCINNATI OPEN; ALEXANDER ZVEREV ADVANCES

Serena and Venus Williams lost in their first doubles match together since 2022 while men's top seed Alexander Zverev battled into the fourth round on Monday at the ATP-USTA Cincinnati Masters. The Williams sisters, with 14 Grand Slam titles and three Olympic gold medals together, were side-by-side for the first time since the 2022 US Open but lost to American Payton Stearns and Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine 6-2, 1-6, 10-8. "It was fun and special. We kicked off a little rust," Serena Williams said. "I didn't come here to win this tournament. It's about having fun and I did

want to do the best I could." German star Zverev, the reigning French Open champion, won his ATP season-best 46th match of the campaign by defeating Terrance Atmane 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (8/6). Zverev finished the Frenchman, a 2025 Cincinnati semi-finalist, with a sizzling backhand down the line. "He was playing incredibly aggressively, hitting forehands all over the court," Zverev said. "He made it difficult for you to play aggressive yourself." Serena, 44, and Venus, 46, each lost serve once in the first set, dropping six of the final seven games, but dominated the second set and

rallied from 8-2 down in the 10-point tie-breaker third set only to lose on a Venus double fault. "It was weird to be in a full stadium. This is not my usual Monday night," said Serena, who noted with the US Open approaching that their reunion is a limited-time attraction. "This is not forever. It's... not long," she said. "We don't have to play every week. It's a bit different." Alexandra Eala, the 17th-seeded Filipina, lost to US ninth seed Amanda Anisimova, who recovered after losing a 65-minute opening set for a 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory. The opener featured a 20-minute fifth game,

with Eala, 21, coming back from a break down before Anisimova battled back. Men's fifth seed Alex de Minaur battled through multiple rain interruptions to defeat Arthur Fery 7-5, 7-6 (7/3). The Australian was up a set and 5-1 after a 30-minute stoppage before Wimbledon semi-finalist Fery caught fire, but he took the tie-break to advance despite 29 unforced errors. "You never want to go into a rain delay leading 5-1," he said. "It was a tough day with all the interruptions. I can't remember a match that started and stopped so many times.





ACTRESS POOJA HEGDE WAVES TRICOLOUR AT NY PARADE

Pooja Hegde had a special moment as she was invited as the Guest of Honour at the India Day Parade in New York. The actress shared how proud and honoured she felt seeing so many Indians come together to celebrate the country on foreign soil. For the special occasion, Pooja looked radiant in a yellow and mint-green organza saree with delicate floral embroidery, paired with a matching sash. She kept her look traditional yet elegant with a choker necklace, jhumka earrings, and soft waves, completing the outfit with a bindi that added a graceful, festive touch. She posted pictures on

Instagram, where she is seen holding the Indian flag while standing atop a car during the parade. She was also given a sash that read “Chief Guest.” Pooja called it a matter of immense pride to witness the streets of New York filled with Indians celebrating everything that connects them to home. She also thanked the organisers for the special experience. The parade, held on Madison Avenue, is known

as the largest India Day celebration outside India. Actor Adivi Sesh also joined as chief guest. On the work front, Pooja has an exciting lineup ahead, she will lead Kanchana 4, the next installment of the popular horror-comedy franchise directed by Raghava Lawrence, who also co-stars. She will also be seen in Sri Sri starring Dulquer Salmaan, a romantic Telugu film directed by Ravi

Nelakuditi, and Sanki, a high-octane action thriller alongside Ahan Shetty. She captioned her post: “It was truly an honour and a matter of immense pride to be the Guest of Honour at the India Day Parade in New York. There was something incredibly surreal about seeing the streets of New York come alive with so many Indians, proudly celebrating our country and everything that connects us to home.” She went on to thank the Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) and city officials for organising the celebration, adding that representing the country abroad is a privilege she doesn’t take lightly.



ACTRESS ANANYA RAJ PASSES AWAY AT 35



Actor Ananya Raj, known for working in movies such as “7 Hours To Go”, “The Final Exit” and “Ghost”, died last month, her family has said. The 35-year-old actor died in her sleep in the early hours of July 15, according to a statement shared by her family on Instagram more than a month after her death. “With great pain, we have to announce that Ananya passed away in the wee hours of 15th July. She passed away peacefully in sleep. “For over a year she was going through physical and mental discomfort. And she fought like a warrior to over-

come them. She was a strong spirited girl and lived like a Queen,” read the statement. The family further said they wished to maintain privacy during a difficult period. Raj began her Bollywood career with “7 Hours to Go” in 2016, followed by “The Final Exit” in 2017 and “Ghost” in 2019. She also appeared in music videos for labels including T-Series, Zee Music and Times Music. The 35-year-old actor died in her sleep in the early hours of July 15, according to a statement shared by her family on Instagram more than a month after her death.

SARDAR SARVAI PAPANNA” PRE-RELEASE EVENT HELD GRANDLY IN THE PRESENCE OF SEVERAL FILM AND POLITICAL PERSONALITIES

Sardar Sarvai Papanna” is an animation movie based on the life story of the historic warrior Sardar Sarvai Papanna, who earned fame as the “Bahujan Emperor.” The film has been written, directed and produced by Venkatesh Goud Lingampally. The movie is presented by V.G. Movie Makers, with Deepak Nyathi overseeing production responsibilities. The animation movie is gearing up for a grand theatrical release on the 21st of this month through Dr. Prathani Ramakrishna Goud’s RK Films. The pre-release event of “Sardar



Sarvai Papanna” was held grandly in Hyderabad today in the presence of

several prominent personalities from the film and political fields.

Acclaimed Romantic Drama Chennai Love Story Premieres on Sony LIV on 21st August

Celebrated for its refreshing take on first love and emotionally resonant storytelling, Chennai Love Story is set to make its digital premiere on Sony LIV on 21st August. A ₹60 Cr+ grosser that won audiences over in theatres with its heartfelt narrative, soulful music, and charming performances, the romantic drama now arrives on streaming for viewers across the country in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi Directed by Ravi Namburii, with the screenplay handled by Ravi Namburii and Sai Rajesh Neelam, the film is written by Sai Rajesh and produced by SKN and Sai Rajesh Neelam under the banners of Amrutha Productions and Mass Movie Makers. Kiran Abbavaram and Sri Gouri Priya play the lead roles. Set against the vibrant backdrop of Chennai, the coming-of-age romance follows two young hearts as they navigate the excitement, innocence, and heartbreak of first love, discovering that growing up is as much about finding yourself as it is about finding each other.



RAASHI KHANNA TURNS A SHAWL INTO STYLE

Raashi Khanna, who never fails to amaze with her stunning looks, has once again nailed it with her latest photoshoot. The actress was seen draped in a cozy red shawl that added a touch of elegance and warmth to her otherwise minimal outfit. In the first look, she paired the oversized red shawl with a plunging neckline, letting it fall off one shoulder for a sultry yet sophisticated vibe. Her tousled waves and soft smoky eyes complemented the fuss-free glam, while a nude-toned lip tied the whole look together. In the second click, Raashi got creative with the same shawl, wrapping it snugly around herself like a stole and pairing it with a

checkered mini skirt. The fringe detailing on the shawl added texture and movement to the frame, while the contrast between the bold red and the monochrome check print made for a striking style statement. The actress’s ability to turn a single piece of clothing into two distinct looks, one glamorous and one playful, is proof of her effortless fashion sense. On the work front, Raashi Khanna has an interesting lineup ahead. She has Dharman in the pipeline, a Tamil film currently in the filming stage. She also has Rowdy and Co, where she plays Bindhu, which is currently filming as well. Her Hindi project Bridge is in production too.

‘The Red Bag’ Will Appeal to Audiences Across All Sections: Producer Harikrishna Somisetty

Produced by Harikrishna Somisetty under the Memory Makers banner, The Red Bag is a different suspense thriller directed by Ravi Kumar Seerapu. The film features Kabir Singh, Prasad Behara, Raadhya, Monica, Sneha Singh, Akanksha, Eeshan Shankar, Avinash Badal, Bhargavi and Raasi in key roles. PVR INOX Pictures is set to release the film on a grand scale on August 21. As the film gears up for its theatrical release, producer Harikrishna Somisetty shared his confidence in the movie and spoke about the response to its promotional content. *Producer Harikrishna Somisetty said* , “There is a good amount of hype surrounding The Red Bag. Every piece of content we have released so far has received an encouraging response. The glimpses, teaser and songs have all trended on YouTube, and our content has received appreciation from all quarters. “Everyone who watched the promotional content appreciated the stylish presentation of the film and the action sequences. The movie will create ten times more impact

Highlights

■ Produced by Harikrishna Somisetty under the Memory Makers banner, The Red Bag is a different suspense thriller directed by Ravi Kumar Seerapu.



than what audiences have seen in the content released so far. Nobody will be able to guess the twists in the film. “The story keeps the audience engaged with thrilling moments until the very end. We have made the film with elements that will appeal to audiences across all sections. It has all the essential elements, including action, suspense and thrilling sequences. “The artistes and the entire technical team extended their complete support to the project. We are now gearing up for a grand theatrical

release on August 21. “PVR INOX Pictures has been providing us with tremendous support in terms of the release. With their cooperation, we are able to bring the movie to audiences across a large number of screens. I am confident that The Red Bag will appeal to audiences and entertain everyone,” he concluded. The Red Bag is gearing up for a grand theatrical release on August 21, promising audiences a stylish suspense thriller packed with action, thrills and unpredictable twists.

We will see a very new Ravi Teja in 'Irumudi': Director Shiva Nirvana

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja’s most awaited movie ‘Irumudi’. Priya Bhavani Shankar is playing the heroine. Directed by Shiva Nirvana and produced by Mythri Movie Makers, this movie has already raised huge expectations with its glimpses, trailer and songs. The movie, which is going to hit the theaters on August 21, is going to provide the audience with a different family entertainer experience with emotions and action. On this occasion, director Shiva Nirvana shared the features of the movie in a press conference.



THERE IS A BUZZ ON SOCIAL MEDIA THAT RAM CHARAN WILL BE SEEN IN THIS FILM. WILL HE REALLY BE SEEN? -No. It’s just a social media campaign. Ram Charan is a devotee of Ayyappa. He has that vibe. Maybe the fans wanted it that way. But there is no truth in the campaign that Charan will be seen in this. I hope Ram Charan likes this film. There have been a lot of expectations ever since the title of ‘Irumudi’ was announced. The promotional content that came later has increased those expectations even more. Will the film live up to these huge expectations?

‘There will be a total of three layers in this film. One is the background of Ayyappa Swamy Mala, as well as the family, and the other is the crime angle. I have also planned the promotions according to that content. According to that plan, we have been revealing every single thing related to this film. As the trailer approaches, everyone has now got clarity about what is going on in the film. Everyone is prepared to see what is in the film. The film will definitely meet those expectations.

Pawan Kalyan garu Personally Called Me and Spoke to Me After Seeing My Work

With impressive projects like Aay, Save the Tigers, Vikatakavi and Gurthukostunnayi to his credit, music director Ajay Arasada has carved a distinct identity for himself among Telugu audiences. With several promising offers coming his way, Ajay Arasada opened up about his journey in the film industry and shared several interesting experiences. Here are excerpts from his conversation:



TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND. - Art and music run in my family and are in my blood. I am from Vizag. I also worked at TCS for seven years. While I was working, I got an opportunity to work on two films. Devi Sri Prasad is my inspiration. It was because of the support from my mother and wife that I could enter this industry. Sricharan, who is also from Vizag, is a very good friend of mine. He brought me on board as a keyboard programmer for Goodachari.

What challenges did you face while working on smaller films? - I never faced any difficulties working on small films. Since I worked with good production houses, there were never any issues with payments. So, I did not really face any major challenges in that regard.

Are you trying to establish a distinct identity for yourself? - I want to work across all kinds of genres and stories. My intention is to do justice to every story that comes my way. If I get a mass story, I will create mass music for it. There is a perception among some people here that if a music director comes from Tamil cinema, he will bring something new, and if someone comes from Malayalam cinema, he will bring a fresh sound. I don’t think that should be the approach.

YUKTI THAREJA NAILS CASUAL GLAM BY POOL

