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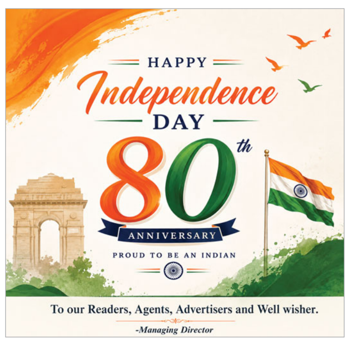

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IN SHORT

Centre avoided discussion during Monsoon Session: Congress

SHIMLA: (Aug 14) The Congress on Friday attacked the central government, saying it was not the opposition that was running away from discussion during Parliament's Monsoon Session, rather the government was avoiding the opposition's questions.

58 advanced fire-fighting vehicles launched

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said the State Government was strengthening and modernising the Fire Services Department to protect lives and property during fires and other disasters. He on Friday flagged off 58 new fire-fighting vehicles procured at a cost of around Rs.40 crore with funds from the 15th Finance Commission. Of the newly introduced vehicles, 25 advanced fire-fighting vehicles worth Rs.18.68 crore will be deployed mainly in rural and forest areas to reach accident and fire locations quickly and provide immediate services. Another 20 water bowzers, costing Rs.14.79 crore, have been made available to ensure continuous water supply during major fire accidents. Each bowzer can carry around 14,000 litres of water and will be particularly useful in urban and industrial areas.

The department has also introduced 13 quick-response multi-purpose fire-fighting vehicles at a cost of Rs.6.37 crore. Designed with advanced technology, these vehicles can reach narrow and congested areas quickly and respond to emergencies. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu said the government was procuring modern fire-fighting vehicles and equipment in phases at a total cost of Rs.252.86 crore through Central and State funds. In the first phase, 65 vehicles were provided at a cost of Rs.33 crore, while 58 vehicles worth Rs.40 crore were being launched in the second phase. More vehicles and fire-fighting equipment would be added in the third phase, he said.

DECLASSIFIED: OPERATION SINDOOR: AJIT DOVAL REVEALS WHAT PM MODI ASKED HIM AFTER PAHALGAM ATTACK

Mumbai, Aug 14 : The National Security Advisor Ajit Doval has revealed the questions PM Modi asked him immediately after the Pahalgam terror attack.

In his first on-camera interview on Operation Sindoor, Ajit Doval spoke about the unknown details of the events and decisions that led to India's military operation.

Recalling his interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi following the Pahalgam terror attack, Ajit Doval said in the documentary, "Prime Minister returned. Foreign Secretary had come to receive him. Then at the airport itself, he had a meeting. First he wanted to know all the facts, and then his first question to me was, 'Who has done it?', 'Who is this Boss?' We should be very keen on who the perpetrators are. I want it immediately'." Ajit Doval further praised our intelligence agencies for giving results in such a short time.

"Thanks to our intelligence agen-

cies. I think they did a brilliant job, and within a very short time we were able to arrive at the conclusion," he added.

On April 22, 2025, some gunmen opened fire on tourists at the Baisaran meadow near Pahalgam, in Jammu & Kashmir's Anantnag district, leading to the death of 26 civilians (mostly Hindu visitors), along with a local guide. India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) later confirmed that Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its affiliate The Resistance Front (TRF) were responsible for the attack.

K'taka govt to withdraw gutka ban after backlash

Bengaluru, Aug 14 : The Karnataka government is contemplating withdrawing its gutka ban order within days of its implementation, following strong backlash from legislators across party lines who raised concerns about its impact on arecanut growers in several districts of the state, sources confirmed on Friday.

According to insiders, Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has already directed officials to withdraw the order banning gutka in Karnataka, after legislators expressed strong opposition and highlighted the adverse impact on arecanut growers.

The issue reportedly came up for discussion at the Cabinet meeting on Thursday, where Shivakumar questioned how an order of such importance could have been issued without his knowledge. He reportedly pulled up the Health Department Secretary over the decision and sought to know why the matter had not been discussed with him before the order was issued.

Shivakumar pointed out that farmers in around seven to eight districts are heavily dependent on arecanut cultivation. Several Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress MLAs had met the Chief Minister and raised concerns that the gutka ban

could adversely affect arecanut growers. When legislators met him, Shivakumar reportedly said he was unaware of the decision and assured them he would address the issue. The MLAs expressed displeasure over the decision being taken without consultation.

Reacting to the development, former Chief Minister and BJP MP Basavaraj Bommai said the government needed to strike a balance between public health concerns and farmers' interests. "There are two matters. One is health, which must be ensured, but the interests of arecanut growers must also be protected," Bommai said.

He pointed out that arecanut cultivation, earlier largely confined to the Malnad region, has now spread to several districts of Karnataka and is being cultivated on a large scale. Bommai warned that any unilateral decision affecting the arecanut sector could seriously impact farmers who have invested heavily in the crop.

Telangana Cabinet OKs Smart Cards, Investment Summit

• Smart Ration Cards From August 15 Telangana Rising Global Summit 2.0 in December

Hyderabad (TSIT BUREAU): The Telangana Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, on Friday approved several major initiatives covering food security, investment, agriculture, education, skills, green mobility, irrigation and energy.

The Cabinet decided to launch Smart Ration Cards across Telangana on August 15, benefiting around 3.42 crore ration beneficiaries. It also approved the Telangana Rising Global Summit 2.0 from December 7 to 9 under the theme "Invest Telangana". The summit will highlight investment opportunities in defence, aerospace and pharmaceuticals and showcase the Future City Plan. For farmers, the government approved seven fine paddy varieties eligible for the Rs.500 bonus and decided to conduct awareness campaigns.

It also approved the e-auction of 17.54 lakh metric tonnes of surplus Yasangi paddy at a base price of Rs.2,389 per quintal.The Cabinet approved bringing ITIs, Advanced Technical Centres and Polytechnic colleges under the Young India Skills University. Seven additional Young India Integrated Residential Schools were also approved.To promote green mobility, a Rs.200-crore electric auto conversion scheme was cleared, offering subsidies of up to Rs.1.50 lakh per vehicle.The Cabinet sanctioned Rs.2,100 crore for Phase-II of the Makthal-Narayanpet-Kodangal Lift Irrigation Scheme.

Congress' Meloni jibe: MEA harps India-Italy ties, BJP hits out

New Delhi (TSIT): A day after an exchange between two senior Congress leaders during a party event sparked a controversy involving Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, India on Friday, August 14, stressed that it enjoys strong ties with Italy and highlighted the need to uphold mutual respect in public discourse.

At his media briefing, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "We have strong ties with Italy. Our ties with Italy in recent years have expanded and strengthened. It is important, as part of diplomatic practice, that we strengthen our ties, keeping in mind being respectful of each other."

Jaiswal was responding to a question on Rahul Gandhi's recent criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's handling of foreign policy and subsequent remarks by Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit.

What transpired at Rachnatmak Congress National Convention

Addressing the Rachnatmak Congress National Convention, Gandhi said that it has somehow been ingrained in Modi's mind that foreign policy is about hugging leaders. "Imagine the ignorance… where did he get the idea that foreign policy was about hugging leaders?" he said.

As if giving a demonstration, Gandhi then called Rachnatmak Congress chief Sandeep Dikshit, grabbed him by the shoulders, and held him in a tight embrace.

An initially stunned Dikshit then shot back, "Meloni samajh ke toh nahi pakda tha (Did you mistake me for Meloni?)" As the venue erupted into

Technology making logistics faster, more efficient; key to 'Viksit Bharat', says Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, Aug 14 : Technology is helping make India's logistics ecosystem simpler, faster and more efficient, strengthening the competitiveness of domestic industry and supporting the country's manufacturing and export ambitions, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday as the Logistics Data Bank (LDB) achieved the milestone of tracking 10 crore EXIM containers.

He said efficient logistics would play a crucial role in strengthening manufacturing, expanding India's presence in global markets and realising the Prime Minister's vision of a Viksit Bharat.

"The tracking of 10 crore containers through the Logistics Data Bank is an important milestone in India's logistics journey. Technology is helping us make logistics simpler, faster and more efficient, while improving the competitiveness of Indian industry," Goyal said.

"Efficient logistics will be central to strengthening manufacturing, expanding our presence in global markets and realising the Prime Minister's vision of a Viksit Bharat," Goyal added.

The Logistics Data Bank provides end-to-end visibility of EXIM container movement across India through RFID-based tracking technology.The platform currently offers visibility into 100 per cent of the country's EXIM container movement, covering 19 ports and 32 container terminals. Its network spans 103 Inland Container Depots (ICDs), 439 Container Freight Stations (CFSs), empty yards, parking plazas and industrial zones, along with 89 manufacturing Special Economic Zones (SEZs), 5,569 railway stations, 269 toll plazas and three Integrated Check Posts. The platform enables stakeholders to monitor container movement across the logistics chain and generates analytics related to dwell time, transit time, and port and terminal performance.

The data helps logistics operators, exporters, importers and policymakers identify bottlenecks and improve operational efficiency.In September 2025, Piyush Goyal launched LDB 2.0, which significantly enhanced the platform's capabilities. The upgraded version introduced high-seas tracking of India's export containers and provided multimodal shipment visibility, allowing users to monitor cargo movements more comprehensively.

Indian drones miss Trump tariff carve-out

Washington, Aug 14 : Indian drone manufacturers have been left outside a preferential US tariff regime that gives selected partners lower rates, potentially subjecting India-made unmanned aircraft and components to duties of up to 100 per cent. President Donald Trump signed the proclamation on Thursday to address what the White House described as a national security threat arising from US dependence on imported drones and components.

The measure does not name India or impose an India-specific tariff. However, India is absent from the group whose qualifying products will receive lower rates.Eligible drones and components from the European Union, Japan, Liechtenstein, South Korea, Switzerland and Taiwan will face a maximum tariff of 15 per cent. Qualifying British products will be subject to a maximum rate of 10 per cent.

Xiaomi India announced the launch of the REDMI Note 17 5G

Bangalore : Xiaomi India today announced the launch of the REDMI Note 17 5G, the latest addition to India's most trusted smartphone series. Built to eliminate battery anxiety, the REDMI Note 17 combines REDMI's biggest-ever 8000mAh silicon-carbon battery with a premium TrueColour AMOLED display, trusted Snapdragon performance, and long-term software support to deliver a complete smartphone experience.

The REDMI Note 17 features REDMI's largest-ever 8000mAh silicon-carbon battery, delivering up to three days of typical usage while maintaining a slim 8.4mm profile. It supports 45W turbo charging with a charger included in the box, 22.5W reverse wired charging, and TÜV-certified battery longevity that retains up to 80% battery health after 1,600 charging cycles.

Designed for immersive everyday entertainment, the smartphone features a 12.75cm (6.9-inch) TrueColour AMOLED display with a 120Hz AdaptiveSync refresh rate, 100% DCI-P3 colour gamut, and up to 1800 nits peak brightness. Complementing the display are 200% volume speakers, HydroTouch 2.0 for improved touch responsiveness in wet conditions, and TÜV Rheinland Eye Care certifications for enhanced viewing comfort.

Powered by the Snapdragon 4 Gen 4 mobile platform built on an advanced 4nm process, the REDMI Note 17 delivers smooth everyday performance while maximizing power efficiency. With up to 16GB RAM (including memory extension), 2TB expandable storage, a 10,416mm^2 graphite cooling system, and Xiaomi's Long-Term Fluency Engine, the device is engineered to deliver up to 48 months of smooth performance.

For photography, the REDMI Note 17 features a 50MP AI dual rear camera paired with an 8MP AI front camera, supported by AI-powered features including Night Mode, AI HDR, Dynamic Shots, AI Editor, and 2x in-sensor zoom.

Running Android 16 with HyperOS 3, the REDMI Note 17 comes with 4 years of Android updates and 6 years of security updates. The smartphone also features Corning Gorilla Glass 7i, an IP65 rating for dust and water resistance, and is available in Dark Night, Arctic Blue, and Starlight Purple.

Let's leave politics aside and serve people together: CM Shivakumar

Bengaluru: "Let's do politics outside. Let's serve here. Let's work together for the success of the state. Let's utilize the opportunity given by the people," said Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

CMD K Sivakumar spoke in Vidhan Parishad on Friday.

"Will it be possible to erase the scars of many who ruled in the past? Let's make history together. Power is not eternal. It comes today, it goes tomorrow. Only our achievements will remain as scars. People will remember us not by our power, but by the work we have done," he said.

He said, "Those who were in BJP and Congress are now Andar Bahar. Power cannot be measured. Yeddyurappa was joined by non-party members as the chief minister. There was a lot of power play. In the end, what remains is not power. Humanity. Work done."

Bangarappa's prediction came true

"Bangarappa gave me the account of the prison which was with Dharamsingh. Then he told me that I managed this account and now you are the CM. You too will become the CM one day. Now his future is real. I believe in humanity. This

is what my guru has taught me. May the religion of Mana win. Peace to the world only through the religion of humanity. I believe in Mr. Rambhapuri."

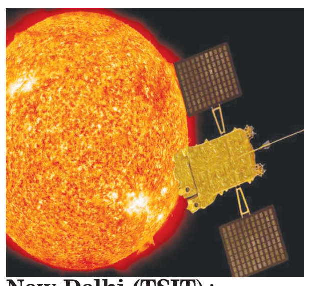
He said, "With the blessings of the people of this state, the decision of the party leaders, the legislators of our party, the Gurupeeth, the Math, the teachers of all religions and the prayers of the people who stood by me and supported me, I am now the representative of the people. Let us all work together to serve the people of the state."

"Today we are standing in a situation of both sadness and happiness. Basaraja Horatti has run the Legislative Council with great dignity and is an example. He wanted to thank us all. But the decision of the situation was different. Now let's forget that incident," he said.

CM who remembered history

"Opportunity is not available to everyone. When you get it, you have to use it. Kengal Hanumantaiah built Vidhana Soudha. Then it was built by the prisoners. One day when the prisoners came to observe the building work, Kengal Hanumantaiah threw slippers in anger at him. After all this, Kengal Hanumantaiah who built Vidhana Soudha did not get a chance to sit here. Kempegowda built Bangalore, Hanumantayana had a discussion with him saying that Sakshi Gudde was the result. During the inauguration of the development building, Dharamsingh, who was the public works minister, came to me. Then he became the chief minister. "I have been elected to the Legislative Assembly 8 times. I have worked with Bangarappa, SM Krishna, Siddaramaiah. However, I have never seen a leader as big-hearted as JH Patel.

Aditya-L1 findings offer fresh clues to Sun's super-heated corona: Indian scientists



New Delhi (TSIT) : Observations from India's Aditya-L1 solar mission have provided crucial insights into one of solar physics' biggest mysteries: how the Sun's outer atmosphere remains millions of degrees hotter than its surface and retains that heat despite constantly losing vast amounts of energy through solar eruptions, according to Indian researchers. Scientists studying data from Aditya-L1, India's first dedicated solar observation mission, have reported findings that could help explain the long-standing mystery of why the Sun's corona remains far hotter than its visible surface.

The findings, published in the Astrophysical Journal Letters, were led by Professor R. Ramesh of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA). The study sheds new light on the processes that heat the Sun's outermost atmosphere and replenish energy lost during powerful solar eruptions.

The temperature structure of the Sun has puzzled astrophysicists for decades. While temperatures in the Sun's core reach nearly 15 million degrees Celsius, the visible surface, known as the photosphere, is significantly cooler at around 5,500 degrees Celsius.

Surprisingly, the corona, located much farther from the core, can reach temperatures of around 2 million degrees Celsius and occasionally soar to as high as 40 million degrees Celsius. This apparent increase in temperature away from the heat source challenges conventional expectations and has remained one of the most enduring unsolved questions in solar science. The corona is also the birthplace of extreme solar weather events, including solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs).

"An act to control the RSS will not stand in a court of law": Basavaraj Bommai

Haveri: Former Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Basavaraj Bommai called upon every citizen to work with dedication to transform India into a fully developed nation by 2047, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat'. He urged everyone to prepare for and pledge themselves to this long journey of progress.

Addressing a press conference in Haveri, Bommai emphasized the need to reflect on the nation's journey over the past 78 to 80 years. He stated that this is the ideal time to build a strong future for the nation.

In response to a media query regarding the state government attempting to curb the activities of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), he said, "The Constitution framed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar grants every citizen civil, personal, and fundamental rights. Everyone must function within the framework of the law without violating these rights."

Telangana Deputy Chief Minister interested in creating a conducive environment to attract more investment in the future: S.E. Sudheendra

Bengaluru: Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has expressed interest in creating a conducive environment to attract more investment in the future by participating in the biofuel sector with Karnataka, which will be a starting point for the development of the energy sector of the two states, said S.E. Sudheendra, Chairman of the Karnataka State Biofuel Development Board.

The two leaders discussed the growth of the biofuel sector in both states during their meeting at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad.

He explained to the Telangana Deputy Chief Minister that he had participated in the India Bioenergy

& Tech Expo (IBET) 2026 held in Greater Noida and had presented the progress of biofuel projects in Karnataka and the development of the biofuel sector in the state in the future during his recent trip to the US. The Telangana Deputy Chief Minister, who holds the Finance, Planning and Energy portfolios of the Telangana state, said that during his US tour, he had engaged investors and technology companies in San Francisco and San Jose and discussed the need for battery-based automobiles and clean energy in the coming years.

The Chairman of the Board opined that the collaboration between Karnataka and Telangana states in the collection, storage and production of used cooking oil (UCO) for the manufacture of biofuel biodiesel would be important in waste management and clean energy production.

S.E. Sudhindra briefed the Deputy Chief Minister about the projects undertaken in the state for the upgradation and commercialization of compressed biogas (CBG), biofuels and the proposed new biofuel policy.

True independence begins with self-governance

DR A SHARATH REDDY
CARDIOLOGIST
MD, DM, FSCAI, FACC, FAHA
DIRECTOR-CTO & COMPLEX CORONARY INTERVENTIONS
DIRECTOR-TAVR & STRUCTURAL HEART DISEASES DIRECTOR-CATH LAB,
SENIOR CONSULTANT INTERVENTIONAL CARDIOLOGIST
MEDICOVER HOSPITALS

Hyderabad, August 14: On Independence Day, Dr. Sharath Reddy, Clinical Director and Senior Interventional Cardiologist, Medicover Hospitals, reflected on the deeper meaning of freedom and independence. He said true freedom goes beyond the absence of external restrictions and begins with self-awareness, responsibility and the ability to govern oneself.

He explained that while India's freedom fighters secured political independence, citizens must use that freedom responsibly. Freedom should not be viewed as an excuse to reject guidance, discipline or accountability. Instead, inner awareness can help people understand advice and supervision as expressions of care.

Dr. Reddy said practices such as Heartfulness can strengthen awareness of the inner self, encouraging individuals to act responsibly even when nobody is watching. He stressed that a truly free citizen is not driven by greed, dishonesty, hatred or selfishness, but by an awakened conscience.

He said the highest form of independence is not merely the freedom to do whatever one wants, but the freedom to choose what is right and contribute to collective well-being.

S. Manohar demands immediate arrest of BJP's miscreants who insulted Dalit community and dismissal of Uttarakhand government

Bengaluru: KPCC General Secretary S Manohar has demanded immediate arrest of BJP's miscreants who insulted Dalit community and opposition party's position in Rajya Sabha by conducting purge after Mallikarjun Kharge's speech and dismissal of BJP's Uttarakhand government which is leading to the massacre of democracy.

Speaking at a protest organized by KPCC, he said that it is highly condemnable that the anti-Dalit BJP government ruling the country has insulted opposition party leaders and Dalit leaders and demanded immediate dismissal of the anti-democratic government.

He demanded that the President of a tribal country, who is in the highest position of the country, immediately take necessary action against this unethical administration of the BJP government by insulting Kharge's speech at Ramlila Maidan in Uttarakhand.

Insulting Dalits is a part of the BJP's program and

the Sangh Parivar has been insulting Dalits since the beginning. Today, the country's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah said that despite seeing such heinous acts with their own eyes, they are not taking action and are acting in a way that is a betrayal of Ambedkar's Constitution.

The country's Prime Minister and Home Minister Amit Shah should immediately apologize to the country's Dalits. He said that considering the insult done to Mallikarjun Kharge, who has served the country for six decades on the path of Buddha Basava Ambedkar and Gandhi, as an insult done to the Dalits of the country, and demanded that the President immediately punish those involved and the government.

Congress leaders Mallesh, G. Prakash, Hemraj, Murali Umesh, Puttaraju Kushal Haruvegowda, Lakshmi Narayan, Madhavahanoor, Naveen Sai, Kishore, Yadukumar, Manjunath, and other Congress leaders participated in this protest.

Devotees participate in the Aadi celebrations at Sri Muthumariamman Temple in Keshavanagar, Bengaluru.

Saluting the Nation Through Service: DCI Organises Blood Donation Camp

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Dredging Corporation of India Limited (DCI) organised a blood donation camp at its Corporate Office in Visakhapatnam on the occasion of the 80th Independence Day, in association with Helping Hearts and Rotary Blood Centre, Visakhapatnam. Around 35 DCI employees and staff voluntarily donated blood, reflecting their commitment to community welfare and social responsibility. The programme was inaugurated by DCI MD & CEO Capt. S. Divakar, who also donated blood and encouraged employees to actively participate in community-oriented initiatives. Speaking on the occasion, Capt. Divakar highlighted the importance of voluntary blood donation in saving lives and supporting patients during medical emergencies. He appreciated Helping Hearts and Rotary Blood Centre for facilitating the camp and commended the employees for their enthusiastic participation. He said such initiatives strengthen the values of unity, compassion and service associated with the celebration of Independence Day. Certificates were presented to all employees and staff who donated blood as a token of appreciation for their contribution. The camp added a meaningful social dimension to DCI's Independence Day celebrations and reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to community welfare

GITAM Organises Anti-Ragging Awareness Rally

Visakhapatnam. (TSIT) GITAM Deemed to be University organised an anti-ragging awareness rally on Friday to educate students about the harmful consequences of ragging and create awareness about laws aimed at preventing the practice. GITAM Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof. Y. Goutham Rao and Registrar Prof. D. Gunasekharan flagged off the rally. Speaking on the occasion, they explained the legal provisions prescribed to prevent ragging and urged students to maintain friendly and healthy relationships while promoting a positive spirit of competition on campus. They advised students to stay away from ragging and other harmful practices, stressing the need to maintain a safe and respectful academic environment. The rally featured anti-ragging slogans and messages highlighting the importance of preventing the practice in educational institutions. GITAM Institute of Technology Director Prof. K. Tirupathi Rao, GITAM NSS Coordinator Dr. S.V.G. Reddy.

Chittoor leaders lead Independence Day rally

Chittoor, August 14: Chittoor MP Daggumalla Prasada Rao and MLA Gurajala Jaganmohan led a preparatory rally in the city on Friday ahead of the 80th Independence Day celebrations.

PMFME–Streenidhi Scheme Opens New Opportunities for AP DWCRA Women

Visakhapatnam : The Andhra Pradesh Government has launched a new initiative by linking the Prime Minister's Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme with the Streenidhi Credit Cooperative Federation to promote food-processing enterprises among DWCRA women in rural areas. Minister for MSMEs, Rural Poverty Alleviation and NRI Empowerment Relations Kondapalli Srinivas said the government's objective was to make DWCRA women financially self-reliant and help them move from being job seekers to entrepreneurs who could create employment for others. Under the initiative, eligible DWCRA women can set up food-processing units with a project cost of up to Rs.3 lakh through Streenidhi loans, along with the credit-linked subsidy available under the PMFME scheme. The units can be established for processing fruits and vegetables, millets, pulses, spices, pickles, flour-based products, snacks and other local food products. The Minister said District Federations would be designated as District Resource Organisations (DROs) to identify interested and capable women and facilitate their participation in the scheme. Selected beneficiaries would receive support in procuring raw materials, packaging, branding and marketing of their products.

Elaborate arrangements for Assembly sessions

Visakhapatnam: Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council Chairman Koyye Moshen Raju and Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu directed officials to make comprehensive arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Assembly and Council sessions beginning August 17.They stressed timely replies to members' questions, clearance of pending medical bills and expeditious implementation of assurances made on the floor of the House. Reviewing security arrangements, the Speaker directed police to ensure foolproof security, including mandatory scanning and verification of digital passes. Officials were also asked to strengthen CCTV surveillance, visitor management, vehicle movement and parking arrangements.

AP Enables Voluntary Aadhaar Authentication for Online Municipal Services

Visakhapatnam TSIT: The Andhra Pradesh Government has enabled Aadhaar-based authentication for citizens accessing municipal services through the online platforms of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across the State. The Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department issued G.O.Ms.No.179 on August 14, permitting the use of Aadhaar-based Yes/No Authentication and e-KYC facilities to establish and verify the identity of citizens seeking municipal services online. The initiative is aimed at making municipal services faster, simpler and more transparent while reducing the need for citizens to repeatedly submit identity documents. The Government said Aadhaar authentication would help strengthen identity verification and prevent impersonation, duplication and fraudulent transactions, besides improving the accuracy of municipal service databases. However, Aadhaar authentication will remain voluntary. The authorities must obtain the consent of the Aadhaar holder before authentication, and no citizen can be denied a municipal service merely for refusing Aadhaar authentication or being unable to authenticate through Aadhaar.Citizens who do not use Aadhaar authentication can establish their identity through alternative documents such as a passport, ration card, voter identity card or driving licence. The Government said the framework was designed to balance digital convenience and administrative efficiency with citizen choice and accessibility. The initiative has been introduced under the Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance Rules, 2020, and relevant provisions of the Aadhaar Act, 2016.

Polavaram civil works reach 90%

Visakhapatnam: Civil works of the Polavaram project have reached 90 per cent completion, while overall progress stands at 77 per cent, State Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu said on Friday. He said the government was targeting completion by March 2027, ahead of the original December 2027 deadline. The Minister said 94 per cent of land acquisition and 52 per cent of rehabilitation and resettlement works had been completed. The Chief Minister has directed officials to expedite the remaining works and colony construction. Polavaram is also being developed as a tourism destination, with plans for spillway beautification, an iconic bridge, better road connectivity and river-based tourism.

Drinking water gets top priority

Visakhapatnam: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to give top priority to drinking water in urban and rural areas and manage water resources strictly as per the Water Movement Plan. Reviewing the Water Resources Department on Friday, he stressed judicious use of reservoir, tank and groundwater resources amid deficient rainfall.Officials informed him that 89.9 per cent of Polavaram civil works had been completed. The Chief Minister directed officials to complete the remaining Left Main Canal works up to Visakhapatnam by March next year.

High Court Judge Justice B.V.L.N. Chakravarthy Given Grand Farewell

Visakhapatnam TSIT Andhra Pradesh High Court Judge Justice B.V.L.N. Chakravarthy was accorded a grand farewell on Friday on the occasion of his retirement. The farewell function was held in the First Court Hall of the High Court in the presence of a Full Bench, under the leadership of Chief Justice Justice Lisa Gill.Speaking on the occasion, Chief Justice Justice Lisa Gill praised Justice Chakravarthy as a committed and dedicated judge who rendered significant service to the judiciary. She said he had delivered several important judgments during his judicial career. She particularly recalled his historic verdict in the Satyam Computers scam case while serving as a Special CBI Court judge, in which the main accused and 10 others were sentenced to seven years in prison.

Justice Chakravarthy had handled a wide range of civil, criminal and cases relating to misconduct by public servants, the Chief Justice said. She noted that he had discharged various responsibilities as a District and Sessions Judge efficiently before being appointed as a permanent judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court in March 2024. Justice Chakravarthy was born in 1964 at Kandulapalem village in East Godavari district to B. Paparaya Chowdary and Vijayalakshmi. He completed his schooling at Tamarapalli and Gangavaram and obtained his law degree from GSKM Law College in Rajahmundry. He began practising as an advocate at the Kakinada Bar in 1988 and entered the Andhra Pradesh Judicial Service in 1994 as a District Munsif Magistrate.

EDITORIAL

How Far Is Saudi Arabia Really Willing To Go For Pakistan?

The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, signed on August 7, 2026, by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye, marks a notable shift in regional security signalling. At its core, the pact states that an armed attack on any one of the three will be treated as an attack on all, while also describing itself as a defensive arrangement not directed against any specific country. Its importance lies less in the wording and more in the uncertainty it introduces: whether this commitment to collective defence will translate into actual military intervention, or remain limited to political support, intelligence sharing, logistics, and arms cooperation. In other words, the pact does not just signal solidarity - it raises an unresolved question about the depth and limits of that solidarity in a real crisis. To understand the Mecca agreement, it is important to see it as an extension of an earlier agreement rather than an invention. It builds on the long-standing strategic defence relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, formalised in 2025 . However, history shows that such arrangements do not always translate to automatic military guarantees. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have maintained close military ties for decades, including Pakistani troop deployments to the Kingdom. Yet Islamabad has shown restraint in becoming directly involved in Saudi regional conflicts. A key example came in 2015, when Pakistan's parliament declined participation in the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen. This highlights the complexities of the regional power balance. Close defence partnerships are filtered through national interest, domestic politics, geography, and the specific nature of the conflict. The Mecca pact expands the bilateral partnership into a trilateral framework involving Turkey, raising the stakes, but not necessarily removing the same constraints. Against this backdrop, some commentators have described the agreement as an "Islamic NATO" or the emergence of a Sunni security bloc. While the analogy is politically striking, it might be an oversimplification of a complex regional dynamic. The three states are not aligned by a single strategic geography or unified threat perception. Pakistan's security focus remains overwhelmingly South Asia, particularly India and Afghanistan. Turkey operates across multiple theatres and pursues a more expansive regional role. Saudi Arabia's core concerns are the stability of the Gulf, protection of energy infrastructure, and managing threats emanating from Iran, Yemen, and Iraq. Saudi Arabia's security environment, in particular, has become more volatile. Attacks and threats linked to Iran-backed groups such as the Houthis and Iraqi militias have exposed vulnerabilities in its defence posture and raised questions about the limits of external security guarantees, including those traditionally associated with the United States. This helps explain Riyadh's interest in diversifying its security partnerships. Yet, as former Indian ambassador Navdeep Suri points out, the more important question is not ideological alignment but operational clarity: what kind of attack would actually trigger collective action? The answer to that question will define whether the pact becomes a hard security commitment or remains a flexible political framework.

Why are new employees appointed from 2022 to 2026 not transferred in Haryana?

—DR. VIJAY GARG

The primary objective of the Haryana government's online transfer policy is to ensure transparency, equal opportunity, fairness, and administrative efficiency in transfers. The online system was implemented to minimize the potential for arbitrary administrative discretion, favoritism, and disparate treatment, and to provide eligible employees with the opportunity to participate in the transfer process and submit their preferences under clear rules. However, the success of any policy is determined not simply by the formulation of rules, but by their logical, consistent, and fair implementation. In this context, the issue of employees appointed between 2022 and 2026 demands serious consideration. The most important question is: when all teachers appointed during this period are required to participate in the mandatory online transfer process, why are employees appointed during the same period in other departments being left behind? If teachers can be included in the policy's mandatory participation, there must also be a clear, objective, and rational basis for a separate arrangement for other eligible employees appointed during the same period. The demand here is not for an employee to be transferred to a location of their choice, but for an equal opportunity to participate in the process if eligible, to exercise their options, and to be considered according to the rules. In this context, provisions such as the cut-off date of May 23, 2025, the "notional category," and the "first online transfer drive for each cadre" used in the 2026 Model Online Transfer Policy become important. To understand these provisions, it is necessary to examine the actual administrative history of the respective cadre. If a cadre is conducting its first online transfer drive in 2026, its situation may be different from that of a cadre that has been conducting online transfer drives since 2017. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the actual policy history of all cadres before applying the same cut-off to all cadres. The question of equality isn't limited to teachers and other departments. The situation of employees being allocated offline positions despite the implementation of an online transfer policy and the conduct of online transfer campaigns in some departments also warrants serious consideration. The example of Haryana's Animal Husbandry Department is significant in this context. The department has implemented an online transfer policy for the VLDA cadre since 2020, and two online transfer campaigns have already been conducted under it. According to departmental information, approximately 50 percent of VLDA cadre employees appointed after 2020 were allocated offline positions. If this figure is corroborated by departmental records, the government should clarify the basis for such widespread offline station allocation despite the already existing online transfer policy and campaigns. The issue becomes even more serious when such employees' appointment letters or station allocation documents stipulate that they must participate in the next online transfer campaign. If the government itself stipulated that employees must participate in the next online transfer process when assigning them offline stations, then excluding the same employee from the online campaign based on a new interpretation or order later raises serious questions of administrative justice and legitimate expectation. If an employee accepted such a condition and assumed charge at an offline station, it was a natural expectation that he or she would be required to participate in the next online transfer process. If the same employee is subsequently excluded from that process, it becomes not merely a matter of transfer, but a question of policy consistency and administrative credibility. Clarity is essential between the condition initially set by the government and its subsequent interpretation. In particular, the status of employees who have previously participated in online transfer campaigns should be seriously considered. They followed the government's prescribed procedures, provided options, and participated in the online system. If employees appointed between 2022 and 2026 are not compulsorily included in the current campaign, the choices and opportunities of employees who have already participated in the online process will certainly be affected. In such a situation, it is natural to question what significance their previous participation will have in the current process. Making an employee a part of the online system first and then limiting their options in the next process under the same system raises questions about policy continuity. It should also be clarified that the right to transfer and the opportunity to participate in the transfer process are different things. Involving an employee in the online process, soliciting their options, and considering their claim in accordance with regulations does not guarantee transfer to their preferred location. The final decision may be based on established criteria such as vacancies, eligibility, cadre status, priority, and administrative exigencies. Therefore, including eligible employees in the process does not weaken administrative control but rather strengthens transparency. This is where the Model Online Transfer Policy of 2026 comes into play. If this policy is intended to provide a model and uniform principles for online transfers, then its core principles—transparency, eligibility, equal opportunity, a process for granting options, and a systematic decision—should apply to all employees in similar circumstances. If this is a policy specific to teachers, its limitations should be clear. But if it is being presented as a comprehensive model, the rationale for excluding employees in similar circumstances in other departments should also be explained. The government should make public the cadre-wise facts surrounding this entire matter. The number of online transfer drives conducted in each cadre since 2017, the years in which employees were given the opportunity to participate, the status of employees appointed between 2022 and 2026, which employees were assigned offline stations, and whose appointment letters stipulated participation in the next online process—all these facts should be clearly disclosed. This will allow the dispute to be resolved on a factual basis rather than through emotional accusations. The cut-off date of May 23, 2025, also needs to be clarified. The government should specify what constitutes the "first online transfer drive for each cadre" and the status of cadres that have consistently conducted online transfer drives since 2017. Similarly, the impact of the notional category on existing participants and new employees appointed between 2022 and 2026 should also be clarified. Ultimately, this isn't just a cut-off date or a technical category dispute. The real question is one of equal opportunity, policy consistency, and administrative justice. If all teachers appointed from 2022 to 2026 are required to participate in the mandatory online transfer process, the reason for excluding eligible employees from other departments during the same period must be clear. If online campaigns have been conducted twice in a department, yet employees are assigned offline stations and their appointment letters stipulate mandatory participation in the next online process, then excluding them from that process later is also reconsiderable. The credibility of the online transfer policy can only be maintained if the rules do not vary by department, employee, or situation. The government should prioritize the spirit of the policy over technical interpretations, equal opportunity over departmental differences, and current eligibility over past involvement. Transfer is not a right to grant an employee a desired posting, but providing eligible employees the opportunity to participate in a fair process is a fundamental principle of administrative justice. Ultimately, the question is simple: when teachers appointed between 2022 and 2026 are being compulsorily included in the online transfer process, why not provide the same opportunity to other eligible employees appointed during the same period? When an employee's appointment letter stipulates that participation in the next online process is mandatory, why should they later be excluded from that process? And when an online transfer policy is already in place in a department and campaigns have already been conducted under it, why not consider that department's entire policy history when determining employee status? These questions require clear, written, and reasoned answers. The true test of an online transfer policy is whether it is merely online, or whether it is also truly equitable, transparent, timely, and fair. If deficiencies persist in the interpretation and implementation of the Model Online Transfer Policy, instead of achieving the policy's objective, disputes may escalate and matters may reach the courts. Varying interpretations across departments, ambiguity regarding eligible employees, inconsistent treatment of old and new appointments, and contradictions between online and offline allocations increase the likelihood of judicial disputes. This impacts administrative time and resources, and employees face prolonged uncertainty and psychological distress. Therefore, the need is not to repeatedly launch new online transfer drives, but to establish a clear, foolproof, and truly model policy. Eligibility, cut-offs, notional categories, prior online participation, the status of employees with offline stations, and employees appointed between 2022 and 2026 should be clarified for all departments and cadres. Where necessary, conditions contained in old orders and appointment letters should also be honored. Once the rules are clear, the entire process should be completed in a timely manner, so that employees can focus on their work without the fear, uncertainty, and constant news of transfer drives. The objective of the Model Online Transfer Policy should not only be to accept online applications, but also to create a fair system that provides equal opportunity to eligible employees, considers their preferences in accordance with the rules, protects administrative needs, and completes the entire process in a timely manner. Only then will employees be able to receive new stations according to their eligibility and prescribed standards, and they will be relieved of the mental stress caused by frequently changing interpretations and incomplete transfer processes. After all, a good policy provides solutions rather than creating conflict, builds trust rather than increasing uncertainty, and allows employees to work with peace of mind rather than being constantly burdened by the transfer process. This is the true test of an online transfer policy—is it merely online, or is it also truly equitable, transparent, timely, and fair?

DRDO Is Being Restructured. But The Real Problem Remains Unsolved

India stands at a defining moment in its technological and strategic journey. The ongoing reforms within the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) are not merely another bureaucratic restructuring. They represent perhaps the most consequential institutional reform in India's defence innovation ecosystem - R&D. If executed with conviction, they could determine whether India becomes a genuine technology power or continues to remain dependent on others for critical military capabilities. According to government sources, the Prime Minister's Office has directed that the restructuring of DRDO be completed by 2026. The objective is ambitious: transform DRDO into a leaner, more efficient, and globally competitive research organisation, capable of delivering next-generation military technologies. The urgency is welcome. But structural reforms alone will not solve India's defence innovation challenge. The deeper questions concern talent, resources, institutional culture, and national priorities. R&D in national security must never be viewed as a cost centre. It is a strategic investment that safeguards sovereignty. Every breakthrough in propulsion, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, semiconductors, or autonomous systems translates directly into military capability and geopolitical leverage. For a rising power aspiring to become a developed nation by 2047, under-investing in defence R&D is not merely poor budgeting, but a strategic mistake.

The DRDO's achievements deserve recognition before criticism. Its record in missiles and strategic systems is remarkable by any global standard. The organisation has delivered the Agni to Akash and Nag, cruise missile BrahMos in partnership with Russia, and is now at work on complex air defence systems like Project Kusha. Its contributions to radar systems, electronic warfare, secure communications, sensors, and naval technologies have substantially strengthened India's armed forces. Working alongside defence public sector undertakings, the DRDO has enabled indigenous warship construction and advanced combat systems that were once considered beyond India's technological reach. These successes demonstrate that India can build world-class defence technologies when policy, scientific leadership, and political commitment converge. Yet, modern warfare is evolving much faster than traditional research institutions. The battlefields of today have fundamentally altered military thinking. Autonomous systems, unmanned platforms, AI, drones, electronic warfare and cyber capabilities, and advanced propulsion are becoming the decisive technologies of future conflicts.

What To Do In Military R&D

It is precisely in several of these areas where India continues to lag. The Kaveri jet engine programme remains unfinished after decades. Indigenous propulsion technologies still trail global leaders. Autonomous and unmanned systems require much deeper investments than India currently makes. The country also lacks commercial-scale semiconductor fabrication facilities, forcing dependence on imported chips that power radars, avionics, communication systems, and electronic warfare equipment. These technological vulnerabilities cannot simply be addressed by reorganising laboratories. Managing DRDO, therefore, is not merely about restructuring departments. It is about rethinking how India conducts strategic research itself. Three fundamental questions deserve honest answers. 1. Is DRDO Attracting Country's Finest Talent? The answer is uncomfortable: not consistently. Every year, India's best engineering graduates leave for universities, laboratories, and technology companies across the United States, Europe, and other global institutions. Thousands of Indian-origin scientists today contribute to cutting-edge research at organisations such as DARPA, NASA, leading semiconductor companies, AI laboratories, and global tech firms. Their work defines tomorrow's technologies - but rarely under the Indian flag. If India can produce world-class scientists, why cannot its premier defence laboratory attract and retain them? 2. Does DRDO Possess Adequate Resources? Again, only partially. DRDO operates 52 laboratories across multiple technology domains. Yet the existence of laboratories does not automatically translate into cutting-edge innovation. Scientific excellence depends upon concentration of talent, sustained funding.

THE COAST PAYS, DELHI COLLECTS:

WHAT THE CENTRE'S MINERAL BILL TAKES FROM STATES

On August 12, the Lok Sabha passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026. There was no debate. What the House voted upon was the reversal of a judgment nine judges of the Supreme Court had spent thirteen years arriving at, and the extinction of a taxing power that belongs, under our Constitution, to the states. Let me be fair to the Government, for its case is not frivolous. In July 2024, in Mineral Area Development Authority v. Steel Authority of India, a nine-judge Bench held by eight to one that royalty is not a tax but a contractual payment, and that the states retain their own power to tax mineral rights and mineral-bearing land. Correcting an error of 1989, it allowed demands back to 2005, payable from this April, leaving mineral states with claims worth thousands of crores and industry with matching liabilities. That deserved an answer. But this Bill raises more questions than it has tried to answer. Let's begin with where the matter was first settled: the Constituent Assembly itself. In December 1948, Professor KT Shah asked the Constituent Assembly to declare all natural wealth - our land, our minerals, the seas around our coasts - to be public property, held privately by no one and worked by public enterprise alone. The Assembly declined. Our Constitution vests the ownership of minerals in nobody but the owner of the land, and land is Entry 18 of the State

List. Where the framers wanted the Union to own a resource, as with the seabed in Article 297, they said so. What they wrote instead was a division of powers, chosen with care. On taxation, they placed two entries side by side. Entry 50, taxes on mineral rights, is subject to any limitations Parliament may impose by a law relating to mineral development. Entry 49, taxes on lands and buildings, is subject to nothing at all. Men who had just written an override clause did not forget how to write a second. The omission was a decision, and it is the decision on which the Court turned in 2024. This Bill restricts both. On mineral rights, the Government is within its rights. On mineral-bearing land, it does what the framers declined to permit, by declaring land a subject of mineral regulation. That provision will very probably fall in court, handing the industry the very uncertainty the Bill was meant to end. Two further defects: any state levy uncollected before commencement is deemed invalid at all material times, while whatever has been collected need not be refunded. So the company that paid has lost its money,

the company that did not owes nothing. And the Bill fixes no limit itself, leaving the Central Government to decide by rules what a state may levy. A constitutional entitlement has become a licence issued from New Delhi. Who pays? Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh had all either legislated such levies or stood to gain from the judgment. Arrears since 2005 are cancelled by a single clause. Nor is this a quarrel between Union and Opposition: Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are governed by the party that governs at the Centre, and lose as much as Jharkhand or Karnataka. Which is why the Bill went to no committee, where members from those states would have had to say aloud what it costs them. Now coming to my home state. Kerala (soon to become Keralam) has not, so far as I am aware, levied a tax of this kind, and I make no claim of any arrears due to it. What Keralam loses, though, is the only fiscal instrument it ever had over the vital resources under its soil. Heavy mineral sand and china clay are more than ninety per cent of the value of our mineral production. Our mineral economy is not a mine in a forest. It is our coastline. At Chavara in Kollam lies one of the world's finest ilmenite deposits.

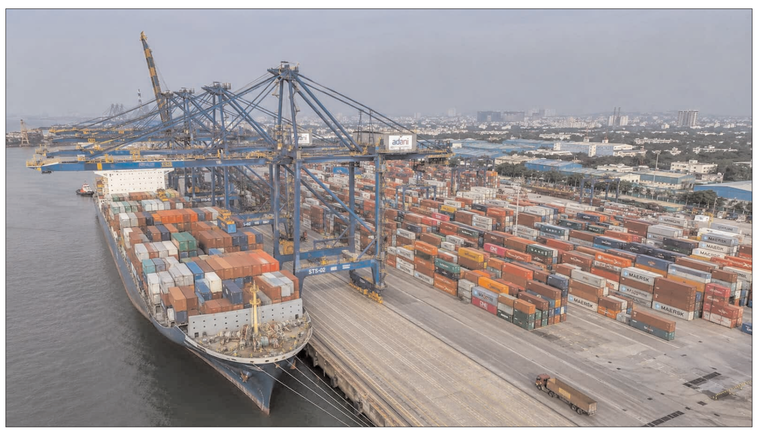
Stock markets decline in early trade; Sensex down 300 points

- Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined in early trade on Friday, August 14, as the prolonged US-Iran impasse weighed heavily on investors' sentiment. The 30-share BSE Sensex was down 298.75 points to 77,760.21 in early trade.

Mumbai: Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty declined in early trade on Friday, August 14, as the prolonged US-Iran impasse weighed heavily on investors' sentiment. The 30-share BSE Sensex was down 298.75 points to 77,760.21 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 74.20 points to 24,321.90. From the Sensex pack, Tata Steel, Axis Bank, InterGlobe Aviation, Tech Mahindra, Power Grid and ITC were among the major laggards. Eternal, Titan, Adani Ports and Bajaj Finance were among the winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.06 per cent higher at USD 87.12 per barrel.

The unresolved US-Iran standoff continues to underpin crude oil prices, leaving oil-importing economies such as India more vulnerable to inflationary pressures and currency volatility, Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 traded higher, while Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index quoted lower. US markets ended higher on Thursday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 510.69 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. On Thursday, fag-end buying helped the Sensex end the session in the positive territory. The 30-share index settled 113.61 points, or 0.15 per cent, higher at 78,079.96. The Nifty was marginally down 40.10 points, or 0.16 per cent, to end at 24,395.85, registering its third day of decline. The 30-share BSE Sensex was down 298.75 points to 77,760.21 in early trade.

US flags India among 40 nations aiding China's tariff evasion



Hyderabad: India has been named in a Tier 1 grouping of countries flagged by the White House over the alleged rerouting of Chinese goods into the American market to dodge higher US tariffs, in a report that could sharpen scrutiny of Indian shipments even as New Delhi and Washington work towards a trade deal. The report, "The Great Transshipment Scam," released by the White House Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, identifies more than 40 countries as part of what it calls a "shadow transshipment network." India is placed in the top tier, called "Diversified Scale Leaders", along with Canada, the European Union, Israel, Japan, Mexico, South Korea and Taiwan. These are large trading economies where, the report says, the risk of rerouting is hidden inside big volumes of genuine trade. Pune-Gujarat-Chennai corridor named The report names the Pune-Gujarat-Chennai industrial belt as a staging point for pumps and compressors, and pairs it with factories in the Ohio cities of Cincinnati, Dayton and Columbus. It calls such pairs "ugly sister cities," which is a foreign hub handling suspect China-linked goods on one side, and on the other, the American towns that make the same products and lose the orders. Illegal transshipment, as defined in the report, involves relabelling, repackaging, re-invoicing, minor processing or false country-of-origin claims intended to secure tariff treatment that would not apply if the true economic origin of the goods were declared. The practice took hold after Washington imposed Section 301 duties on Chinese goods in 2018, it says. Citing Commerce Department estimates, the report says roughly USD 67 billion worth of US-bound goods were transshipped from China through three leading hubs, Mexico, India and Vietnam, in 2025, costing the US exchequer about USD 28 billion in tariff revenue. Its wider estimates of annual illegal transshipment range from USD 40 billion to USD 303 billion, drawn from five separate government and private assessments. India well on our radar: US White House trade adviser Peter Navarro, who championed the report, named India directly at a briefing. "As we impose higher tariffs on other countries, India, Vietnam, down the line, they're going to try this transhipment too," he said, adding that preferential access to the American market was not a licence to launder another country's exports. Navarro said India was "well on our radar," describing the practice as a modern form of smuggling involving over 40 countries. The timing comes at an awkward time. India and the US are negotiating an interim reciprocal trade agreement and the framework announced in February carried commitments on rules of origin so that the benefits accrue mainly to the two countries. The final agreement is yet to be signed and the latest assessment could make those origin rules tougher. For Indian exporters using Chinese components, that could translate into having to document more clearly the extent of processing or value addition carried out in India before goods qualify as Indian-origin, raising compliance costs and customs risk on US-bound consignments.

Flock boss admits surveillance firm took too long to act over police abuse

Flock, the US surveillance firm, is rolling out new safeguards to prevent police misuse of its technology which, its founder and chief executive admits, should have happened sooner. Police have used Flock to track romantic partners and stalk strangers, leading to growing public backlash against the company. It has also been used to find stolen cars and missing people. Asked whether it had taken Flock too long to protect tens of thousands of its cameras, licence plate readers and drones from police abuse, Garrett Langley said: "Yeah... yes." Flock is cutting the number of days most data is retained, from 30 days to seven and abnormal searches and uses will also automatically be flagged. Flock cameras have been used by police to not only track former and current romantic partners, but in one case, even a woman who had had an abortion. Police across the US have quit or been fired for misuse of the technology. A man in Indiana recently told local news he found out through a public records request that police had set a Flock alert for his vehicle, despite not being suspected of any wrongdoing. At least 50 cities have this year cut ties with Flock due to a public backlash. However, Langley told the BBC that another 16 cities that had turned off Flock services have in the last three months come back to the company. Generally, it's running at a 7:1 ratio of new customers to lost customers, he said. Langley said that, just six months ago, he asked in a meeting of the company's board why there seemed to be a growing public focus on Flock.

BLAZO I-TRK BY MAHINDRA:

Setting New Standards for Profitable & Intelligent Trucking in India

Mumbai, August 14, 2026: Mahindra Truck and Bus, part of the Mahindra Group, today announced the launch of the all-new BLAZO i-TRK, a new generation Heavy Commercial Truck engineered around one singular promise to transporters and fleet owners - Profit Ka Rocket. Purpose-built as a complete business solution rather than just a truck, the BLAZO i-TRK combines best-in-class fuel efficiency, high-performance powertrain, intelligent connected technologies and an industry-leading uptime guarantee. It enables customers to maximise earnings, improve productivity, reduce operating costs and exercise greater control over their fleet. The BLAZO i-TRK has been engineered around three powerful customer assurances:

EARN MORE

Delivering up to 10% better fuel efficiency, the BLAZO i-TRK integrates advanced technologies including AI-powered iFUELSMART auto drive mode, TurboMAXX turbocharger, OptiFuel air compressor and multiple other hardware solutions and software innovations to extract maximum value from every drop of fuel. These cumulative savings can translate into up to ?15 lakh* of additional profit per truck over five years, helping customers grow their business faster.

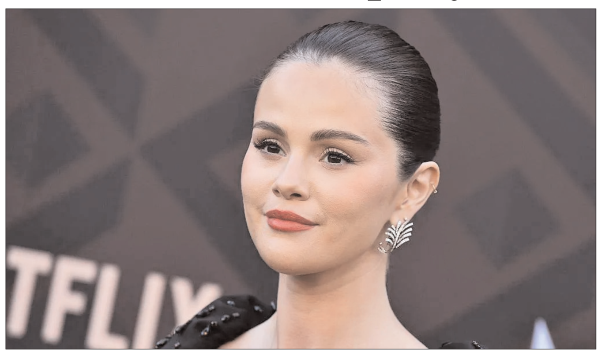
RUN MORE

Powered by Mahindra's trustworthy and best-in-class 320 HP mPOWER engine across the entire BLAZO i-TRK range, the truck delivers strong performance, higher reliability and greater productivity. Enhanced driver comfort – through the COMFiMAXX suspended seat, EzyCruise cruise control, Bluetooth enabled music system with mic for handsfree and safe communication, spacious, premium and ergonomic AC cabin – keeps drivers productive on long-haul operations, enabling fleets to complete more trips with greater efficiency.

Every BLAZO i-TRK is backed by Mahindra's comprehensive service assurance programme designed to maximise vehicle availability and minimise operating costs. At its core is the industry-first 48-hour Uptime Guarantee*, under which customers receive ?10,000 per day* if the vehicle is not put back on road within the committed timeline of 48 Hours*. This is supported by an expanding nationwide network of service centres and Mahindra Quick Service Points (mQSPs) located within 75 km on National Highways and 50 km on State Highways.

Further strengthening the proposition are Mahindra's Parts Supply Guarantee*, which ensures 250 critical parts* availability across dealer network. If an eligible guaranteed part is not made available within the committed 24-hour period, the customer shall be entitled to receive the respective part free of cost*. It also offers a class-leading warranty on 100+ parts.

Selena Gomez sued for alleged fraud over mental health company



Hollywood actress and singer Selena Gomez is being sued by five investors who backed Wondermind Global, a mental health business she founded with her mother. Shareholders are claiming the pop star failed to fulfil promises that she would be "actively building" the brand, saying her "abject dereliction of her duties" has left the company in a "state of financial calamity". The lawsuit seeks to recover around $1.2m (£890,000) it claims was invested as well as costs and damages. The BBC has contacted Wondermind and Gomez's representatives for comment. Gomez, who rose to fame as a child actor before moving into pop music, set up the mental health platform five years ago with her mother Mandy Teefey and businesswoman Daniella Pierson. It came after Gomez publicly discussed her own mental health struggles, including with bipolar disorder. The 34-year-old is one of the most-followed women in the world on social media, with over 500 million followers, and an estimated net worth of nearly $1bn. She also founded cosmetics company Rare Beauty, in 2020, which is closely associated with her name and image. Wondermind aimed to make mental health-related content more accessible through a digital platform, recruiting investors to back the venture. But the lawsuit claims Wondermind's founders "falsely represented" their position by suggesting "a full slate" of ad deals, celebrity cover stories, an app and other initiatives were already underway and promising that Gomez would take an active role as its head of marketing.

"Masthugundira Yavvaram" Song from Nenu Ready Released in Grand Style

Young hero Havish is all set to entertain audiences with a full-fledged entertainer directed by hit filmmaker Trinadha Rao Nakkina. The film has already generated considerable interest among moviegoers. Presented by Satyanarayana Koneru and produced by Nikhila Koneru, the film features Kavya Thapar as the female lead opposite Havish. Following the positive response to the promotional posters, two songs, and other promotional content released so far, the makers unveiled the much-awaited song "Masthugundira Yavvaram" on Thursday at Kaloji Kala Kshethram, Hanamkonda, with Warangal MLA Sri Nayani Rajender Reddy launching the song. A high-energy romantic entertainer, the song has been penned by Kasarla Shyam. The catchy tune, energetic beats, beautiful visuals, and the chemistry between Havish and Kavya Thapar add to the song's appeal. In particular, the Telangana slang lyrics beginning with "Masthugundira Yavvaram..." are expected to strike a chord with the youth. Director Trinadha Rao Nakkina presents Havish in a brand-new look while bringing his signature family-entertaining style to the film. The makers revealed that the movie gives equal importance to comedy, romance, and engaging elements designed to appeal to family audiences. Meanwhile, the songs "Konchem Konchem Kothaga" and

"Merupule Merupule" have already created a sensation on social media. The songs have crossed 50 million views and received an overwhelming response from audiences. Bollywood sensation Nargis Fakhri added glamour to one of the songs, which has also received tremendous appreciation on social media. With the team consistently coming up with innovative promotional content and raising expectations around the film, the latest release of "Masthugundira Yavvaram" has created even more buzz among audiences.

SOUTH KOREA'S INCHEON AIRPORT BECOMES WORLD'S BUSIEST FOR GLOBAL TRAFFIC

Highlights

- Incheon International Airport, the main gateway to South Korea, served 38.4 million international passengers for the first six months of this year, according to preliminary data from the Airports Council International.

South Korea's Incheon has become the world's busiest airport by international passenger traffic for the first time, new figures show. Incheon International Airport, the main gateway to South Korea, served 38.4 million international passengers for the first six months of this year, according to preliminary data from the Airports Council International. London Heathrow Airport ranked second with 37.79 million passengers, followed by Singapore's Changi Airport with 34.53 million. Incheon's airport attributed its rise partly to the diversion of passengers from aviation hubs in the Middle East because of the conflict between the US and Iran. Dubai International Airport, which ranked second both in 2024 and 2025 based on full-year statistics, is expected to fall outside the top five this time. London's Heathrow airport ranked fifth in 2024 and seventh in 2025, while Incheon ranked 12th and 13th, respectively. Some passengers who previously transited through Dubai on the way to Europe are now travelling via Incheon, the airport corporation said, fuelling an 18% rise in transfer passengers from the same period last year. The number of transfer passengers whose final destinations were in Europe rose 63.2% to 210,000, it added. The corporation said the expansion of infrastructure also enabled the airport to manage a larger traffic load. Incheon, which opened in 2001, serves 158 international destinations. In comparison, Hong Kong's International Airport serves 139 destinations, Shanghai's Pudong serves 92 while Tokyo's Narita serves 86. "We're grateful for the [South Korean] government's support, the public's encouragement and the hard work of everyone stationed at the airport in making Incheon the world's No. 1 airport," said the Incheon airport corporation's acting president Kim Beom-ho. Kim added the corporation planned to strengthen competitiveness by focusing on passenger convenience.

US SAYS DOZENS OF COUNTRIES HELPED CHINA DODGE TRUMP'S TARIFFS

The White House said in a report on Thursday that more than 40 countries had helped China sidestep US tariffs by routing exports through nations that face lower American import duties. The countries named include Canada, India, Mexico, Japan and South Korea, which the White House said had helped China evade tens of billions of dollars in tariffs, which are levied on companies importing goods. White House trade adviser Peter Navarro said it had cost "American jobs and billions in revenue". A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington said "trade wars have no winners" and that it opposes the US tariff measures and the use of state power to target China's companies. "Any unilateral actions or agreements concerning transshipped goods must not target or harm the interests of third parties," the spokesperson added. The BBC has contacted the US embassies of Canada, India, Mexico, Japan, South Korea and other trading partners listed in the report for comment. The report follows a wave of sanctions between the US and China and comes weeks before US President Donald Trump will meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Washington. Between $30bn (£22bn) and roughly $300bn in goods have been moved from countries with higher tariffs through those with lower rates, according to government and private sector estimates quoted by the White House. The process is known as transshipping, which refers to the practice of transferring cargo through another country while en route to a final destination. The US accused China of "taking advantage" of the practice by moving goods through nations that have lower import duties. China has used third countries as a stopover and has repackaged goods to hide their real origin to obtain lower tariffs, the White House said in its report, describing the process as "fraud cloaked in paperwork". "What has changed in today's Great Transshipment Scam is not merely the speed and scale of this modern form of smuggling, but the breadth.

Crimea bomb attack reportedly kills former Ukrainian submarine commander who defected to Russia

INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS FUELLING CEUTA CRISIS WITH PAID ADVICE FOR HELP TO CROSS

This weekend, Mohammed wants to travel from Morocco to the neighbouring Spanish enclave of Ceuta, on the northern tip of Africa. He's a Moroccan man in his twenties and wants to emigrate to Europe - not least because he's been seeing lots of videos on Instagram that make the trip look easy. He contacts several of the Instagram accounts and one replies, claiming to have helped "many people" and offering him advice on how to cross for hundreds of pounds. Except Mohammed isn't real - he's a dummy account I've set up to investigate a network of interconnected Instagram profiles that are driving the influx of migrants to Ceuta with aspirational content and offering them help for a fee. It comes after roughly 78,000 migrants

from Morocco arrived by sea into Ceuta in a matter of hours last month, 100 of whom died according to the Mayor of Ceuta. The crisis has calmed since, but it has sparked tensions between EU nations who share open borders as well as criticism of the Spanish government. The BBC's Top Comment podcast has identified dozens of Instagram profiles that portray the short swim around the Morocco-Ceuta border fence as safe and easy - but in reality, people have drowned trying to make the crossing and take much longer routes. The accounts also wrongly show Ceuta as a viable route to mainland Europe. Our research suggests that this has contributed to the influx, alongside other factors such as misinformation about changes to Spanish immigration law and allegations about weak border controls. After engaging with the accounts' profiles and posts, the BBC was added to multiple channels and WhatsApp groups. When I asked one of the anonymous accounts if they could help me cross to Ceuta this weekend, they said yes and requested "5000 dirhams upfront" (£400) for "information that will help you enter Ceuta". They said they had helped "many people" cross before and would give me information about the "sewer pipes" which I could use to help me reach the enclave safely. The account confirmed lots of other Instagram profiles help people to cross to Ceuta in this way, and asked for payment "via bank account" with a specific money transfer service.

STOLEN MATISSE ARTWORKS RECOVERED BY POLICE IN BRAZIL

Eight illustrations by French artist Henri Matisse that were stolen from a library in São Paulo have been recovered by police in Brazil. The works, which have a combined estimated worth of about $200,000 (£148,000), were found on Thursday at a home in the town of São Bernardo do Campo, a suburb to the south of the city. A 44-year-old man was arrested at the scene. During the heist at Biblioteca Mário de Andrade on 7 December last year, two thieves overpowered a security guard and an elderly couple who had been visiting the library, before making off with the artworks through the main entrance on foot. Three other people were previously arrested in relation to the case. Five engravings by the Brazilian artist Candido Portinari that were also taken during the robbery have not yet been recovered. Police in São Paulo said they suspected the works had been sold. João Paulo Linhares de Araujo, the man arrested on Thursday, is suspected by police of having stored the Matisse artworks on behalf of those accused of being involved in the theft, as well as illegal possession of a firearm. Laéssio Rodrigues de Oliveira, 53, described by Brazilian media as a prolific art thief, is suspected of having planned and directed the crime, according to Brazilian news outlet Globo. He has been in custody since April after being arrested in relation to another case. The Matisse illustrations, made for the limited-edition art book Jazz, along with five engravings by Portinari, created to illustrate a special edition of the novel Menino de engheno (Plantation Boy) by Brazilian writer José Lins do Rego, formed part of a joint exhibition with the São Paulo Museum of Modern Art. The thieves targeted the exhibition, entitled From Book to Museum, on its final day. They reportedly entered the library by its main entrance mid-morning and headed towards the nearest metro station following the heist. Investigators said the theives placed the stolen artworks in a canvas bag to flee the scene. The local department of culture said the illustrations had already been returned to the library, the security of which had been improved.

Matisse is widely considered to be one of the 20th Century's most influential artists and art critics say the value of the stolen works is "incalculable". Portinari, who often painted rural workers and labourers, is one of the most significant Brazilian Modernist artists.

Conditions on US aircraft carrier at sea for more than 250 days raise alarms

Thousands of US military members who have lived aboard an aircraft carrier for more than 250 days are reportedly contending with food shortages, broken plumbing and exhaustion, leading lawmakers to demand answers from the Pentagon and pressure the Trump administration over the Iran war. Military news outlets reported that some USS Abraham Lincoln sailors had attempted to jump overboard, while families have raised concerns about mental health aboard the ship. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth called reports of conditions "completely misrepresented" on Thursday. The carrier left California in November for the South China Sea and was sent to the Middle East ahead of attacks on Iran in February. The deployment, which was originally set to end in May, has been repeatedly extended. No return date has been announced, but on Thursday multiple outlets reported the US was preparing to replace the carrier with the USS

George Washington as part of a previously scheduled rotation plan. Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal listed the reported hardships on the carrier, where about 5,000 people currently live, in a letter to Hegseth. "Shortages of basic supplies, water contamination, plumbing issues, deteriorating mental health, deck safety concerns and disruptions in the mail system, which have caused many care packages in route to the ship to be lost in transit for months," the Democrat, who serves on the Armed Services Committee, wrote. "These reports warrant immediate attention, but they also raise a broader question: whether the Navy can sustain the operational tempo now being demanded of its carrier force." Fellow Democratic Senator Ruben Gallego called for the military to allow a congressional delegation to visit the ship and "conduct oversight investigation into this horrible situation", he wrote on X, adding: "There is no reason to be denied access." Citing two unnamed officials, CBS News, the BBC's US partner, reported that earlier this month a sailor went overboard and was recovered by a helicopter, treated by the medical department and transferred off the ship for further care. The circumstances of the incident are under investigation. The Military Times and Stars & Stripes reported earlier this week that multiple service members had considered jumping overboard, according to their families. They said that being at sea for an extended period of time and the conditions aboard were hurting some members' mental health. Those conditions also reportedly included not being able to clean laundry for more than a week and not eating fresh food due to infrequent visits to ports, when troops are not always allowed to leave the ship. The relative of one sailor aboard the ship told BBC News that their family member has lost 65lbs (29kg) since beginning their deployment. The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to concerns about retaliation, said that their relative confirmed sailors had attempted to jump from the ship.

Presidential vote counting halted in Zambia over alleged attacks on polling staff

Zambia's electoral commission has suspended the counting of votes from Thursday's presidential, parliamentary and local elections over alleged attacks on polling staff. The authority said the process would be halted nationwide with immediate effect as it expressed concern over reports of violence that had "resulted in the theft of marked ballot papers in ballot boxes". President Hakainde Hichilema is seeking a second five-year term. Brian Mundubile is the main opposition candidate among 13 challengers. The electoral commission had previously set itself the target of announcing the results by the end of Sunday. Counting got under way immediately after polls closed on Thursday but no official results had been declared when the halt in the count came into effect. In Friday's statement the commission said it would review the decision to suspend vote counting within the next 24 hours. Just hours before the commission's statement, Mundubile expressed "grave concern" over delays in the announcement of presidential results, warning that the delay could create opportunities for interference or manipulation.

'Unprecedented' rain in Japan kills eight people

BUILDERS UNEARTH €9M GOLD LOOT SEALED IN WALLS OF BELGIAN PROPERTY

Builders renovating a house in Belgium have discovered a stash of gold reportedly worth some 9m (£7.6m) sealed into the walls of its cellar. The construction workers stumbled across the hidden trove of gold bars and coins while drilling to lay new sewage pipes in the property in east Flanders earlier this week, local media report. The discovery has sparked interest in who might get to keep the loot - with both the builders and the local charity that owns the site having a chance of claiming it. An investigation has been launched and local police cautioned anyone hoping to go looking for more treasure that the site had been "turned upside down" and the gold moved to a secure location. The builders unearthed the hoard while working on the building's

foundations - including an 18-year-old working a summer job. "Our first reaction was actually disbelief, amazement," the student, named Kobe, told Belgian public broadcaster VRT. "At first I thought they were 1 coins. But then we also saw a gold nugget lying there. That's when we realised it was something bigger."Soon after, they alerted police to the discovery and explained that them keeping it for themselves was not an option. "There are so many coins and bars - it would be almost impossible," the site manager Mario told VRT. "Besides, that would be theft." Kobe agreed: "9m – you simply can't keep that hidden." The property currently belongs to CAW Oost-Vlaanderen, which provides welfare support in Dendermonde, a Flemish community of around 47,000 people. Its director, Geert Hillaert, said his first reaction was "surprise and amazement", adding that he hoped the loot might eventually be used to support the charity's work and meet the "enormous need we experience daily". Local police urged the public not visit the active construction site looking for treasure. The force - which has updated its Facebook profile picture to an image of a gold coin - said it hoped the discovery would end up in "the right place" and change people's lives. The rightful owner has five years to claim the hoard under Belgian law - though the local prosecutor, who has launched an investigation, said it was not yet known who this might be.

"Huge Honour": Shubman Gill On Leading India In 600th Test On Independence Day

India's Shubman Gill said it is a "huge honour" to lead his side for the country's 600th Test when they face Sri Lanka Saturday in the opening match of a two-Test series. Only England (1,097) and Australia (883) have played more Tests than India and the landmark match also coincides with the anniversary of India's independence from British rule on August 15, 1947. "It's a big honour and privilege for me to captain India in any Test match," Gill told reporters in Galle. "Captaining India in our 600th Test is a huge honour and doing it on India's Independence Day makes it even more special." India began their Test journey in 1932 against England at Lord's and have since won 186 matches and lost 188. They have drawn 224 games, with one match ending in a tie. The tourists arrive in Sri Lanka looking to revive their red-ball fortunes after a difficult period under coach Gautam Gambhir. India, who have won eight and lost 10 of their 20 Tests under Gambhir, have slipped to fifth in the World Test Championship standings, one place above Sri Lanka. But Gill remains upbeat. Galle milestone "I'm very comfortable with the way we have progressed over the last year. I feel we are moving in the right direction," said Gill. "Our main goal is to play in the World Test Championship final next year and if we win six or seven games out of the next nine, we have a good chance." He added: "To get there, winning this series is very important and that's what everyone is focusing on." The tourists have been forced to make changes in their line-up due to injuries. Top-order batter Sai Sudharsan is unavailable, and Devdutt Padikkal, who struck an unbeaten century in the warm-up game in Colombo, is set to take his place. The first match will also mark a milestone for Galle, which will become the first venue in Asia to host 50 Test matches. Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva, who has played at the venue since his school days, said it would be a "big occasion" for the picturesque venue overlooking the Indian Ocean.

Iga Swiatek Rolls Past Elena Rybakina To Win WTA Toronto Title

Former world number one Iga Swiatek captured her first title of the year on Thursday, roaring past a weary Elena Rybakina 6-2, 6-3 to win the WTA 1000 in Toronto. Swiatek, a six-time Grand Slam champion, hadn't even reached a final in 2026 and saw her Wimbledon title defense end in the third round. But she was in control throughout against second-ranked Australian Open winner Rybakina on the way to a first Canadian crown. The victory will see her rise from eighth in the world back into the top five heading into her title defense in Cincinnati, with the US Open beckoning later in the month. And as she accepted her 12th 1000-level trophy the 25-year-old had some words for the doubters who have contributed to what she has called her toughest year on court. "It means so, so much to me," Swiatek said. "All these past months were not easy. "I'm really happy that I kept focusing on growing, changing my game a little bit, improving despite all the opinions that many people have about me every day on the internet. "It's not easy to deal with all of that. So I'm really happy that the reality is different. I have people that know me so well and people that support me every week, every day ... so thank you to the team." Finally, she said: "I want to dedicate this title to everyone who is dealing with judgment and hate. Just keep growing ... and always remember what's ahead and what might be possible." Swiatek's efficient serve performance, polished defense and timely attacks were far too much for Rybakina, who was taken to three sets in four of her five prior matches and didn't polish off her three-set semi-final win over Coco Gauff until 1 am. She got off to a sluggish start, gifting Swiatek a break in the opening game with a pair of double faults. "Today was a pity," Rybakina said. "I didn't have much energy. I tried my best, but it wasn't enough. "I was just very tired," she added. "You could see that I wasn't pushing with the legs enough. There was a lot of unforced errors, especially on top of the net. It was just pure lack of concentration. Even on those kind of easy balls, too." Rybakina steadied to hold at love in her next two service games, but after she failed to convert a pair of break chances in the sixth game, Swiatek broke her again for a 5-2 lead to find herself serving for the opening set after barely more than 20 minutes. Tough opponent Swiatek pocketed the set with a love game, delivering a swerving second-serve winner on set point.

India's Predicted Playing XI For 1st Test vs Sri Lanka: Debut On The Cards; Gautam Gambhir To Make Bold Call?

India captain Shubman Gill and head coach Gautam Gambhir have a few selection headaches to resolve when they pick the playing XI for the opening Test against Sri Lanka in Galle, starting August 15. India are expected to go in with a spin-heavy bowling attack given the spin-friendly conditions in Sri Lanka. Gill and Gambhir also have to find an answer to the No. 6 position. Who will play between Dhruv Jurel and Sarfaraz Khan? Will Gurnoor Brar or Saransh Jain make their Test debut? Here's our India predicted XI for the first Test. The Guarantees Most of India's batting and bowling core is fixed. Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul are almost certainly going to open, skipper Shubman Gill will slot in at No. 4, and wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant will be at No. 5. Ravindra Jadeja is also expected to return as the primary all-rounder in the team, while Mohammed Siraj is set to lead the pace attack in Jasprit Bumrah's absence. Given the spin-friendly conditions in Galle, Kuldeep Yadav's selection is also all but guaranteed. Last among the certainties is Devdutt Padikkal at No. 3. Padikkal struck a century in India's warm-up game against Sri Lanka Cricket XI, and with Sai Sudharsan out injured, he has no direct competitor for this series. The Dilemmas India's big dilemma in the batting order comes for the No. 6 spot. Dhruv Jurel has played most of India's recent Tests, but Sarfaraz Khan's re-inclusion in the squad has created a debate for the position. However, Jurel is the favourite to retain his position. A combination of three spinners and two seamers seems more likely than four spinners and just one pacer. In that case, left-arm spinner Manav Suthar is likely to play, after a 'Player of the Match' performance on Test debut against Afghanistan in June. This would see veteran Saransh Jain miss out. However, the Gambhir-led team management making the bold call of playing all four spinners cannot be ruled out. For the second pacer, Gill and Gambhir face a choice between Prasidh Krishna, Gurnoor Brar and Auqib Nabi Dar. Ahead of the first Test, Gill admitted that it is a "tough call" between Prasidh and Gurnoor. Gurnoor Brar impressed in his ODI outings, and was arguably better than Prasidh in India's warm-up match. Gill praised the 26-year-old's ability with the old ball. He also offers more with the bat. As a result, Gurnoor may get the nod over Prasidh, and be in line for a maiden Test cap. India predicted XI for 1st Test vs Sri Lanka: Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Devdutt Padikkal, Shubman Gill (c), Rishabh Pant (wk), Dhruv Jurel, Ravindra Jadeja, Manav Suthar, Gurnoor Brar, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj.

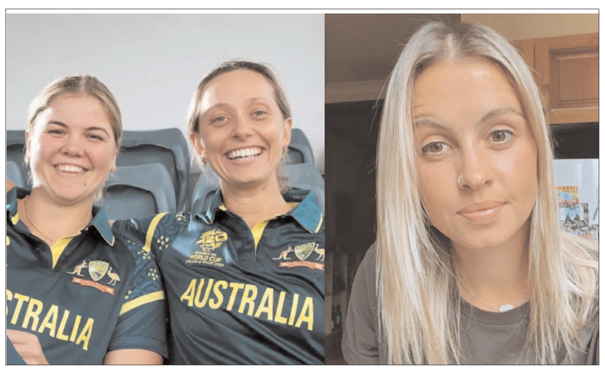
MICHAEL CARRICK SAYS MANCHESTER UNITED NEED MORE SIGNINGS, DESCRIBES MARCUS RASHFORD'S RETURN AS 'EXCITING'

Manchester United manager Michael Carrick has called for more signings in a summer when the club's spending on new players has been below all of its main Premier League rivals. United has spent around 85 million pounds ($115 million) combined on three players - midfielders Andrey Santos and Youri Tielemans and goalkeeper Karl Darlow - during the off-season, while also welcoming back Marcus Rashford from his loan spell at Barcelona. For Carrick, who is heading into his first full season as United manager and will be leading his team in the Champions League, it's not enough. "I think we've done really good business and we've got really some top, top, top players. We're delighted with that. We always want to improve," Carrick said. "We want more, we need more, we keep looking for how we can do that." Chelsea, Manchester City and Tottenham have each splashed out more than 100 million pounds on a single player, in Morgan Rogers, Elliot Anderson and Sandro Tonali, respectively. Chelsea's expenditure on new players, in fact, has exceeded $450 million. "Certainly the situation is what it is as well, whether that's finances or whatever," Carrick added on United's situation. "For now, we've got to make the most of it, but we've got to keep pushing and push everything and every boundary that we can to be able to win again." Rashford returned to United this week after the World Cup, as Barcelona declined an option to buy the England winger following his loan spell.

American Ben Shelton Repeats As ATP Montreal Masters Champion

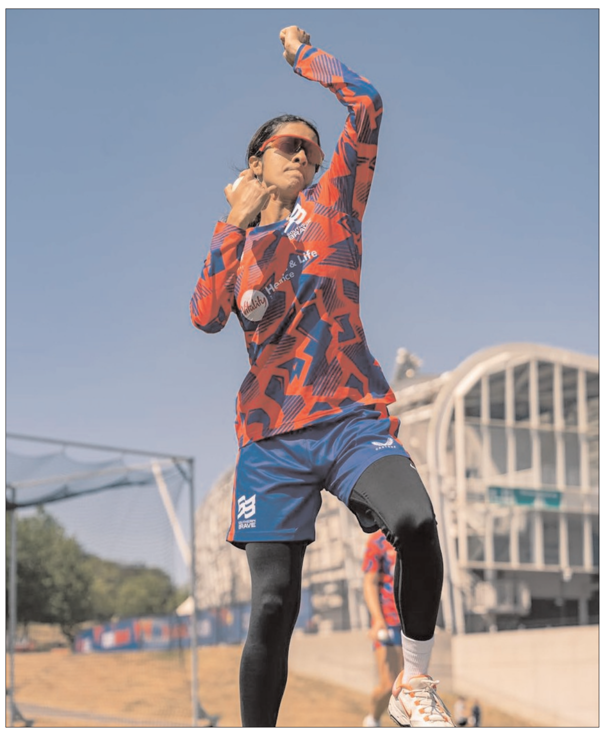
Ben Shelton won his second consecutive ATP Montreal Masters 1000 title on Thursday, revving up his game to defeat Brandon Nakashima 6-3, 7-6 (7/4). Success in the first all-American title match in Canada since Andre Agassi beat Pete Sampras in 1995 sends Shelton into elite company. The son of a former ATP player is the fourth man in the 2000s to back up a Canadian title the next year after Andy Murray, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal.

Ashleigh Gardner "Cheating" Controversy Prompts Cricket Australia To Tighten Policy



Cricket Australia (CA) chief executive Todd Greenberg has extended support to all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner after she was retained as the vice-captain of the women's national team. Gardner has been in the news ever since her estranged wife, Monica Wright, accused the all-rounder of cheating on her with teammate Georgia Voll. Wright had also slammed Cricket Australia (CA) for not taking action against Gardner and allowing her to hold a leadership position in the team. Now, CA chief executive Todd Greenberg has confirmed that Gardner's future as vice-captain was discussed by board officials, but it was eventually decided that the 29-year-old will continue to be part of the leadership group. "It was discussed yesterday at the board level. The board asked for an update on it, which we provided, and the outcome of that is the board are very supportive of Ash in the role as she was appointed to the vice-captaincy, [there's] huge and high regard for Ash," Greenberg told reporters in Darwin. Greenberg also revealed that CA was aware of the relationship between Gardner and Voll before it became public. He added that Gardner's situation prompted CA to update its Respect at Work policy regarding players in relationships holding leadership roles. "We've got a Respect at Work policy, which we've now put some additional measures in place. Because we want to make sure that either the perception or the real conflict of selections, even though the vice-captain doesn't have a say in selections in the team.

Big Blow For India As Jemimah Rodrigues Ruled Out Of Women's Asia Cup, Asian Games. BCCI Names Replacement



India women's team batter Jemimah Rodrigues was on Friday ruled out of the upcoming Asia Cup and Asian Games due to a hamstring injury she sustained earlier this month while playing in The Hundred tournament in England. The BCCI said in a statement that the 25-year-old Rodrigues has been assessed by the medical team with a high-grade tear. The Women's Selection Committee has named Pratika Rawal as Rodrigues' replacement for the Asia Cup to be played in Dubai from August 28 to September 13. "Jemimah Rodrigues sustained a right hamstring injury on 3rd August while playing in The Hundred in England. The BCCI Medical Team clinically assessed her at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, and the assessment confirmed a high-grade tear," the Board said. "Consequently, she has been ruled out of the upcoming ACC Women's Asia Cup in the UAE and the Asian Games in Japan." The Asian Games will be held in Aichi-Nagoya in Japan from September 19 to October 4. India's updated Asia Cup squad: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana (VC), Shafali Verma, Bharti Fulmali, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh (WK), G. Kamalini (WK), Arundhati Reddy, Prema Rawat, Radha Yadav, Sree Charani, Renuka Thakur, Nandni Sharma, Kranti Gaud, Pratika Rawal.

"Instead Of Criticising, Support Us": Neymar Slams 'Negative' Santos Supporters

Brazilian legend Neymar hit back at sections of Santos' home support after being booed during their Copa Sudamericana comeback win over Macara, saying fans who cannot get behind the team during difficult moments should "stay home". The Brazilian forward provided two assists as Santos recovered from an early deficit to beat Ecuadorian side Macara 2-1 in the first leg of their round-of-16 tie at Vila Belmiro on Friday. However, Neymar's two-assist performance was overshadowed by his reaction to criticism from supporters during the match. "What I was saying out there is that we were losing 1-0, and I know the fans have been suffering for many years... but if you're going to keep thinking about that and come to the stadium with a negative mindset, it's better to stay home," Neymar told ESPN after the match. "I told the guy up there: instead of criticising, there's still 60 minutes left to play, support us... encourage us. Then we turn the game around, I come over to get some water, and he's making a heart sign in the stands... It's easy to be a Santos fan like that... Only liking the guy when he's winning," he added. Santos endured a difficult start as Macara took the lead inside four minutes through Franco Posse. The hosts, however, gradually found their rhythm, with Neymar playing a key role in their response. The 34-year-old set up Gabriel Barbosa for the equaliser before the break and then delivered another assist from a corner in the 75th minute, with Willian Arao heading home to complete the comeback. The victory extended Neymar's impressive run of form. He has now contributed 13 goals and eight assists in his last 24 appearances for Santos. Santos will now travel to Ambato for the second leg next week, holding a 2-1 advantage.

The Brazilian forward provided two assists as Santos recovered from an early deficit to beat Ecuadorian side Macara 2-1 in the first leg of their round-of-16 tie at Vila Belmiro on Friday.

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KIARA ADVANI'S FIERY 'TOXIC' LOOK SPARKS BUZZ

Kiara Advani's red-hot look is basically Nadia energy spilling into real life. In the new pictures, she's draped in a sharp red blazer with a plunging neckline, worn against a moody all-red backdrop that makes the whole frame smoulder. Her dark wavy hair falls loose, bold red lips match the outfit, and the intense, smoky gaze she throws at the camera feels straight out of Toxic itself. It's the kind of look that matches the film's dramatic, circus-meets-crime world perfectly. As Nadia, a circus performer in Geetu Mohandas' Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups, she plays a layered, complex character, and these pictures capture that same intensity off-screen. The trailer dropped to massive buzz, with reactions calling it possibly her career-best performance opposite Yash. The film also stars Nayanthara, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria and Rukmini Vasanth, set in a Goa-backed world of crime, power and old-world drama.

With a worldwide release locked for August 26, 2026, anticipation keeps climbing. Bollywood actor Kiara Advani is all set to feature in Geetu Mohandas' Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups, marking her first film after pregnancy. During the film's audio launch in Mumbai on Thursday, lead actor Yash praised Kiara's dedication to the project and revealed how he and Geetu turned into "bouncers and bodyguards" to ensure she was taken care of on set. Praising Kiara's commitment to the film, Yash said, "How do I say, I think she is such a professional actor. She came into this film; I was a little worried because it's too demanding. The first time we spoke, she said, 'Have you ever done a rain sequence and all?', I said, 'Never, but it's going to be good and easy'. Then I saw her."

He added, "But the way she dedicated herself, and I must say, even after she was pregnant, she came with 100% commitment. I was more worried; Geetu was more worried. We were like bouncers/ bodyguards on set; we used to take care of her, but she has really dedicated herself. Thank you, Kiara; this one is special." Kiara received immense backlash on social media after her and Yash's song, Tabahi, from the film was released. The actor faced unwarranted hate over the intimate scenes in the song. However, after the trailer was released, fans praised her performance. At the film's trailer launch event last week in Bengaluru, Yash defended Kiara against the backlash and said, "And what you have to go through as an actor, unfortunately, don't care (about it). Whatever you believe in, you should do, and people will celebrate, people will appreciate. It's just that we are a little ahead of the times." Helmed by Geetu Mohandas, Toxic is a gangster drama that stars Yash in a dual role alongside

Visa - vintara saradaga teaser 2 out now | Actor's hilarious confession about love & girls is exciting

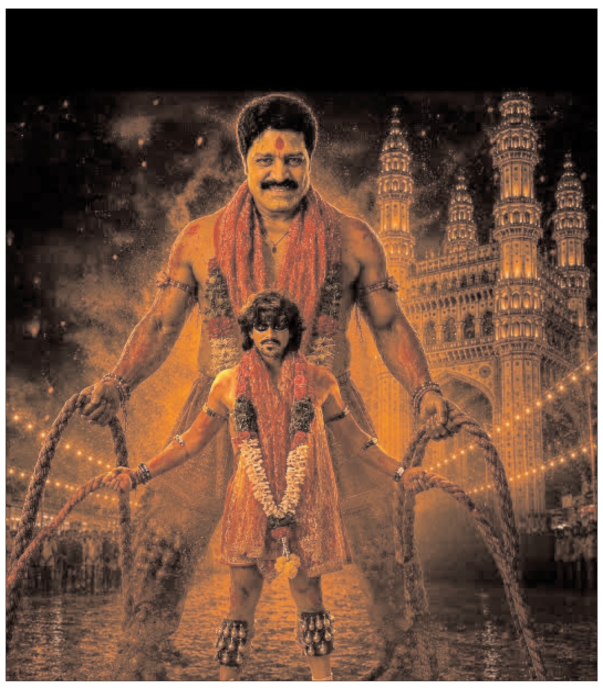
The second teaser of VISA - Vintara Saradaga is out now and it's already winning hearts across the internet! Directed by debutant Udbhav Raghu and produced by Naga Vamsi S and Sai Soujanya under Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, this quirky campus to USA romantic comedy stars Ashok Galla alongside Sri Gouri Priya, Rahul Vijay, Shivathmika Rajasekhar and Harsha Chemudu.

The second teaser takes a refreshing turn narrated entirely from the hero's POV, it has Ashok Galla's character candidly venting about love and the "trouble" girls bring into a man's life. Raw, relatable and wickedly funny, the monologue strikes an instant chord with the youth who have lived every word of it.

But what truly sets the teaser on fire is an unexpected moment - a dialogue reference from the iconic Khaleja, the cult classic featuring none other than Mahesh Babu - Ashok Galla's real-life mamayya. The inclusion of that iconic line sends the excitement through the roof

Music by Vijai Bulganin keeps the energy alive throughout, perfectly complementing the teaser's tone.

BHAIRAVAKALI FLIX BANNER WISHES LEGENDARY ACTOR REAL STAR DR. SRIHARI A HAPPY BIRTHDAY WITH A POWERFUL FIRST LOOK IN POTHURAJU ATTIRE!



Legendary actor Real Star Dr. Srihari earned a special place in the hearts of audiences by portraying a wide range of roles and being part of diverse films throughout his illustrious career.

Following in his father's footsteps, Meghamsh Srihari, who has ventured into acting, is making his debut as a hero with a film produced under the Bhairavakali Flix banner. The film is directed by Lella Rohith and produced by Lella Rahul.

On the occasion of Dr. Srihari's birthday on August 15, the makers unveiled the first look of Meghamsh Srihari in Pothuraju attire, an important part of Telangana culture.

KANNADA 'SUPREME STAR' BHARGAV'S "THOLISARI MIMMALNI CHOOSINDI MODALU" MOVIE LAUNCHED GRANDLY WITH POOJA CEREMONY

Kannada film industry's popular 'Supreme Star' Bhargav is acting as the hero and making his directorial debut with the film "Tholisari Mimmalni Choosindi Modalu." Meenakshi Jaiswal and Ariya Menon are playing the female leads. The film is being produced in Telugu and Kannada under the banner of Kosala Creative Works Pvt. Ltd., with Bandi Nagaraju as the producer and Maddineni Ramesh as the executive producer. Bhargav B. V. is directing the film. Set against a village backdrop, the movie is being made as an emotional thriller. The film's

grand launch ceremony was held in Hyderabad on Friday with a traditional pooja. Prominent producer Chadalavada Srinivasa Rao sounded the clap for the muhurat shot, while Film Chamber Secretary K. Ashok Kumar switched on the camera. Director Dasarath directed the first shot ceremonially, and director Veerashankar handed over the script.

Renowned filmmaker Deva Katta Presents 'Jo Jo': A Raw, Rustic Romantic Comedy with an Unfiltered Comic Voice

Renowned filmmaker Deva Katta, known for a distinctly serious and idea-driven body of work, is stepping into an entirely different space as he presents 'Jo Jo', a raw, rustic romantic comedy set against the Ultra Rural diamond fields of Jonnagiri. Written and directed by Kiran Jay Kumar, known for Mayasabha, the film promises an irreverent and unfiltered take on romance, ambition and the lengths people go to in search of a better life.

In the parched diamond fields of Jonnagiri, two penniless dreamers and a fearless young woman set their sights on one life-changing diamond, hoping that a single discovery can transform their fortunes. But their desperate hunt for wealth soon becomes anything but straightforward, drawing them into a whirlwind of romance, comic misadventures, greed, betrayal and danger. As their pursuit of the elusive diamond takes increasingly unpredictable turns, 'Jo Jo' unfolds as a quirky romantic comedy rooted in the eccentric characters and circumstances surrounding this unlikely treasure hunt.

The title announcement poster captures the film's raw and earthy character through its rustic visual treatment, placing its central figure against the landscape of Jonnagiri. The makers further underline the film's irreverent comic voice with the tongue-in-cheek warning,— signalling a film that intends to approach its romance and comedy without the usual restraints.

'Jo Jo' is produced by Vijay Krishna Lingamaneni under the banner Vijayam. Kiran Jay Kumar has handled the story, screenplay, dialogues and direction, while Krishna Kamal and Maahi Sri play Seenu and Supraja, respectively. The ensemble includes Phanindra Devarapalli as Venkatesh, Prabhavathi as Vijayamma, Mahaboob Basha as Suri, Satish Devatte Tanjore as Rangasaami, Puduru Sharath Babu as Ramana and Makarand Deshpande as Mukesh Shah. The technical team comprises Rohith Kumar as Director of Photography, Mahesh Shankar as Music Director and Madhav Kumar Gullapalli as Editor, with Rehman, Srinivas Mouli and Ramachandra as lyricists.

'BA BA BLACK SHEEP' FIRST LYRICAL 'AAJA MERI JAANI' OUT NOW; DEVI SRI PRASAD UNVEILS THE PEPPY TRACK, FILM ARRIVES OCTOBER 9

What begins as an unexpected incident can sometimes set off a chain of events with far-reaching consequences. 'Ba Ba Black Sheep', the upcoming new-age crime comedy from Chitralayam Studios, explores such an unusual premise, combining crime, comedy and entertainment with a quirky narrative. Presented by Donepudi Chakrapani and produced by Venu Donepudi under the Chitralayam Studios banner, the film is helmed by director Guni Manikanti. The movie boasts a diverse ensemble cast featuring Tinu Anand, Upendra, George Maryan, Akshay, Vishnu, Karthikeya, Vismayashri, Malavi, Kashyap, Raja Ravindra and others in significant roles. A major talking point about the film is its distinctive shooting experience. 'Ba Ba Black Sheep' marks the first South Indian film to be shot completely in Meghalaya. The makers extensively explored the state's stunning landscapes, with Cherrapunji among the prominent locations featured in the film. The teaser previously released by the makers introduced audiences to the film's unusual characters and their unique personalities. It also offered glimpses of a brisk and entertaining storyline filled with humour, quirky situations and unexpected developments. The makers have now officially announced that the film will have its grand theatrical release on October 9, taking advantage of the Dussehra festive season. Making the announcement more special, the team has unveiled the first lyrical song, 'Aaja Meri Jaani', with Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad launching the track. Devi Sri Prasad appreciated the song's youthful appeal and energetic mood. He also congratulated the makers for choosing a different concept and extended his best wish-

Ameer Log Feels Very Realistic and Raw: Little Hearts Director Sai Marthand at Trailer Launch Event

Ameer Log is produced by Madhavi Reddy Soma under the Awwal Number Productions banner and directed by Ramana Reddy Soma. Manohar Reddy Manchuri is the co-producer. The film features MC Hari, Manoj and Sasidhar in the lead roles, while Vedha Jalandhar, Ravan Nitturu, Vishwender Reddy and Saiyogi play key characters. Rana Daggubati's Spirit Media is releasing the film in Telugu on August 21. As part of the promotional campaign, the trailer was unveiled on Thursday.

ACTRESS HUMA QURESHI DAZZLES IN FRINGE SEQUIN DRESS

Huma Qureshi is keeping her fans hooked with her striking fashion choices, and her latest pictures are no exception. The actress, who has an exciting lineup ahead including Toxic, where she plays the role of Elizabeth, along with two other Hindi films, took to social media to share glamorous pictures right before the weekend. Huma opted for a shimmery silver fringe dress with a sheer, sequinned finish, paired with sleek black pointed heels. She kept her hair open in soft waves and let the outfit do all the talking, striking confident poses against a plain white backdrop that put the sparkly ensemble in the spotlight. With Toxic generating buzz as one of the year's most awaited releases, Huma Qureshi is clearly having a busy and stylish year. The much-awaited music album launch of Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups turned Mumbai into a glamour hotspot on August 13, 2026, as Yash and the film's ensemble came together for a grand promotional evening. Led by the Rocking Star himself, the event brought together the cast, director Geetu Mohandas, musicians and several entertainment personalities, creating plenty of buzz around one of the year's most anticipated pan-Indian releases. Yash made a powerful arrival at the event, leading the Toxic team and interacting with the media as excitement continues to build around his role in the film. The actor is set to portray a gangster in the highly stylised action drama, with the project promising a darker and more ambitious world than audiences have seen from him before. His commanding presence at the album launch once again underlined the scale of the film and its pan-Indian ambitions. Kiara Advani was among the biggest fashion highlights of the evening, turning heads in a striking red Elie Saab outfit featuring a structured blazer and dramatic flared trousers.

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