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NATION | NEWS

Gadkari blames faulty DPRs for highway accidents, warns contractors of action

WORLD | NEWS

TRUMP PAUSES NEW TARIFFS ON CANADA FOR THREE DAYS, SAYING DEAL CLOSE

CINEMA | NEWS

Sreeleela's Sleeveless Twist Elevates The Classic Lehenga

SCAN FOR E-PAPER

**OM NAMO VENKATESAYA**

18-08-2026
Total pilgrims : 80,905
Tonnages : 33,539
Hundi Kankals : 6,12 CR
Laddis sold : 4,16 Lac
Ampaprasadam : 2.88 Lac
Aavilambhala : 3,546
Present Situation on 19-08-2026:
Waiting Compartments...Out side
line adding at Stationaram

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens). 20-24 H.

Short Takes**34 ill as school uses detergent instead of salt in meal**

Patna: As many as 34 children fell ill in Bihar's Nalanda district after they were served a mid-day meal in which the cook allegedly mixed detergent powder instead of salt "by mistake." The incident occurred on Tuesday, August 18, at Parsa Middle School when some students complained of a burning sensation in their throats and stomach pain. The students were served a midday meal comprising rice with a potato-soybean vegetable dish, supplied by a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), as per the prescribed menu.

Minor raped by father; fake papers used for delivery

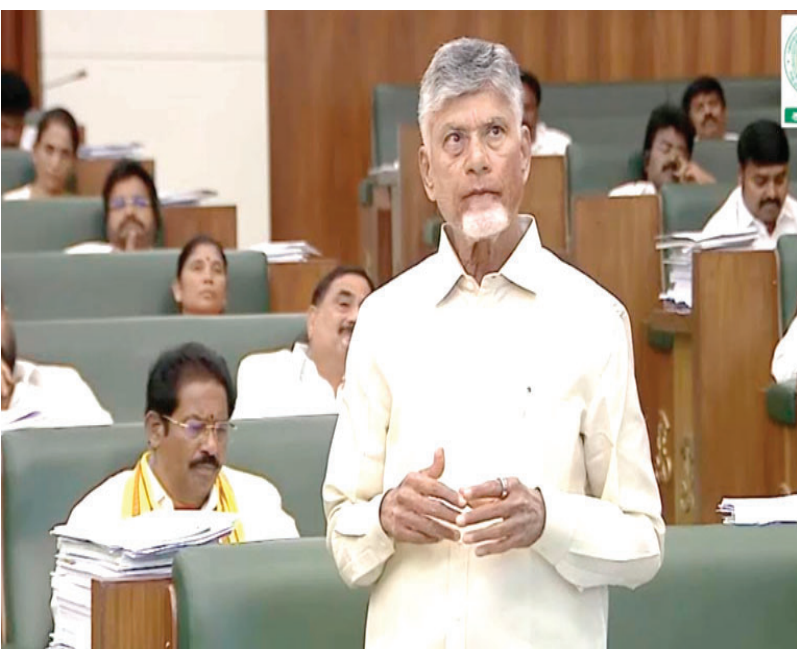
Raipur (TSIT): A minor girl was allegedly repeatedly raped and impregnated by her father, who later arranged her delivery at a hospital by using forged documents to show her as an adult and married, in Chhattisgarh capital Raipur, police said on Wednesday, August 19. The newborn son of the 16-year-old girl, who had also allegedly been forced to undergo an abortion on one occasion, was later sold to another person, they said. After the matter came to light on Monday, eight persons, including the teenager's father, aunt and a nurse, have so far been arrested in connection with the case, they said. The alleged abuse began in 2023 after the minor's mother separated from her husband, leaving their three daughters with him, a police official said.

CM Naidu Alleges Unprecedented Irregularities in APPSC Group-I Exams

Visakhapatnam (TSIT)

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has alleged that unprecedented irregularities took place in the APPSC Group-I examinations conducted during the previous government's tenure. He said established procedures were violated in the recruitment of Group-I officers, whose services are crucial to the administration and future development of the State. Speaking during a special discussion in the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Minister said the APPSC is a key institution responsible for selecting senior officials and criticised the previous government for undermining its credibility.

He alleged that the evaluation process involved serious violations and that unqualified personnel were engaged in handling and evaluating answer scripts. Recent reports on the SIT investigation have also pointed to serious procedural violations in the evaluation of Group-I Mains answer scripts. Chandrababu Naidu said the



same answer scripts were subjected to multiple rounds of evaluation despite rules restricting re-evaluation. He questioned how such irregularities could have occurred in the selection process for senior government officials.

The Chief Minister also challenged the Opposition to

face the people and answer questions in the Assembly instead of resorting to what he described as conspiracies and political campaigns. He said the government was prepared to discuss the issue openly and present the facts before the Legislature and the people.

Cong criticises Modi govt at CWC meeting



New Delhi (TSIT)

The Congress on Wednesday announced a broad political offensive against the Prime Minister Narendra Modi led Centre government, deciding to take its 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' campaign against paper leaks to nearly 800 cities, launch a nationwide agitation over alleged "chanda chori" at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and raise the issue of Chinese incursions in Arunachal Pradesh. The party also demanded a Prime Ministerial apology over the Haldwani incident involving Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, demanded to freeze 543 Lok Sabha seats and backed implementation of women's reservation from the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

The decisions were

taken at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting at Indira Bhawan in the national capital, where the party reviewed the political situation and discussed paper leaks, education, donations, China, delimitation, Vande Mataram and organisational strengthening, said general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal while addressing a press conference along with Jairam Ramesh and Pawan Khera. The CWC also flagged worsening unemployment among educated youth, saying the crisis had become a systemic failure after 12 years, with unemployment among graduates and postgraduates higher than among those without formal education.

Rajnath Singh to meet Japanese counterpart on defence ties

New Delhi (TSIT): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will hold a bilateral meeting with his Japanese counterpart, Shinjiro Koizumi, in New Delhi on Thursday to further strengthen defence cooperation between the two nations and promote peace in the Indo-Pacific region. Shinjiro Koizumi arrived in Mumbai on Wednesday for his maiden visit to India. Upon arrival, he inspected a Guard of Honour at the Western Naval Command in Mumbai. The Japanese Defence Minister also laid a wreath at the Gaurav Stambh at the Naval Dockyard. Additionally, he paid a visit to the indigenous ship INS Chennai. Koizumi held discussions with Indian Navy Chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan and Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Western Naval Command, Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan.

Cabinet approves Rs.9,450-cr railway multitracking projects across 4 states

New Delhi (TSIT)

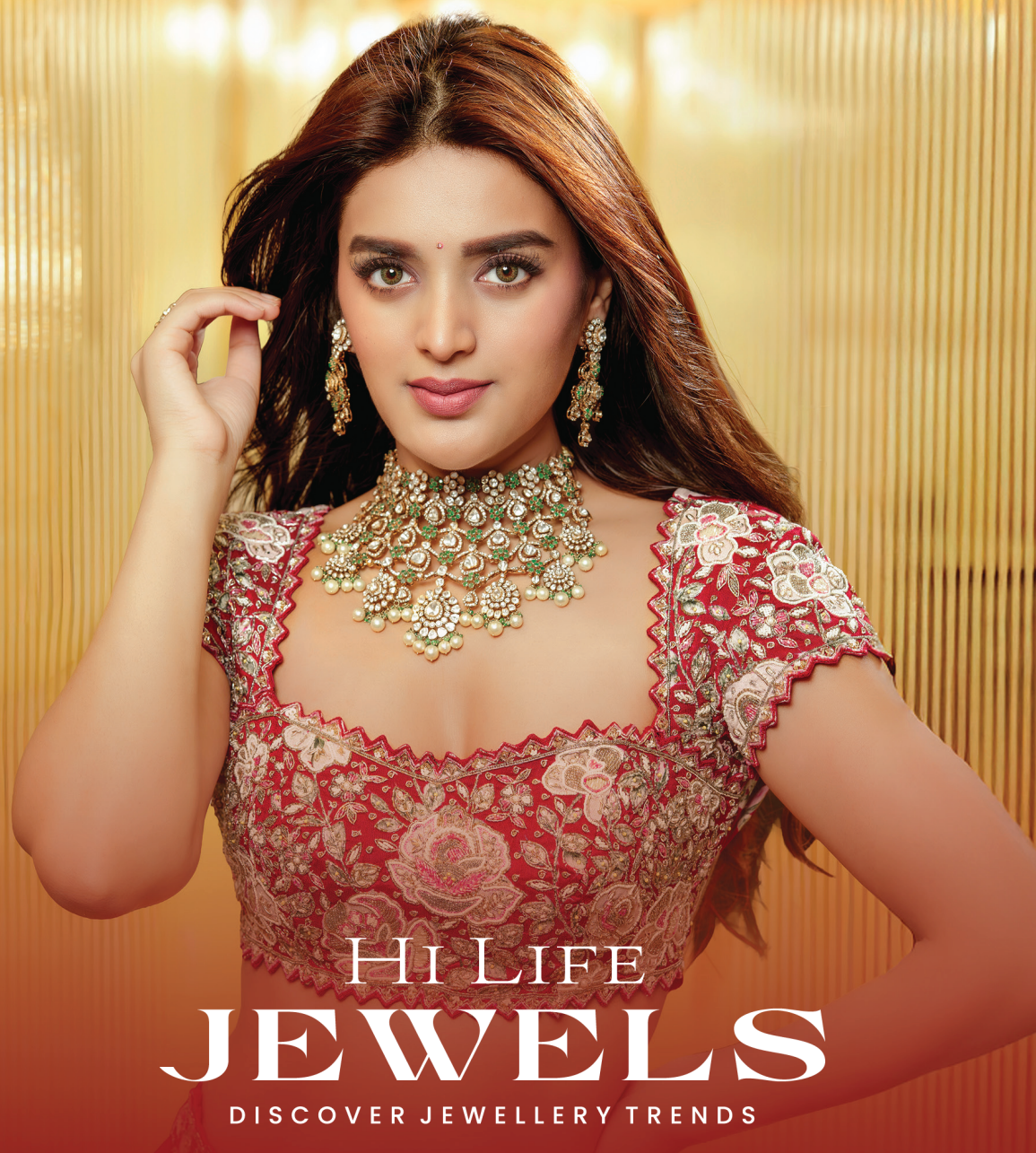
The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved four railway multitracking projects with an estimated cost of 9,450 crore. The projects, scheduled for completion by 2030-31, will add around 410 km to the Indian Railways network across West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The approved projects include the 173-km fourth line between Kharagpur and Bhadrak (Ranital) covering West Bengal and Odisha; the 75-km fourth line between Bhadrak and Haridaspur in Odisha; the 90-km third and fourth lines between Gummidipundi and Gudur covering Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu; and the 72-km



third and fourth lines between Cuttack and Paradeep (Badabandha) in Odisha. The projects are expected to increase rail capacity, reduce congestion and improve operational efficiency and service reliability. Planned under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, they will strengthen multimodal connectivity

and improve logistics efficiency through integrated planning. The four projects will cover eight districts and improve connectivity to around 6,448 villages with a combined population of nearly 60 lakh. They will also strengthen rail access to several tourist destinations, including Bhitarkanika National Park, Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandipur Beach, Pulicat Lake, Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary, Lalitgiri and several prominent temples. The routes are important for transporting commodities such as coal, iron ore, cement, iron and steel, containers, automobiles and food grains. The capacity enhancement is expected to facilitate additional freight traffic of around 76 million tonnes per annum.

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NAARM workshop stresses stronger agri-media collaboration for effective science communication

Hyderabad : The National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) organised a workshop on “Agri-Media Synergy: Enhancing Collaborative Communication” on Wednesday to strengthen collaboration between agricultural research institutions and the media and improve the communication of scientific developments to farmers and other stakeholders. The workshop brought together media professionals and communication functionaries to discuss ways to strengthen collaboration, ensure the flow of credible and timely information, and enhance public communication on agriculture and rural development.

Dr. R.M. Sundaram, Director, NAARM, inaugurated the workshop and stressed the need for a well-defined communication roadmap to bridge the gap between researchers, farmers and other stakeholders. He said scientific developments and technologies developed by agricultural research organisations must be communicated from the right perspective and in an accessible manner. Dr. Sundaram highlighted strategic communication, transparency and innovation as key elements of effective



public communication and called upon media and communication professionals to demystify science and break institutional silos to make scientific knowledge accessible to a wider audience. Dr. Kurmanath, Consulting Editor, Business Line, delivered the keynote address and emphasised the importance of using data, facts, figures and infographics in news reports to improve public understanding of scientific discoveries. He also stressed the need for newsrooms to adopt emerging multi-format communication practices, including quality photographs and short videos supported by clear explanations of scientific terms. Dr. Venkat Kumar, Head,

Extension Systems Management Division, NAARM, outlined the Academy's activities in strengthening human resources under the National Agricultural Research, Education and Extension System (NAREES). He also explained the significance of the ICAR Science Communication Policy in strengthening institutional communication. The workshop provided a platform for discussions on effective communication strategies, emerging media practices, information dissemination mechanisms and the role of stakeholders in addressing the information needs of farmers and the wider public.

Participants also discussed operational challenges and ways to strengthen professional collaboration between agricultural research organisations and media representatives. G. Aneja, CTO, NAARM and Workshop Director, welcomed the participants and outlined the objectives of the workshop. Around 35 participants from print and electronic media, including agriculture bureau chiefs, senior reporters, Public Relations Officers and other communication professionals, attended the programme.

Telangana banks record Rs.12.77 lakh crore advances; Deputy CM urges alignment with Telangana Rising 2047

Hyderabad, August 19, 2026: The State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), Telangana, held its 50th Quarterly Review Meeting for the quarter ended June 2026 at Praja Bhavan, Hyderabad, on Wednesday to review the performance of banks and assess progress in priority-sector lending and financial inclusion. Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, senior officials of the Telangana government, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), NABARD, State Bank of India (SBI) and representatives of public and private sector banks, Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks and other financial institutions attended the meeting. Presenting the banking sector's performance for the first quarter of 2026-27, SBI Hyderabad Circle Chief General Manager and SLBC Telangana Chairman Neelesh Dwivedi said total



bank deposits increased by Rs.49,522 crore during the quarter to Rs.9,92,947 crore. Total advances grew by Rs.42,891 crore to Rs.12,76,748 crore, while the Credit-Deposit ratio stood at 128.58%. Banks disbursed Rs.20,069 crore in short-term production loans during the quarter, achieving 34.51% of the Kharif target. Investment credit to agriculture and allied sectors, agricultural infrastructure and ancillary activities stood at Rs.32,268 crore, representing 38.36% of the annual target.

Lending to the MSME sector stood at Rs.91,374 crore, achieving around 40% of the annual target. Banks also extended Rs.1,46,096 crore under various priority-sector categories, achieving 33.66% of the annual target. Priority-sector lending included Rs.134 crore in education loans and Rs.1,402 crore in housing loans. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu urged banks to align their lending activities with the Telangana Rising 2047 vision, which targets a \$1 trillion economy by 2034

and \$3 trillion by 2047. He said banking performance should be assessed not only through financial targets but also through outcomes such as rural income growth, women's entrepreneurship and job creation. He reviewed agriculture and MSME lending and expressed concern over high agricultural NPAs. He called for timely and proactive credit to farmers and MSMEs, reactivation of inactive Business Correspondents and a shift from welfare-oriented financing towards enterprise-based finance for Self-Help Groups. Principal Secretary (Finance) Sandeep Kumar Sultania urged banks to align their Annual Credit Plans with the State's Vision 2047. He said Telangana was currently growing at 10-11% and called for stronger and targeted lending to support the State's objective of achieving a 13% growth rate.

Hindi News Reading Competition held at SBI Amravati LHO in Hyderabad



Hyderabad, August 19, 2026: A Hindi News Reading Competition was organised on August 18 at the State Bank of India (SBI), Amravati Local Head Office, Hyderabad, under the aegis of the City Official Language Implementation Committee (Banks and Insurance), Hyderabad. Employees from public sector banks and insurance companies in Hyderabad participated enthusiastically in the

competition. Regional Director of the Reserve Bank of India Chinmoy Kumar, SBI Chief General Manager Rajesh Kumar Patel, Chief General Manager Sushil Kumar, General Manager Prafulla Kumar Jena, General Manager Vishal Kumar Saxena, Divisional Development Officer Sushil Kumar Hans and Deputy General Manager Umesh Kumar were among those present. Assistant Director of All

India Radio (AIR), Hyderabad, and jury member of the competition, Seema Kumari, also attended the programme.

The programme began with a welcome address by Divisional Development Officer Sushil Kumar Hans. Regional Director Chinmoy Kumar, Deputy General Manager Meghna Singh and AIR Hyderabad Assistant Director Seema Kumari were felicitated with traditional shawls, mementoes and saplings.

Addressing the gathering, Chief General Manager Sushil Kumar stressed the importance of regional languages and encouraged Hindi-speaking employees to learn and use regional languages. Chief General Manager Rajesh Kumar Patel said promoting the effective use of Hindi as the official language was the responsibility of everyone. He noted that the simple and effective use of Hindi in public-oriented services such as banking and insurance can serve as a powerful medium of communication.

Mosquito Threat Doesn't End With the Monsoon, Warn CARE Doctors

Hyderabad, August 19, 2026: With the monsoon in full swing, fever cases are once again bringing dengue, malaria and chikungunya into focus. Doctors at CARE Hospitals say the immediate concern is not only the seasonal increase in mosquito-borne infections, but also the tendency among people to dismiss early symptoms as a routine viral fever and delay seeking medical advice.

rains, high humidity and accumulation of stagnant water create favourable conditions for mosquito breeding. In cities such as Hyderabad, breeding is not limited to large areas of waterlogging. Water collected in coolers, flowerpot trays, buckets, discarded containers, tyres, construction sites, terraces and uncovered tanks can also become breeding grounds.

India continues to face a significant dengue burden. According to the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC), the country reported 2,33,519 dengue cases and 297 deaths in 2024. Telangana alone reported 10,077 cases during the year. The numbers underline the need for continued vigilance, particularly during the monsoon and post-monsoon period.

Speaking about the current



monsoon scenario, Dr. Syed Mustafa Ashraf, Senior General Physician, CARE Hospitals, Malakpet, said, "During the monsoon, we see a noticeable increase in patients coming with fever, headache, severe body pains, weakness, nausea and vomiting. The challenge is that dengue, malaria and chikungunya can initially look very similar to a routine viral fever. Many patients wait for two or three days expecting the fever to settle or start taking medicines on their own. If the fever is persistent, symptoms are worsening or the patient is becoming unusually weak, it is better to get evaluated rather than continue waiting.

"What we look at as physicians is not just the temperature, but the overall clinical condition of the patient. Repeated vomiting, severe abdominal pain, unusual bleeding, increasing weakness, drowsiness, breathing difficulty or reduced urine output are warning signs that should not be ignored. In dengue particularly, the fever coming down does not always mean the patient has completely recovered. Timely clinical assessment, appropriate investigations, adequate hydration and monitoring are important to identify patients who may be developing complications."

Highlighting why prevention

should continue beyond the rainy season, Dr. Chaitanya Challa, Senior Consultant – General Medicine, CARE Hospitals, Banjara Hills, said, "We have traditionally associated dengue, malaria and chikungunya with the monsoon and immediate post-monsoon months. The rains certainly create favourable conditions for mosquito breeding, but we should not assume that the risk disappears once the rains stop. Mosquito-borne illnesses can occur outside the traditional seasonal window as well, particularly when warm temperatures, humidity and local breeding conditions continue.

"In an urban environment, mosquitoes do not need large areas of waterlogging to breed. Water left in a cooler, flowerpot tray, bucket, discarded container, tyre or an uncovered tank can be enough. That is why mosquito control should not end with the monsoon. Families need to make it a routine habit to check their homes and surroundings for stagnant water, keep water-storage containers covered and take precautions against mosquito bites. The larger message this World Mosquito Day is that prevention has to be continuous, not seasonal."

AINU Vizag Performs First Robotic Boari Flap Reconstruction Surgery in Vizag, Restoring Kidney Function

Vizag, August 19th 2026: In a significant milestone for advanced urological care in the region, the Asian Institute of Nephrology & Urology (AINU), Vizag, has successfully performed Vizag's first robotic Boari flap reconstruction surgery to treat a complex long-segment ureteric stricture, restoring normal kidney function in a 50-year-old woman suffering from a severe ureteric stricture. The patient, a resident of Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, initially presented with a ureteric stone that could not be treated successfully at another hospital due to significant narrowing of the ureter. Following this, she developed urinary obstruction and infection, requiring immediate intervention.

Upon admission at AINU Hospital Vizag, the medical team first stabilized her condition by placing a percutaneous nephrostomy (PCN) tube to relieve obstruction and manage infection. The stone was later successfully removed. However, the patient continued to experience recurrent infections due to a long segment ureteric stricture, which left her dependent on an external drainage system. After comprehensive evaluation, the urology team opted for a robotic reconstructive approach to restore normal urinary flow and preserve kidney function.

During surgery, the team encountered a more extensive ureteric defect than anticipated, making conventional proce-



dures such as ureteric reimplantation or psoas hitch unsuitable. The surgeons therefore performed a robotic Boari flap reconstruction, a specialized technique in which a flap from the urinary bladder is used to reconstruct the damaged ureter.

Unlike traditional open surgery—which involves a large incision and prolonged recovery—the procedure was carried out using minimally invasive robotic technology through just a few keyhole incisions. This resulted in minimal blood loss, reduced postoperative pain, faster recovery, and excellent functional outcomes. The patient recovered well, had the kidney tube removed prior to discharge, and was discharged within three days.

Speaking about the case, Dr. Amit Saple, Senior Consultant

Urologist, Transplant, Laparoscopic & Robotic Surgeon said: "This was a highly complex reconstructive case. The ureteric narrowing involved a long segment located close to major pelvic blood vessels, making the surgery technically demanding. Robotic technology allowed us to perform the reconstruction with exceptional precision while minimizing surgical trauma, resulting in quicker recovery and excellent outcomes." He further added "The robotic platform has significantly enhanced our ability to perform complex reconstructive urological surgeries. It enables meticulous dissection and precise suturing in difficult anatomical locations, ensuring better clinical outcomes and improved patient recovery."

Dr. G. Ravindra Varma,

Managing Director & Sr. Consultant Urologist, Andrologist, Uro-Oncologist, Laparoscopic & Robotic Surgeon, AINU Hospital Vizag, said, "Managing long-segment ureteric strictures is particularly challenging, as they can significantly compromise kidney function if not addressed with precision. In this case, we adopted a robotic Boari flap reconstruction—a highly advanced, minimally invasive technique that utilizes bladder tissue to restore ureteral continuity and ensure normal urine flow. This approach not only allowed us to effectively bridge the damaged segment but also helped preserve the patient's kidney function. Robotic technology provides enhanced precision, better visualization, and faster recovery, making it a game-changer in complex reconstructive urology."

The advanced procedure was expertly led by Dr. Amit Saple, Senior Consultant Urologist, Transplant, Laparoscopic & Robotic Surgeon, along with Dr. G. Ravindra Varma, Managing Director & Senior Consultant Urologist, Andrologist, Uro-Oncologist, Laparoscopic & Robotic Surgeon, and Dr. P. Sridhar, Consultant Urologist. This success also highlights AINU Hospital Vizag's broader expertise in robotic urology, where other complex procedures, including Radical Prostatectomy and Radical Cystectomy, are routinely performed with excellent outcomes.

Workshop on Provisional NOC Framework & New Age Technologies for Fire Safety Automation organized

Hyderabad: 18th August 2026: CREDAI (Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India) Hyderabad, NAREDCO (National Real Estate Development Council) Telangana, and FSAI and (Fire and Security Association of India) Hyderabad Chapter, in coordination with the Telangana State Disaster Response and Fire Services Department, Government of Telangana organized a workshop aimed to eliminate regulatory bottlenecks while upgrading life safety infrastructure across high-rise residential, retail, hospitals, hotels, schools, and commercial developments. Key real estate bodies, architects, structural engineers, MEP consultants, fire safety experts, auditors and government officials gathered in Hyderabad for an intensive industry workshop focusing on 'Streamlining Provisional No Objection Certificates (NOCs) framework and advocating adoption of New Age Advanced Fire Safety Technologies.'

The workshop follows the withdrawal of the National Building Code of India 2016 and the introduction of the advisory National Building Construction Standards (NBCS) 2026. In response, the Department has formulated draft Provisional NOC documents featuring practical checklists for Residential, Business, Mercantile, and educational occupancies. A major highlight of the session was the introduction of a new service allowing a Single Provisional NOC for Multiple Blocks within a single project, significantly streamlining the approval process for large developers. This risk-based framework aims to establish uniform, practical fire and life safety requirements while removing repetitive and non-essential provisions to enhance the 'Ease and Speed of Doing Business' in the state. The department also showcased innovative IoT-based health monitoring sensors that provide real-time data on fire pump status, water levels,



and generator readiness, alongside presentations on pressureless aerosols and advanced smoke management systems.

The workshop served as a crucial platform for dialogue between government officials and real estate leaders to eliminate regulatory bottlenecks while upgrading life safety infrastructure across residential and commercial developments. Discussions centred on establishing transparent online processing timelines for Provisional NOCs, standardizing early-stage safety protocols, and mandating the adoption of modern fire mitigation technologies, including IoT-based smoke detection, early-warning suppression systems, and automated flame-dampening devices.

Speaking about the workshop Sri Vikram Singh Mann, IPS, Director General, Telangana Disaster Response & Fire Services Department said "Provisional NOCs are not merely administrative formalities; they are critical roadmaps designed to ensure fire safety is built directly into the architectural DNA of a residential, commercial or retail real estate project. Our objective is twofold: simplifying approval mechanisms through digital transparency and strictly enforcing modern safety standards. By integrating real-time sensor monitoring and early-warning technologies, we aim to transform Telangana into a benchmark state for urban fire resilience and zero-preventable fire casualties."

Two Temples Handed Over to Endowments Department



TTD officials on Wednesday formally handed over Sri Prasanna Anjaneya Swamy Temple and Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple at Rajanalabanda, Vengalapalle village, Chowdepalle Mandal in Annamayya district, to the Endowments Department as per the State Government orders. At 10.30 a.m., TTD Special Grade Deputy EO of Sri Govindaraja Swamy Temple, Smt. V.R. Shanthi, formally handed over the charge of both temples to Sri Viswanatham, Endowments Department Officer, Madanapalle.

LARS Test Plinth Commissioned in Visakhapatnam



Visakhapatnam (TSIT) Eastern Naval Command Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla commissioned the Launch and Recovery System (LARS) Test Plinth at the Submarine Rescue Unit (East) in Visakhapatnam. The specialised facility has been established to facilitate testing and maintenance of the Launch and Recovery System associated with the Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) at the shore-based facility. The in-house test facility will enable testing and maintenance of the LARS without deploying the system for sea operations. This will help ensure that the DSRV system remains operationally ready at all times and that necessary maintenance activities can be carried out in a timely manner.

Naval officials said the facility would further strengthen the critical submarine rescue capability along the Eastern Seaboard. The LARS Test Plinth is expected to play an important role in enhancing the operational readiness of the DSRV system, which is used to rescue personnel trapped aboard submarines during emergencies. The facility will also make the maintenance of submarine rescue systems more efficient and provide greater assurance of the Indian Navy's sustained operational readiness along the Eastern Coast.

Hi Life Jewels to bring exquisite jewellery collection to Vijayawada from August 21



Vijayawada, August 19, 2026: Jewellery enthusiasts in Vijayawada are set to experience a curated collection of fine jewellery, statement pieces and contemporary designs as Hi Life Jewels hosts a three-day jewellery showcase at Novotel Vijayawada Varun from August 21 to 23.

The showcase will feature an extensive range of jewellery combining traditional craftsmanship with contemporary aesthetics. The collection is designed to cater to a wide range of preferences, from elegant everyday jewel-

lery to statement pieces suitable for celebrations, weddings and special occasions.

Visitors will have an opportunity to explore the latest jewellery trends and discover designs that reflect individual styles and preferences. The showcase aims to bring together craftsmanship, elegance and modern design under one roof.

Hi Life Jewels has invited jewellery lovers from Vijayawada and surrounding areas to visit the exhibition and explore its collection during the three-day event.

Special Focus on Irrigation and Drinking Water Supply to Yeleru Ayacut

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) The State Government is giving special attention to irrigation and drinking water supply to the Yeleru Reservoir ayacut, Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu said in the Assembly on Wednesday. Replying to questions on the

Yellasi Canal works and water supply, he said the government was acting on the directions of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and had recently conducted field inspections with officials and local MLAs.

SIR-2026 process must be completed meticulously, says Nellore Collector

Ozili, August 19, 2026: Nellore District Collector Dr. S. Venkateshwar conducted a surprise inspection of the Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls (SIR-2026) process at Graddagunta Gram Sachivalayam in Ozili mandal on Wednesday and directed officials to complete the exercise meticulously within the stipulated timeframe.

Accompanied by Sullurupeta RDO Devendra Reddy, the Collector reviewed the field-level work being carried out by Booth Level Officers (BLOs), Booth Level



Agents (BLAs) and other election staff. He enquired about staff attendance, duties assigned and the progress achieved so far. The Collector examined no-mapping and anomaly cases and reviewed them individually. He also looked into difficulties in mapping current voter details with the 2002 electoral rolls. Where mapping was not possible, he directed officials to collect the required documents from voters, conduct field-level enquiries and upload the details online as per prescribed procedures.

RSB Factory Outlet launches first exhibition sale with wholesale prices in Nizampet

Hyderabad, August 19, 2026: RSB Factory Outlet has launched its first-ever exhibition sale in Nizampet, offering customers the opportunity to shop a wide range of fashion and home essentials at factory-direct wholesale prices. The multi-day exhibition is being held at Sapthapadi Gardens near D-Mart on Nizampet Road and will continue from August 19 to 24. The sale is aimed at customers from Nizampet, Bachupally, Kukatpally and surrounding areas, offering a variety of products for the entire family. The exhibition was inaugurat-



ed by Indian actress and television host Rashmi Gautam on August 19 at 10.30 am. Speaking ahead of the launch, Rashmi Gautam said she was delighted to be associated with the event and described

the concept of bringing factory wholesale prices directly to customers as an opportunity for families to purchase quality products while making significant savings. The exhibition features an extensive range of ladies', men's and children's clothing, along with home furnishing products. The women's collection includes silk sarees, ethnic dress materials, party wear and daily-wear outfits. The men's section offers for-

mal wear, casual shirts, trousers and traditional ethnic collections, while the kids' range includes colourful and comfortable clothing for boys and girls. The home furnishing section features bedsheets, curtains, bath towels and decorative items designed for different household needs.

According to the organisers, RSB Factory Outlet has traditionally supplied collections to retail stores at wholesale prices. Through the exhibition sale, the company is bringing its factory-direct pricing model directly to retail customers.

Red Bull Racing Car Exhibition Draws Attention at GITAM



Visakhapatnam (TSIT) A Red Bull racing project and Formula racing car exhibition organised on the GITAM University campus attracted considerable attention from students and motorsport enthusiasts. GITAM President M. Sri Bharat attended the event as the chief guest. The special programme was organised to bring motorsport culture and advanced engineering technologies closer to students. Students of GITAM, along with members of the GITAM Automotive Club and GUSAC, had an opportunity to closely observe the Red Bull racing car and learn about its advanced technology, aerodynamics, speed, powertrain and design principles. The exhibition provided students with

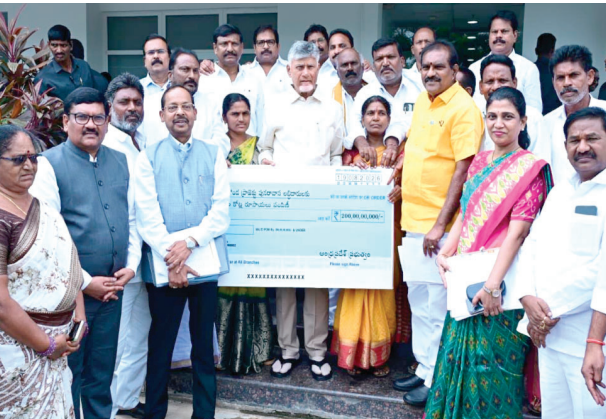
valuable exposure to engineering techniques and design approaches used in world-class racing. Engineering students and motorsport enthusiasts enthusiastically visited the racing car, interacted with the organisers and clicked photographs. The GITAM management said the Automotive Department would continue to encourage students through such global racing initiatives and motivate them to participate independently in national and international motorsport events such as Formula Student and Karting. University officials, faculty members and Automotive Club coordinators participated in the programme and thanked everyone who contributed to making the exhibition a success.

SACRIFICE IS YOURS... SUPPORT IS OURS

- Another Rs.200 Crore Compensation for Veligonda Project Displaced Families
- Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu Hands Over Cheque to Displaced Families
- Rs.518 Crore Compensation Paid So Far

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) With the inauguration of the first phase of the Veligonda Project approaching, the State Government is extending financial support to families displaced by the project. Recognising the sacrifices made by families who lost their lands and houses for the construction of the project, the government on Wednesday provided another Rs.200 crore in compensation.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu handed over the Rs.200 crore cheque to representatives of the displaced families at the Assembly premises. This follows the Rs.300 crore compensation released on June 27, taking the total compensation paid to Veligonda project-affected families so far to Rs.518 crore. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said the government recognised the sacrifices made by farmers and displaced families for the construction of major projects and assured that the



remaining compensation would also be released soon. He said his government was committed to supporting the Veligonda displaced families and urged people to recognise governments that work for their welfare. The displaced families expressed happiness over the government's support and compensation and said they were grateful for the assistance. Under the rehabilitation measures, the government has already paid around Rs.318 crore under the OTS scheme

to 2,557 families that constructed houses on their own. On Wednesday, a cheque for another Rs.200 crore was handed over to 1,600 families, taking the total compensation to Rs.518 crore for 4,157 families.

Name Change
I hitherto known as Y Uligappa
S/o Y. Siddappa R/o 5/897,
Hanuman Nagar, Adoni, Po:
Adoni, Dist: Kurnool, Andhra
Pradesh-518301 have changed
my name and shall hereafter be
known as Yerukula Uligappa

Technology Must Be Integrated with Handicrafts to Create New Opportunities for Artisans

DR. PASUPULETI HARIPRASAD AT APHDC CRAFTTECH HACKATHON-2026 FINALS

Visakhapatnam (TSIT) The primary objective of the APHDC CraftTech Hackathon-2026 is to integrate modern technology, design and innovation with traditional handicrafts and create new markets and better livelihood opportunities for artisans, said APHDC Chairman Dr. Pasupuleti Hariprasad. Dr. Hariprasad was the chief guest at the final competition, prototype exhibition and evaluation of the CraftTech Hackathon-2026 organised by the Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Skill Development Corporation (APHDC) at the Ratan Tata Innovation Hub (RTIH) in Mangalagiri.

A total of 60 artisans from different parts of South India participated in the competition, of whom 12 were shortlisted for the final round based on their performance. Following the final evaluation, three participants



were selected as winners. The finalists presented their innovative prototypes before the jury members. OSD Lakshminath, DCH Assistant Director Aparna Lakshmi and Madhava Rao of the School of Planning were among the jury members who examined and evaluated the prototypes. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Hariprasad said traditional handicrafts were an important part of the coun-

try's cultural heritage. By combining them with technology, contemporary design and market requirements, artisans could gain global recognition for their skills. "When technology supports the traditional skills in the hands of an artisan, it creates new markets for the craft and a new future for the artisan," he said.

Participants developed innovative solutions in areas such as integrating

interactive and mechanical technology into traditional handicraft toys and developing sustainable food-grade packaging solutions using natural and locally available materials.

Dr. Hariprasad said APHDC would work towards developing the best prototypes into marketable products rather than limiting them to the competition. The corporation would move forward with the vision of "From tradition to innovation, and from innovation to the market." He said the primary objective was to connect the skills of Andhra Pradesh's artisans with modern technology and provide them with sustainable incomes, new markets and better opportunities. APHDC Director RDS Prasad, Yashaswini and others participated in the programme.

AMBIT FIVEST PRIVATE LIMITED	
Corporate Office: Kanaka Wall Street, 5th floor, A-506-510, Andheri-Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai-400093	
DEMAND NOTICE - Under The Provisions Of The Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("the Act") And The Security Interest (enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("the Rules")	
The undersigned being the authorized officer of Ambit Finvest Private Limited under the Act and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) of the Act read with the Rule 3, issued Demand Notice(s) under Section 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the following borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice(s) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The undersigned reasonably believes that borrower(s) is/are avoiding the service of the demand notice(s), therefore the service of notice is being effected by affixation and publication as per Rules. The contents of demand notice(s) are extracted herein below:	
Name of the Borrower(s)	Demand Notice Date & Amount
1. NETHALA PREM SURESH 2. SODADASI RAJANI Lan Nos. VSP000001019128	31-07-2026. Rs.26,20,132/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lakhs Twenty Thousand One Hundred and Thirty Two Only) As On : 16-07-2026
Description of Immovable property/properties mortgaged	
All The Piece And Parcel Of The Property Being Site Of An Extent Of 33.33 Sq.Yds Being Undivided And Unspecified Out Of 100 Sq.Yds Together With Rcc Building Entire Second Floor Measuring 720 Sft Bearing D No.10-8 8/1 Part, Asst No.23310 Part Covered By T S No 10322/20 As Per Endorsement Issued By Gmce Block No.65 Of Ramnagar Area, Waltair Municipal Ward Corporation Area Visakhapatnam District. Boundaries Of Secured Asset: East: House Of Bolla Kanakamma, South: Cement Road, West: Property Of Palli Savitramma, North: Property Kona Bhaskar Rao	
The borrower(s) are hereby advised to comply with the demand notice(s) and to pay the demand amount mentioned therein and hereinafter within 60 days from the date of this publication together with applicable interest, additional interest, bounce charges, cost and expenses till the date of realization of payment. The borrower(s) may note that APFL is a secured creditor and the loan facility availed by the Borrower(s) is a secured debt against the immovable property/properties being the secured asset(s) mortgaged by the borrower(s). In the event borrower(s) are failed to discharge their liabilities in full within the stipulated time, APFL shall be entitled to exercise all the rights under Section 13(4) of the Act to take possession of the secured asset(s) including but not limited to transfer the same by way of sale or by invoking any other remedy available under the Act and the Rules thereunder and realize payment. APFL is also empowered to ATTACH AND/OR SEAL the secured asset(s) before enforcing the right to sale or transfer. Subsequent to the Sale of the secured asset(s), APFL also has a right to initiate separate legal proceedings to recover the balance dues, in case the value of the mortgaged properties is insufficient to cover the dues payable to the AMPL This remedy is in addition and independent of all the other remedies available to APFL under any other law. The attention of the borrower(s) is invited to Section 13(8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets and further to Section 13(13) of the Act, whereby the borrower(s) are restrained/prohibited from disposing of or dealing with the secured asset(s) or transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of business) any of the secured asset(s), without prior written consent of APFL and non-compliance with the above is an offence punishable under Section 29 of the said Act. The copy of the demand notice is available with the undersigned and the borrower(s) may, if they so desire, can collect the same from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.	
Date : 20.08.2026. Place: Andhra Pradesh	
Sd/-, Anket More, Authorised Officer Ambit Finvest Private Limited	

EDITORIAL

US Envoy Signals Possible Review of Kashmir Travel Warning

During his first visit to the Union territory, United States India Ambassador Sergio Gor today (August 19) pointed to a possibility of Washington reviewing its travel advisory for Jammu and Kashmir, citing “improvements in the security situation”. Speaking to reporters briefly following his meeting with the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Gor said the US would consider whether its travel warning for the region should be downgraded, and described Kashmir as “an important part of India”. He said that Americans would enjoy visiting the region. “I cannot make any big announcement [on a revision of the travel advisory].” Gor told reporters outside Abdullah’s residence in Gupkar, Srinagar. “New Delhi, the chief minister here, the government here, we believe, have made some incredible steps toward keeping this area safer and making it more secure,” he said. “And so we will be looking at whether the travel warning that is recommended by the United States is something that should be downgraded,” Gor added. “This is a beautiful area. I think a lot of Americans would enjoy coming here and seeing the beauty,” he said. Earlier in the day, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti had urged Gor to withdraw the US travel advisory, saying it was hurting an economy in which thousands of families depend on tourism. “For Kashmir, where thousands of families depend on tourism, the travel advisory on Kashmir is more than a warning; it is a wall between Kashmir and the world.” Mufti said in a post on X. “Lifting it would send a powerful message of confidence, help bring back international tourists and give much-needed relief to countless families whose livelihoods depend on tourism,” she added. Mufti urged the US ambassador to at least review and withdraw what she described as the highest-level travel advisory against visiting Kashmir. ‘Kashmir important part of India’ Gor, who is also US President Donald Trump’s special envoy for South and Central Asia, made his comments after his meeting with Abdullah. “Kashmir is an important part of India. I am visiting the place for the first time. It is an incredibly beautiful place,” Gor told reporters in Srinagar. “We had a very warm meeting and we look forward to building on our relationship,” he added, with Abdullah standing alongside him. The visit is Gor’s first to Kashmir since Operation Sindoor last year and comes amid heightened strategic developments in the region. His remarks on the travel advisory are particularly significant to Jammu and Kashmir’s efforts to expand its international tourism footprint and attract visitors from the United States and other Western countries. The meeting was also attended by Ian Michael Dick, an official from the US Embassy in New Delhi, Gary Applegarth, First Secretary at the US Embassy, Lisa Grace Alkins, a US Embassy official, Hemant Joshi, another embassy official, and Jammu and Kashmir National Conference leaders Nasir Aslam Wani, Tanvir Sadiq and Sakeena Itoo. Before meeting Gor, Abdullah said he would not raise the issues Jammu and Kashmir faces to the US envoy and stressed that the solution of internal issues rested with the Government of India. “The solution to our problems will not come from Washington. Our problems have to be resolved by our central government,” Abdullah said.

Why The Congress-Samajwadi 'Merger' Fantasy Could Be Opposition's Biggest Self-Goal

Political Delhi has a weakness for grand solutions. When alliance talks are tedious, seat-sharing becomes rancorous, and local leaders refuse to yield, a merger can appear seductively simple. Why negotiate every election if two parties can simply become one? That is precisely why the suggestion that the Congress and the Samajwadi Party (SP) should merge deserves scrutiny. The argument is that Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav are increasingly occupying the same terrain of caste justice, representation, and inclusive politics, and that a merger could turn this convergence into a new national political formation. It is an interesting proposition. But it also solves the wrong problem. The challenge before Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav is not that their parties are insufficiently alike. It is that they must cooperate without destroying the differences that make each useful. In politics, two plus two is not necessarily four. Votes carry memory, caste, class, community, local loyalties, ideological inheritance, and, importantly, the ambitions of party workers. A merger may look like a consolidation from Delhi. In Uttar Pradesh, it could become subtraction. Parties Are Constituencies, Not Containers The case for a merger rests substantially on the argument that the Congress and the SP are moving towards the same social terrain: caste justice, representation, minorities, Dalits, and backward classes. There is truth in the observation, but the conclusion does not follow. Political convergence is not political sameness. The Congress in Uttar Pradesh was historically an umbrella formation. At its strongest, it brought together a coalition of Brahmins, Dalits, and Muslims, alongside other groups, under a broad national platform. That old social compact eventually came apart under the



pressures of Mandal, Mandir, and the rise of parties representing more sharply defined social constituencies. The Samajwadi Party grew out of a very different political genealogy - the socialist tradition associated with Ram Manohar Lohia, backward-caste assertion, and a pronounced streak of political and organisational independence. The party itself describes Lohia as its "guiding light" and defines its ideological inheritance in explicitly socialist terms. Its traditional social architecture has also been different: Yadavs, sections of other backward communities, and Muslims formed its core, even as Akhilesh now attempts to widen that coalition substantially. The fact that the Congress and the SP today seek Dalit, OBC, and minority votes does not mean that they command the same voters, or that those voters see them as interchangeable. Even the

'Muslim vote', so casually spoken of in political shorthand, is no single transferable bloc. Ashraf and Pasmanda communities, biradari networks, class, locality, and the standing of individual candidates, all influence political preferences. There is another constituency that political arithmetic habitually forgets: the aspirant. Every district has leaders who have spent years building a claim to a ticket, an organisational post, or a local following. Merge two organisations and one may not get twice the energy. One may get twice the number of claimants for half the available political space. Rebellion, sabotage, and migration are not academic possibilities in Indian elections, but daily mechanics of party politics. UP Has Tested This Already There is no need to conduct this experiment in a laboratory. Uttar Pradesh has supplied enough evidence. In 2017, the SP and

the Congress fought the Assembly election together amid enormous publicity around the Rahul-Akhilesh partnership and the catchy promise that Uttar Pradesh liked their coming together. The electorate proved considerably less sentimental. The SP won 47 seats and the Congress seven, while the BJP swept 312. That election demonstrated an elementary truth: leadership chemistry does not automatically produce cadre chemistry. A friendly photograph at the top does not guarantee vote transfer at the booth. The 2019 mahagathbandhan between the SP and the Bahujan Samaj Party supplied another warning. On paper, their previous vote shares promised formidable arithmetic. In practice, those votes did not transfer mechanically; the alliance finished with 15 seats. Ironically, the argument in favour of a Congress-SP merger itself acknowledges

this inconvenient fact. Then came 2024, and that result should lead to precisely the opposite conclusion. The Congress-SP arrangement worked because it was an alliance of recognisable political entities, not an act of political self-liquidation. The SP won 37 Lok Sabha seats, and the Congress six; together, the INDIA grouping took 43 of Uttar Pradesh's 80 seats. Both retained their symbols, leadership structures, cadres, and political personalities while preventing destructive competition across most of the State. Why should the success of a coalition be converted into an argument for abolishing coalition partners? The lesson of 2024 was simpler and more useful: intelligent seat-sharing, a resonant common campaign, and disciplined accommodation can make distinct social coalitions complementary. The political genius lay in addition without erasure. The Janata

Warning Indian politics has seen a much grander merger in the name of defeating a dominant leader. In 1977, the Congress (Organisation), Bharatiya Lok Dal, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, and socialist streams surrendered their separate identities to come together as the Janata Party after the Emergency. Anti-Indira sentiment and the extraordinary public reaction to the Emergency gave the formation a historic victory and India its first non-Congress government at the Centre. But what was powerful enough to win an election proved inadequate to manufacture a durable political identity. Old ideological disputes resurfaced. Leadership rivalries sharpened. The tensions between the socialist and erstwhile Jana Sangh components became impossible to paper over. Morarji Desai's government collapsed in 1979, barely halfway through its mandate. The lesson is not that Opposition unity is futile. It is considerably subtler: a negative common denominator can be a campaign instrument; it cannot, by itself, become an organisational philosophy. 'Defeat Modi' cannot be the constitution of a new political party any more than 'Defeat Indira' could hold Janata together. A Congress-SP merger would immediately raise questions that an alliance instead can negotiate without creating an existential crisis. Who controls the Uttar Pradesh organisation? Who selects candidates? What happens when the Congress's national calculations clash with the SP's provincial imperatives? Does the Congress abandon its long-term ambition to rebuild independently in India's largest State? Does the SP trade the autonomy that gives Akhilesh Yadav his political weight for a place within a national hierarchy? These are not minor details to be worked out after a merger.

ALONG WITH JOB, PREPARATION FOR LIFE IS ALSO IMPORTANT



A government job is an important part of life, but it shouldn't be everything. While salary, position, promotions, and government benefits are nice, having a good family, health, financial security, personal growth, and preparing for your future after retirement are just as important. First, plan your home. Whether in the countryside or the city, having your own home provides a sense of stability and self-reliance. While government housing is a good thing, it shouldn't become the foundation of your life. Having your own home will significantly ease the situation for you and your family in the event of a job loss. Be honest and dedicated to your work, but don't devote your entire life to the workplace. Don't think that the company can't function without you. Someone else can fill each of these roles, but you can never get back those moments spent with your loved ones. Enjoy your holidays and vacations, relax or spend quality time with family and friends, take care of yourself, travel, learn, and enjoy life. Don't make promotion the sole criterion for success.

Practice and develop your abilities, increase your knowledge, and achieve excellence in everything you do. Take advantage of a promotion if it comes your way. If it doesn't come your way, don't let disappointment lower your self-esteem. Personal development is far more important than a position. Stay away from office gossip, politics, and negative conversations. Respect your superiors, but don't make flattery your profession. Pleasing powerful people may bring temporary respect, but it doesn't bring lasting honor. Maintain your self-respect, self-esteem, and self-determination. Don't always compare yourself to others, but instead compete with yourself. A level of healthy competition is good for improvement, but if it's driven by a desire to beat someone, some people become unnecessarily stressed. You should compete with yourself tomorrow, not anyone else. The ability to manage your finances is equally important. Don't rely solely on your salary and expect it to be everything for you. Create savings and investment plans based on your income, liabilities, and risk tolerance. When considering a second income or business, ensure it complies with service regulations and your professional duties. Develop a habit of regular savings. Avoid unnecessary debt and unnecessary lifestyle expansion. While borrowing to fund education, purchase a profitable asset, or

fund a planned venture is acceptable, borrowing to maintain your desired lifestyle is not. Don't share personal matters. Personal relationships, financial matters, family issues, and marriage should not be discussed in the office. Respect your coworkers, colleagues, and employers not by what you share about your personal life, but by your conduct, professional attitude, and honesty. Plan for your retirement early in your career. Retirement doesn't always happen at age 40 or 50. In fact, retirement means being financially, mentally, and emotionally prepared for the days when work, whether good or bad, ends. Plan hobbies and activities to make life meaningful after retirement. This could be writing, teaching, farming, running a small business, social work, traveling, reading, or any other fulfilling activity. Gradually doing something while you work will give you experience and help you see if it's possible and feasible. Don't wait until retirement to establish your daily routine. After decades of working, adjusting to life after retirement can be difficult because there's no longer a regular routine or purpose. Retirement should be a new phase of life, not a sudden void. Make the most of your vacation. Read a book, learn a new skill, start a personal project, travel with family, stay healthy, or take up a hobby. How you spend

your time reflects how you will live your life in the future. Don't forget to save for retirement and pensions. First and foremost, these savings should protect your health, dignity, independence, and your needs in old age. It's important to make good financial decisions after retirement, taking into account future expenses for healthcare, home and personal care needs, and emergency expenses. When you retire, don't retire from life. This can be a time to focus on all the things you missed while working. Spend a morning drinking tea, reading a book in the sun, traveling, spending time with family, doing things you love, serving society, or even running a small business. Remember that the workplace isn't safe. Jobs can change, offices can change, and sometimes even offices can be moved. All you have left is your potential, your savings, your relationships, your health, your reputation, and your life. The most important thing is to enjoy your work, but don't let it dominate your life. Work honestly and know your rights and responsibilities, take care of your family, protect your health, build financial security, and plan for the future in a timely manner. Being successful at work isn't just about having a career that provides a good work life. A successful career is one that helps you build a good life – both while you're working and after you leave work.

6 Years After A Dramatic Break-Up, Are BJP-Akali Dal Set To Join Hands Again?

The corridors of power in the capital are abuzz about the 'gharwapasi' of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) into the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) fold before the Punjab elections next year. Sukhbir Badal and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting a few days ago has fuelled speculation. The two parties ran a successful coalition in Punjab for almost 25 years, winning the 1997, 2007, and 2012 elections. It was a natural alliance representing the majority Sikh (SAD) and minority Hindu (BJP) population, respectively. Sikhs account for 58% of Punjab's population, and Hindus 38%. However, the controversial farm bills in 2019 led to a strain in the relationship, as farmers, particularly from Punjab, opposed the law. The SAD, fearing a loss of support from its key Jat Sikh vote, exited the alliance in September 2020. The SAD had urged the BJP-led central government not to bring the bills to Parliament till "all reservations" expressed by farmers were "duly addressed". But when the Centre did not pay heed, Harsimrat Kaur Badal resigned from the Union Cabinet in protest against the bills. Punjab's Unique Situation The duality of the Sikh community - a minority in India but a majority in Punjab - is a continuing source of political conflict and tension between Sikh-majority Punjab and Hindu-majority India. Resentment towards the Centre, especially after the Golden Temple incident in 1984, hasn't waned fully. Regionalism is integral to Sikh culture; Punjabis don't want their fate to be remote-controlled by Delhi. Post-split,



however, both the BJP and the SAD have suffered electoral setbacks. The 2017 Vidhan Sabha Verdict From 15 seats in 2017, when it had contested in an alliance, the SAD collapsed to just three in 2022 as a lone player. The BJP also dropped from three to two seats in an election that was swept by AAP, which ended up bagging 80% of the seats. Vote share numbers tell a similar story. While SAD fell sharply from 25.2% to 18.5%, a loss of 6.7 percentage points, the BJP actually gained slightly, from 5.4% to 6.7%, a climb of 1.3 percentage points. The SAD bore the brunt of the split as it lost its core Jat Sikh and panthic Sikh votes, while the BJP's standalone vote share held up better than its seat count would suggest. The BJP consolidated Hindu support significantly. Its Hindu Upper caste vote jumped from 7% in 2017 to 20% in 2022, in elections it contested alone. The Hindu OBC vote also climbed from 6% to 16%, while the Hindu SC vote showed a moderate rise from 9% to 10%. The SAD, on the other hand, lost not only Jat Sikh support, which fell from 38% to 26%

votes, but also Dalit Sikh backing, whose vote share dropped to a mere 18% from 35%. Similar But Sharper Patterns In Lok Sabha While the SAD managed to hold on to just one of the two seats it had won in 2019, the BJP lost both its constituencies in a five-cornered contest. The SAD vote share dropped steeply from 27.5% to 13.5% - twice the Vidhan Sabha erosion as it lost further panthic support to Independents, later rechristened as Akali Dal (Waris Punjab De). On the other hand, the BJP's vote share surged from 9.6% to 18.7%. This is explained by the "national character" of Lok Sabha polls, anti-incumbency against the AAP government, and the consolidation of Hindu voters behind the BJP - even if the saffron party's seat count didn't reflect these shifts. Hindu upper caste support jumped from 20% in 2022 to 56% in 2024. In terms of assembly segments, while the BJP led in 23 seats (21 more than in 2022), the SAD led in nine (six over 2022). In total, they led in 32 segments, leading to calls for patching up and forming an alliance for the 2027 state

polls. What If The Two Had Remained Allied? In the 2022 Vidhan Sabha elections, had there been a 100% vote transfer, the SAD-BJP combine would have won 16 seats against the actual combined tally of five. AAP would still have dominated the elections, winning around 86 of the 117 seats. The alliance wouldn't have changed the overall outcome, but it would have certainly eaten into the AAP-Congress numbers slightly. Even at 50% vote transfer, the alliance would have won nine seats, a gain of four. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, with a 100% vote transfer, the SAD-BJP combine would have won six out of 13 seats, a gain of five. They would have emerged as the single largest alliance, gaining largely at the cost of Congress. Even at just 50% vote transfer, the alliance would have won five seats against the one it actually won. Is An Alliance Practical Now? The 2020 split hurt the SAD far more than the BJP in vote share terms, in both state and national elections. The BJP's Hindu-consolidation strategy paid off in terms of vote share - even if it failed to turn into seat gains - as Punjab's Hindu population is a minority. Rejoining forces would have mathematically recaptured many lost seats, particularly in 2024, though AAP's continued strength, especially in 2022, means an alliance wouldn't have changed who governs the state. The SAD, to be fair, is facing an existential crisis today. A section of party old-timers have expressed a lack of confidence in Sukhbir Badal's leadership, claiming he is no match to his late father, Prakash Singh Badal.



SITHARAMAN LEADS DELEGATION TO SINGAPORE FOR MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE

Highlights

■ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday, August 19, embarked on an official visit to Singapore with a ministerial delegation to participate in the 4th India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR).

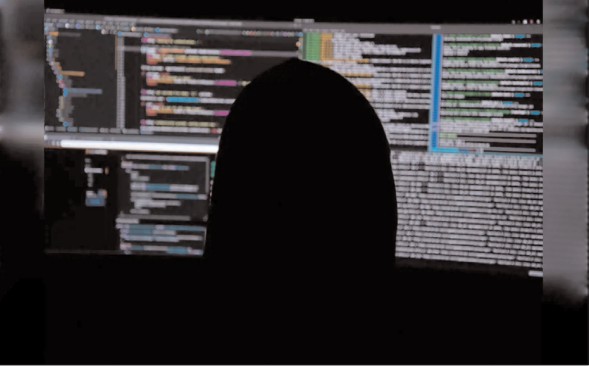


New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday, August 19, embarked on an official visit to Singapore with a ministerial delegation to participate in the 4th India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMR). Sitharaman is leading a delegation comprising S Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs; Piyush Goyal, Minister for Commerce & Industry; and Jitin Prasada, Minister of

State for Electronics & IT and Commerce & Industry. The roundtable is scheduled for August 19-20, the finance ministry said in a post on X. Established in 2022, the ISMR is a key high-level economic mechanism between India and Singapore. It provides a platform to review progress and explore new areas of collaboration across six pillars: advanced manufacturing, connectivity, digitalisation, healthcare, and medi-

cine, skills development, and sustainability. "The 4th ISMR will build on the progress made under these pillars and explore new opportunities to further strengthen the India-Singapore economic partnership," the finance ministry said. Sitharaman is leading a delegation comprising Minister of External Affairs, Minister for Commerce & Industry and Minister of State for Electronics & IT and Commerce & Industry.

CYBERSECURITY FIRM PROOFPOINT SETS UP AI COE IN HYDERABAD



New Delhi: Global cybersecurity firm Proofpoint on Wednesday, August 19, said it has set up an AI Security Engineering Centre of Excellence in Hyderabad and looks to hire over 200 engineers over the next 12 to 24 months to meet the growing demand for AI-driven security solutions in India. The move comes as the company's India business tripled over the past year, driven by double-digit growth in new customer acquisitions, according to a company statement. "Proofpoint has been serving customers in India for several years through our APJ organisation, supported by regional sales teams and channel partners. In March 2025, we established a dedicated local team...a decision that reflected the scale and momentum we were already seeing in the market..." "We are now expanding fur-

ther with a new AI Security Engineering Centre of Excellence in Hyderabad, a new Delhi office, and continued investment in sales, customer success, technical support and our partner ecosystem. These cumulative investments, combined with strong market demand, underpin the growth we've seen over the past 12 months," Proofpoint CEO Sumit Dhawan said. The new Hyderabad facility will focus on advancing next-generation AI security technologies. The firm plans to recruit more than 200 engineers over the next 12 to 24 months to staff the Centre. The expansion also includes a new office in Delhi to bolster its go-to-market presence, supplementing the existing hub in Bengaluru and a Centre of Excellence in Pune, which currently houses over 550 team members.

NEW MARKETS FOR INDIA'S BUFFALO MEAT AID DAIRY ECONOMY

New Delhi: Among India's agricultural export items, buffalo meat has shown a massive 25.6 per cent growth in 2025-26 to USD 5.1 billion. "We crossed USD 5 billion for the first time last fiscal year and are on track to do USD 6 billion in 2026-27," a Commerce Ministry official said to The Indian Express. That's not all; the value realisation, or simply put, the money made on the sale per tonne of buffalo meat, is remarkable. If one looks at the numbers, in 2014-15, India exported 14.8 lakh tonnes (lt) of buffalo meat worth USD 4.8 billion, which is an average value of USD 3,240 per tonne. The next few years saw a drop in value realisation and exports, but since 2024-25, there has been no looking back. In 2024-25, exports touched USD 4.1 billion at a unit value of USD 3,236 per tonne. The unit value increased to USD 3,591 in 2025-26 and USD 4,392 during April-June 2026. The official said that the higher unit value realisation shows that Indian buffalo meat has been better accepted. "This has been enabled by government



policy, allowing exports only from plants registered by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), which is conditional upon their meeting stringent safety, hygiene and infrastructure requirements," the official said. 'Global brand, not alternative to cattle beef' Fauzan Alavi, secretary of the All-India Buffalo and Sheep Meat Exporters Association, explains what worked. "In the last couple of years, we have consciously worked at making Indian buffalo meat a global brand and not a number two alternative to cattle beef. The world too is recog-

nising our product quality and safety standards." India is the world's third-largest bovine meat exporter. Trailing behind Brazil at 42.8 lt and Australia at 21.6 lt, its projected volume is 17 lt for 2026, according to US Department of Agriculture data. Our top three exporters are the Mumbai-based Allanasons Private Ltd, the LuLu Group-owned Fair Exports India, and HMA Agro Industries, Agra. Buffalo meat, also called carabeef, is used for processed industrial foods such as burger patties and ready-to-eat products. The focus now is on raising value realisation by pushing retail

sales in smaller packages as well. Since last October, APEDA has been imposing a Rs 250/tonne levy on exports of all frozen and chilled buffalo meat. The proceeds go towards a Meat Export Development Fund meant for promoting exports. The efforts are showing in how diverse the market has become. In 2025-26, of the USD 5.1 billion, 10 countries imported over USD 100 million worth of meat each. These are Vietnam, Egypt, Malaysia, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Iraq, the Philippines and Jordan. "Uzbekistan is a new market. So are Russia, Georgia, Oman and Senegal," said the Commerce ministry official. Boost to dairy economy Here's how buffalo meat exports have helped India's livestock and dairy economy. The export of beef (cattle meat) is not allowed here. Carabeef that is exported is from buffaloes that do not produce enough milk, are infertile, have damaged udders or are males. Maintaining such animals is uneconomical for farmers.

Business

META HOOKED CHILDREN ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM, US COURT HEARS

A court has heard claims Meta intentionally hooked a generation of children on Facebook and Instagram, as the biggest legal challenge faced by the social media platform began. A jury in Oakland, California will spend the next six weeks wading through claims by top attorneys from several US states and lawyers for the social media company. A lawyer for California claimed Meta found "millions" of 11 and 12-year-olds were on Instagram and "did little to keep them off" as the trial opened on Tuesday. Meta's representative said just over 100,000 such users were found, and argued that social media addiction does not exist. California's lawyer said Meta knew its platforms hurt teen mental health, while Meta said it was being ignored how many more teens had good experiences. The trial stems from a lawsuit filed in 2023 by 29 US states, including California and New York. They claim there have been numerous violations of federal and state privacy laws for children. The states are seeking billions of dollars from Meta and are demanding it make changes to Instagram and Facebook, including ending "like" counts and infinite scroll. In her



opening arguments Megan O'Neill, a lead attorney for California, relied heavily on information found in millions of documents provided in the case from Meta. They included internal research, employee emails, and chat logs that went all the way up to Zuckerberg. One piece of internal research on Instagram stated: "Teens have an addict's narrative about use." In another that O'Neill pointed the jury to, Meta found "product features designed to increase time spent are inherently at odds with well-being and take away from people's ability to focus on activity that adds

value to their lives". Despite Meta's awareness of potentially negative impacts, O'Neill argued that Meta targeted young people as users of Facebook and Instagram. Meta, she said, went out of its way to "assure the public that its platforms were safe for kids". O'Neill outlined to the jury how Meta's business model could be summed up. "Hook the users; hold them for as long as they can; harvest their data; hide the truth from the public when making public statements," she said. She said that throughout the trial it would become clear that what Meta said

publicly about its platforms and what its internal research showed were very different. "Meta said it put safety over profits, but hid the reality that, time and again, when it came to make a decision, profits won." Paul Schmidt, a lead attorney for Meta, directly addressed the internal research report O'Neill used in her opening arguments. The Meta document O'Neill showed the jury found that "1 in 5 teens says Instagram makes them feel worse". Schmidt said: "That sounds pretty bad." "What else does the document say?" Schmidt went on. "That 41% of teens said it made them feel better and another 41% said it had no effect." Schmidt also worked to poke holes in the states' argument that Meta had not only failed to stop users under the age of 13 from using its platforms, but that it intentionally "hooked" teens and children as users of Facebook and Instagram, or that they were designed to be addictive. As for Meta being able to verify the age of every user on its platform, Schmidt argued that the very privacy laws Meta was being accused of violating had prevented it from saving and using data it needed to track underage users effectively.

Tata Tea Chakra Gold salutes the invaluable contribution of homemakers with a new campaign 'Ghanam Soch'

Andhra Pradesh, August 19, 2026: The new campaign encourages families to recognise that while a homemaker's contribution may not come with a salary slip, it is fundamental to building every strong home. Every day, millions of women demonstrate extraordinary strength by nurturing families, shaping futures and keeping households running. While this strength forms the foundation of every home, it often goes unrecognised because it cannot be measured through conventional markers such as a monthly income/ salary slip. Celebrating this everyday strength, Tata Tea Chakra Gold, one of Andhra Pradesh's most loved premium tea brands, renowned for its distinctive strong cup of tea crafted from some of the finest Assam leaves, has unveiled its latest campaign, 'Ghanam Soch'. Rooted in the brand's long-standing belief in the strength of women, the campaign encourages families to rethink how they define work and recognise the homemakers whose unwavering efforts form the foundation of every strong home. For years, Tata Tea Chakra Gold has stood for more than just a strong cup of tea. It has championed the belief that strength is reflected not only in what we drink, but also in the way we think and the



values we uphold. Through Ghanam Soch, the brand celebrates the quiet strength of homemakers whose contribution, though immeasurable, is indispensable to every family. The campaign brings this thought to life through an emotional yet relatable family moment that challenges society's conventional definition of "work". Set during a home loan application, the story unfolds around a simple question that leads everyone to rethink what truly creates value within a family. When the banker asks how many members of the household are working, the husband confidently replies, "Two." Expecting salary slips from both, the banker is surprised when only the husband is able to produce one. As the conversation unfolds, it becomes evident that while the wife

may not receive a monthly pay cheque, she is very much a working member of the family—one whose everyday efforts keep the household running. In a poignant moment, the mother-in-law reminds everyone that the strength and contribution of a homemaker are simply too valuable to be measured by a salary slip. Reinforcing this belief, the husband proudly acknowledges his wife as an equal partner in building their home, leaving viewers with a powerful reminder that while one person may earn for the family, it takes two to build a home. Commenting on the campaign, Sharat Verma, President – Packaged Beverages and Organic India, Tata Consumer Products, said: "Andhra Pradesh continues to be one of the most impor-

tant markets for Tata Tea Chakra Gold. Over the years, the brand has earned a special place in consumers' hearts through its distinctive strong cup of tea crafted from some of the finest Assam leaves. At Tata Consumer Products, we believe enduring brands are built by combining superior product quality with stories that genuinely resonate with the lives and values of our consumers. 'Ghanam Soch' is a natural extension of Tata Tea Chakra Gold's belief that Ghanam Tea inspires Ghanam Soch. Through this campaign, we wanted to celebrate the quiet strength of homemakers and inspire families to recognise that while their contribution may never come with a salary slip, it is fundamental to building every strong home.

Hyderabad logistics company plans USD 50 million expansion



Hyderabad: Hyderabad-based logistics firm Jassper Shipping on Wednesday, August 19, announced plans to invest USD 50 million over the next three years to expand its project logistics, breakbulk, bulk cargo and industrial supply chain operations, betting on India's growing infrastructure and industrial build-out. The growth capital, to be infused by the company in phases, will go towards expanding project logistics infrastructure, strengthening bulk and breakbulk cargo handling, building technology-led logistics planning capabilities and scaling operations across key industrial and port-led corridors, the company said in a statement. The first tranche of USD 10 million will be deployed to expand the company's B2B project logistics business, with a focus on sectors such as power, steel, petrochemi-

cals, heavy engineering, manufacturing and large infrastructure projects. It will also fund specialised transportation, port-to-plant logistics, vessel chartering and multimodal freight solutions for oversized and critical cargo, the statement said. Pushpank Kaushik, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Head of Business Development for the subcontinent, Middle East and Southeast Asia at Jassper Shipping, said India's infrastructure and industrial sectors were entering a multi-year growth cycle that was creating unprecedented demand for specialised project logistics capabilities. The USD 50 million investment reflected the company's long-term commitment to building stronger capabilities across project cargo, breakbulk logistics, vessel chartering and integrated industrial supply chains.

SAMSUNG'S NEW FOLDABLE SMARTPHONES MAY GET COSTLIER IN INDIA

New Delhi: Samsung is likely to increase the prices of its latest foldable smartphones in India, including the Galaxy Z Fold8 Ultra, Galaxy Z Fold8 and Galaxy Z Flip8, as rising memory chip costs put pressure on smartphone makers, leading retailers and industry analysts said. The new Samsung foldables, priced between Rs 1.25 lakh and Rs 2.6 lakh, have received an unprecedented response in India. Samsung India said nearly 2.71 lakh consumers pre-ordered the three devices within just 72 hours of their launch, marking record pre-orders for the company's foldable smartphone portfolio. Retailers now expect the strong demand for memory chips, a critical component in smartphones, to push up device costs further. Analysts also believe Samsung may eventually pass on part of the higher component costs to consumers after absorbing a significant portion of the increase so far. The latest foldables represent Samsung's most advanced foldable lineup yet, with improvements across hinge design, displays, durability and performance, along with purpose-built Galaxy AI features. The Galaxy Z Fold8 Ultra measures just 4.1mm when unfolded, making it the company's thinnest Galaxy Z Fold device, while the Galaxy Z Fold8 weighs 201 grams, making it the lightest Fold model from Samsung. Samsung President and CEO, Southwest Asia, JB Park, recently said



the company has been absorbing a substantial portion of the rising smartphone costs to protect consumers from the full impact of price increases. "If you compare how much they (competition) have increased the price, Samsung's increment is relatively lesser than competition because we have been absorbing the cost," Park said in London at the launch of the new Galaxy foldables. He added that the cost burden being absorbed by Samsung in 2026 is "humongous", while stressing that the decision was driven by the company's focus on providing premium devices rather than simply protecting or expanding market share. Samsung has also introduced long-tenure zero-cost EMI options for buyers of the Galaxy Z

Fold8 Ultra, Galaxy Z Fold8 and Galaxy Z Flip8 in India, potentially helping cushion the impact of higher upfront prices for consumers. Industry analysts expect the broader memory shortage to affect smartphone shipments in the second half of 2026. Abhilash Kumar, Lead Research Advisor (Director) at Smart Analytics Global (SAG), said the Indian smartphone market could see annual shipment declines in the third and fourth quarters as memory shortages drive up component and retail prices. "The smartphone market in India will continue to see annual shipment decline in Q3 and Q4 2026, given the global memory shortage in the smartphone industry leading to prices increase," Kumar said.

SACKED UKRAINIAN DEFENCE MINISTER CALLS FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



Ukraine's popular ex-defence minister Mykhailo Fedorov has called for wartime elections, in what is widely seen as the biggest challenge to Volodymyr Zelensky's presidency since Russia's full-scale invasion four and a half years ago. "Democracy cannot be held hostage by Russia," said Fedorov, 35, in a video posted to YouTube on Tuesday, adding that Ukraine is fighting "precisely because we want to remain a free European state". Since the war broke out in 2022 Ukraine has been under martial law, meaning elections are suspended. Fedorov, who did not mention Zelensky by name in the video, was unexpectedly fired from his role as defence minister last month, just six months after his appointment. Zelensky is yet to respond to the video from Fedorov, whose dismissal sparked protests across the country. However, a source in the presidential office told the

BBC it was "highly bizarre to plan elections amidst missiles and drones. This demonstrates a complete lack of realism". In a separate development, Ukraine's two anti-corruption agencies said they were conducting a special operation targeting current and former MPs as well as an unnamed official in the presidential office. Hours later, Zelensky's office said its deputy head Iryna Mudra had been dismissed, amid local media reports of a raid on her premises. There was no immediate comment from Mudra, although MP Vadym Stolar, whose home was searched as part of the operation, said he was co-operating with anti-corruption officials. In his video, Fedorov complained that corruption was depriving the military of weapons and equipment and making it harder for Kyiv to win the war. He spoke of Ukraine facing a "systemic crisis of governance" and being "scared of change".



■ Liberia agrees to accept 1,200 foreign deportees from the US

TRUMP PAUSES NEW TARIFFS ON CANADA FOR THREE DAYS, SAYING DEAL CLOSE

US President Donald Trump said he will delay imposing new tariffs on a wide array of Canadian goods for three days as the countries firm up a trade deal. "I have paused the 50% Tariffs against Canada, that were scheduled to kick in tomorrow morning for a three day period, based on the fact that Canada and the U.S.A., subject to the finalization of documents, have a DEAL," Trump said in a social media post. The announcement came less than two hours before a 50% levy on nearly \$20bn (£14.8bn; C\$28bn) of Canadian imports was set to go in place. The two sides have been at an impasse on several issues, including US tariffs on autos and many Canadian provinces banning American liquor sales. Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney spoke twice this



week, and trade negotiators have been engaged in intense talks since July, after the US president threatened the new levy with a deadline of 19 August. "Substantial progress has been made, although there is important work still to be done," Carney said in a letter posted on X. In his post, Trump also said a final trade deal could allow the revival of the Keystone XL pipeline. The oil pipeline, which would con-

nect Alberta to the US, was blocked by both the Obama and Biden administrations. Environmentalists and indigenous groups have long opposed the pipeline but Trump has said multiple times he would like to revive the project, which would carry 830,000 barrels of oil a day. "The great Keystone XL Pipeline, long ago killed by Sleepy Joe Biden, may be awoken from the grave!"

Trump wrote on Truth Social. "The deal will include comprehensive market access for all American goods, economic security commitments, digital trade alignment", US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer's office posted on X. It will also include "many important provisions that will continue to protect our market and American workers, along with our Canadian partners", it added. The extension is welcome news for Canadian negotiators and for businesses on both sides of the border, who have warned that the new tariffs would be harmful to both countries. Tensions have mounted between the two major trading partners since Trump returned to office in January last year and he unleashed a wide-ranging global programme of tariffs.

Thai teen found in suitcase died from suffocation, police reveal



A 17-year-old girl whose body was found in a suitcase in Thailand died from suffocation, according to authorities. Police in the coastal city of Pattaya previously said they had found Tunchanok Donhomla's naked body in a bag near a railway track in the early hours of 27 June. This was just 15 minutes after they had arrested 45-year-old Australian man Simon Peter Carman, who was allegedly "preparing to flee the country", they said. On Wednesday, Pattaya City police chief Anek Srathongyoo told the BBC that Tunchanok's autopsy results "showed she died from suffocation". "She also suffered some brain injury but that was not the cause of death," he added. "It could have happened after she died as the accused moved her body in a suitcase before dumping it." Anek further revealed that the DNA found on Tunchanok's body matched Carman's, and suggested that it "likely came from when he put her body in the suitcase". Police are pressing four charges against Carman: murder; concealing or moving the body; kidnapping a child over 15 but under 18; and taking away a child over 15 but under 18 for an indecent act. "[Carman] did not completely deny all the charges initially," Anek said. "He admitted to taking her out. That said, even if he pleads not guilty in court later, I believe we have collected all the evidence thoroughly and closed every loop-

hole in the case in order to prove it to the court that he has committed those crimes." Police will be ready to submit the case to prosecutors by Friday, according to Anek, who noted that the deadline for them to indict Carman was 18 September. Previously released CCTV footage allegedly showed Carman entering a condominium with Tunchanok at 03:34 local time on 25 June. Later that evening, he emerged alone "carrying a large suitcase", according to a police statement. The statement said Carman loaded the bag onto a motorbike before driving towards a railway line. Following his arrest, Carman denied the charges against him and claimed he had acted in self defence. He reportedly told police he had agreed to pay Tunchanok 1,000 baht (\$30; £23) for sexual services, but they had had an argument when they returned to his apartment and he had offered only 500 baht. In a video recorded while he was in custody, the suspect issued a message to Tunchanok's family, saying: "I feel bad for what happened to your daughter. It was out of my control." "I know you'll be very sad, upset... same [as] me," he added. "Please tell other girls... just to be careful." Tunchanok's family previously told the ABC she was an only child who lived with her father and step-mother in the province of Kalasin, about 480km (298 miles) north-east of Pattaya.

SOUTH KOREA SHORTENS WAR GAMES WITH US, CITING WASHINGTON REQUEST

South Korea's annual joint military drills with the US will be cut short by six days at the request of Washington, its defence ministry has announced. Seoul said that the "period and scale" of the 2026 Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise had been adjusted due to a "proposal of the US side". The drill will now conclude on 21 August, rather than 27 August as planned. It comes after Donald Trump announced plans to curtail exercises with South Korea, citing his "very good" relationship with North Korea's Kim Jong Un. South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun told a parliamentary hearing that neither South Korean nor US officials had been aware in advance about Trump's plans. The combined field training exercise component of the drills will also be "partially reduced in scale", Seoul said, noting that the "specific details" of that reduction are still under discussion. The unprecedented



curtailing shakes South Korea's confidence in America's commitment to come to its aid, under a defence pact that is the foundation of their relationship. It also sends a signal to other US allies in the region like Japan and Taiwan. The announcement comes after US officials told the Wall Street Journal that Trump is pushing his aides for a meeting with Kim Jong Un. Over the weekend, Trump wrote on Truth Social: "These exercises are not only costly, with much of these costs paid for by the

United States of America (as usual), but send a signal that is totally inappropriate and hostile." He added: "While somewhat unrelated (?), I recently asked the President of South Korea if they would like to join us in the Denuclearization of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and they said, 'No thanks!'" Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office on Monday, the president again explicitly linked his decision to South Korea's refusal to "give us a little hand" with Iran. "We have 39,000 soldiers over there guarding

you from Kim Jong Un, your next door neighbour, and you're not going to help us on a very easy military operation in Iran," he said. "That's strange". US and South Korean military leaders announced the Ulchi Freedom shield in a joint press conference last week. At the time, they said the event would be similar in scale to previous years, with about 18,000 South Korean soldiers participating. About 28,500 American military personnel are stationed in South Korea. During the news conference, military leaders also mentioned North Korea's deployment of troops to aid Russia's war against Ukraine. US military spokesperson Ryan Donald said "our training accounts for that threat", referring to North Korean soldiers returning from the battlefield. Following that press conference, North Korea's foreign ministry condemned the joint military drills as "a rehearsal for an aggressive war".

Apparent human remains found in US reservoir as water levels hit record low



Potential human remains, including a jaw with teeth still attached, have been recovered from the largest reservoir in the US, officials said, as an ongoing drought causes water levels to drop across western states. The US National Park Service said it received reports of apparent skeletal remains at Boulder Beach on Lake Mead, Nevada, on 16 August. "National Park Service rangers and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department responded to the scene," the service said in a statement seen by the BBC's US partner CBS. The service added that the incident "remains under investiga-

tion, and no additional information is available at this time". A woman and her friend spotted the bones while visiting the Nevada side of the reservoir, which is located on the border with Arizona. Dianelis Molina Cruz told CBS affiliate KLAS: "My friend was playing with the rocks in the lake, and then he grabbed the jaw. And when he looked, he saw the teeth and everything." Her friend Noel De Leon suggested the low water levels at Lake Mead contributed to the recovery of the potential human remains. "The water looks very low compared to where it should be," he said.



US condemns 'unnecessary escalation' after Israeli airstrikes on Syrian airbase

Mushroom murderer trial undermined by 'catastrophic' hotel mix-up, appeal court told

Lawyers for Australian mushroom murderer Erin Patterson say her conviction was undermined by a "catastrophic" mix-up that led to the jury staying at the same hotel as prosecutors and a key witness. Patterson is serving a life sentence after killing three of her relatives and trying to kill another by serving them a beef Wellington containing death cap mushrooms at her Victoria home in 2023. Her lawyers also argued some evidence in the trial was too speculative, while evidence crucial to their own case was wrongfully excluded. At the same hearing, Victoria's Director of Public Prosecutions is appealing against the sentence, arguing a 33-year parole period is "manifestly inadequate".



Patterson's victims include her in-laws Don and Gail Patterson, both 70, and Gail's sister Heather Wilkinson, 66. Patterson, 51, did not attend the Court of Appeal in Melbourne in person, opting to watch via video link from prison. Also not present was Patterson's estranged husband Simon Patterson, who was meant to attend the deadly lunch but cancelled at the

last minute, in part due to his belief that his wife had been trying to poison him for years. Heather Wilkinson's husband Ian, the only surviving guest of the lunch, was in court. During Wednesday's hearing, the appeal judges heard that while deliberating their verdict, jurors stayed in the same hotel as members of the prosecution team, a key police witness, and journal-

ists. Patterson's barrister Richard Edney said this "catastrophic" situation had "undermined the integrity of the verdicts and requires the quashing of the convictions". He said a retrial was required "so that justice can not only be done but be seen to be done". Director of Public Prosecutions Brendan Kissane accepted it was regrettable but "happened, as far as we can tell... by accident". "The issue is whether there was communication between this jury and any other person," he said. "The evidence as it stands points towards there being no communication. Once the court accepts that, there's no irregularity in this situation, let alone a fundamental irregularity that goes to the root of the trial."

Updated WTC Points Table After India's Huge Win Over Sri Lanka In Galle

In a major boost to their World Test Championship (WTC) final hopes, India on Wednesday beat Sri Lanka by 165 runs in the first Test in Galle. Chasing a target of 372, Sri Lanka were bowled out for 206 on the final day at the picturesque Galle International Stadium. For India, Manav Suthar claimed a six-wicket haul, his second five-for in as many matches. Suthar finished with figures of 6/55 in the innings and match figures of 10/131. While India remained fifth in the WTC points table, their PCT rose from 48.15 to 53.33. Sri Lanka, meanwhile, stayed sixth, but their PCT dropped to 33.33. India couldn't improve their position despite the big win, as Bangladesh, who are fourth in the WTC standings, beat Australia in the opening Test of their series in Darwin last week. Apart from the second Test in Colombo, which starts on August 23, India have seven Tests remaining in the ongo-



ing WTC cycle. Having already lost four of their 10 Tests so far, every remaining game is virtually a knockout for the Shubman Gill-led side. After the series against Sri Lanka, India will travel to New Zealand for a two-Test series in November later this year. To conclude the current WTC cycle, India will host Australia for a five-Test series next year before the Indian Premier League (IPL) window. India must win every remaining Test to have a realistic chance of reaching the WTC final, especially after

Bangladesh's historic victory over Australia in Darwin. If India win seven of their remaining eight Tests, they will finish with a PCT of 68.52. Meanwhile, six wins and two losses would see their PCT drop to 62.96. These scenarios are only possible if India are not docked any penalty points. Therefore, the Shubman Gill-led side have very little margin for error for the remainder of their WTC campaign.



Aryna Sabalenka breezes through as Medvedev loses cool in defeat

World number one Aryna Sabalenka needed just 54 minutes to reach the Cincinnati Open fourth round - but Daniil Medvedev could not hide his frustration after missing three match points in a surprise defeat. Sabalenka did not face a break point in a 6-1 6-3 win over China's Wang Xinyu. The Belarusian lost only six points in eight service games and committed just five unforced errors to 17 winners in a composed performance. It was Sabalenka's easiest win for some time following her fourth-round Wimbledon exit and an early loss in Canada

last week. "To get this win in under an hour [is] an insane result and I'm so happy to be through," the 28-year-old said. "I think I really trusted myself and I was going for my shots without overthinking. "That was the weapon of tonight's match." Sabalenka is the two-time defending champion at the US Open, which begins on Sunday, 30 August. No woman since Serena Williams in 2014 has won the New York title three times in a row. Sabalenka's position as world number one is also under threat from Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina. Four-time major singles champion Sabalenka had a 354-point gap over Rybakina going into Cincinnati. Rybakina must reach the final to have a chance at surpassing Sabalenka. If Sabalenka reaches the quarter-finals, Rybakina would need to win the title to become world number one.

Sabalenka will face Czech Sara Bejlek for a place in the last eight. Earlier, fourth seed Medvedev lost his cool after squandering a match-winning position against Brandon Nakashima. The Russian had fought back from 5-2 down in the first set to take it on a tie-break and had three match points on the American's serve at 5-4 in the second. However, Nakashima saved them and won a subsequent tie-break - then ran away with the third set to win 6-7 (3-7) 7-6 (7-4) 6-1. Medvedev hurled his racket at the electronic boards at the back of the court - briefly breaking it - after missing the match points. He also kicked the screen and knocked over several microphones after committing 51 unforced errors in a poor display. "Down match points, I was just trying to tell myself to keep fighting for every point," Nakashima said. "I'm super happy with the level in the third."

What India Women Need To Do Against England To Qualify For Hockey World Cup Second Round

Unbeaten and brimming with confidence after a strong start to their campaign, India will look to seal a place in the second round of the FIH Women's Hockey World Cup when they take on a desperate England in their final Pool D match on Thursday. A draw will be enough for India to progress as pool toppers, but the team would prefer to secure its passage with another strong performance after holding world number four and Olympic silver medallists China to a 2-2 draw before thrashing South Africa 6-1. India and China are locked on four points each, but India sit atop the pool on a superior goal difference, having scored eight goals and conceded three. England, on three points, have no such cushion and need a victory to keep their campaign alive. That makes Thursday's contest a study in contrasting stakes — India can afford to be cautious, while England have everything to lose. India's biggest strength so far has been their attacking variety. Six different players



scored in the 6-1 demolition of South Africa, underlining the depth in a team where 11 players are making their World Cup debuts. Deepika and Navneet Kaur have already scored twice each, while Lalremsiami and Sunelita Toppo have provided pace and penetration in the forward line. The defence, too, has looked considerably more assured. Led by Sushila Chanu, India conceded just two

penalty corners against South Africa, while goalkeeper Bichu Devi and veteran of more than 300 international appearances Savita Punia have provided solidity at the back. But England represent a different proposition. They have already beaten India 2-0 in the World Cup qualifiers in Hyderabad earlier this year and possess the ability to dominate possession before hitting on the counter.

Their 4-0 win over South Africa underlined their attacking threat, although they subsequently lost 2-4 to China. India coach Sjoerd Marijne knows his team cannot afford to get carried away by its flying start. "We shouldn't rest easy after holding China to a draw and defeating South Africa. England are a very good team and gave China a tough challenge. They are ranked higher than us and have already defeated us this year, so we need to play cautiously," Marijne said. "The quality of passing should be better. We always talk in India about individual skills, but international hockey is all about passing. We were a little bumpy today in passing, not efficient with the direction or receiving," the coach said. For India, the challenge will be to retain the freedom and attacking flair that produced six goals against South Africa while tightening the areas Marijne believes still need work. The team's confidence, meanwhile, stems from more than just results.

Former Wimbledon Finalist Nick Kyrgios Says He Tested Positive For Cocaine

Former Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios revealed on Wednesday he tested positive for cocaine and was provisionally suspended from tennis. The 31-year-old Australian was beaten by Novak Djokovic in the 2022 singles final. He's now ranked 919th after a series of injuries. Kyrgios posted details of the case on social media. "I recently failed a drug test in Mallorca after testing positive for cocaine," he wrote. "I made a huge mistake and take full responsibility for it." Kyrgios said he had difficulties coming to terms with being near the end of his career after two years of injuries. "At times I've felt helpless and alone. None of that excuses what I did," he

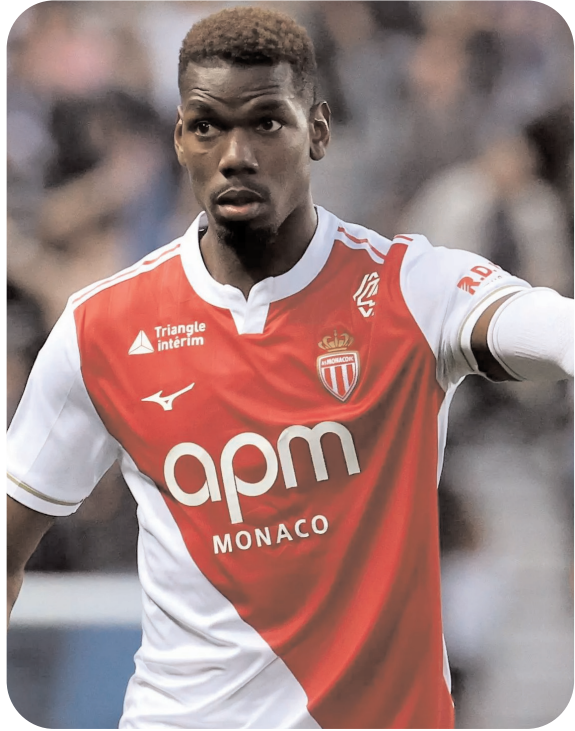


said. Kyrgios got a wild card to play doubles at Wimbledon last month and lost in the first round with partner Alexander Bublik.

Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios revealed on Wednesday he tested positive for cocaine and was provisionally suspended from tennis.

PAUL POGBA TO BE RELEASED BY MONACO

Former Manchester United and Juventus midfielder Paul Pogba will be released by Monaco after a series of injuries, the French club said on Wednesday. Pogba, 33, won the World Cup with France in 2018 but since serving a ban for doping has struggled to return to the elite level. Monaco said in a statement that the objectives they had set for Pogba were "only partially achieved" and the Ligue 1 club were therefore ending his contract that would have run until June 2027. Pogba is currently sidelined with a thigh injury, just after returning from a knee problem.



Egypt's FIFA World Cup 2026 Coach Hossam Hassan Collapses After Alleged Fight Between Two Wives

Egypt coach Hossam Hassan is back in the news. At the FIFA World Cup 2026, the coach made headlines around the world after his aggressive gesture following Egypt's loss to Argentina. Now, according to multiple reports, Hassan was taken to hospital after an alleged fight involving his wife and ex-wife. The incident reportedly took place at a café in Marina El Alamein on Egypt's North Coast. Hassan's first wife, Howaida Al-Gharbawi, and second wife, Dina Mustafa, were involved in a heated verbal exchange before a physical altercation broke out. A video circulating on social media appears to show the incident, though its authenticity and context remain unclear. According to Spanish outlet Cadena SER, Hassan attempted to defuse the tension but later collapsed.



Egyptian outlet Al-Arabiya subsequently reported that Hassan had divorced his first wife, with whom he has three children, following the incident. "He officially signed the divorce papers at a legal registrar's office in Cairo. Hassan had been with Howaida for decades prior to their sudden split, and the pair have three children," the report said. According to Sky News Arabia, his lawyer

denied rumours that Hassan had suffered a health crisis and stated that he was in good health. Hassan is not only Egypt's coach but also the country's all-time leading scorer, with 69 goals in 177 appearances. The Egyptian Football Association announced in July that national men's team head coach Hossam Hassan's contract had been extended following a solid outing at the FIFA World Cup.

F1'S ALEX ALBON RE-SIGNS WITH WILLIAMS FOR 2027



Formula One constructor Williams announced Tuesday it was extending the contract of driver Alex Albon for next season. The 30-year-old Thai finished eighth in the drivers' standings last year, securing Williams' best result since 2016. Albon joined the British team four years ago and will now stay with them to the end of 2027. "Alex is one of the best drivers on the grid and knows better than anyone the enormous improvements we have made in recent years," Williams' team principal James Vowles said in a statement. "Resigning him shows the belief we both have in the direction we are heading." The deal comes in the wake of Albon bringing up a century of race starts for Williams. In inter-

views with AFP in February, Vowles stated it was "not realistic" for Williams to win the world championship this season or next, before Albon said Williams had started the 2026 campaign "on the back foot compared to our rivals". However, in a statement released by Williams on Tuesday, Albon said: "One tough year doesn't tell the full picture, and it only gives me more motivation to keep building and pushing together with the factory and our fans to achieve great things. "Our story is not over yet, so my full focus now is on doing whatever it takes to get us back up the grid." Formula One constructor Williams announced Tuesday it was extending the contract of driver Alex Albon for next season.

Coco Gauff Finds A Way Into Cincinnati Masters Fourth Round

Coco Gauff needed to battle following a sizzling first set on Tuesday to complete a 6-1, 7-6 (7/3) victory over Ann Li to reach the fourth round of the ATP-WTA Cincinnati Masters. The 2023 champion had it all her own way in the opening set against her 29th-ranked American compatriot, but it proved more difficult to close the match out in a tight second set. After Gauff swept the first in 30 minutes, the pair exchanged early breaks in the second on the way to a tie-breaker. Gauff sprinted to a 4-1 lead and closed out victory on her third match point. "She

played better in the second set and I missed a couple of break opportunities," Gauff said. "I tried to forget about those. "It was hard to control the ball for both of us and it was my first time playing a day match on this center court so I had to adjust to that." Mirra Andreeva's French Open reigning champion status counted for little as the fifth seed struggled to close out a 6-1, 7-6 (7/5) victory over Janice Tjen. The Indonesian challenger ranked 37 was bowled over in the first set but made Andreeva work to finally advance. Tjen saved two

match points as Andreeva served for the win leading 5-4 and another in the tie-breaker before putting a return wide. "It was two completely different sets," Andreeva said. "In the first I was in command and she had unforced errors here and there. "But in the second after a couple of games I started getting nervous, she made fewer mistakes. "It turned into a match of mentality and physicality. It was not easy -- I had a lot of opportunities to close it out earlier, but even like this I'm super happy." Madison Keys, the 2019 winner, dispatched

Katerina Siniakova 6-1, 6-3 as the American polished her record against the Czech to 3-0. Eighth seed Elina Svitolina was forced to withdraw before her match against Wang Xiyu with an ankle injury. "Unfortunately I tried my best to recover but the injury I sustained in Toronto and also pushed by the second round match, I didn't recover as I wish I could to get ready for my next round," the Ukrainian said in a statement. "I've been advised by the doctors to take a little bit of time to rest and recover completely."





Sreeleela’s Sleeveless Twist Elevates The Classic Lehenga

Sreeleela, the Gen-Z heroine who has been winning hearts with her films and chartbuster songs, is now gearing up for a big milestone, her Bollywood debut. The actress recently shared a set of gorgeous new pictures, and fans simply cannot stop gushing over them. In the photos, Sreeleela looks radiant in an ivory lehenga with intricate gold and pastel embroidery, paired with a sleeveless blouse that adds an elegant, contemporary touch to the traditional outfit. She kept her accessories minimal yet regal, with a statement choker, delicate earrings, and bangles. Her hair tied

back neatly let her glowing complexion and bright smile take center stage. Her candid, joyful expression, especially the wide, genuine smile, gives the pictures a warm and effortless charm that fans are absolutely loving. On the work front, Sreeleela is set to make her Bollywood debut alongside Kartik Aaryan in a film directed by Anurag Basu, and anticipation for the project is already building. “This lehenga really started with the arches. The ones you keep seeing everywhere, but here they’re taken and made the entire point of the piece. They’re not small or

tucked away; they run across the skirt in silver zari, slightly elongated, almost like they’ve been drawn out and then woven in,” shares Khushi Shah, co-founder and creative director at Shanti Banaras. “On this sheer Anar Wine silk organza, they stand out instantly. You notice the shape first, and then the detailing inside each one.” Shah describes the result as “regal, dressed up, but in a way that still feels easy. Our own take on a royal bridal look without overdoing it.” The fabric keeps the look featherlight, and as Shah puts it, “even with all that zari, it doesn’t feel

heavy.” The blouse, cut with cap sleeves and a scooped V-neckline, is detailed with antique gold work tracing the neckline. The matching organza dupatta mirrors the architectural arches seen on the skirt. The actor’s look was styled with an uncut diamond statement necklace, paired with matching drop earrings and stacked kadas. The pièce de resistance of her jewellery look was the matha patti, encrusted with uncut diamonds and rubies that echo the colour of the ensemble. Her makeup featured a neutral base, coppery eyeshadow, kohl-lined eyes and a nude lip.

Every Character in Ameer Log Has Its Own Importance: Actress Vedha Jalandhar



Ameer Log’ is the maiden production venture of Madhavi Reddy Soma under the Awwal Number Productions banner. Directed by Ramana Reddy Soma, the film has Manohar Reddy Manchuri as co-producer. MC Hari, Manoj and Sashidhar play the lead roles, while Vedha Jalandhar, Ravan Nitturu, Vishwender Reddy and Sai Yogi essay key characters. Rana Daggubati’s Spirit Media is set to release the film grandly in Telugu on

August 21. As part of the promotional campaign, actress Vedha Jalandhar shared interesting details about the movie and her experience working on it.

■ **TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY:**
I started my career in 2019. Two films I worked on were screened at international film festivals, but unfortunately, they were not released. Later, I also trained in theatre to improve my acting skills. I have really enjoyed this journey of learning acting and being part of films.

GRAND LAUNCH OF ‘MODERN MISSAMMA’ FIRST SINGLE

Modern Missamma’ is being produced under the Lasya & Mithuna Creations banner by Chiranjeevi Pamidi, Shiva Pamidi, Kiran Kumar Nalluri and Sravanthi Namburi. Sai Baba has provided the story and screenplay and is also directing the film. Harsha Narra, Tanmayi Khushi, Siju AR, Pramodini, Harika, Dr. Bhadram, Shivannarayana, Rakesh Rachakonda and others play key roles. The cinematography is handled by Sheshu Raj Daddala and Vijay Pidapa, while Aditya Papisetty is the editor and Balakrishna is the choreographer. Harikrishna Jagurothi heads the script



department. Somesh Eripalli serves as the VFX Director and G. Pawan Kalyan is the Sound Designer. Upputholla Babu (Bobby) is the Executive Producer. The grand launch event of the film’s first single was held on Wednesday at Prasads Labs

in Hyderabad. The song, composed by music director Gopi Sundar, features lyrics penned by Kittu Vissapragada. Titled ‘Better Be A Missamma’, the song showcases Harsha Narra in traditional Dhoti attire and Tanmayi Khushi in a traditional outfit.

A special birthday poster featuring Sangeeth Shobhan has been released; Title Glimpse on August 23rd

Young and promising hero Sangeeth Shobhan, who has earned a special following among youth audiences with films like Mad and Mad Square, is starring in an exciting new project with hit producer Dheeraj Mogilineni, aspiring producer Giribabu Vallabhaneni, and talented director Palnati Surya Pratap. The film is being made as a fresh and trendy love story, with Anaswara Rajan playing the female lead. Presented by Smt. Sravani, the movie is being produced as Production No. 3 under the banners of Dheeraj Mogilineni Entertainment and VGB Entertainment. Lakshmi Bhupala is the writer.



On the occasion of Sangeeth Shobhan’s birthday today, the makers released a special poster wishing the young actor. Sangeeth Shobhan plays the character of Maruthi in the film. In the birthday poster, he is seen carrying a basket of leafy vegetables, sporting the look of a middle-class young man.



“PANASAPALLI FANS ASSOCIATION” MOVIE MOTION POSTER RELEASED

Virupaksha” fame director Karthik Dandu’s brother Vivek Dandu is making his acting debut as the lead in the film “Panasapalli Fans Association.” Sangeethana Vipin plays the female lead, while Sapthagiri will be seen in a key role. The film is being produced by P. Vivekananda Varma under the Candid Films banner as Production No. 1. Directed by C.H. Ravikishore, the movie is a village-backdrop periodic entertainer. The makers released the motion poster of “Panasapalli Fans Association” today, and it looks interesting and engaging. The motion poster of “Panasapalli Fans Association” introduces an

intriguing concept. Panasapalli is a village known for its love of cinema, where posters of every new movie are a must on the walls. The hero is the president of the Panasapalli Mega Comrades Fans Association, while the heroine is the president of a Balakrishna fans association. The motion poster hints at an entertaining rivalry between the hero and heroine as they compete over the box-office records achieved by their respective favorite stars. How far this fan war goes, what twists and turns it takes, and how it turns into an entertaining journey will be revealed in the film.

Irumudi' will win many National Awards. It will be a trend-setter movie.: Music director GV Prakash Kumar

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

How special did you find composing music for the film Irumudi?
-I have done many love stories and commercial films. Irumudi is a very intense thriller. I got immersed in it as soon as director Shiva Nirvana narrated the story. ‘Irumudi’ is very new to Telugu cinema. The audience cannot imagine the twists and turns that will come in it. Working on this film was a lot of fun. It will be a very good film. There is a lot of scope for background

scoring for this film. We gave our best. I hope this film will win many national awards like Best Regional Film, Best Child Artist. I also believe that the film will be a huge success commercially.

What kind of approach was taken towards the music of this film?
-The music of this film is very special to me. Everything in it is psychological. We assume one thing but it takes a different turn. Also, the way the characters change, the events, the scenes, all of them are very special. That is why I approached it with intense psychological thinking while making music. There is a film called ‘Omkaara’. The music of that film has a very psychological approach. I treated the score of ‘Irumudi’ in the same way.

What kind of appreciation did you receive from Ravi Teja?
-All the songs have become super hits. Ravi Teja is very happy about the music. He really liked the song in the climax. It has not been released yet. You will experience it in the theater.



DIMPLE HAYATHI’S SULTRY GAZE STEALS THE FRAME

Dimple Hayathi, who was last seen in Bharatha Mahasayulaku Vignypathi this year, has treated fans to a stunning new set of portrait shots, and the internet cannot get enough. The pictures capture her in a raw, editorial avatar that shows off a different side to the actress. In the photos, Dimple opts for minimal styling, letting her sharp features and tousled voluminous hair do the talking. She poses in muted, earthy-toned outfits with off-shoulder cuts, keeping her makeup soft with glossy nude lips and warm eye tones. Her intense, sultry gaze in one frame contrasts beautifully with her bright, candid smile in another, giving the shoot a nice mix of drama and warmth. On the work front, Bharatha Mahasayulaku Vignypathi didn’t perform well at the box office, and



Dimple currently has no new projects lined up. However, at just 27, she still has a long

way to go in her career, and fans are hopeful she’ll bag an exciting project soon.

RUKMINI VASANTH’S DESI AVATAR STEALS THE SPOTLIGHT

Rukmini Vasanth is known for her bold and glamorous fashion choices, but her latest photoshoot proves that traditional looks suit her just as well. The actress took a break from her usual glam avatars and stepped into a gorgeous pink Banarasi silk saree, and honestly, this switch was totally worth it. In the photos, Rukmini is seen draped in a pink saree with intricate golden motifs, paired with a matching silk blouse. She kept her look minimal yet elegant with a maang tikka, jhumka earrings, a delicate necklace, and bangles. Her wavy open hair and soft makeup added to the traditional charm. Her candid poses, especially the one with her hand resting near her chin while she looks away, exude effortless grace and have left fans swooning over her ethnic avatar. On the work front,



Rukmini has an exciting lineup ahead. The upcoming action film Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups, starring

Yash and directed by Geetu Mohandas, is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on August 26, 2026.

AMY JACKSON FLAUNTS HER TONED FIGURE IN SPAIN

