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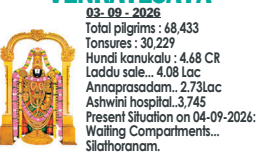
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Short Takes

**INDIA, BELGIUM
AGREE TO BOLSTER
CIVIL AVIATION TIES:
RAM MOHAN NAIDU**

NEW DELHI (TSIT): Union Minister of Civil Aviation Ram Mohan Naidu held talks with the Belgian Prime Minister, Bart De Wever, on further strengthening civil aviation cooperation between the two nations, an official statement said on Friday. The discussion included talks on direct air connectivity options between the two countries, air cargo improvements focused on the high-value pharmaceutical sector and advanced air mobility initiatives. The Belgian Prime Minister is on a three-day official visit to India from September 2-4, during which he held high-level bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to deepen trade and investment ties between the two countries and the timely implementation of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA). "Honored to meet Prime Minister of Belgium. Discussed further strengthening of India-Belgium cooperation in civil aviation, including direct air connectivity, air cargo for the high-value pharmaceutical sector and Advanced air mobility," the minister posted on X.

AP Governor, CM
congratulate ISRO scientists

AMARAVATI (TSIT): Andhra Pradesh Governor S. Abdul Nazeer, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday congratulated ISRO scientists on the successful launch of the GSLV-F17 mission carrying EOS-05 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. Governor Abdul Nazeer hailed the achievement as a significant milestone for India's space programme, noting that EOS-05, described as the country's heaviest Earth observation satellite, was successfully placed in geosynchronous orbit. He said the mission would strengthen continuous surveillance, national security and Earth observation capabilities, adding another feather to ISRO's cap. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu called the launch a



proud moment for India's space journey. He congratulated ISRO on the precise placement of EOS-05 into its intended orbit and praised the dedication of the scientists and engineers behind the mission. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan termed the launch a new milestone in Bharat's journey from Earth to the stars. He said EOS-05, India's first-ever imaging satellite from a geosynchronous orbit, would strengthen Earth observation capabilities. He also said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India's space programme was reaching new heights and inspiring the country's youth.

FM Sitharaman invites global
CEOs to invest in India

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held a series of discussions with CEOs of global companies in New York on the new investment opportunities in digital infrastructure opening up in India's fast growing economy, according to an official statement posted on X on Friday.

In a meeting with Sanjeev Ahuja, Chairman and CEO, Tillman Holdings, the Finance Minister said that India's policy design, including recent budget announcements, facilitates investment in digital infrastructure and alluded to the rapid growth in areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), cloud computing, digital services and enterprise technology. These sectors, she said, are generating sustained demand for data centres, high-capacity networks and reliable power infrastructure.

In this context, firms like Tillman are well-positioned to participate in the next phase of India's digital infrastructure growth, she said.

The two also discussed



opportunities pertaining to the development of large-scale, resilient and sustainable digital infrastructure campuses.

In another meeting with Marsh RE CEO Dean Klisura and Devanshu Dhyani, head of the company's strategy and corporate development, the Finance Minister said India offers global professional-services and risk-management firms a combination of a large domestic market, skilled talent, expanding infrastructure, digital capabilities and an increasingly reform-oriented business environment.

She noted that these strengths are underpinned by India's robust economic performance as the fastest-growing major economy in the world, as reflected in the GDP growth of 7.8 per cent in Q1 of FY 2026-27.

Team from Marsh RE acknowledged and appreciated the reform orientation of the Government of India and said that the company is keen to further grow and expand its presence in India, particularly as the country offers a level playing field along with a well-informed regulator, IRDAI.

Delhi Police keeps word, detains
Swatantra Bhardwaj in UP

NEW DELHI (TSIT) : The Delhi Police on Friday, September 4, detained Swatantra Bhardwaj, the man accused of assaulting the father of student activist Nishu Azad during a protest at Jantar Mantar, from UP's Bulandshahr. Bhardwaj was detained near Dhamra Nara village, reports said.

This comes within hours of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) representatives claiming that they had been assured by the Delhi Police that Bhardwaj would be arrested within 72 hours.

Earlier reports suggested that a Delhi Police team had reached Bulandshahr after Bhardwaj's location was traced to the district. However, Bhardwaj had reportedly left the area by



the time the team arrived, heading towards Khurja, they said.

Bhardwaj found himself in the spotlight when a clip of one of his interviews made the rounds on the internet, in which he was admitting that he "cracked the skull" of Sanjay Kumar, Nishu Azad's father, during the protest and escaped being jailed despite the seriousness of the alleged offence because of his contacts.

'Do you know which section this crime attracts? Section 307, attempt to murder. He was almost dying in the ambulance,' Bhardwaj can be heard saying in the clip. He claimed that he had not been sent to jail, suggesting he enjoyed political connections.

The CJP, which spearheaded the Jantar Mantar protest, has been seeking Bhardwaj's arrest. The controversy escalated on Thursday after Delhi Police said Kumar had suffered a simple head injury and rejected claims that his skull had been fractured. Police said Bhardwaj and another accused, Suraj Kumar, were detained at the spot and served notices, and that a chargesheet would be filed.

After investigation panel flags
positive drug test, Air India
sacks Phuket-Delhi flight pilot

NEW DELHI (TSIT) Air India on Friday terminated the services of the Pilot-in-Command (PIC) of its Phuket-Delhi flight AI2379 with immediate effect after he tested positive for a psychoactive substance, hours after the preliminary investigation into the August 4 accident flagged the test result as a "serious concern" and sought priority action from the aviation regulator.

"Safety remains Air India's highest priority. The Pilot-in-Command of the Phuket-Delhi flight tested positive for a psychoactive substance," an Air India spokesperson said. "In line with Air India's zero-tolerance approach to violation of safety, fitness or regulatory requirements, the pilot's employment has been terminated with immediate effect," the airline said.

The action came as the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) preliminary report on Friday revealed another critical aspect of the accident: the Air India A320 carrying 145 people lost pressure in all three hydraulic systems within four seconds at 36,000 feet, leading to the autopilot disconnecting, a stall warning and a violent altitude upset. The



August 4 accident left 24 people -- 20 passengers and four cabin crew -- injured, four of them seriously. The aircraft first climbed 372 feet and then fell 292 feet from its assigned flight level during the upset, an overall swing of 664 feet.

The AAIB report said both pilots underwent post-flight breath-analyser tests after landing in Delhi and the results were satisfactory. However, both were also subjected to psychoactive substance detection tests. The PIC's sample was found "non-negative". Blood samples of both pilots were subsequently sent to a pathological laboratory, where the PIC's confirmatory test was again non-negative while the co-pilot tested negative in both tests. "The confirmation of use of psycho-active substance is a serious concern," the AAIB said, recommending that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) take "appropriate actions.

Revanth directs officials to invite
Phase-II lift irrigation tenders

HYDERABAD TSIT BUREAU:

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday directed officials to immediately initiate the tender process for Phase-II works of the Makthal-Narayanpet-Kodangal Lift Irrigation Project and expedite its implementation.

During a review meeting held in Kodangal, the Chief Minister asked officials to furnish comprehensive details of the annual budgetary requirements needed to accelerate the project. Irrigation officials informed him that efforts were underway to complete Phase-I works by December 2027 and Phase-II works by October 2028.

Earlier, Revanth Reddy inspected the progress of various works at the Hakimpet Education Hub. He reviewed the construction status of the Young India Integrated Residential School, government medical and nursing colleges, physiotherapy and paramedical sciences institutes, a 430-bed hospital and other facilities coming up at the hub.

The Chief Minister directed officials to ensure effective coordination among all agencies



involved in the construction works and continuously monitor quality and other technical aspects. He also suggested setting up water-harvesting wells to prevent waterlogging during rains and directed officials to prepare plans for conserving rainwater and utilising it for landscaping and other purposes within the Education Hub.

Chief Minister also reviewed the progress of Roads & Buildings works in the Kodangal Assembly constituency. He instructed officials to speed up road connectivity projects, construction of buildings and bridges, and other

infrastructure works.

Revanth Reddy laid particular emphasis on providing road connectivity to every tribal hamlet (thanda) in the constituency. He warned that action would be taken against officials found negligent in developing road connectivity to the thandas. The Meeting also reviewed plans for constructing culverts and bridges across streams in villages. The Chief Minister suggested designing bridges across streams in such a way that they could also function like check dams, helping conserve water while improving rural connectivity.

CJP protest: Police identified 2,873
but 25 were already in jail

New Delhi: At least 25 of the 2,873 people with criminal records identified by the Delhi Police using facial recognition software (FRS) at the CJP-led Jantar Mantar protest over the alleged exam leak between July 20 and 26 were in jail during that period, an exclusive investigation by The Indian Express showed on Friday, September 4.

Earlier this week, while the apex court quashed all FIRs against the protestors, it allowed the government to go ahead with action against these 2,843.

According to the report, Express looked at those accused of serious crimes such as murder, attempted murder, and rape. There were 205 names in these: 101 (murder), 61 (rape), six

(POCSO Act), and 37 of the 62 listed under attempted murder.

Breaking this group down further, 17 charged with murder, four with rape, and four with attempt to murder were in Delhi's prisons at Tihar, Mandoli, and Rohini when the FRS flagged them at Jantar Mantar, said the report. Three of them were identified on July 24, another 21 on July 25, and one on July 26, the last day of the protest at Jantar Mantar.

As per the Delhi Police answers to a questionnaire by the newspaper, "During the protests, 2,873 individuals identified as prima facie having criminal antecedents were spotted. However, further verification in this regard is pending."

According to the police affidavit submitted on August 17 in the Supreme Court in response to plea alleging use of force and surveillance during the protest, 2,402 people were identified by their biometric database, 'Crime Kundli', and 471 through criminal records. One of these, said the report, was linked to a high-profile killing in Delhi, with Yogesh, aka Raju, being arrested for his role in the murder of a gym owner in Greater Kailash-1.

The affidavit does not say whether those identified were accused, convicts, or merely named in criminal cases.

It said, "No actions are taken solely based upon the result of the facial recognition system, which is only the

first step to identify a person in the crowd who has a criminal record. After the said face is recognised, there is a field verification done with respect to the individual concerned since that person's details are already in the police records, and if, on field verification, it is found that he was, in fact, present at the site, actions are taken." However, back in 2022, in response to a Right to Information (RTI) request, the police had said that a match is considered positive if the system shows 80 per cent accuracy. The performance changes according to the algorithm, camera angle, lighting, image quality, masks, and the database being searched.

EDITORIAL

The Rise Of Indians In US Is Making Some Americans Very, Very Angry

The US Second Lady, Usha Vance, has again been in the news this week for her Indian heritage. Her husband, Vice President JD Vance, attacked Abdul El-Sayed, the Democratic Party's Senate nominee for Michigan, at a campaign rally on Monday over remarks about Usha. "Abdul, keep my wife's name the hell out of your mouth because she's way out of your league," Vance warned. A week earlier, El-Sayed wondered in a social media post whether the Vice President would take Usha "back in time to meet Papaw" if he could, referring to Vance's late grandfather and seemingly implying that he would not have approved of their interracial marriage. Indian community leaders criticised El-Sayed for the remarks. Ironically, he himself has been a target of racial and Islamophobic hatred from members of Vance's Republican Party. Usha Vance, a Hindu, has been among the most high-profile victims of racial attacks in the United States, mostly from supporters of the Republican Party and far-right activists. The most prominent among them is Nick Fuentes, a 27-year-old white supremacist leader, an admirer of Adolf Hitler and Holocaust denier. Fuentes has frequently attacked Usha's Indian heritage and Hindu background and has condemned JD as a "race traitor" for marrying her and betraying white identity. The attacks began after Trump picked Vance as his Vice-President for the 2024 election. "What kind of man marries somebody named Usha? Clearly, he doesn't value his racial identity," Fuentes said. Other prominent Indian American targets of such hatred include former presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy (also a Hindu), New York's mayor, Zohran Mamdani (a Muslim), and Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Harmeet Dhillon (a Sikh). Ramaswamy, who is currently campaigning to become governor of Ohio on a Republican Party ticket, faces racial abuse online almost daily and sometimes in person, despite being endorsed by President Trump. Some ask him to go back to India; others say they will only elect a white person. Disturbing Trends The latest FBI report on hate crimes, released last month, said there was a 10% reduction in such cases against Asians across the US in 2025. But it also reported that such crimes were up by 24.6% against Sikhs and 12% against Hindus, while anti-Muslim hate crimes fell by 10%. However, independent researchers paint a much more alarming picture of racial abuse against the Indian community, as many more cases go unreported. Hate speech and racial slurs are not crimes in the United States unless they lead to physical violence. So many such cases fall outside the FBI's purview. Racist incidents against Indians and other South Asians in the United States have more than doubled over the past two years and have sharply escalated since Trump's return to the White House, according to a new report published on Thursday by Stop AAPI Hate, a US campaign group that monitors such data. Between January 2023 and December 2025, the use of anti-South Asian slurs rose by 109%, the report said, based on surveys conducted by the market intelligence firm Moonshot and NORC at the University of Chicago. In 2025 alone, 48% of South Asian adults in the US said they experienced a hate act due to their race, ethnicity, or nationality, according to the report. Nearly half of them suffered racial harassment, but 14% were physically harmed.

Teachers: The future direction and a new form of education

Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

The nature of education is changing today at a pace never before seen. Artificial intelligence, digital technology, online learning, virtual classrooms, and new teaching methods are reshaping the learning process. Children today can acquire information on any subject in a matter of moments. At a time like this, it's natural to ask: what will be the role of a teacher when knowledge and information are so readily available? In fact, the expansion of technology has not diminished the role of a teacher, but rather has made it more important. In the future, teachers will not only be imparters of knowledge, but also visionaries, guides, motivators, and protectors of human values. Traditionally, a teacher's role has been limited to teaching and learning books and curriculum. However, today this role has expanded significantly. Teachers play a vital role in shaping students' overall personality. Preparing them simply to score high marks in exams is not enough. They must also be taught to face life's challenges, differentiate between right and wrong, learn from failures, be sensitive to others, and make balanced decisions in difficult situations. The digital age has virtually erased the boundaries of knowledge. The internet and digital platforms have put a vast world of information at the fingertips of students. Artificial intelligence can answer any question in seconds. But there's a difference between information and knowledge, and an even greater difference between wisdom and knowledge. Knowing the answer to a question is one thing, and applying it appropriately in life is quite another. Technology can provide information, but only teachers can cultivate its judicious use, ethics, and a humane perspective. With the



growing influence of artificial intelligence and the expansion of robotics and automation, the world of employment and skills is also changing. In the coming years, the nature of many traditional jobs will change. At such a time, the challenge for education will not only be what students know, but also how much they can learn, think, and solve problems in response to changing circumstances. Therefore, the teacher of the future will be a continuous learner. Only those teachers who update their knowledge, technical skills, and teaching methods over time will be able to better prepare students for the future. The greatest need today is to strike a balance between education and skills. Simply acquiring degrees does not guarantee success in life. Qualities such as communication skills, problem-solving abilities, creative thinking, decision-making, cooperative spirit, and empathy are equally essential. Teachers must develop these abilities in students so that they become

not just good students but also responsible and sensitive citizens. In a diverse country like India, the role of a teacher becomes even more expansive. Here, education is not only a means to employment, but also the foundation of social unity, democratic consciousness, cultural understanding, and the formation of national character. Teachers can connect students with their culture, traditions, and values and develop a scientific outlook and constitutional values in them. The school classroom is truly the laboratory of the future society. In this age of technology, a teacher's greatest strength lies in their human empathy. Books can impart knowledge, the internet can provide information, and artificial intelligence can provide answers, but only a teacher can recognize the disappointment hidden in a student's eyes, boost their morale in the face of failure, and inspire them to try again. A machine can answer a student's question, but understanding the meaning of

their silence still requires human empathy. Today, the structure and lifestyle of families have also changed. Joint families are becoming more limited, and many children no longer receive the constant guidance of family elders as they once did. In such times, the teacher's responsibility increases further. School is not just a place to teach lessons, but also a place to shape children's personalities and outlook on life. A sensitive teacher can develop qualities such as self-confidence, discipline, patience, and responsibility within students. The goal of education shouldn't be merely passing exams. Education is the power that teaches a person to question, reason, make decisions, and face challenges. Education not only empowers a person but also makes them discerning and sensitive. If students achieve high degrees but lack compassion, morality, and social responsibility, education deviates from its true purpose. Teachers are the strongest force for positive

change in society. A teacher transforms a student, a student influences a family, and a family influences society. Thus, a teacher's influence reaches an entire generation. A nation's future isn't shaped solely in parliaments, policies, and plans; its true creation takes place in classrooms. Students in classrooms will become the scientists, doctors, administrators, teachers, public representatives, entrepreneurs, and citizens of tomorrow. In Indian tradition, the guru has always been held in special respect. From the gurukul tradition to modern universities, the guru-disciple relationship has fostered the tradition of values along with knowledge. Times have changed, the means of education have evolved, and technology has transformed teaching styles, but the fundamental role of the guru remains the same—to lead from ignorance to knowledge and from confusion to wisdom. Teachers' Day is not just an occasion to honor teachers, but also a day to reconsider

the purpose of education. We must consider whether we are preparing our children only for competition or for life. Do we want them to be successful or also good human beings? The answers to these questions will determine the future direction of our education system. In the coming eight to ten years, technological changes in education will accelerate. Artificial intelligence will accelerate student learning, enable personalized teaching, and simplify many of teachers' administrative tasks. But amid this change, the human role of the teacher will become even more important. In the future, a teacher's worth will be measured not by how much information they can memorize, but by how much they can inspire students to think, understand, question, and become better human beings. Therefore, teachers need not fear technology. Technology cannot replace teachers, but rather can become a powerful ally. What is needed is for teachers to strengthen their human sensibility while using technology. A balance between machine efficiency and human sensitivity will be the most pressing need in education for the future. In reality, a teacher isn't just someone who delivers a curriculum. He or she is the creator of future generations. He or she not only tells students how the world is, but also empowers them to imagine how it should be. This is a teacher's greatest power. Therefore, on Teachers' Day, we should not only wish teachers well, but also recognize their responsibility, respect, and social importance. Technology may change, curriculum may change, teaching methods may change, but the need to make humans human will never end. Because machines can give knowledge, technology can give information, but it is the teacher who gives direction to life.

WHY INDIA'S GEN Z IS DONE WITH TRADITIONAL POLITICIANS

There is a peculiar kind of confidence that comes from mistaking noise for understanding. Walk into any political war room in India today and you will find strategists confidently explaining "the Gen Z mindset" through slide decks full of Instagram trends, reels, and hashtag campaigns - as if a generation's worldview can be reverse-engineered from its social media habits. This confidence is precisely the problem. India's political class believes it has cracked the code of its youngest voters. It has not. What it has cracked, at best, is their attention span for thirty seconds - not their trust, not their conviction, and certainly not their respect.

■ THE MANUFACTURED RELEVANCE TRAP

Scroll through the last few years of political discourse in India and a pattern emerges: an extraordinary amount of energy spent on things that simply do not register with Gen Z's actual concerns. Renaming a city. Relitigating whether a national song constitutes true patriotism. Wading into celebrity spats - a Kriti Sanon versus Kangana Ranaut spectacle - as though this qualifies as cultural engagement. Rewriting or re-litigating historical narratives depending on which version flatters which side. Communal flashpoints dressed up as governance debates. Caste arithmetic disguised as social justice. None of this is Gen Z's language. This is legacy politics wearing a young person's clothes and hoping nobody notices the fit is wrong.



Gen Z did not grow up with the emotional scaffolding of Partition memory, Emergency-era trauma, or Mandal-era caste consciousness that shaped previous generations' political grammar. They grew up with global classrooms on their phones, with friends across borders, with the ability to see - in real time - how other societies are solving problems India's political discourse still treats as unsolvable. When they see politicians pour national attention into a city's name or a song's interpretation, it does not read as cultural pride. It reads as a diversion - a magician's trick to keep your eyes on one hand while the other hand does something else, or nothing at all.

■ AN EMBARRASSINGLY SIMPLE THING

Ask any Gen Z Indian what they want from their leaders, and the answer is rarely ideological. It is functional. They want jobs that match their skills. They want institutions

that work without a bribe. They want their taxes to translate into visible public goods. They want leaders who, when wrong, say so - plainly, without spin. They want a political culture where disagreement doesn't require dehumanizing the other side. This is not a radical ask. It is, if anything, a strikingly modest one. And yet it remains largely unmet, because meeting it requires something Indian politics has grown allergic to: direct, unembellished honesty. Gen Z does not need a politician to be perfect. They need a politician to be real. A leader who admits "we got this wrong, here's what we're doing about it" earns more credibility with this generation than a hundred polished press conferences ever could. Authenticity, not eloquence, is the currency they trade in - and it is a currency most of the political establishment has stopped minting.

■ THE TRUST DEFICIT IS

THE REAL CRISIS

Survey after survey, and simply any honest conversation with young Indians, reveals a quiet but corrosive skepticism toward political institutions. This is not apathy - it is informed disillusionment. This generation has watched corruption scandals unfold and dissolve without consequence. They have watched promises made in election season evaporate the moment the results are declared. They have watched public discourse get captured by manufactured outrage over things that, six months later, nobody even remembers debating. The danger here is not that Gen Z will simply disengage - though many are choosing exactly that. The deeper danger is what happens when disengagement calcifies into contempt. A generation that stops believing institutions can be reformed is a generation that stops participating in reforming them. That is a far more dangerous outcome for a democracy than any single election result.

Nepal Needs \$5 Billion To Rebuild. World's Climate Fund Doesn't Have Even 10% Of It

HARJEET SINGH

Nepal stands today on the frontlines of a climate emergency it did nothing to create. A wall of freezing water and debris, unleashed when a glacial lake burst high on the Tibet border on August 26, tore through the Bhotekoshi and Rasuwa valleys, killing more than a thousand people and leaving thousands still missing. Its glaciers are melting, its rivers are turning into weapons, and its communities are absorbing irreparable loss. Nepal is responsible for barely 0.1% of global greenhouse gas emissions. It did next to nothing to cause this crisis, yet it is bearing the full weight of it. Kathmandu has formally called on the UN's Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) to expedite support for relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction - the first country ever to pressure the new Fund in a moment of acute catastrophe. This is precisely the crisis that the fund was created to answer. And here is the bitter truth: it is almost an empty bucket. Process And Punishment Nepal's Finance Minister, Swarnim Wagle, estimates that rebuilding will cost between USD 4 billion and 5 billion, and warns that this figure is only preliminary. Set that against the fund meant to help. Of roughly USD 820 million pledged by wealthy nations, only around USD 350 million is actually available to spend - and not a single project has yet



been approved. The fund caps support at USD 20 million per project; Nepal needs two hundred times that. People are drowning in loss right now, yet the fund is bogged down by process. Kathmandu is begging for emergency help, but the board is not scheduled to sit until December. Let me say this plainly, as I have in negotiating halls for over twenty years: climate change does not wait for December board meetings, and neither can its victims. I have spent more than two decades fighting for climate justice and for this fund to exist - through summit after summit where rich nations smiled, stalled, and rebranded delay as diplomacy. We won the fund at Sharm el-Sheikh in 2022 and forced governments to make it operational a year later in Dubai, because disasters like this one were coming. To see it starved of money at the very first true test is

not just a technical failure. It is a moral one.

■ LIABILITY, NOT CHARITY

For over fifty years, fossil fuel companies and the developed nations that hosted them knew that reckless extraction and mindless industrialisation would one day become a Frankenstein's monster - and they buried the reports that said so. Nepal is not asking for a handout to save rich consciences. As Nepal's Foreign Minister, Shisir Khanal, put it, the country is shifting its framework from "aid" to "justice and compensation" - this is "not a matter of charity; it is a matter of legal and moral liability". That distinction is the whole argument: accountability for a catastrophe manufactured elsewhere. For years, the major polluters, led by the United States, bullied their way through the Paris Agreement by explicitly

ruling out liability and compensation. Washington - the largest historical emitter - pledged a mere USD 17.5 million to the fund, then walked away from both the Paris Agreement and the fund's board altogether. The US and its allies wanted a system built on voluntary handouts they could switch off at will. That era is over. The Paris Agreement may contain a loophole that shields polluters and refuses to utter the words "compensation" and "reparations", which is exactly what this is. But international law is not so squeamish. In its historic advisory opinion of July 23, 2025, the International Court of Justice held that states that breach their climate obligations owe full reparations for the harm caused. That gives countries like Nepal a legal instrument outside the UNFCCC's political theatre to hold major emitters to account under customary international law.

Americans also face historically high petrol costs, with the average price per gallon reaching \$4.15 compared to \$3.20 a year ago. Despite prices cooling some during hopes for peace earlier in the summer, oil has now renewed its climb as fighting once more escalates between the U.S. and Iran. Brent crude, the international standard, was trading at more than \$95 a barrel Friday, up from roughly \$70 before the war. Prices at the pump always follow closely behind. The last time businesses and drivers saw sky-high fuel prices was in June 2022, when diesel reached nearly \$5.82 a gallon on average months after the Ukraine war began and world leaders imposed sanctions against Russia, a leading oil producer. When adjusted for inflation, however, prices have been higher in the past. Ahead of the 2008 financial crisis, for example, diesel hit about \$4.74 a gallon — equivalent to \$7.20 in 2026, according to the government's latest data. And 2022's record of nearly \$5.82 would be about \$6.56 this year when accounting for inflation.



Nepal rescuers try to reach dozens trapped in tunnel as two pulled out alive and one found dead

Girl group Katseye are missing two members, but their tour still dazzles

They may have been two members down, but the pop group Katseye received a hero's welcome as they played their first full concert in the UK. The audience erupted with screams even before the show began, as the band broadcast their music videos on the O2 Arena's big screens, and the noise barely dipped for the next three hours. It was proof that Katseye have become pop's biggest property (they're currently the most-streamed act on YouTube UK) even while singers Manon Bannerman and Sophia Laforza are on



health-related hiatus. The stage felt emptier without them, but their bandmates worked hard to fill the gaps, hyping up the crowd with a succession of bass-heavy pop anthems and jaw-drop

ping dance breaks. "Are you happy to see us?" asked the band's youngest member, Yoonchae Jeong, as if the answer hadn't been obvious from the moment they appeared in a storm of

laser lights and launched into the Brazilian funk workout of Hootie Frutti. "I think you guys are our loudest crowd ever, literally," marvelled Megan Skindiel. "This crowd is unbelievable," added Lara Raj. The concert was only the second date of the band's Wildworld tour - but fans already knew every twist and turn from social media. There was even a cheer of relief when Daniela Avanzini survived a complicated lift in the dance routine for Gabriella. On the opening night, her

dance partner dropped her. Such adulation - and scrutiny - has come quickly for Katseye. Based in Los Angeles, the multinational girl group were only formed in 2023 as part of the online reality competition show The Debut: Dream Academy. The contest was created by Hybe, the South Korean entertainment company behind acts like BTS and Le Sserafim, and the US record label Geffen, home to Olivia Rodrigo and the Rolling Stones. Of the 120,000 who initially applied for the show, only six made it through.

HOW COULD US-IRAN CONFLICT END? THREE EXPERTS GIVE THEIR VIEWS



The prospect of an imminent agreement to end the conflict between the US and Iran again seems unlikely, with the warring sides exchanging strikes and uncompromising rhetoric. The attacks come days after the US said it was moving into a new phase - a sweeping economic blockade against Iran and countries which trade with it. The US aim was to force Iran to negotiate and to stop its attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. The key commercial shipping route has been effectively closed since the US and Israel started the conflict in February. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) the two sides signed in June and meant to result in a permanent ceasefire and a deal within 60 days has expired. As the conflict enters its seventh month, we asked three experts for their thoughts on how it may play out. US hopes military and economic pressure will weaken Iran's negotiating power Jason Campbell, Senior

Fellow at the Middle East Institute, Washington DC The problem is we still do not know definitively what the US strategic objectives are in Iran. The White House is persistently re-evaluating what it is willing to live with from a political standpoint. It was assumed the military component would be enough for a quick victory and that has not had the desired effect. What we are seeing is different levers - both military and economic - that the US is trying to pull at. Right now, the administration appears satisfied with some form of stasis. I think they are satisfied with maintaining the blockade and with allowing some periodic targeting against Iran's capability to upset the shipping lane in the strait. US officials are hopeful that the new sanctions will be enough to compel the Iranian regime to come to the negotiating table in a weaker position. US forces have seemingly been able to facilitate a sufficient trickle

through the Strait of Hormuz in recent days to avert an oil-price shock or a global economic collapse. But those were not the US objectives when starting the war. My sense is that Iran is likely to demand a high price to get to a resolution, which is likely to remain politically untenable for the Trump administration. I do not think the latest strikes really alter Iranian calculations on the war. I think Tehran is preparing for an increased squeeze on its economy, and a continuation of the on and off attacks which we have seen over the past couple of months. Their intent will be to respond to these attacks in a proportionate manner in order not to spiral a larger conflict. On the economic side, obviously this is likely to hurt the Iranian economy which has already been affected by the war and has had underlying structural issues anyway, as we know from the December and January demonstrations in Iran.

Argentine leader threatens to sanction oil firms and reiterates Falklands claim

Argentina's president has heightened tensions with the UK over the Falkland Islands, warning he will impose economic sanctions on firms which exploit oil close to the British overseas territory. In a national address, Javier Milei said the "winds of change" favoured Argentina's claim to the islands, emboldened by signs the US might reconsider its stance of neutrality on the issue. Milei said the Sea Lion oil field, where a British and an Israeli firm are due to begin exploration work, was a "clear and present danger". Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband said the UK's position on the islands was "unwavering", and they would remain British as "that is the overwhelming position of the Islanders." Earlier Downing Street said reaffirmed its position that the islands would remain a British Overseas Territory "for as long as the Islanders wish". "This is not the first time Argentine



governments have made economic threats against the islanders. We are clear that the Falkland Islanders' right of self-determination extends to the right to exploit their own natural resources." More than 40 years after the war over the territory, sovereignty of the archipelago in the south-west Atlantic Ocean remains hotly disputed between Britain and Argentina. Milei announced his sanctions plan surrounded by his cabinet at the presidential palace, reiterating that the Falklands were "historically and legally" Argentinean.

Europe targeted by spiralling campaign of sabotage and Russia is the chief suspect

As summer temperatures in Europe smashed records this summer and many politicians shifted to holiday mode, Russia remained focused on its war. Not only did its military attacks across Ukraine intensify last month, becoming ever more deadly for civilians, Russia also appears to have escalated its sabotage campaign across Europe. This time, military and defence sector sites were the prime target. A full month after drones packed with explosives were found at Leipzig's airport, used by Ukraine to transport military goods, Germany's interior minister has declared that "Russia is responsible". Russia's President Vladimir Putin is demanding proof, as always, and his officials call the accusation "absurd". But the drones were just a dramatic start. August then brought a series of suspicious fires at defence facilities from Italy to Estonia. Some of the affected countries have already blamed Russia; others are still investigating and some fires may eventu-



ally be ruled accidental, exactly as such attacks are designed to seem. Poland's interior minister is clear. "There are many, many signals that Russia is changing its strategy and intensifying its activities, including terrorist and sabotage activities," Marcin Kierwinski said, warning people to be on their guard. August campaign across Europe 4 August Germany: The first drone at Leipzig airport is discovered. 10 August Bulgaria: A major fire breaks out at a factory of the defence firm EMCO, with initial reports that a truck ignited during a fuel deliv-

ery. 13 August Italy: A fire at KNDS Ammo Italy outside Rome triggers a large explosion. The local prosecutor is looking into possible outside interference, La Repubblica newspaper reports. Publicly, his office will only confirm that a case has been opened for negligent disaster against "unknown persons". 15 August Estonia: The Milrem Robotics factory in Tallinn, which the Kyiv Post says supplies drones to Ukraine, goes up in flames. Two suspects are arrested. Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal says the possibility of Russian sabotage is being

"taking seriously" by investigators. 25 August Slovakia: Police announce they have averted an arson attack on a Ukrainian-owned drone manufacturer and seized a "large amount of incendiary mixture". The firm itself blames Russia and police arrest three suspects who they say were "following orders". Slovakia is Russia's close ally in Europe. 30 August Poland: A country which is heavily targeted for sabotage reports two more fires. One is in Lublin at a company which produces helicopter components. Prime Minister Donald Tusk said arson "cannot be ruled out". An attack on the drone producer, WB Group, is clearer cut. A masked man is caught on CCTV throwing incendiary devices. Tusk calls it a "continuation of Russia's escalatory activities". The pattern has continued into September with two Bulgarians arrested in Munich, Germany, for suspected arson after throwing incendiary devices from a car at defence firm Rhode & Schwartz.

Steve Irwin's family celebrates 'superhero' dad, 20 years after shock death



Australian conservationist Bindi Irwin has marked the 20th anniversary of her famous father's death with a touching tribute to the man best known as the "Crocodile Hunter". Steve Irwin died on 4 September 2006, aged 44, after a stingray fatally pierced his chest while he was underwater filming a documentary at the Great Barrier Reef. Bindi, who was eight when her father died, called Steve a "superhero" in an online post on Friday, saying she has "watched the world mourn my dad with our family" for the past two decades. "I always thought that my dad's legacy is wildlife conservation; it

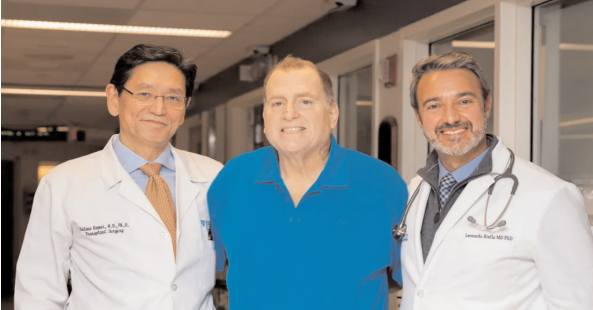
turns out, his legacy is love. For our planet and for each other," Bindi, 28, wrote on Instagram. She described the impact of her father's death on her mother Terri and her younger brother Robert, 22. "My mum lost the love of her life; my brother and I lost the greatest dad," she wrote. "Grief never truly leaves us; we walk alongside it every day." Bindi also shared details on how her daughter connects with the grandfather she never got to meet. "I have a 5-year-old daughter who watches his documentaries every morning. She feels utterly loved by her 'grandpa crocodile' without ever having met him."



Around 2,000 fall ill in Indonesia after eating free school meals

TRANSPLANTED PIG KIDNEY WORKS IN US MAN'S BODY FOR RECORD 271 DAYS

A kidney transplanted from a pig has worked inside a patient for 271 days - the longest on record, say US doctors. Tim Andrews said the transplant gave him "hope" and spared him months of needing to go to hospital to have his blood filtered by a dialysis machine. The team at Mass General Brigham hospital say their work shows pig organs can be used as a "bridge" until a human transplant becomes available. But the pig organ eventually failed and was removed so Andrews needed a short bout of dialysis before a donor was found. Doctors and scientists are exploring xenotransplantation - using organs from other species - due to shortages of organs for transplants. In the US, around 100,000 people are waiting for a kidney



while only 25,000 transplants occur each year. More than 7,000 people in the UK are on the kidney transplant list. Andrews was told it could take seven years to get to the top of the list, but that people live only five years, on average, on dialysis. "I had a little bit of a shortage of time... it becomes very depressing," he said. But he described the idea of a pig transplant as "hope" and the "light at the end of the

tunnel". "Hope is the biggest thing, the chance to be free from the [dialysis] machine and live your life." Pigs are seen as the ideal animal for xenotransplantation. Their organs are roughly the right size and there have been years of experience farming them. But you cannot just pop down to the farm and take a kidney from a pig and put it into a person. The human body would immediately

identify the organ as foreign and launch a devastating immune assault that would destroy the kidney. It would turn black in minutes as holes are ripped in every cell and the organ clots from the inside. So researchers have developed Yucatan miniature pigs that have gone through 69 genomic modifications to "humanise" their organs. These modifications strip out some features of pig cells that our immune system spots and attacks; add some human DNA that acts like camouflage netting to help hide the pig tissue from the immune system and further tweaks disable viruses that hide inside pig DNA to prevent infection. Andrews had end stage kidney disease as a result of type 2 diabetes and his kidneys were failing.

Asian Games-Bound Shooters To Undergo Final Preparatory Camps In Delhi And Bhopal

The Asian Games-bound Indian shooters will undergo preparatory camps at facilities in Delhi and Bhopal this month as they look to fine-tune their skills for peak performance at the quadrennial showpiece beginning September 19 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. The camps have been divided between the MP State Shooting Academy in Bhopal and the Karni Singh Range in the national capital. As per the schedule, the selected Asian Games pistol and rifle shooters will train in Bhopal from September 5 to 14. The skeet camp commenced at the Karni Singh Range on Friday, while the camp for trap shooters will be held from September 10 to 18 at the same venue. National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) High Performance Director Pierre Beauchamp said the focus of the camps would be on mental conditioning and technical refinement. "At this stage, our focus shifts from volume to precision, mental conditioning, and technical refinement. The structure of these final camps allows our sports science and coaching teams to closely monitor each athlete's performance metrics and ensure they peak exactly when they step onto the range at the Asian Games," said Beauchamp. The shoot-



ing events at the Asian Games are scheduled to take place from September 17 to October 3 at the Aichi Prefectural General Shooting Range. The squad: Rifle and Pistol: 10m Air Rifle Men: Parth Rakesh Mane, Himanshu Dhillon, and Rudranksh Balasaheb Patil; 10m Air Rifle Women: Elavenil Valarivan, Sonam Uttam Maskar, and Vidarsa K Vinod; 50m Rifle 3 Positions Men: Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Niraj Kumar, and Rudranksh Balasaheb Patil; 50m Rifle 3 Positions Women: Ashi Chouksey, Vidarsa K Vinod, and Tilotama Sen; 10m Air Pistol Men: Kedarling B. Uchaganve, Kamaljeet, and Aakash Bharadwaj; 10m Air

Pistol Women: Suruchi, Esha Singh, and Manu Bhaker. 25m Rapid Fire Pistol Men: Anish; 25m Sports Pistol Women: Esha Singh, Manu Bhaker, and Rahi Sarnobat; 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team: Parth Rakesh Mane and Elavenil Valarivan; 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team: Kedarling B. Uchaganve and Suruchi. Shotgun: Trap Men: Kynan Chenai, Ahvar Rizvi, and Shapath Bharadwaj; Skeet Men: Anantjeet Singh Naruka, Bhavtegh Singh Gill, and Mairaj Ahmad Khan; Trap Women: Neeru, Manisha Keer, and Aashima Ahlawat; Skeet Women: Parinaaz Dhaliwal, Raiza Dhillon, and Maheshwari Chauhan; Trap Mixed

Team: Kynan Chenai and Neeru; Skeet Mixed Team: Anantjeet Singh Naruka and Parinaaz Dhaliwal. A top national shotgun coach, who is part of India's preparations for the upcoming Asian Games, is under scrutiny following allegations of a conflict of interest over the award of a contract to build a shooting range in Chennai. A senior Sports Authority of India (SAI) official has "been asked to examine" the matter. The senior coach works with the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) to train India's top shotgun shooters for international competitions, including the Olympics, ISSF World Cups, World Championships, and National Championships. "A complaint has been received in the head office of the Sports Authority of India and we have asked the stadia division and the regional director of Delhi to examine it. However, no report has come to me so far," said a senior SAI official on condition of anonymity. "I don't remember the name of the complainant but that complainant has put his name. It (complaint) is by name, it is not an anonymous complaint. So, therefore, since it's not an anonymous complaint, it will be looked into as per the government procedures," the SAI official added.

Indian Powerlifter Keyaa Banerji, Who Went Viral For Lifting 140kg

Indian powerlifter Keyaa Banerji grabbed headlines with her sensational performance at the 2026 IPF World Sub-Junior & Junior Classic Powerlifting Championships. The 21-year-old lifted 140kg, more than three times her body weight, to win a silver medal in the deadlift event for India. While social media was filled with praise for Banerji, she revealed a darker side to her newfound fame, saying that her achievement also led to online sexual harassment, impersonation, and AI-generated images made using her face and body. She revealed her experience through her Instagram stories. "I recently won a deadlift silver medal at IPF Jr Worlds for India and while I appreciate the support and recognition, as an Indian female athlete I've also had to deal with sexual harassment online, accounts impersonating me, disturbing conversations surrounding my ethnicity, ancestry and caste, and the Worst - thousands of AI generated



images of me with pictures of my body and face morphed and edited in very disturbing ways - it's quite unnerving to be waking up everyday to my feed (and the feeds of every single person I know) flooded with these fake AI pictures," Keyaa Banerji wrote on Instagram. Banerji went on to say that she has always been a private person and not someone who shared a lot of pictures on social media. As a result, seeing herself being "everywhere" has proved to be a very difficult experience. "I've always been a private person, and if you've known me in any capacity / followed my old account, you'd know I never posted

pictures on it either! It only got more stressful when Instagram suspended my old account (a private account with 300 followers), hence, I've made this new one. I didn't want to make it public, but I'm left with no choice if I want to have a say in a narrative about my own sport and accomplishments and stand up for myself without getting my account suspended again!" "The purpose of my sport in my life is just to challenge myself in a fun way and I'm grateful to be competing at the level that I am. I never wanted to see myself everywhere like this, in-fact I really despised all these AI posters popping up without my consent.

U19 WC Winner Among 62 Players Caught In Age Fraud, BCCI Swings Into Action

The BCCI has imposed a two-year ban on Bengal leg-spinner Rohit Yadav for allegedly misrepresenting his age, weeks after he was selected in India's Under-19 squad for the upcoming series against Australia. Rohit, who is originally from Uttar Pradesh, had represented India during the Under-19 team's tour of Sri Lanka in July, taking six wickets and helping the side win the final Test. "He has been banned for two years," said a BCCI source. He was also part of India's U-19 home one-dayers and multi-day games against the touring Australia U-19 side in Rajkot and Ahmedabad, slated later this month. The age discrepancy came to light when his documents were scrutinised



in Sri Lanka. Rohit has three birth certificates carrying different years of birth - 2007, 2009 and 2010 - making him ineligible to play in age-group cricket. There were also discrepancies in his Aadhaar records. When he was regis-

tered with the Cricket Association of Bengal, his year of birth was recorded as 2007. His Aadhaar records subsequently showed 2006 in updates in 2017 and 2020 before being changed to 2009 in 2021. The CAB had earlier

kept Rohit out of its junior teams over the discrepancies and subsequently informed the BCCI. The Board has now barred him from participating in domestic cricket for two years and informed all affiliated state associations.

Gautam Gambhir, Shubman Gill's Big '2027 World Cup' Request, BCCI In Talks With South Africa

While the 2027 Cricket World Cup is still more than a year away, preparations and planning for the tournament has been underway for quite some time already. The Indian team management is seemingly leaving no stone unturned in order to ensure that the squad arrives at the World Cup in the best shape. As per reports, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has recently engaged in talks with Cricket South Africa (CSA) to organise a crucial ODI series between India and South Africa ahead of the global event. With the 2027 World Cup being primarily held in South Africa, the BCCI is in talks with CSA for an ODI series in South Africa leading up to the tour-



nament, as per a report by The Indian Express. The report further states that the BCCI has held such talks after a specific request from the Indian team management, which is currently led by skipper Shubman Gill and head coach Gautam Gambhir. The ongoing talks are for an ODI series between India and South

Africa that will contain four to six matches. The BCCI is yet to finalise India's cricket tours following IPL 2027, and as such, there is plenty of space in the Future Tours Programme to organise a series against South Africa if need be. Big focus on players' fitness Another aspect of India's preparation for the 2027 World Cup is to ensure

that all players arrive at the tournament in the best condition, according to the report. As a result, the team's strength and conditioning coach, Adrian Le Roux, has already chalked out a plan regarding fitness programmes for the players. India captain Shubman Gill was also asked to join the BCCI review meeting on Thursday so that he could provide the players' perspective to the fitness programme plan. The BCCI reportedly wants all stakeholders on the same page and remove any communication gap when it comes to the fitness of the players. The fitness of the likes of pacer Jasprit Bumrah and all-rounder Hardik Pandya are in key focus.

MICHAEL 'VENOM' PAGE SET FOR FINAL FIGHT ON UFC CONTRACT IN PARIS



Influencer Boom At US Open Stirs Controversy, Tennis Players Slam Organisers

The rapid influx of content influencers at the US Open 2026 has triggered significant controversy, prompting several tennis players, fans, and officials to criticise the organizers' management of the event. The US Open authorities have granted influencers unprecedented access to boost the Grand Slam's appeal among younger audiences. While this strategy has largely succeeded in driving engagement, elite players, including Naomi Osaka, have expressed frustration over the disruptions.



Multinational Camp, Japan Stint Set To Fine-Tune Indian Boxers For Asian Games



Indian boxers are sharpening their skills at a multinational camp at the Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports here ahead of this month's Asian Games, before leaving for a preparatory stint in Nagoya, Japan, on September 8. The camp features boxers from Iran and the Dominican Republic, including Paris Olympics bronze medallists Junior Alcantara (51kg) and Cristian Pinales (80kg). The national campers, that also include the second-ranked boxers, will then leave for a training camp in Nagoya Japan, starting September 9. Following the stint, the Asian Games-bound squad will move directly to the team hotel for continental event, while the remaining boxers will return to India. "We are training hard for the Asian Games. The competition will be quite hard there. But the preparation is going well," Commonwealth Games gold medallist Sachin Siwach told PTI. The Asian Games begin on

September 19. The Indian boxing team enters the final stretch of preparation on the back of an exceptional campaign at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games last month, when they returned with a record-breaking haul of 10 medals, including seven golds. However, the field at the Asian Games promises a much stiffer challenge, with Indian pugilists set to go toe-to-toe with traditional powerhouse countries like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. "Asian Games will be tough. At the Paris Olympics Kazakhs took home five gold medals, while Kazakhstan boxers won 3," a coach in the camp said. To put things into context, boxers from Uzbekistan dominated the Paris Olympics with five gold medals, while Kazakhstan claimed three medals. A realistic marker for the team's prospects remains the recent Asian Championships, which featured a similar competitive field.

Rohit Sharma's Endgame: Gautam Gambhir, Ajit Agarkar, And A World Cup Dream



Every time the external noise around Rohit Sharma steps up, he steps up to silence the doubters. On the tour of England, the former India captain did the same as he smashed a brilliant 138 off 110 balls in the third and final ODI. Though India went on to lose the game, the knock silenced the 'outside noise' that had suggested that the match would be his last in the Indian shirt. That has been the case for the veteran opener the last couple of years at least. With his departure from T20Is and Test cricket sealed, the central question grew increasingly pointed: can

the 39-year-old push all the way to the 2027 ODI World Cup in pursuit of the trophy that has continued to evade him? Yet, following a crucial high-level review meeting in Mumbai on Thursday, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) firmly stepped in to silence the retirement chatter around the Hitman. Addressing reporters following the briefing, which featured head coach Gautam Gambhir, BCCI's new Director of Cricket VVS Laxman, alongside format leaders Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer, the board's Joint Secretary Devajit Saikia came out fiercely in support of the former India captain. "He is playing superbly in all the matches. So what more do you want? In the last match, he scored 138 runs. So why is there speculation? For now, I don't want to give any fodder to the speculators," Saikia said after the meeting amid specu-

lations that Rohit's future was also discussed in the meeting. Saikia also pointed to Rohit's recent hundred at Lord's, a masterclass of controlled aggression that proved his elite timing, range, and tempo remain completely intact. BCCI Unperturbed By Outside Chatter Despite endless debate over whether Chief Selector Ajit Agarkar and Gambhir are preparing to fast-track an immediate succession plan, Saikia made it clear that Rohit's position in the 50-over setup was never up for debate during the meeting. "No, no. We have basically thought about what should be our way forward in terms of team preparation and all, because we have a lot of series coming up." Highlighting the long road of international commitments ahead, Saikia outlined a demanding calendar that leaves little room for unnecessary distractions.

‘KRISHNAM BHAJE’ FIRST LOOK LAUNCHED AS KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI SPECIAL

The devotional film ‘Krishnam Bhaje’, presented by Jayshree Media, is currently progressing at a brisk pace. Produced by Kalal Srinivas and directed by Nagaraj Kotte, the film features popular senior actor Brahmaji in the role of Markandeya. As a special offering on the occasion of Krishna Janmashtami, Brahmaji unveiled the first look of ‘Krishnam Bhaje’ on social media. Brahmaji’s look in the poster has generated considerable interest in the film. Appearing as Markandeya in a traditional spiritual avatar, the senior actor impresses with his distinctive appearance. Dressed in saffron attire, wearing rudraksha malas, sporting vibhuti on his forehead and holding a weapon, Brahmaji’s look stands out. The first look, which reflects the devotional and spiritual essence of the film, has raised curiosity among audiences. Blending mythological and devotional elements, the film is written and directed by Nagaraj Kotte. According to the film’s team, the story features distinctive characters

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and engaging sequences that have been designed to complement the narrative. The film features Murali Goud, Racha Ravi, Abhay Bethiganti, Gautham Raju, Dayanand Reddy and Yadamma Raju in key roles. Pradeesh plays the lead role, while Vangamayi Patel is the female lead. The dialogues for the film have been penned by Racha Ravi. With the shoot currently progressing rapidly, the makers are planning to unveil more details about ‘Krishnam Bhaje’, along with the teaser and other promotional material, soon.

Progressive Panel Releases Manifesto

5 Lakh Cashless Medical Facility for Every Eligible Member; 50 Lakh Emergency Fund; Progressive Panel Producer K.L. Damodara Prasad “We Are Ready to Provide Every Necessary Support”: Producer Ravi Shankar The Telugu Film Producers Council elections are scheduled to be held on the 6th of this month. Against this backdrop, the Progressive Panel held a press meet to announce its manifesto. On the occasion, members of the panel explained the key points included in their manifesto.

■ PRODUCER K.L. DAMODARA PRASAD SAID: “Greetings to everyone. It is common for there to be two groups in elections. Here, we are all members, but our ideologies are different. I would like to explain the key points of our manifesto. We are giving special attention to providing medical and emergency assistance to producers who are in need. We will create a system through which every eligible member will be provided with a 5 lakh cashless medical facility. There was a lack of transparency in this matter in the past. Many members are aware of this. This time, we will establish a proper system with a cashless card, through which members can avail themselves of the facility. No recommendation will be required to use it. We will also establish a 50 lakh



emergency fund for producers facing critical situations. Whenever a producer faces an emergency, steps will be taken to provide assistance through this fund. We have around 300 annual members. We will fix a one-time minimum fee for all of them and convert them into regular members. To encourage new producers, we will establish a single-window producer helpline. There will also be a help desk to guide new producers. We will create a system to provide guidance regarding scripts and stories as well. With regard to women’s safety, we will take responsibility for

implementing the necessary regulations that production houses must follow. If producers face any issues with workers’ unions, we will establish a dedicated help desk that will be readily accessible to them. There should be a council that is accessible to everyone and functions transparently. We need to bring everyone together and treat everyone equally. However, some decisions are currently being taken unilaterally, which is not right. Everyone here belongs to the film fraternity. Our intention is to establish a policy—almost like a law—that ensures everyone is treated equally.”

■ PRODUCER RAVI SHANKAR SAID: “Greetings to everyone. Over the past three months, films have been achieving super-hit and

blockbuster success. They are performing exceptionally well. Once again, we have gained confidence that good times have returned for producers. This is a tremendous encouragement for the industry. Our panel will provide a support system for all producers. We have distributed 18 films in Nizam, many of which were small-budget films. There are nearly 100 films that are in a situation where their producers are unable to release them. We will stand by small producers. We can provide them with the confidence and support required to release their films. However, it is not enough merely to release a film—the film should also become successful. We are trying to work collectively on this by discussing the issues and providing suggestions that can help producers make

better films. We are ready to provide producers with all the necessary support.” **■ PRODUCER ASHOK KUMAR SAID:** “You are all aware of the personal developments that took place with me regarding the elections. Some people tried to prevent me from contesting. There were also several developments concerning my nomination. Ultimately, I had to fight the matter legally. Our intention is to ensure transparency, honesty, trust and equal rights. The Producers Council belongs to everyone. Whether someone is a small producer or a big producer, everyone should have equal respect and equal rights. That is the goal of our Progressive Panel.” All the producers belonging to the Progressive Panel participated in the press meet.

STAR STUDDED CAST RAISES THE STAKES FOR DRAGON IN HINDI

Dragon is rapidly emerging as one of the biggest Indian films, and the latest casting developments have taken the excitement to another level. Headlined by Jr NTR and directed by Prashanth Neel, the film already carries massive expectations and is nearing completion. Now, with the likes of Shahid Kapoor and Alia Bhatt joining the project, the scale looks even bigger. Jr NTR remains one of the biggest stars in Indian cinema today, while Prashanth Neel enjoys tremendous popularity after delivering blockbusters like KGF and Salaar. The combination itself was enough to create huge buzz among trade circles. The addition of Anil Kapoor brings experience and star power, while Shahid Kapoor’s involvement and a star like Alia Bhatt further strengthen the film’s appeal across the North Indian market.

What is particularly interesting is the film’s growing reach in the Hindi belt. With such a strong cast, Dragon now appears to have tremendous potential in North India. In fact, trade observers feel the project is shaping up to be a proper Pan India biggie with South roots. This could work hugely in the film’s favor globally. The combination of Jr NTR, Neel, and a star-studded cast gives Dragon a strong chance of attracting audiences across languages. Business-wise too, the dynamics will change big time with the addition of these stars, and the sky is the limit for this NTR starer. Jr NTR and KGF fame Prashanth Neel’s upcoming film Dragon has been making headlines for a while now. The film, set to be a grand project, already features Anil Kapoor in a key role. Adding to the buzz, fresh reports claim that both Shahid Kapoor and Alia Bhatt are expected to join the cast of the highly anticipated film. According to a report by Gulte, the Shaandaar stars, Shahid Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, have joined Dragon in

important roles. While an official announcement is still awaited from the makers, the news has generated massive buzz among the fans. If the reports are to be believed, Alia Bhatt’s expected inclusion could give the film an even wider pan-India appeal. The actor made her Telugu debut in SS Rajamouli’s RRR, which also featured Jr NTR as the lead. If this development materialises, it will mark Alia’s second Telugu film sharing screen with the Devera actor.



“DELULU” TEASER LAUNCHED IN THE PRESENCE OF MEDIA

The teaser of “Delulu”, a new-age film aimed at the Gen Z audience, was launched in the presence of the media. The film is being produced by Sankeerth Konda under the Kreative Launch Pad banner and is directed by Preetham Kasturi. Vijay Raj Kumar, Veni Rao, Sai Prasanna, Akhil Jackson, and Sreerama Mandava play key roles. The story is written by Reshmit S Kaushik, while Vijay Raj Kumar has written the dialogues. Jai Raj Naidu is the cinematographer, Aadi Chebrolu is the music director, and Harikrishna Kurapati is the editor. The film is made with today’s Gen Z audience in mind. The title “Delulu” is a word commonly used by Gen Z, and the



team believes the film will connect well with young audiences.

Julianne Moore to Receive Zurich Film Festival’s Golden Icon Award

Julianne Moore is set to be honored with the Golden Icon Award at the 22nd Zurich Film Festival. The U.S. actress will accept the accolade alongside Jesse Eisenberg, who

directs her in his latest feature The Debut, a musical-comedy co-starring Paul Giamatti. Over a career now spanning more than three decades, Moore has worked with some of the most distinguished directors in contemporary cinema including Robert Altman (Short Cuts), Paul Thomas Anderson (Boogie Nights, Magnolia), brothers Joel and Ethan Coen (The Big Lebowski) and Todd Haynes (Safe, Far From Heaven, May December). At this year’s Zurich Film Fest, Moore will be given the lifetime achievement award in recognition for her career and recent starring role in The Debut,

which is screening at the festival. The movie follows Mona Friedman (Moore), who is cast in a bit part at a small community theater and transforms from a shy, unassuming housewife into a zealous method actor willing to do anything to protect the artistic integrity of her marginal role—even if it means waging war against the show’s domineering director (Giamatti). “Julianne Moore is one of the outstanding character actresses of American cinema,” said Christian Jungen, CEO of the Zurich Film Festival. “She possesses remarkable versatility and, time and again,

“Tortoise” is a unique thriller that will completely engage you in theatres: Actor Raj Tarun

Raj Tarun is playing the lead in the upcoming film “Tortoise.” Amrutha Chowdary, Avasara Srinivas and Dhanya Balakrishna are playing other key roles. The film is being produced by Vijay Chowdary, Shashidhar Nalla and Ramisetty Rambabu under the banners of SK Golden Arts, Prashwita Entertainment and NVL Creations. Director Rithwik Kumar is helming the film as an intense action thriller that blends suspense and drama. Manasa Kumar and Santhosh Immadi are serving as co-producers.

