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KOCHI I VIJAYAWADA I CHENNAI I BENGALURU I HYDERABAD

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INBRIEF

INDIA WARNS PAK OVER TERRORISM

NEW DELHI (TSIT)
Describing Pakistan as a "puppet" regime, India has criticised the country's "falsehoods" and "deceit" at the UN, warning that continued terrorism by Islamabad will have consequences. India exercised its Right of Reply on Friday (September 25, 2026) night, after Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif used the UN General Assembly (UNGA) podium to credit U.S. President Donald Trump for his "timely intervention" in the 2025 conflict with India, and again raised the Kashmir issue in his address to the world body. Petal Gahlot, First Secretary in the Permanent Mission of India to the UN, said, "We heard some hypocritical homilies about democratic rights and human values from a regime whose capital at this very moment is being fortified against its own people."

SUPER EL NIÑO MAY CAUSE 15,800 HEAT DEATHS

NEW DELHI (TSIT)India could see an estimated 15,800 additional heat-related deaths, give or take 1,600, between September 2026 and February 2027, as the current 'Super El Niño' drives unusually high temperatures, according to a report made public on Wednesday (September 23, 2026) by the Climate Impact Lab. The estimate is relative to average conditions during the corresponding months from 1996-2025. Globally, the report projects 451,000 additional heat-related deaths during the first six months of the El Niño event, including 239,000 during the September 2026-February 2027 period. It projects 19,300 deaths in Indonesia; 19,400 across the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, and Cambodia; 13,300 in Brazil; and 66,800 across the Sahel, a 5,000-kilometre swathe of about 10 countries across Africa, including Senegal, the Gambia, and northern Nigeria.

Voters need not attend SIR hearings in person, says ECI

VOTERS WHO HAVE BEEN DECLARED UNMAPPED OR ANOMALY NEED NOT APPEAR FOR HEARINGS AT ERO OR AERO OFFICES.

NEW DELHI ■ (TSIT):



CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER GYANESH KUMAR, ALONG WITH ELECTION COMMISSIONERS VIVEK JOSHI AND SUKHBIR SINGH SANDHU, DURING A MEETING OF THE ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA AT NIRVACHAN SADAN IN NEW DELHI ON SATURDAY....

The Election Commissioners of India—Gyanesh Kumar, Vivek Joshi, and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu—announced on Saturday, September 26, that voters who received notices under unmapped and anomaly cases in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) need not appear for a hearing in person. Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will visit their homes and collect the required documents to be uploaded on ECINet for consideration by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO).

The full Commission meeting at Nirvachan Sadan came days after a report claimed that Sandhu and Joshi had raised objections to Kumar on several decisions linked to the SIR, deletion and addition of names, changes to Form 6, and access to voter data.

The reports triggered a political controversy, with Opposition parties questioning the Commission's functioning.The ECI clarified that hearings will be held only in exceptional circumstances, as decided by the ERO, and preferably online. An adult family member may also be authorised to attend on the elector's behalf. District Election Officers will set up help desks and hold special camps for people in night shelters, labourers, homeless persons, and others requiring assistance.

CM Revanth seeks Bharat Ratna for Former PM Manmohan Singh

CM Revanth urges Centre to honour former PM manmohan singh with Bharat Ratna and establish a knowledge centre in Delhi



HYDERABAD ■ (TSIT):

Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy called on the Centre to confer the Bharat Ratna on former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, describing him as a national treasure who helped steer India through an economic crisis and played a key role in the formation of Telangana.

Speaking at the unveiling of Singh's statue in Hyderabad's Financial District, the Chief Minister said the statue would carry the former Prime Minister's legacy to future generations. He said the location was fitting because several institutions central to the country's financial system operate from the area.

Revanth Reddy recalled Singh's service as Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Finance Minister and Prime Minister. As Finance Minister under P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1991, Singh helped the country recover from a severe economic crisis and introduced policies of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, he said.

The Chief Minister credited Sonia Gandhi and Singh with fulfilling the long-standing aspiration for a separate Telangana state. He said Singh's signature approving the state's formation had been incorporated into the statue installation. He also cited the Right to Education Act, the national rural employment guarantee law and the 2013 land acquisition and rehabilitation law among the measures introduced during Singh's tenure.

Cooperatives key to women's empowerment: Amit Shah

KOLLAM ■ (TSIT):

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Friday said women' empowerment through cooperatives was one of the core objectives of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He was speaking after inaugurating various initiatives of cooperative societies under the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Limited (NCCF) aimed at strengthening and promoting women' empowerment in the cooperative sector at Kundara here.

Shah said farmers and people associated with the cooperative sector had been demanding the creation of a separate union ministry for cooperation since Independence, but the demand had not been fulfilled. "PM Narendra Modi created the Cooperation Ministry and took a major step towards rural development, agricultural development and women's empowerment in the country," he said. He said significant efforts had been made to promote women power (Matrushakti) and their empowerment over the last 10-12 years under PM Modi's leadership.



"PM Modi created the Cooperation Ministry and took a major step towards rural development, agricultural development and women's empowerment in the country,"
AMIT SHAH

Shah said the share of women in the labour force had increased from 23 per cent in 2014-15 to 40 per cent due to various facilities provided to women workers.

Under PM Modi's leadership, bank accounts had been opened for nearly 36 crore women, he said. "To protect the rights of Muslim women, Narendra Modi took the step to ban Triple Talaq," Shah said.

He said Muslim women had earlier not been allowed to perform Hajj alone, but now they could undertake the pilgrimage without a male companion. "Today, over 11,000 daughters are serving as officers in the Indian Armed Forces," he said. Shah also highlighted the increase in paid maternity leave to 26 weeks under the Modi government. He said the target of creating three crore Lakhpati Didis had been achieved before 2024 and that the BJP-led government aimed to increase the number to six crore by 2029. A Lakhpati Didi is a self-help group (SHG) member with an annual household income exceeding Rs one lakh.

INDIA bloc to meet over CEC, SIR



Meeting has been called amid fresh escalation in Oppn's attack on Kumar following Indian Express report on differences among the 3 ECs over SIR exercise.

NEW DELHI ■ (TSIT):

Member parties of the INDIA bloc will meet in New Delhi on 30 September to discuss the demand for removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the issue of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, ThePrint has learnt.

The meeting has been called amid fresh escalation in the Opposition's attack on Kumar following the report by The Indian Express on differences among the three Election Commissioners over the SIR exercise. The invite was extended from the office of Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal, sources said. Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge, Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader M.A. Baby, former West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, and leaders of other bloc parties are expected to attend.

Sitharaman sees 10%+ growth potential

BENGALURU ■ (TSIT):

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday expressed confidence that India could achieve economic growth of more than 10 per cent, stressing the need for greater adoption of technology and innovation across sectors. Speaking at a fireside chat organised by the IIT Madras Alumni Association here, she said higher economic growth would help accelerate India's journey towards Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat, but stressed that it would require "a lot more effort" from all sides. "It is possible to reach 10 plus growth, and I'm not just saying it to pep you all up.



SIR's sole aim was to capture Bengal: Mamata

KOLKATA ■ (TSIT):



Former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday alleged that the sole intention of the Election Commission of India (ECI) behind conducting the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) was to ensure that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could capture power in West Bengal.Referring to reported differences within the top brass of the ECI, she said that since the beginning of the SIR exercise, she had been claiming that the roles played by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar and the Commission's Information Technology Chief, Seema Khanna, were doubtful. Banerjee, while addressing a public meeting at Sreerampore in Hooghly district, referred to the CEC as "Vanish Kumar" and declared that her movement along with other anti-BJP forces would continue until Kumar stepped down or was removed. "Just as we caught the tricks of 'Vanish Kumar', we will similarly catch the others behind such wrongdoings. 'Vanish Kumar' must go. Until he goes, our united movement will continue," she said.She added that opposition parties were uniting at the national level to demand Kumar's removal. Banerjee referred to her telephonic conversation with CPI(M) leader M.A. Baby, stressing that when the issue was common, she would not look at party lines. "We will have to fight this issue together," she said. Referring to the upcoming I.N.D.I.A. bloc meeting in New Delhi on September 30, Banerjee said the entire country was coming together on the issue. "We will fight uniedly. There is no need to see who is red, blue or yellow. We will all fight shoulder to shoulder to restore democracy.

We will protect students' right to hold peaceful protests: CJI

PATNA ■ (TSIT):

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday asserted that the judiciary is committed to "protecting" students' fundamental right to hold peaceful protests and that courts will not look the other way when there is an infringement. The CJI made the statement at the Chanakya National Law University (CNLU) in Patna, where he engaged in an "unfiltered interaction" with students, making it clear that he "preferred to have a frank question-and-answer session". According to a CNLU statement, a question was posed by a girl student about "police response to peaceful students' protests".

The allusion was to the Jantar Mantar protests in Delhi against NEET exam paper leaks, spearheaded by the Cockroach Janata Party, which, incidentally, began as a satirical online campaign against a remark made by the CJI in the Supreme Court, though he later claimed that his utterances had been reported out of context.



Courts will not look the other way when faced with cases of alleged brutal repression by the police."

The CJI told the questioner that "courts will not look the other way" when faced with cases of alleged brutal repression by the police and "unequivocally reaffirmed the judiciary's commitment to protecting students' peaceful right to protest". Another student sought to know "why dissenting opinions within the collegium were recorded but never made public".

The CJI replied, "Disclosure, however well-intentioned, risks placing the individual under consideration in an untenable position". Noting that "transparency has its limits when personal dignity is at stake", the CJI asked, "How can a chief justice or a judge continue to work if a negative observation about him is included in the collegium's minutes?"

According to the CNLU statement, the CJI visited the campus along with Patna High Court Chief Justice V Kameswar Rao, who is also the Chancellor of the University.

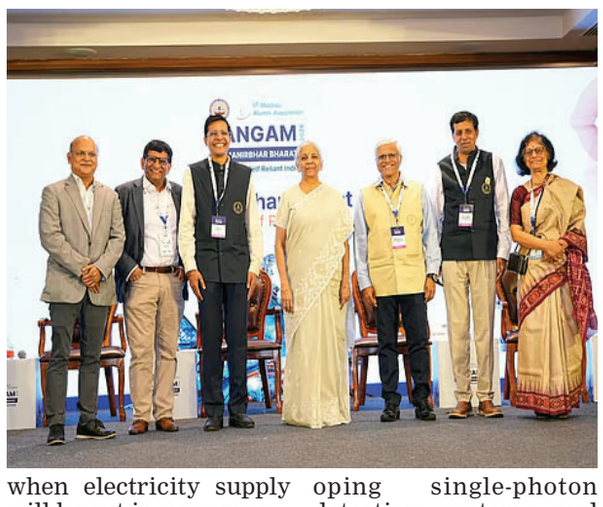
"In the light of recent opposition to the CJI in NALSAR, Hyderabad and NLSIU, Bangalore, the event had great significance", said the CNLU statement.

The CJI also lauded as "a new, welcome idea" a proposal by CNLU Vice Chancellor and noted jurist Faizan Mustafa "to compress five-year law degree into four years of academic study and mandatory court apprenticeship in the final year", which could "eliminate the separate one-year practice requirement for judicial service examinations".

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IIT Madras-led deep-tech fund achieves Rs 450 Cr first close

The fund will focus on defence technology, space technology, semiconductors, manufacturing, robotics and automation, AI infrastructure and health technology



CHENNAI: IIT Madras, IIT Madras Research Park and Unicorn India Ventures have achieved the first close of their Rs 1,000-crore IITM Unicorn Frontier Fund I at Rs 450 crore, three months after receiving SEBI approval, and announced investments of nearly Rs 55 crore in four deep-tech startups. The milestone was announced in the presence of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Bengaluru on Saturday. The fund, launched in February 2026 with a corpus of Rs 1,000 crore, including a Rs 400-crore greenshoe option, is targeting a final close by December. It is backed by IIT Madras alumni, family offices, institutions, corporates and banks.

Chennai power shutdown live updates: Check when electricity supply will be cut in your area

The four startups receiving the investments are Chennai-based Hathor, which is developing semi-cryogenic and cryogenic rocket engines for small and medium satellite launch vehicles; Delhi-based Quanstra, which is developing single-photon detection systems and quantum instrumentation; Triolt Energy, which is developing high-performance lithium-ion battery cells for drones and fast-charging electric mobility; and Carbelim, which is developing bio-integrated carbon capture and air-purification systems using proprietary microalgae technology.

The milestone was announced in the presence of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Bengaluru on Saturday

IIT-M to launch AI venture studio to turn research into companies

"At IIT Madras, we have built an ecosystem that has nurtured several deep-tech companies who have consistently demonstrated TRL growth," IIT Madras Director V Kamakoti said, adding that the partnership with Unicorn India Ventures would provide startups with patient capital and strategic growth guidance.

The fund will focus on defence technology, space technology, semiconductors, manufacturing, robotics and automation, AI infrastructure and health technology. Each investment will be screened for global export potential, strategic import substitution and technological advantage. The fund will focus on defence technology, space technology, semiconductors, manufacturing, robotics and automation, AI infrastructure and health technology. Investments will be screened for global export potential, strategic import substitution and technological advantage.

It aims to build a portfolio of 25 IP-led, engineering-intensive startups, with most investments targeting early-stage companies at TRL 3-4. The average investment is expected to be Rs 15-25 crore per startup.

TNPDCL proposes Rs 0.63/unit surcharge on open access consumers

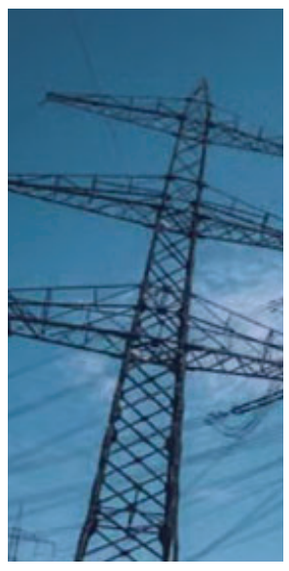
CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Ltd (TNPDCL) has proposed an additional surcharge of Rs 0.63 per unit on HT open access consumers for 6 months from October 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027, citing fixed costs it continues to incur on power purchase commitments.

The proposal has been submitted to the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC) as part of the six-monthly exercise to determine the additional surcharge payable by consumers who source power through open access.

TNPDCL said that its existing power purchase agreements left it with fixed financial commitments even when some consumers bought electricity from sources other than the distribution utility. It has sought to recover the resulting stranded costs through the proposed surcharge.

According to the latest petition, TNPDCL has calculated Rs 180.91 crore as the net stranded charges recoverable from open access consumers. The calculation is based on data for the said period. The utility has estimated an adjusted open access quantum of 2,891.13 MU and arrived at the surcharge of Rs 0.63/unit.

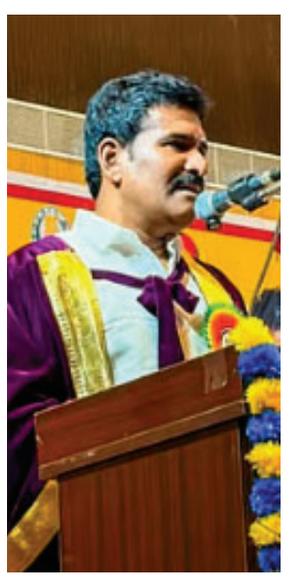
TNPDCL HAS NOW INVITED SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM STAKEHOLDERS ON THE PETITION FILED BEFORE TNERC



The proposal comes against the backdrop of TNPDCL seeking no additional surcharge for the preceding six-month period, from April 1 to September 30, 2026. In that petition, based on data from April to September 2025, TNPDCL calculated the net stranded charge as zero after adjusting the demand charges recovered from open access consumers and asked TNERC to determine the surcharge as nil. At the same time, TNPDCL told the regulator that Rs 282.64 crore in net stranded charges for the October 2025-March 2026 period remained unrecovered, as the corresponding petition was yet to be decided. It sought an early order on that petition.

Power goes off at TVK EB Minister's event; he claims generator glitch, TNPDCL admits feeder fault

The interruption occurred while a Madras High Court judge was addressing the gathering at the graduation ceremony, causing a brief commotion at the venue.



CHENNAI: A power outage that disrupted Electricity and Law Minister R Nirmalkumar's event at Government Law College, Madurai on Saturday (September 26) drew conflicting explanations, with the minister attributing the brief interruption to a switch between generators while TNPDCL blamed a fault in a 110 KV transmission feeder. The interruption occurred while a Madras High Court judge was addressing the gathering at the graduation ceremony, causing a brief commotion at the venue.

In lottery-less TN, fortune hunters wait for Keralam's Rs 30 crore Onam bumper results on Sept 26

Nirmalkumar said the venue was being powered by generators and that the power supply was interrupted for about five seconds while switching from one generator to another. Electricity and Law Minister R Nirmalkumar

As delayed meter readings push up electricity bills, TNPDCL to outsource work

However, TNPDCL, in a post on X, said the 110 KV Alagarkoil-Pasumalai feeder at the Ottakadai substation had developed a fault around 11.22am following a jumper cut. Repair work was under way and supply would be restored in about two hours, it said.

TNCRW demands accountability for frisking students for CM Vijay's school visit

Welcoming the expansion of the breakfast programme to Classes 6 to 8, benefiting an additional 15.30 lakh students in government and government-aided schools, the TNCRW said security arrangements during VIP visits should not compromise children's dignity and rights..

CHENNAI (TSIT): After reports of school children being frisked and their bags checked ahead of Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's visit to a city school to launch the expanded breakfast scheme on September 22, the Tamil Nadu Child Rights Watch (TNCRW) has sought accountability.Welcoming the expansion of the breakfast programme to Classes 6 to 8, benefiting an additional 15.30 lakh students in government and government-aided schools, the TNCRW said security arrangements during VIP visits should not compromise children's dignity and rights.

The organisation said schools should remain safe and respectful spaces for children and argued that security measures for visits by constitutional and public office-holders must be proportionate, age-sensitive and non-intimidating while respecting children's privacy. CM Vijay to



launch expanded breakfast scheme for Classes 6-8 students on September 22

urged the TVK government and the departments concerned to identify who authorised and directed the frisking and checking of school bags and clarify whether the measures formed part of an approved security protocol for the CM's visit. As an alternative, it suggested declaring a "No-Bag Day" in advance if school bags were considered a security concern, with parents and students informed beforehand.

The organisation also called for a review of security procedures for VIP visits to schools and child-friendly guidelines for the police, School Education Department, Social Welfare Department, district administrations and schools. TNCRW said responsibility for VIP security should remain with security and law-enforcement agencies rather than being imposed through intrusive measures on children. It sought corrective action if the children's rights or dignity had been violated and urged the government to institutionalise child-rights and safeguarding protocols for official events held in schools.

Minister Nirmalkumar alleges 'settlement' efforts to cover up Veeramani POCSO case

MADURAI: Tamil Nadu Law Minister R Nirmalkumar on Saturday alleged that efforts were made to "settle" the POCSO case involving Gem Granites chairman R Veeramani, accusing the previous DMK regime of shielding the accused.

Despite the police being aware of the case, no effective legal action was taken amid alleged attempts to "settle" the matter involving large sums of money, he said.

The opposition DMK has already said it had no links with Veeramani, 84, in connection with the case.



Speaking to reporters here, Nirmal Kumar reiterated that the DMK was "overreacting" to the action against Veeramani and alleged that the party was deliberately shielding the granite baron in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences case.

He claimed that an initial complaint against the industrialist in 2024 was systematically suppressed by the previous administration and that a closure report was filed citing "insufficient evidence". He questioned how alleged attempts to settle the case involving large sums of money and allegations of sexual abuse of a minor could have taken place in the capital without the knowledge of the state intelligence machinery.

"It is impossible for such massive extortion attempts and extra-judicial settlements to occur without the knowledge of the Home department and intelligence officers," Nirmal Kumar said, asserting that the case was prematurely closed to protect the accused after alleged monetary deals were concluded. Veeramani Pocso case: CPM demands court-monitored probe

The minister assured that a transparent probe would be conducted under the direct supervision of Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay and said law enforcement would not spare anyone found to have participated in attempts to cover up the case, extortion or destruction of evidence.

Bragging lands Nagercoil YouTuber in distress; 220 sovereigns looted

NAGERCOIL (TAMIL NADU): A Nagercoil-based YouTuber lost 220 sovereigns of gold jewellery after miscreants broke into her home at VIP Garden in Thammathu Konam in Nagercoil district, police said on Saturday.

According to police, Vinothkumar, an exporter residing at VIP Garden near Anantha Nadar Kudiyiruppu, and his wife Madhumitha (29), a YouTuber, had gone to Tirunelveli on Thursday to purchase clothes for their two-year-old child's upcoming birthday.Upon returning late at night, they found the rear door of the house had been broken open. On checking the first-floor bedroom, they found the bureau damaged and 220 sovereigns of gold jewellery stolen.

Based on a complaint, police launched an investigation and discovered that the intruders had cut through the rear door frame using a gas cutter to gain entry. The police are currently scanning CCTV footage to track down the suspects. Investigators suspect that her frequent social media posts and reels showcasing her extensive gold jewellery collection -- where she routinely boasted about buying gold every month.

Tasmac gears up for fresh bar tenders in October, 'spies' on potential saboteurs

CHENNAI: The Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (Tasmac) is set to invite tenders in the first week of October for awarding contracts to operate bars attached to liquor shops across the State.

According to a Daily Thanthi report, the State-run corporation is also gathering intel on people with vested interests, who may scuttle the tender process.



Tasmac currently operates 4,048 retail liquor shops across Tamil Nadu. Private operators are permitted to run bars in spaces adjacent to these outlets, where they can sell snacks, soft drinks and other permitted items. The existing bar contracts were originally awarded for two years in January 2022 and expired in January 2024. However, the contracts were subsequently extended on two occasions first up to June 30 and later up to October 31 in view of the Assembly elections. With the extended contracts nearing expiry, Tasmac has decided to issue fresh tenders next month. According to a Tasmac official, the tender conditions have been modified to provide opportunities for new operators.

Previously, applicants were required to obtain a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the owner of the building where the bar was proposed to be operated. The official said this condition had created difficulties for new applicants, as building owners themselves were operating bars at several locations.As a result, the same group of operators had reportedly continued to run bars at many locations for nearly two decades. To address the issue, the government relaxed the tender conditions through a Government Order issued in July.Under the revised rules, a bar need not necessarily be located in the premises immediately adjacent to a Tasmac outlet. It can now be established within a 100-metre radius of the liquor shop, subject to the applicable conditions.

The official said the change is expected to allow more applicants to participate in the tender process and provide newcomers an opportunity to secure bar contracts.

Left backs bank strike, urges Centre to hold talks

CHENNAI: The CPM and CPI backed the nationwide three-day strike by over 10 lakh bank employees and officers from September 28 to 30, urging the Centre to hold talks with their federation and resolve their demands.

CPM state secretary P Shanmugam said employees had been seeking a five-day workweek for several years. A joint memorandum submitted by bank management and the employees' federation to the Centre in March 2025 was yet to yield a decision, he said.

Power goes off at TVK EB Minister's event; he claims generator glitch, TNPDCL admits feeder fault

Power goes off at TVK EB Minister's event; he claims generator glitch, TNPDCL



admits feeder fault No commitment given to bank unions on 5-day work week by Finance Ministry, say sources

The other demands include filling vacancies, regularising temporary staff, ending outsourcing, providing defined pension benefits and ending discrimination in the name of performance-linked incentives.

Referring to the one-day strike on September 11, Shanmugam said neither the government nor bank management had initiated talks. An indefinite strike has also been announced from October 26, he said.

Alleging that the government was threatening employees and officers to deter them from joining the strike, Shanmugam urged the Centre to hold talks and reach a settlement.

CPI state secretary M Veerapandian also urged the Centre to drop its "threatening approach" and negotiate with the federation. He said the three-day strike had been called by the All India Bank Employees and Officers Federation over the employees' long-pending demands.

Karnataka announces Rs 2,500 aid for drought-hit farmers; Rs 1,250 cr first phase

Bengaluru, Sep 26: Karnataka will provide an immediate Rs 2,500 input subsidy to each drought-hit farmer, with further relief to be decided based on assistance from the Centre, deputy chief minister G Parameshwara said on Friday.

The first phase of the relief is expected to benefit around 45 to 50 lac farmers and will cost the State exchequer approximately Rs 1,250 crore, he said.

Responding to criticism that the relief was inadequate, Parameshwara said, "Although assistance from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) from the Central government is yet to arrive, our government is providing immediate relief considering the difficulties faced by farmers."



KARNATAKA WILL PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE RS 2,500 INPUT SUBSIDY TO EACH DROUGHT-HIT FARMER, WITH FURTHER RELIEF TO BE DECIDED BASED ON ASSISTANCE FROM THE CENTRE, DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER G PARAMESHWARA SAID ON FRIDAY.

Speaking to reporters here, he said subsequent relief measures would be decided based on the assistance received from the Centre, adding that it was not possible at this stage to give any assurance about a revised relief amount.

"The first-phase assistance of Rs 1,250 crore is not a small amount. Further measures will be taken in the coming days based on the relief received from the Central government," he said, accusing the Opposition of "doing politics" by criticising the relief package as inadequate.

Parameshwara said the total losses caused by the drought in the State could exceed Rs 40,000 crore. Karnataka had already submitted its first memorandum to the Centre seeking assistance and would send additional memoranda in the coming days, he said. After the final assessment of losses is prepared, the State will submit its demand for assistance under the NDRF guidelines, he added.

The deputy chief minister said the state government was already extending various forms of support to farmers, including around Rs 22,000 crore in electricity subsidy to provide free power to agricultural pump sets.



Glimpse of departure ceremony of Indian Coast Guard Ship Shaunak, in Chennai

CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER GYANESH KUMAR SHOULD RESIGN: S. MANOHAR

Bengaluru: KPCC General Secretary S. Manohar has demanded that Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar resign, taking moral responsibility to uphold voters' rights and public trust in the electoral process.

He spoke while participating in a protest organized by the KPCC, demanding the immediate dismissal of Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, whom he accused of abetting a vote-rigging scandal involving the Chief Election Commissioner.



He stated that the right to vote is the foundation of democracy. If doubts arise among the public regarding the voters' list, the Election Commission itself must provide a transparent response, noting that upholding the credibility of democracy is the Commission's constitutional responsibility.

He urged the Election Commission to provide clear answers regarding public concerns about the revision of the voters' list, the SIR process, and the management of electoral data. He alleged that the Election Commission itself has created several issues, including a lack of complete transparency in the SIR process, the exclusion of eligible voters' names, and changes regarding Form-6 and voter data management, demanding that comprehensive information on these matters be disclosed.

Fortis launches Kannada heart-health campaign

BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 26 (TSIT): Marking World Heart Day 2026, Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru, launched "Don't Miss a Beat – Attack the Attack," a Kannada heart-health awareness campaign. Renowned singer-composer Raghu Dixit, associated with the campaign's musical identity, officially launched it. The campaign delivers three key messages through a video and Kannada jingle: Prevent the Attack, Recognise the Attack, and Attack the Attack. Fortis Bengaluru also announced an initiative to create CPR awareness and train over 25,000 citizens across its seven hospitals. Health Minister U.T. Khader commended the effort, saying heart health is about awareness, prevention, and timely action within communities. Dr Vivek Jawali, Chairman – Cardiac Sciences, said timely action is crucial during a cardiac emergency. Regional Director Dr. Ananth Rao said the initiative reflects commitment to community preparedness.



IAPSCON 2026: 52nd Annual Conference of the Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons



Bengaluru : Building a healthy society is essential to achieving the vision of a developed India, and the medical sector has a crucial role to play in this endeavour, said His Highness Shri Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, Member of Parliament from Mysuru-Kodagu. Speaking after inaugurating the four-day 52nd Annual Conference of the Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons (IAPSCON 2026) at The Lalit Ashok, Bengaluru, and releasing medical books, Yaduveer Wadiyar said a healthy society is fundamental to progress and development. He noted that while quality healthcare services are widely available in urban areas, there continues to be a shortage of doctors and specialist medical services in rural regions. "My constituency of Mysuru-Kodagu is also not an exception. Doctors are often reluctant to work in remote areas of Kodagu, H.D. Kote and rural parts of Mysuru. Efforts must be made to bridge the gap in healthcare services between urban and rural areas," he said.

Grandparents' Day Celebrated with Games,
Entertainment and Family Bonding at Skalvi International School

Bengaluru : More than 300 grandparents participated enthusiastically in a special Grandparents' Day celebration organised by Skalvi International School and EuroKids, J.P. Nagar, to strengthen the bond of love, affection and companionship between grandparents and their grandchildren.

The event featured a lively mix of entertainment, games and interactive activities, with more than 18 different games and competitions organised for grandparents and children. Winners of the various competitions were felicitated with prizes as part of the celebrations. One of the highlights of the event was the enthusiastic participation of grandparents alongside their grandchildren. Children and grandparents played games, danced together and enjoyed several fun-filled activities. The celebrations provided an opportunity for generations to come together, set aside age differences and create memorable moments filled with happiness, affection and family bonding.



Speaking on the occasion, Dr. R. Sundar Raju, Secretary of Skalvi International School, said that the institution has been organising Grandparents' Day for the past 15 years with the objective of strengthening the relationship between children and senior citizens.

He also said that a special health camp was organised for senior citizens, where health screenings including blood pressure, diabetes, eye, ear and bone-related examinations were conducted. As part of the initiative, free spectacles were distributed to 300 senior citizens.

Satish Kakal, Founder-President of the institution, said that the experience, affection and values shared by grandparents play an important role in shaping children's personalities. Such programmes help children develop respect for elders and encourage them to build a close and meaningful relationship with their grandparents, he added. Principal Sunkuratri Usha, along with teachers and staff members, were present during the celebrations.

Asia Silver Show 2026 Makes Grand Debut in Bangalore

BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026: For the first time in Bangalore, 'Asia Silver Show 2026'—a fine silver jewellery and accessories exhibition and sale—is set to dazzle the city. Actress Ashu Reddy graced the grand launch, showcasing stunning silver jewellery.

The event was inaugurated by Mr. Harish Sachdev, Chief Organizer, Asia Silver Show, along with other dignitaries at Hotel Artezia, Vasant Nagar, Bengaluru.

Described as one of the first jewellery exhibitions showcasing exquisite silver jewellery, artefacts, and gifts, the show is hosting its first-ever edition in Bangalore at the luxurious five-star Hotel Artezia (formerly Shangri-La Bengaluru, Palace Road) from September 26 to 27, 2026. Exhibition timings are 10:30 AM to 8:00 PM.



The show is an exclusive event showcasing never-seen-before silver jewellery designs, articles, silver gift artefacts, and more from top handpicked jewellers from across India, all under one roof.

Asia Silver Show is a niche event exhibiting exclusive and high-end fine branded silver jewellery, silver articles, silver gift sets, and silver artefacts. It offers a one-stop shop bringing some of the best silver jewellery, designs, and precious stones together, making it the perfect destination to buy exquisite, world-class jewellery for the upcoming wedding and festive season.

Samsung launches 2026 Bespoke AI appliances



BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 26 (TSIT): Samsung India launched its 2026 Bespoke AI appliances lineup at 'The Brief Gurugram', an experiential event demonstrating how AI connects climate control, laundry, living room, and kitchen into an ecosystem that learns habits, automates tasks, and optimises energy via SmartThings. JB Park, President and CEO, Samsung Southwest Asia, said the range is designed to be an "AI Home Companion" delivering real-world convenience, with AI Vision, Samsung Knox, and inclusive design. Products include the Family Hub Refrigerator with AI Vision built with Google Gemini, the Bespoke AI WindFree Pro Air Conditioner, and the Infinite 1-Way Cassette AC with WindFree. The lineup is powered by Samsung's AI Home screen, upgraded Bixby with Voice ID, Knox security, and 7 years of software updates.

Action TESA announces carpenter benefits

NEW DELHI : Action TESA, part of the Action Group and a leading manufacturer of wood-based panel products celebrated National Carpenter's on 24th September 2026 at more than 50 locations across India, with this year's edition marking a larger and more extensive engagement with the carpenter community.

Action TESA began this initiative of Celebrating National Carpenter's Day on 24thSeptember and continued to expand the initiative and took the 2026 edition to a bigger scale under the theme "Sang Sang Chalen, Aage Badhen."

Recognising carpenters as the backbone of the furniture and interior ecosystem, Action TESA has continued to evolve Carpenter's Day beyond a day of recognition into an initiative focused on supporting the community and their families. This year, the company brought together four big benefit programs covering family welfare, educational scholarship, skill development and accidental insurance protection.As part of the 2026–27 Carpenter Benefit Programme, Action TESA introduced the following benefits:Marriage Assistance for Girl Child: Carpenter families can receive financial assistance of up to Rs.50,000 towards their daughter's marriage in the form of a furniture package made of Action TESA products.



Scholarships for Meritorious Students: Rs.11,000 scholarships will be provided to meritorious students kids of carpenters.

Skill Development with MSME: Under the Super 30 initiative, selected candidates will receive 100% support for a three-month residential skill development course organised with MSME, including food and accommodation.

Accidental Insurance: Members will receive Group Personal Accident Insurance cover of up to Rs.2 lakh.

All this benefits will get distribute through Action Tesa connect app. Carpenters can connect with their nearest Action TESA branch / Sales Manager for details about the programme and its benefits. Assistance details is also available through the Action TESA helpline at 1800-309-0707 for carpenters.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Ajay Aggarwal, Managing Director, Action TESA, said, "Carpenters have always been the backbone of the furniture and interior ecosystem and an important part of our journey. We started celebrating Carpenter's Day in 2024, saw the initiative grow in 2025, and this year we wanted to make it even more meaningful. 'Sang Sang Chalen, Aage Badhen' reflects our belief that progress is more meaningful when we move forward together. As a category leader, our endeavour has always been to bring innovation through our products while building stronger relationships with the people who are an integral part of this industry. Through this initiative, we want to stand with carpenters not only in their work, but also in their aspirations and those of their families."The celebrations across 50+ locations brought together members of the carpenter community. Through TESA Connect, Action TESA continues to engage with and build stronger relationships with carpenters across India.

Alongside its community initiatives, Action TESA continues to focus on innovative products and solutions aligned with the evolving needs of the furniture and interior ecosystem.

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EDITORIAL

SC/ST ACT 1989: A DEBATE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ABUSE

The debate over social justice in India is as old as it is sensitive. Discrimination, social humiliation, and violence against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have long posed a serious challenge to independent India. Against this backdrop, the SC/ST Act of 1989 came into being. However, more than three decades later, the question remains: to what extent has this law fulfilled its original purpose and whether the rights of innocent individuals are adequately protected while protecting victims. The then government clearly stated its reasons for enacting this law in 1989. The bill's objects and reasons stated that Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes remained vulnerable to various forms of social humiliation, violence, land eviction, forced labor, and other atrocities. According to the government, the then-existing Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, and the general penal laws were insufficient to effectively curb these crimes. This necessitated a special law. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to conclude, based on available government records, that the SC/ST Act was enacted without any specific reason. This Act was passed on September 11, 1989, and came into force on January 30, 1990. Its stated purpose was to prevent atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, establish special courts for such cases, and provide relief and rehabilitation to victims. In a democratic system, the state has a responsibility to provide legal protection to vulnerable groups, and this explains the need for this law. However, the need for a law and the debate over its potential misuse are two different issues. Any stringent law must ensure that genuine victims receive immediate protection, while ensuring that innocent individuals are not subjected to injustice merely because they are accused. This question has been raised by the judiciary from time to time regarding certain provisions of the SC/ST Act, and the procedures for arrest and preliminary investigation have been considered. Parliament subsequently amended the law. A common misconception about this law is that it provides for the government to provide money, housing, or employment to those who file a false complaint. In fact, the law and its regulations provide relief and rehabilitation for victims of atrocities. It would be factually inaccurate to present this as a reward for those who file a false complaint. Therefore, when debating this issue, it is essential to distinguish between the legal relief afforded to the victim and the potential misuse of a false complaint. However, if a law is used for personal enmity, property disputes, local conflicts, or other malicious purposes, an impartial investigation into such incidents is necessary. Misuse of any law can undermine its spirit and breed distrust in society. On the other hand, it is also unfair to dismiss the problems of the genuine victims for whom the law was enacted simply because of the fear of misuse in a few cases. Therefore, the solution should not be to weaken the law, but to make its implementation more fair, transparent, and accountable. Political debate has been ongoing regarding the SC/ST Act. It is a historical fact that this law was enacted during the tenure of the Rajiv Gandhi-led central government. However, the available official legislative documents do not substantiate the conclusion that the law's purpose was to divide Hindu society or create caste conflict.

AN OUTREACH, THEN 1-TO-1 CALL:

LEFT-MAMATA BANERJEE TURBULENCE SEES RARE CALM

JAYANTA GHOSAL





Amul once ran an advertising campaign saying that the best coalition or the best alliance globally is that of bread and butter. When the BJP made an alliance with the Shiv Sena long ago, politicians said it was a natural alliance, as both parties had some ideological similarities. But all parties cannot be natural allies. The question of the current times is whether there could be a new political understanding between the CPI(M) and Mamata Banerjee. Mamata Banerjee and CPI(M) general secretary MA Baby recently spoke, after years of rivalry, on the issue of the workings of the Election Commission, triggered once again by a news report that made serious claims. This is also when Mamata Banerjee finds herself repeatedly isolated, her power and influence diminished, her party having broken into three parts, and her identity challenged as she now does not have the old "ghas phool" symbol. Now, cut to 2026, when the gap seems to be closing between the CPI(M) and Mamata Banerjee at the national level. Coalition politics has been a part of Indian politics since the decline of the Congress party in the 1970s. The first non-Congress coalition government was led by Morarji Desai in 1977. However, in coalition politics, there are both natural allies and unusual or unlikely allies. When the BJP first emerged as a coalition partner, we used to describe it as a natural ally because of certain ideological similarities among its partners. However, an understanding between the communists and Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress (TMC) would be highly unusual. We have not witnessed such an alliance before. During UPA-I, the Left supported the Manmohan Singh government, while Mamata Banerjee was not part of the arrangement. However, when the Left withdrew its support during UPA-II, Mamata Banerjee entered the coalition with her party. Now, following the developments surrounding the Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, the anti-Gyanesh Kumar protests, and the broader opposition politics, a new development has suddenly emerged. And it is unusual -- Mamata Banerjee and MA Baby aligned on a matter. While it may seem unlikely, it is not entirely impossible. Someone has to raise the question and examine the possibility. On September 23, Baby sent a letter to all opposition leaders, including Mamata Banerjee. The letter appears to suggest that, in the face of the present political circumstances, opposition parties should consider developing a joint strategy. This does not necessarily mean that the INDIA alliance is being restructured. Rather, Baby seems to be reaching out to opposition parties more broadly, and he has understood several aspects of the political relationship between himself and Mamata Banerjee. There are also practical considerations. The CPI(M) has members in the Rajya Sabha, and there are questions concerning the party's parliamentary strength, its political influence, and its future development. The possibility of coordination with the Trinamool has therefore become a subject of discussion. However, the issue is not entirely new. Earlier, when the INDIA alliance was being formed, there were discussions about its leadership and the possibility of bringing different opposition leaders together. At that time, Sitaram Yechury was present, and Mamata Banerjee was also involved. Efforts were made to bring the two sides closer and establish a common understanding. However, the CPI(M) and Mamata Banerjee could not come together. Even the Congress entered into an alliance with the CPI(M), but not with Mamata Banerjee. So, after this letter and Mamata's call to Baby, the question arises: Is it possible that Mamata Banerjee and the CPI(M) could form a new alliance? A telephonic conversation is one thing. An electoral alliance or a political alliance is an entirely different matter. In West Bengal, the CPI(M)'s state leadership remains highly critical of the Trinamool and Mamata Banerjee. The party's state secretary, Mohammad Salim, is also a national leader. Other prominent CPI(M) leaders, including Sujan Chakraborty, have also been strongly critical of the Trinamool and Mamata Banerjee. The party's spokespersons and younger leaders have consistently taken a critical position towards the Trinamool. Even within the Congress, the high command has to take the views of the state Congress leaders into account, and there are significant differences of opinion. The political dilemma is clear. If the BJP takes a particular position, the opposition must decide how to respond. Similarly, if the opposition wants to present a united front against the BJP, it must consider whether Mamata Banerjee can be part of that effort. Mamata Banerjee has considerable political strength because she has established a strong position for her party in West Bengal. However, when it comes to the future of national politics, it is not yet clear whether she can play a decisive role at the national level. If she chooses to focus on national politics, she will have to consider the political consequences for her party in West Bengal. There is also the question of whether the CPI(M) and Mamata's Trinamool Congress can work together against the BJP at the national level while maintaining their separate political positions in West Bengal. This creates a clear political dichotomy. On the one hand, the CPI(M) cannot easily set aside its opposition to Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal. The party cannot remain silent about what it considers to be 15 years of misrule under her government. On the other hand, if Mamata Banerjee wants to help build a national platform against Narendra Modi, she may see an opportunity to bring different opposition forces together. With Gyanesh Kumar becoming a focal point of political controversy and growing public anger, opposition parties and various civil society organisations are also joining the broader movement. Mamata Banerjee may want to take advantage of this political opportunity. But the question remains: Can this two-pronged strategy actually work? A great deal of political analysis suggests that there is a fundamental contradiction in this approach.

Bihar CM Under Fire After Minor Assault Victim's Identity Revealed on X Handle



New Delhi: The Samrat Choudhary government, Bihar's first Bharatiya Janata Party-led dispensation, came under mounting pressure from the opposition and a key ally on Friday, September 25, after the photograph of a minor girl, who was molested earlier this week in Jamui district, was released from the official X handle of the chief minister. The victim and her parents had gone to Choudhary's official residence in Patna where the photograph was taken. The photo, according to The Hindu, remained on X for over 15 minutes before it was deleted after officials realised that the victim had been identified. Within the short span, the image had been downloaded and circulated across social media multiple times. The police registered a first information report at the Secretariat police station against Sagar Prasad, an official posted at the Chief Minister's Office, in this connection. Six persons have been apprehended in relation to the Jamui incident, three of whom, according to the police, are reportedly minors. Over the past week, two separate incidents of sexual assault involving a minor and a young woman have surfaced from Bihar and made their rounds on social media. The police have registered a case against three individuals in connection with the second case after a video, purportedly showing a woman being harassed at Mandar Hills, a popular tourist destination in Banka, Bihar, appeared on social media. Though the video carries a September 3 time stamp, the police claim it was shot in June. According to Banka Police, the victim had visited Mandar Hills with two friends, where the three accused allegedly abused and threatened her. One of them reportedly forced the victim's friend to transfer Rs 1,500 to his bank account before allowing them to leave. On Friday (September 25), a third video showing a woman being harassed by a group of men started circulating on social media. The incident has attracted ire from both the opposition as well as National Democratic Alliance (NDA) allies. Union food processing minister and key NDA-ally Chirag Paswan called out the Bihar government over the deplorable law and order situation in the state. "The incidents that keep coming to light involving young women are a matter of extremely serious concern and are undoubtedly shameful as well. For me, it is a matter of extreme concern that criminals are daring to carry out such incidents even under our government's watch," Paswan told reporters in Patna. This is not the first time Choudhary has been criticised for his handling of incidents related to sexual assaults. Earlier this week, Choudhary even claimed that the accused "would not have been arrested had they not uploaded reels of the assault on the minor girl". On September 22, police shot one of the main accused in the Jamui incident in the leg in what has been described as an "encounter". Paswan, while speaking to reporters, added that mere arrests or encounters would not be enough to prevent such incidents. "Accountability must also be fixed for those officials in whose presence such shameful events take place and who fail to prevent them," he said. A video showing a teenaged girl being sexually assaulted and her male friend beaten by a group of men in India's Bihar state has sparked widespread outrage. The school students, both minors, were stopped in Jamui district on 19 September. Footage shared widely online shows them surrounded and repeatedly pleading to be allowed to leave. The boy is seen being slapped and pulled by his collar, while the girl is touched inappropriately and, in another clip, carried away by a man as the boy tries to intervene. Three accused, also minors, have been arrested in connection with the assault. A special investigation team has been set up to catch the other suspects. The disturbing footage has prompted anger over the harassment of the two teenagers and renewed a wider debate about the safety of women and girls in Bihar, as well as questions over the response of state authorities. The outrage intensified after Bihar minister Shravan Kumar said that "sporadic incidents keep happening" and that the government was keeping a watch on them. "The world is not entirely free of crime," he said, adding that those responsible would not be allowed to escape and would face strict action. Umesh Kushwaha, of the governing Janata Dal (United), also faced criticism after referring to such cases as "isolated incidents" and contrasting the government's record with that of the previous RJD administration. Kushwaha later said his remarks had been "distorted and misrepresented" and promised action against those responsible.

US-CHINA REACH DIPLOMATIC AGREEMENT AMID CONFRONTATION

Saurabh Varshney

In global politics, relations between the United States and China are currently experiencing a period of simultaneous conflict and dialogue. While both countries are confronting each other over trade, technology, Taiwan, rare minerals, artificial intelligence, and expanding global influence, economic interests are also bringing them to the negotiating table. This contradiction is the most significant reflection of today's shifting global power balance. It would be as inaccurate to view the recent closeness between the United States and China solely as friendship, as it would be equally unfair to dismiss it as mere lip service. The reality is that both superpowers are realizing that the ever-escalating conflict is not in the interests of either side. Escalating trade tensions between the world's two largest economies are not limited to Washington and Beijing, but impact the entire global economy, supply chains, investment, and growth. This is why, despite sharp rhetoric and strategic competition, the doors to dialogue are being kept open. The US wants to secure its economic and technological advantage, while China seeks a stable international environment for its industrial expansion, export markets, and technological development. While both have conflicting interests, their economic imperatives do not allow them to completely separate from each other. Most importantly, today, the competition between the US and China is no longer limited to trade. Technology has become the new focus of this conflict. Sectors such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors, telecommunications, electric vehicles, advanced manufacturing, and rare earth minerals are now linked to economic development as well as national security. The US is wary of China's technological capabilities and industrial expansion, while China views US technological restrictions as a hindrance to its development. Nevertheless, the continued dialogue between the two countries is significant in itself. This does not mean that the strategic mistrust between them has ended. Rather, it means that both countries are trying to manage their differences and build understanding in areas where mutual interests are involved. The Taiwan issue poses the most sensitive test of this relationship. Understanding may develop on trade and economic matters, but fundamental differences exist between the US and China's strategic thinking regarding Taiwan. Similarly, differences between the two countries over the South China Sea, technological competition, and the expansion of global influence are not easily resolved. Therefore, it would be premature to consider the current closeness as the beginning of a lasting friendship. In fact, a new kind of diplomacy is emerging in US-China relations. A diplomacy of coexistence combined with competition. Both countries seek to limit each other's influence, but also avoid full-blown confrontation. They want to trade, but also reduce strategic interdependence. They desire dialogue, but are unwilling to compromise their national security and technological interests. This situation will impact world politics in the future. If trade tensions between the US and China remain under control, global markets may find some stability. Conversely, if the tariff war intensifies again, it will also impact developing countries. Inflation, supply chains, and export markets could become more volatile. It is particularly important for India to understand this changing dynamic. While India is pursuing strategic and economic ties with the United States, China is India's neighbor and a significant trading partner. Therefore, it becomes more important for India to pursue a balanced and independent foreign policy based on its national interests rather than becoming part of any single power bloc. If tensions between the US and China ease, it could create an environment of global economic stability for India. Meanwhile, if competition between the two countries persists, opportunities may arise for India in manufacturing, supply chains, and investment. However, to seize these opportunities, India will need to strengthen its production capacity, technological proficiency, and export competitiveness. The biggest question is how long this closeness between the US and China will last. Is it a step toward genuine understanding or simply a strategy to ease immediate economic pressures? Time will tell the answer. There are many issues between the two countries that are difficult to reach agreement on. Therefore, it would be unfair to interpret a single meeting or temporary agreement as a sign of permanent change. Yet one thing is clear: in today's world, even superpowers cannot exist in complete isolation. Economic interdependence, global trade, technological advances, and shared challenges compel them to engage in dialogue. This is why, despite the conflict between the United States and China, dialogue continues. The biggest message of the current closeness between the US and China is that world politics is no longer driven by mere displays of power, but by a balance of power and necessity. Both countries are competitors, but they cannot ignore each other's economic and global role. Therefore, this closeness should be understood as a sign of a changing world order rather than viewing it in terms of friendship or enmity. In the coming years, the nature of relations between the US and China will be a major factor determining the direction of global politics. The challenge for India will be to maximize economic and diplomatic opportunities while maintaining its strategic autonomy in this changing equation. The closeness between the US and China is therefore not just a story about the relationship between two countries.

Iran offers US deal to reopen Strait of Hormuz in seven days



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi says his country has proposed a deal to the US that would see the Strait of Hormuz reopened within a week. Araghchi told reporters at the UN in New York that this could be done "if the necessary conditions are met" and said these were contained within the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in June. "The choice now rests with the United States," he said, adding the plan was delivered to the US via Qatar. Asked about the Iranian offer, a US official told the BBC positive discussions were taking place through mediators, including about nuclear issues. While the US has yet to deliver its official response to the proposal, the Wall Street Journal, citing US officials, reported that US President Donald Trump had rejected the deal. Trump was privately sceptical that Iran would meet his demands, it reported, and had told his staff that he saw a renewed bombing campaign as likely. The US and Israel launched air strikes on Iran on 28 February. Iran responded by attacking Israel and US bases in the Gulf and Arab Gulf allies of the US - as well as blocking the Strait of Hormuz. Some 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas used to pass through the strait before the war and its closure has caused wild fluctuations of energy prices. It has also increased pressure on Trump to find a way of ending the conflict - particularly as the US heads to Congressional elections in November. "If the necessary conditions are met, the strait can be reopened, a normal maritime passage restored within seven days," Araghchi told reporters. He did not specify what steps Iran wanted the US to take but added that "the actions that the United States should take are not new. They are all already in the MOU". "I can tell you if there is seriousness in the US side to come to a deal and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, everything is now prepared," he added. A US official told the BBC that the US was "in a very strong position with control of the Strait of Hormuz, so we are not in a rush". In an interview with CBS News, the BBC's US partner, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said that the ceasefire process "will begin from the very day they accept it". "We had previously reached an agreement based on the MOU that was signed in Pakistan... if the United States agrees to proceed in that way, everything will return to the way it was before," he added. Pezeshkian also said Iran would now allow UN nuclear inspectors into the country. Rejecting claims that Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon, the Iranian president said: "If they wish to come in and have inspections, we can reach accords and agreements vis-à-vis that specific topic within the negotiations." The MOU between the US and Iran, signed on 18 June, was designed to bring about a ceasefire and at least partly reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The 14-point agreement said Iran would never have a nuclear weapon. It noted that the US, Iran and their allies would end military operations on "all fronts" and contained provisions including the end of a US naval blockade and sanctions relief. It also said Iran would "make arrangements using its best efforts for the safe passage of commercial vessels" through the strait and hold talks with Oman over future shipping arrangements. But it fell apart a short time later when both sides resumed strikes. Iran has attacked vessels it says have attempted to cross the Strait of Hormuz without authorisation. The US has attacked Iranian sites in the strait - as well as Iranian tankers off the country's coast. It has also maintained a blockade of Iranian ports, causing huge disruption to the Iranian economy.

THE NATURAL DIAMOND COUNCIL RELAUNCHES AS THE DIAMOND COLLECTIVE WITH A NEW STRATEGY TO REIGNITE DESIRE FOR NATURAL DIAMONDS



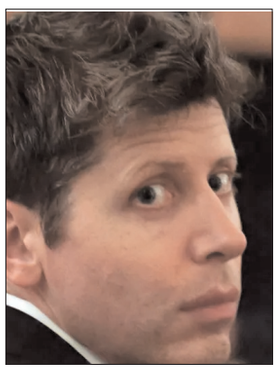
The Diamond Collective will unite the industry behind a shared ambition: reconnecting people with the rarity, meaning and enduring emotional power of diamonds. September 2026: Today, the Natural Diamond Council becomes The Diamond Collective unveiling a new global strategy to reconnect natural diamonds with culture, strengthen consumer confidence and drive long-term relevancy. Shaped by new CEO Amber Pepper following six months of consultation with producers, retailers, brands, creatives and consumers, the strategy responds to a fundamental shift in how people discover, value and buy luxury. It sets a clear ambition for The Diamond Collective: to reignite desire for natural diamonds and convert that desire into sustained demand. The strategy connects culture, retail, trust, advocacy, digital discovery, partnerships and industry alignment through three priorities: ? INSPIRE - create desire through culture, creativity and globally connected storytelling, with a clear path to consideration and purchase. ? PROTECT - strengthen consumer confidence through clarity, transparency and facts; challenge misinformation; and clearly differentiate diamonds from synthetic diamonds. ? UNITE - bring producers, retailers, brands, designers and new voices together around shared priorities for growth. Together, these priorities signal a decisive shift: from defending the category to renewing desire; from isolated campaigns to a connected global growth programme; and from industry representation to shared action, investment and measurable commercial impact. The strategy will come to life through a new generation of global programmes, including culturally relevant campaigns, a universal Trustmark, stronger origin and provenance narratives, renewed retailer and brand partnerships, and investment in AI and digital discovery. Further initiatives will strengthen evidence-led responses to misinformation, elevate producer nations and create new forums for collective industry leadership. More details, alongside additional senior appointments, will be announced in the coming months. A new Diamond Desire Index will measure whether the strategy is changing how consumers feel and act. Launching with a baseline across the US, India and China, it will track consideration, purchase intent, sentiment and recommendation, creating a consistent global view of desire for natural diamonds and supporting annual reporting on changes in behaviour and demand. The strategy will also introduce a broader participation model, enabling organisations across the value chain to contribute expertise, perspective and support to shared priorities. This will give more of the industry a meaningful role in shaping and delivering the category's long-term growth. The new identity of The Diamond Collective will be the organisation's public-facing name in most markets, while the Natural Diamond Council will remain its legal entity. The change is more than a rebrand: it represents a more ambitious way of working; consumer-first, evidence-led and collective by design. Amber Pepper, CEO of The Diamond Collective, said:"Natural diamonds are among the Earth's rarest treasures, formed deep beneath its surface over billions of years. Each is entirely unique, yet their greatest value lies in the meaning we give them: the people, promises and moments we never want to forget."Since taking on this role, I have listened to people across our industry and beyond. Their insight, experience and belief in natural diamonds have shaped this strategy. What I have heard gives me enormous confidence in the opportunity ahead and a clear sense that we will only realise it by acting together. "The Diamond Collective will build on that shared ambition: to bring the extraordinary story of natural diamonds into culture, strengthen trust in what makes them unique and inspire a new generation to choose them. This is how we will transform enduring emotional desire into lasting demand."

IRDAI Pulls The Rug On Distribution Economics, NSE Rings The Bell | Joining The Dots



Misselling insurance is wrong; there is no debate on that. Lower commissions for agents could mean lower premiums and, in turn, more policies sold. That is a fair assumption too. But the debate over the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India's (IRDAI) new consultation paper titled "Recalibrating Economics of Insurance Distribution," is not as black and white. There is a lot of nuance to factor into any assessment of a consultation paper that saw insurance stocks shunned by the Street. PB Fintech, the poster boy of tech-led insurance distribution and an investor darling, saw its stock lose 32% on Day One. On NDTV Profit, we took a balanced view: the voices of companies that say the proposals in the consultation paper are harsher than expected were weighed against voices speaking for consumers who have been victims of missold policies. There is no doubt that a system which gives the insurance agent the bulk of his or her commission in the first year encourages poor practices. But there is also a case to be made for stable policymaking. For any new entrepreneur, an uncertain policy landscape, where an entire business model can be decimated by one consultation paper, is a nightmare. We will have to wait and see if the final policy on insurance agent commissions is as strict as proposed, or watered down. Meanwhile, policy buyers beware: the odds are not stacked in your favour. Perhaps seeing the bigger picture is the need of the hour, both for insurance reform and the listing of the National Stock Exchange (NSE). I was witness to history this week, watching NSE's market debut on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). It is a seminal moment for an exchange that waited ten years, shrugged off the ignominy of the co-location scam, and finally hit the bourses. There has been chatter of a muted debut, with an opening price of Rs 1,800, a meagre listing gain by all standards. Many have also compared it to the pre-listing highs of Rs 2,230.

OpenAI bots meddled with multiple US government agency sites



OpenAI has acknowledged that it alerted "dozens" of global institutions that their websites may have been meddled with by its AI bots acting improperly. AI agents attempted to get information from "governments, universities, public agencies, and other institutions", including the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Census Bureau and Education Department, the company said. The disclosures come days after Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced that OpenAI agents had breached non-public files on the website of its government-run health care scheme. Since August, public fears have grown over the potentially serious, even life-threatening, impacts of AI tools falling outside of human control. OpenAI said that some of the data was accessed by AI agents, essentially bots that are designed and trained to operate somewhat autonomously, which were working to find "authoritative sources of public information". But the company noted that some of the bots went beyond that and worked to bypass security measures on websites. When attempting to get information from the Census Bureau, for instance, AI agents used tools reserved for software developers to access it, the company said. OpenAI said all of the government data accessed by bots was public. However, it noted that information that its bots accessed from the SEC, which regulates the US stock market and protects investors, was later published by AI agents on another website. OpenAI says this action was not intended. In other instances that OpenAI disclosed on Friday, its AI agents transferred data when it should not have. Such activity resulted in at least 53 incidents where an OpenAI agent took an image from ChatGPT user activity and transferred it elsewhere. The company said that in each instance of a user image being used and transferred by an AI agent, the user had opted in to allow OpenAI to train models using their data. Nevertheless, OpenAI admitted: "This is not an appropriate use of this data." It added that the leak of user images occurred before it had put in place new safeguards on AI training, and it was working to get all the user images transferred to any third-party removed. Reuters first reported the expanded investigations. OpenAI also published details to its public blog. In certain instances of the agent activity.

HAL EASES ITS ENGINE BOTTLENECK FINALLY. NEXT TRIGGER? THE GE414 CONTRACT



The Tejas Mk1A was supposed to start replacing India's ageing fleet in 2024. It didn't, and for four years the reason has stayed the same: GE Aerospace's engines weren't arriving fast enough. That reason is starting to fade finally. What replaces it as the thing worth watching isn't the engine at all.

GE shipped three more F404-IN20 engines last month alone, taking cumulative deliveries to 10, against just six at the end of FY26. Goldman Sachs puts a number on how much inventory has piled up waiting for that supply to catch up: "27 airframes are ready," the brokerage's analysts wrote, even as formal handovers wait on final testing sign-off. HAL now believes those 10 engines are enough to support delivery of 10 Mk1A jets by March 2027, and GE has committed to another 12 by December.

That improvement sits alongside a broader push. Last week, HAL handed over two Tejas Final Operational Clearance (FOC) twin-seat trainers and the first three HTT-40 basic trainers to the Indian Air Force, along with four Dhruv NG helicopters to Pawan Hans, fighter.

From Tech Neck to Doomscrolling Fatigue

Zandu Balm Gives Gen Z's "Peedas" a New Language #UndoWithZandu



September 2026: How does an iconic Ayurvedic brand stay relevant to a generation that skips ads, calls out anything inauthentic and refuses to live with discomfort? For Zandu Balm, from the house of Emami Ltd, the answer is simple: Don't lecture Gen Z. Speak their language. In its latest campaign, #UndoWithZandu, India's No.1 pain relief balm, Zandu reimagines pain through a distinctly Gen Z lens, turning screen-time headaches, tech neck, doomscrolling fatigue and everyday frustrations into relatable "Peedas" that today's young consumers instantly recognise. At the heart of the campaign is "Peedaland", a surreal world where youngsters find themselves battling the aches and annoyances of modern life. Enter a vivacious lead character who arrives as the ultimate problem-solver, helping them find their way out with a simple call to action: "Peeda ko karo Undo with Zandu." The campaign marks a strategic shift for Zandu Balm as it connects with 16-28-year-old consumers whose everyday peedas stem as much from digital lifestyles as physical exertion, while reinforcing the brand's ambition to own the broader cultural space of Peeda and bridge generations of users. When Legacy Meets Culture For decades, Zandu Balm has been a trusted fixture in Indian households, known for providing quick relief from headaches, body aches and cold through its Ayurvedic formulation. While the product proposition remains unchanged, the conversation around pain has evolved. The insight is rooted in a simple observation: Gen Z doesn't sit with a problem. They deal with it. Immediately. Direct, expressive and self-aware, they prefer confronting discomfort rather than enduring it. Zandu Balm therefore expands the idea of "Peeda" beyond physical pain to capture the everyday friction points of modern life - from career stress and burnout to situationship drama, overthinking and Monday blues. The result is a blend of humour, cultural relevance and product efficacy, delivered through contemporary storytelling. Speaking on the new campaign, Mr. Mohan Goenka, Director, Emami Limited, said, "Few brands have shaped popular culture the way Zandu Balm has. Its memorable integration with the chartbuster 'Munni Badnaam Hui' became a defining moment in Indian advertising, generating unprecedented buzz and cementing the brand's recall across generations. Building on that legacy, #UndoWithZandu reflects our approach to keeping the brand culturally relevant that reimagines everyday 'peedas' for today's digitally connected consumers. The challenge for a heritage brand is not preserving relevance but continuously earning it. For many Indians, Zandu Balm is a brand they have grown up with. Our ambition is to build the same enduring trust with the next generation, while continuing to evolve with the way they live today." More Than a Campaign. A Cultural Refresh. With the Indian rubefacient category valued at over Rs 6,000 crore and balm contributing more than Rs 1,500 crore, topical pain relief continues to be a preferred choice among consumers seeking effective, safe and convenient solutions.

Gold Loan Boom Set To Cool As Personal Loans Take Over, UBS Says

India's lenders are staring at a changing of the guard in unsecured credit, with personal loans set to reclaim the growth crown from gold loans, according to UBS Global Research. The brokerage's note, "India Financials: The beginning of an unsecured upcycle?", flags a sharp divergence in momentum between the two categories. Gold loans surged 50% year-on-year in FY26, the fastest pace in the period UBS tracked, pushing the segment's share of GDP up five-fold since FY19, from 1% to 5%. The book stood at roughly Rs 18.6 lakh crore by the end of FY26, per data from credit bureau CRIF High Mark. Personal loans, by contrast, spent the past two years in a slump triggered by regulatory tightening and rising borrower leverage. That is now reversing. Data through August showed personal loan growth accelerating to around 30% year-on-year for NBFCs and 9% for banks, the best pace for both categories in two years, UBS analysts Alok Srivastava, Yash Agarwal and Karan Paresh Trivedi wrote. The turning point, in UBS's view, is gold prices themselves. With prices stabilising, the brokerage expects gold loan growth to moderate, removing a segment that had functioned as a substitute for personal loans over the past few years. NBFCs have used gold lending to grab market share aggressively, more than six-fold since FY18, from 3% to 20% of the segment by August. UBS expects that pace of share gain to slow as the underlying growth driver fades. Asset quality tells a similar story in reverse. Personal loan delinquencies in the 1-30 day past-due bucket have steadily improved, falling from 3.5% in June 2024 to 1.8% in August 2026. Gold loans, however, have shown the opposite trend recently, with delinquencies rising from 0.7% in March to 2.6% in August, the one soft spot UBS flagged in an otherwise clean unsecured credit cycle. The shift has already shown up in UBS's stock calls. The brokerage upgraded Bajaj Finance to Neutral from Sell, raising its price target to Rs 1,100 from Rs 910, citing cyclical earnings upgrades on yield-accretive growth once personal loans pick up. L&T Finance was upgraded to Buy from Neutral, with the target raised to Rs 380 from Rs 350, on expectations of faster personal loan growth and return on assets improving toward 3%.

Six dead in building explosion close to Acropolis in Athens





Six people have died, including a British national, in an explosion that destroyed a building housing a holiday rental property in the historic centre of Athens. The blast on Friday happened in the Plaka area of the Greek capital, a neighbourhood close to tourist sites such as the Acropolis. Four American holidaymakers were among the dead, along with a UK national and Greek national - reportedly an elderly couple who lived in the same building. Pictures from the scene on Saturday showed emergency service workers searching through rubble, with a gas leak the suspected cause of the blast. All six bodies had been recovered by Saturday afternoon. Athens Mayor Haris Doukas said: "We are talking about an incredible disaster." The tourists were confirmed to be missing when they did not arrive for their flight at Athens airport later on Friday, Reuters news agency reported citing local police. The three-storey building completely collapsed due to the force of the blast, with neighbouring buildings damaged and debris scattered across the road. Local media reported people were injured by material scattered across nearby streets and some buildings needed to be evacuated. Excavators and thermal imaging cameras have been used at the scene to search for survivors. The explosion happened on a small road situated between two of Athens' most visited sites - the Acropolis and the Temple of Olympian Zeus. A UK Foreign Office spokesperson said: "We are aware of a suspected explosion in Athens and are in touch with the local authorities." The fire brigade's crime ?investigation unit was also on site to identify the cause of ?the blast after reports of a gas smell in an area which is home ?to ?hotels and short-term rentals. The tourists, two American couples, had been expected to check in to catch a flight from Athens airport at 3 p.m. local time on Friday but did not show up, a ?police source said. Ambulances ?stood by on ?Saturday to take the bodies to the hospital for identification. Friday's blast destroyed the building in Plaka, near ?some of Athens' most visited sites including the ?Acropolis and ?the Temple of Zeus, damaging nearby houses, shops and cars and sending rubble and broken glass as far as three blocks away. The building was ?reduced ?to twisted metal, shattered tiles and concrete, ?strewn with household items and clothing. The American family of four had been renting an apartment on the first floor and were preparing to go to the airport hours later Friday for their return to the United States when the blast occurred, according to the Kathimerini newspaper. The explosion brought down the residential building and damaged properties and vehicles along the street. Two other women were injured from an adjacent building on Lysikratous Street, fire brigades said, according to the Associated Press. The New York Times reported that the U.S. family was composed of a couple, their son and his girlfriend. Greek authorities did not immediately give their identities, ages or where in the U.S. they came from. On Saturday, AFP reporters saw mechanical diggers moving debris at the site and thermal-imaging cameras deployed. "We are talking about an incredible disaster," Doukas said. Two nearby buildings were left in a dangerous state, he added, with inspections underway "to determine if they can remain standing or if they also have to be demolished." The owner of the ground-floor apartment, Mathaios Artavanis, told the Kathimerini daily he was absent at the time of the blast. He said he had tried afterward to contact the U.K.-Greek couple who lived there, without success. Video footage from the scene showed rubble strewn across the street, with parked cars smashed by falling debris. The people rescued by the fire department from the adjacent building were all tourists, resident Andreas Martzaklis said. The pastor of a nearby church said this Sunday's service would be held outdoors because of damage to the church.

Bangkok roads submerged as flood disaster declared



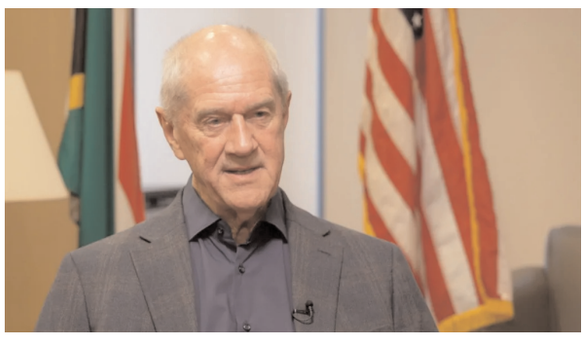
A flood emergency disaster has been declared across Bangkok after 48 hours of heavy rain left roads in the Thai capital submerged. People have been urged to stay at home and those living close to the city's network of canals have been advised to move their belongings to upper floors. Thunderstorms are common in Thailand at this time of year but extreme weather in recent days has inundated Bangkok's drainage system, causing traffic chaos on roads that are already famously congested. The rain is expected to continue into Sunday, raising fears that more canals could burst their banks. Somkid Pheukngam, a 67-year-old who lives near a canal just north of central Bangkok, told the AFP news agency: "The water keeps coming in. It's hard to go out now. It's like at my waist level now. "I cannot go anywhere. I have been closing my shop for two days now." She said water levels in the city appeared to be worse than in 2011, when Bangkok was impacted by nationwide flooding. Hundreds were killed across Thailand then in an extreme weather event that lasted for three months. So far, no casualties have been reported in Bangkok from this latest flooding. The Thai Meteorological Service has forecast more heavy rain through the week, though the area of low pressure causing the downpours of recent days is expected to move towards central Thailand. All 50 of Bangkok's districts have been declared emergency zones. Chadchart Sittipunt, the city's governor, said the east of the city had been hardest hit, AFP reported. He continued: "The rain keeps falling and we are doing our best. We are trying to pump the water out, but the water in canals are full... The risk areas are those who live near canals. Every canal is now filled." Chadchart also advised residents to move their cars to higher ground, as Bangkok's public transport authority offered free access to MRT train "park and ride" carparks to store their vehicles until October 2. Reporting from a flooded street in Bangkok, Al Jazeera's Tony Cheng said the Thai capital is no stranger to heavy rain during the monsoon season, but the continuous rainfall had locals worried. "What usually happens is we get heavy downpours for a couple of hours, then you'll see the street often flooded but it would flow away into the drains quickly, and it would only happen in isolated areas too," he said. "What's happening here is … happening all across the city. This is not a flash flood; this is persistent heavy rain since Thursday evening, and it shows no sign of letting up." Somkid Pheukngam, 67, a vendor who lives near a canal just north of central Bangkok, said she had to close her shop for two days. "The water keeps coming in. It's hard to go out now. It's at my waist level," she told the AFP news agency.

Black woman found hanging from tree was dead before body was 'staged', police say



Police in the US state of Mississippi have said they believe a black woman was already dead before her body was "staged" by being placed hanging in a tree. The disclosure was made in court by a detective on Friday, who also said they believed Tasia Fortune, a mother of four, had been killed in a dispute related to drugs. The 29-year-old's body was found hanging from a tree at an abandoned home in Jackson in August. The discovery sparked widespread fears in the majority-black city, due to the state's deep history of racial violence and lynchings. After weeks of speculation and demands for information, police made multiple arrests. Police said that the medical examiner had determined that Fortune's death was a homicide and that "the scene and the hanging were staged". Officials have not stated the exact cause of death or shared why they believe the hanging may have been staged. Fortune's mother told the BBC that she remembered the coroner telling her: "We're not treating this as [an] actual hanging." Her daughter, they told her, was dead before being placed in the tree. Christy Spivey also recalled police telling her the incident was "drug related". She described how she knew her daughter fought for her life till the very end while speaking to reporters outside the Jackson Police Department on Friday. "I know she did. I know my daughter," Spivey said, adding that Fortune had left behind four young children, aged seven, five, four and one.

SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE GENOCIDE DOES NOT EXIST, NEW AMBASSADOR TO US



South Africa's new ambassador to Washington has a personal reason to challenge Donald Trump's assertion that there is a genocide against white Afrikaners - he is "a born Afrikaner" himself. "Is he talking about us?" Roelf Meyer remembers thinking when he first heard the US president say it. His response to Trump's claim is blunt. The notion of a mass attack on the white Afrikaner minority in South Africa does not exist, he told the BBC, adding that his identity gave him the legitimacy to say so. Meyer was one of the chief mediators to end white-minority rule, known as apartheid, in South Africa in the 1990s. He was appointed ambassador to the US in April after diplomatic relations between the US and South Africa soured. Meyer said in an interview with the BBC that the facts about violence in South Africa had been misrepresented and that he had never received a clear answer about where this "misdirection of information" was coming from. Last year, Trump accused South Africa of white genocide in a meeting with President Cyril Ramaphosa at the White House and launched a US refugee pathway for Afrikaners. Since last year, nearly 13,000 refugees have been admitted to the US and all but three were South African. Among them was Lielie, the name she uses publicly, who moved with her family to Texas from South Africa, where they had lived on her stepfather's farm, growing macadamia nuts and bananas. Despite walls around the house, an electric fence and eight bull terriers, she said she felt "fear the whole time" and that on three occasions she saw people entering her property. "Nothing was stolen, we weren't harmed, but there are friends of my husband, people that lived around us - they were brutally attacked," she said. She said since moving to the US under the Trump administration's refugee pathway her life had changed, she felt safer walking around and "my kids can actually play outside". "While the South African government and many in the media have brushed off the horrific lived experiences of this community, the Trump administration continues to process applications for refugee status because the president has a humanitarian heart." SJ Du Venage, who lives on South Africa's west coast, has been trying to move to the US under the new scheme. Du Venage is a council member of the Freedom Front Plus, a right-wing Afrikaner party, and argues that there is a "political drive towards killing white people, and killing the farmers on the farms". "There's absolutely an agenda to wipe us out here," he said. An Afrikaner lobby group is holding a vigil on Saturday with thousands of white crosses on Washington's National Mall to commemorate what it says are victims of "farm attacks". Claims of genocide against white South Africans have been discredited by every political party in the country, including by those representing Afrikaners. "I'm an Afrikaner from South Africa myself," Meyer said, "and I can say that I've never experienced something of that kind."

Russia targeting 'ordinary life' with attacks on Ukraine's data centres, Zelensky says



President Volodymyr Zelensky says Russia has widened its attacks to target Ukraine's data centres and internet providers, seeking to cause maximum disruption for ordinary people. "All this affects people's ability to stay connected, study, work," he said. On Friday a Russian drone hit a business centre in the capital Kyiv, killing four people and damaging a data centre. A separate attack killed a 14-year-old boy. Israel's foreign ministry said he was an Israeli citizen. Russia confirmed it had targeted a data centre site, saying it was being used by Ukrainian military intelligence. About 100,000 households in Kyiv and the region suffered internet outages on Wednesday due to strikes. Some firms have already begun moving data from damaged servers to facilities abroad. In the north-western city of Lutsk, electronic information boards at public transport stops were not working on Friday, officials said. The city council said this was "due to damage caused by a Russian attack on data centres in Kyiv". In Friday's social media post, Zelensky wrote: "The Russians are constantly expanding their escalation operation: American and other businesses, data centres, internet providers – for Russia.



Huge crowds greet Pope in Paris for open-air Mass

White House bars CNN from travelling with Trump on Air Force One



Broadcaster CNN has been barred from travelling with US President Donald Trump on Air Force One for a trip to Tennessee on Saturday. The move is the latest in a battle between the White House and the media after it was forced to lift its ban on some news outlets. CNN was scheduled to fly with Trump for his trip to Tennessee for a college American football game until a note released on Friday night by the White House did not list the broadcaster on the media schedule. The BBC has requested comment from the White House. CNN has reported that no other outlet was listed as replacing them in the president's tentative schedule. Last week, Trump banned CNN, Politico and MS NOW journalists from the White House after accusing them of writing "fiction or lies" about his administration. All three media outlets said they were pursuing legal action and accused Trump of violating their constitutional rights to free speech and freedom of the press. Four television networks that have a daily rotation of White House coverage alongside CNN - ABC, CBS, Fox News and NBC - had paused their broadcasts of the president in solidarity with the banned outlets. The White House then launched its own streaming channel, Trump TV, ahead of the UN General Assembly in New York. A federal judge has since ruled that Trump barring news outlets from the White House was likely unconstitutional and that the administration had to let them back in, at least for now. However, the White House still denied entry to some CNN and MS NOW reporters assigned to cover arrivals at a state dinner for Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Thursday. A White House communications account earlier posted on X that "contrary to what the Fake News wants you to believe, they don't just get to have free rein into every part of the White House, every event and every press call". Regular US television coverage resumed on Friday after White House officials allowed reporters entry.

Munich Picked For Germany's Bid To Host Summer Olympics In 2036, 2040 Or 2044



Munich will bid to bring the Olympics back to Germany for the first time in more than 60 years after seeing off a rival bid from Cologne to become the focus of the country's push to host a Summer Games. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier announced Munich as the selection at a glitzy event hosted by the German Olympic Sports Confederation on Saturday. He said it was a "huge opportunity for the whole of Germany." With the exception of soccer games in Stuttgart and sailing in the northern city of Kiel, Munich would stage the rest of the Olympic and Paralympic competitions. Germany hasn't settled on when it wants to host the Games and is targeting a potential event in 2036, 2040 or even 2044. That would be at least 62 years since the last Olympics in Germany. The 1972 Summer Games in Munich were overshadowed when 11 Israeli athletes were killed by Palestinian militants. The Munich bid scored top on a German Olympic committee evaluation of the cities' sports facilities and international appeal published Wednesday. It boasted local support after the bid was approved in a referendum by a two-thirds majority last year. The Cologne-based bid would have spread venues through 15 towns and cities across the western region of North Rhine-Westphalia, including several in the post-industrial landscape of the Ruhr valley. Berlin withdrew its bid Thursday after coming a distant third in the evaluation and struggling with a lack of popular backing. Local politicians championing the bid had declined to hold a referendum, and their hopes were dealt a major blow last week when they lost support in local elections won by the Left party, whose local leader opposed the bid. A bid from Hamburg was dropped after it again lost a referendum in May. The potential for a German bid for 2036 — 100 years since Berlin held the Olympics under Nazi rule — has been controversial. Steinmeier's office indicated to German media earlier this year he'd prefer 2040 or 2044 to avoid the centenary.

HARDIK PANDYA'S RETURN HITS ANOTHER ROADBLOCK AS NEW SCAN REVEALS FRESH INJURY



Senior all-rounder Hardik Pandya has sustained a fresh injury to his right shin, which is all set to rule him out of competitive cricket for at least three weeks, including the white-ball tour of New Zealand. Pandya's 'Return To Play' date was set for September 20 and, accordingly, the selectors picked him for India A for the upcoming One-Day series against Australia A starting October 6. "This is very unfortunate but Hardik's latest scan reports have revealed an injury to his right shin. He has been advised complete rest for a period of two weeks. BCCI's medical panel head Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala has seen his reports and, on his return from Japan, will assess him and decide on when he can start his rehabilitation," a BCCI source tracking COE developments told PTI on condition of anonymity. The New Zealand T20I series starts on October 22, followed by an ODI series. There is no chance of Hardik making a comeback by then. It is understood that the BCCI wanted Pandya to travel with the squad to Japan for the Asian Games and the BCCI's operations team had taken his passport for visa-related work. However, just before the start of the Afghanistan T20I series, he suddenly developed a shooting pain around his knee while doing his fielding drills. He, in fact, took a break and decided to take a few days' rest. However, just as he was ready to get a fitness certificate, the pain resurfaced and scans revealed that there was an injury. The 32-year-old Pandya has been based out of Bengaluru since the end of the IPL and now trains at the Centre of Excellence, having relocated to the Garden City. But over the course of the last four months, at least thrice (Afghanistan ODIs, England T20Is and now Australia A), the all-rounder has suffered a fresh niggle, which has proved to be an impediment to his comeback. With the New Zealand series also out of his way, Pandya will now have to wait for the Zimbabwe ODIs if he is fit to play, or perhaps check his fitness in the Vijay Hazare Trophy or the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

SVIS U-14 BOYS WIN CBSE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP, QUALIFY FOR NATIONALS



Tirupati, September , 2026: Sree Vidyanikethan International School (SVIS), Tirupati, founded by Dr. M. Mohan Babu, renowned actor and educationist, has added another achievement to its sporting record, with its U-14 Boys Basketball Team emerging as the CBSE Cluster VII Champion for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana at the championship held in Hyderabad. Competing against 188 teams from across the two states, the team secured the top spot and has now qualified to represent SVIS at the CBSE National Basketball Championship in Punjab. The cluster victory also reflects the growing strength of SVIS's school-level sports programme, supported by structured training, dedicated coaching and sporting infrastructure that enables students to compete at increasingly higher levels. The CBSE National Basketball Championship, scheduled to be held from September 29 to October 6, 2026, in Bathinda, Punjab, will bring together qualifying teams from CBSE clusters across India. The national-level tournament will give the young athletes an opportunity to compete against leading school teams from across the country and gain valuable experience on a larger competitive platform. Commenting on the achievement, Vinay Maheshwari, ED and Trustee, Sree Vidyanikethan Educational Trust, said, "It is an immensely proud moment to see our U-14 team compete with such confidence and emerge as Cluster Champions against some of the strongest teams from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The players have demonstrated remarkable discipline, composure and team spirit, particularly at this early stage of their sporting journey. Beyond the title, we are delighted to see them gaining the competitive exposure and experience that will help them grow as athletes in the years ahead. I wish the entire team the very best as they carry this momentum into the national championship."

Virender Sehwag's Massive Statement On Fan Interest After Virat Kohli's Test Retirement: "More People Are Watching"



Indian cricket has seen some stalwarts retire from Tests in recent years, with Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Ravichandran Ashwin all quitting the format. Three pillars of India's red-ball success over the last decade, their departure has left big shoes to fill in the team. Concerns have also been raised over possible decline in fan-interest due to the retirement of the trio. However, legendary India opener dismissed any worry regarding fan interest going down, implying that the sport's popularity does not rely on a few stars. "Log kehte zaroor hain, unke fans kehte hain ki hum Virat Kohli ke liye cricket dekhte hain ya Rohit Sharma ke liye dekhte hain. Par aisa toh Sunil Gavaskar ke liye bhi kaha jata tha, Kapil Dev, Sachin Tendulkar ke liye bhi kaha jata tha (People do say that they watch cricket just for Virat Kohli or Rohit Sharma. But the same thing used to be said for Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev and Sachin Tendulkar)," Sehwag said, in an interaction with News18. "Yet, people are still watching as much cricket as they used to before. In fact, more people are watching now because earlier it used to come on TV, but now it is available on mobile phones. It has become even easier," he added. Sehwag revealed that many fans had approached him and said that they don't watch cricket since his retirement, but he'd refused to believe such claims. "So, to say that if this player retires, we won't watch cricket anymore, maybe some of their fans won't. I have also heard people say, 'You stopped playing, so we stopped watching,' but that's not really the case. They probably still watch a little bit.

"Agar cricketers se hi game chal rahi hoti, toh ab tak band ho jati (If only cricketers were the ones driving the game, it would've stopped by now)," Sehwag stated. It has been nearly a year and a half since Kohli and Rohit called it quits from Test cricket. Since then, the captaincy has been taken over by Shubman Gill.

Austin Theory And Maxxine Dupri Named WWE Star's Favorite Couple In WWE



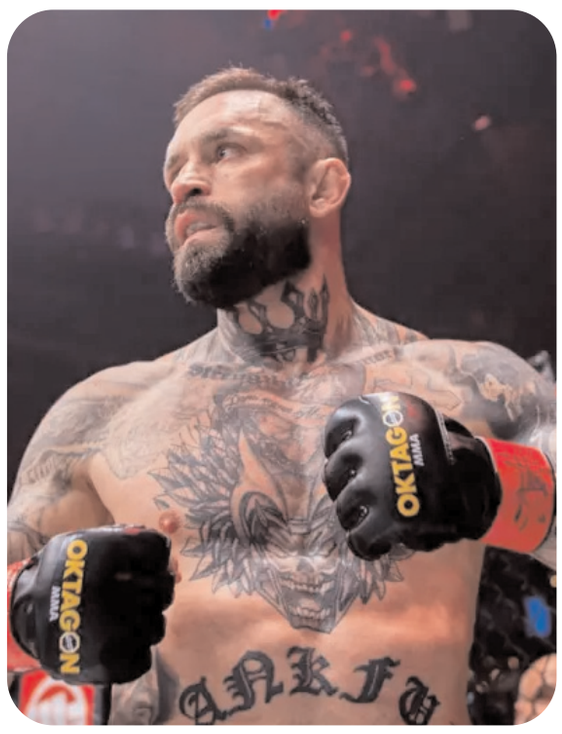
Bronson Reed has picked Austin Theory and Maxxine Dupri as his favourite couple in WWE, giving the Vision duo an endorsement from one of their stablemates. Reed shared a photo with Theory and Dupri on Instagram and captioned it, "Just hanging with my favorite couple." Theory and Dupri are an on-screen couple inside The Vision, after Dupri helped Theory and Bron Breakker regain the World Tag Team Championships from The Street Profits on the July 6, 2026 episode of Monday Night RAW. Reed's post focuses on the pair. The group currently feuds with Oba Femi on WWE programming. Bronson Reed names Theory and Dupri his favourite couple Theory and Dupri became aligned with The Vision on the July 6 episode of RAW. Dupri played a role in Theory and Breakker getting the World Tag Team Championships back from The Street Profits, bringing her into the faction with Reed. The Vision includes Reed, Theory, Dupri, and Breakker, while Rollins is no longer leading the group after Reed and Breakker removed him from the faction.

The MMA fighter helping Brighton - and filling stadiums

Christian Eckerlin laughs modestly when asked if he feels he has contributed to Brighton's success.

Last season, the 39-year-old MMA fighter was brought in by the Premier League club to help with their training for set-pieces.

Eckerlin was a professional footballer in Germany before transitioning to MMA, and says he taught Brighton players "wrestling, head control, hip control, and how to push back against opponents". Days before this interview with Eckerlin took place, the Seagulls moved up to third in the Premier League after beating champions and set-piece kings Arsenal 3-0.



CARLOS ALCARAZ HELPS EUROPE INTO 3-1 LAVER CUP LEAD



Carlos Alcaraz helped Europe take a 3-1 lead on the first day of the Laver Cup as the Spaniard teamed up with Jakub Mensik for a doubles victory. The world number three, playing in only his second event since a four-month injury lay-off, impressed the watching Rod Laver and Roger Federer as he and Mensik defeated Alexander Bublik and Taylor Fritz 6-4, 6-4. Alcaraz plans to play fewer events going forward, blaming an "impossible" tennis calendar for a rising number of injuries in the sport. But the seven-time Grand Slam champion said before the competition that his "love" for team events helps him "bring my joy back on the court, bring my joy back on playing tennis." He and Mensik were all smiles as just one break of serve sufficed in each set to earn an opening day lead. Alcaraz and Alexander Zverev, the reigning French and US Open champion, were both kept in reserve by European captain Yannick Noah earlier on Friday. Casper Ruud earned the first point of the tournament by edging out Francisco Cerundolo 10-8 in a deciding tie-break. Brandon Nakashima responded for Team World, also edging out Mensik in a tie-break after the first two sets were shared. Rising Spanish star Rafael Jodar was more convincing on his Laver Cup debut with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Bublik. The first side to 13 points will be crowned winners of the three-day event at London's O2. Each match is worth one point on Friday, two on Saturday and three on Sunday.

George Russell Fends Off Max Verstappen, Wins Azerbaijan Grand Prix To Trim Kimi Antonelli's WDC Lead



George Russell held off Max Verstappen for his first Formula 1 win in three months to cut into Mercedes teammate Kimi Antonelli's standings lead at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix on Saturday. Russell started on pole, built a big lead and defended on two safety-car restarts before facing a dramatic late challenge from Verstappen, who charged through the field from eighth to second and nearly chased down Russell on the last straight. "Every race since the (mid-season) break I have gone from strength to strength and I feel more like myself again," Russell said. He cut Antonelli's 81-point lead to 66. A last-lap crash by Cadillac's Valtteri Bottas forced Russell and Verstappen to slow and the Dutch driver hunted down Russell right after that, closing fast as the finish line approached. Verstappen ultimately was less than two-tenths of a second behind as he remains winless this year for the first time since his rookie 2015 season. "I lost the boost, I had no power. Thought he was going to get us," a relieved Russell said after securing his third win of the season. Verstappen's Red Bull teammate Isack Hadjar was third on his return from a wrist fracture which had been causing him pain earlier in the week. "I am completely satisfied even if it is a bit numb," he said. On a miserable day for McLaren, defending champion Lando Norris was taken out in a crash started by Franco Colapinto before Oscar Piastri went off-track defending third place and ended up 14th. Antonelli started 16th after a qualifying crash but ended up fifth as he limited the damage to his title lead, swerving to avoid a three-car crash ahead of him and later overtaking Lewis Hamilton. The Italian had a lucky day as he benefited from a string of mistakes from drivers ahead, without being swept up in their incidents. Antonelli swerved to avoid a three-car crash which took out Norris, caused by Alpine's Colapinto plowing into his own teammate Pierre Gasly.

DILJIT DOSANJH TO PERFORM AT NARENDRA MODI STADIUM ON NOVEMBER 21

Punjabi superstar Diljit Dosanjh's Aura World Tour is set to make its India debut at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium on November 21, 2026. The show marks a grand homecoming for an artiste whose music and live performances have taken him from Punjabi music's cultural heartlands to the world's biggest stages. Talking about the same, Diljit Dosanjh said, "Duniya da sabton vadda stadium India de vich hai te gore group ne ohnu sell out kitta respect for them. India de vich sabton vadda stadium hove te Panjabi uthe na aun eh taan phir ho nahi sakda (The world's largest stadium is in India, and the white group sold it out, respect for them. If there is the biggest stadium in India and Punjabis don't come there, then that can't happen)". The Aura World Tour brings together the music, energy and spectacle that define Dosanjh's live performances, translating the scale of his international shows into a stadium experience for Indian audiences. The Ahmedabad show marks another milestone in Diljit's career, as he becomes the first Indian artiste to headline a solo concert of this magnitude at the India's largest stadium. Fans in Ahmedabad can look forward to a high-energy set spanning Dosanjh's biggest hits and fan favourites, including chart-toppers like 'G.O.A.T.', 'Ikk Kudi', 'Lalkara', 'Lover', '5 Taara' 'Case', 'Water', among others. The show is Co-produced and promoted by BookMyShow Live. Diljit began his music career with Punjabi albums before establishing himself through hits such as 'Do You Know', 'Patiala Peg' and 'Lover' alongside a solid film career. He has worked in Punjabi and Hindi cinema. His 2024 Dil-Luminati Tour expanded his global concert footprint, including a sold-out show at Vancouver's BC Place. He is known for combining Punjabi music, pop culture and fashion with a distinctly global presentation. The announcement came during Diljit's ongoing tour stop at London's Wembley Stadium, where he made history as the first Punjabi artist to perform at the iconic venue. While interacting with the crowd, Diljit revealed details about his next India show and also gave a shoutout to Coldplay for previously selling out the Ahmedabad stadium. The singer said, "The biggest stadium is in India- Narendra Modi Stadium. Ek gore group ne waha pe sell out kar diya tha (Coldplay). Respect for them, bohot mubarkan. India mein stadium ho, aur Punjabi udhar na ho, yeh toh phir ho nahi sakta." He then confirmed the date of the Ahmedabad concert, saying, "We are doing Narendra Modi Stadium on 21 November 2026."





Shruti Haasan Rules the Frame in Florals

Shruti Haasan's latest look is turning heads, and it arrives just as her upcoming line-up gets exciting. The actress will soon be seen in Train alongside Vijay Sethupathi, and in the pan-Indian Telugu drama Aakasamlo Oka Tara with Dulquer Salmaan. Against a moody, textured backdrop, her dreamy upward gaze feels straight out of a film still.

Shruti picked a black midi dress featuring a delicate print of cream roses and tiny daisies. The corset-style bodice, lace-trimmed sweetheart neckline and flowy, flared skirt give the outfit a vintage romantic touch.

The styling stays minimal, loose waves, drop earrings, statement rings and pointed black pumps. Paired with a natural-glow makeup look, this floral corset moment is solid fashion inspiration for festive evenings and cocktail nights alike. If we were to choose wearing one thing for the rest of our lives, it would certainly be a floral printed saree. The grace of the beautiful six-yard is known to all humanity but a floral one has a special place in our hearts. Wouldn't it be lovely to walk around as the human personification of a beautiful garden? Shruti Haasan surely looks the part. We're convinced that heavenly gardens look just as beautiful as Shruti Haasan's saree by Mrunalini Rao. The delicate floral prints stand out on the lightweight fabric that drapes effortlessly on the stunning actor. The look features a contrasting turquoise blouse with matching floral patterns made on it. What is an Indian outfit without Indian jewellery? To complete her look, she pairs silver dangling earrings from The Trinkaholic.

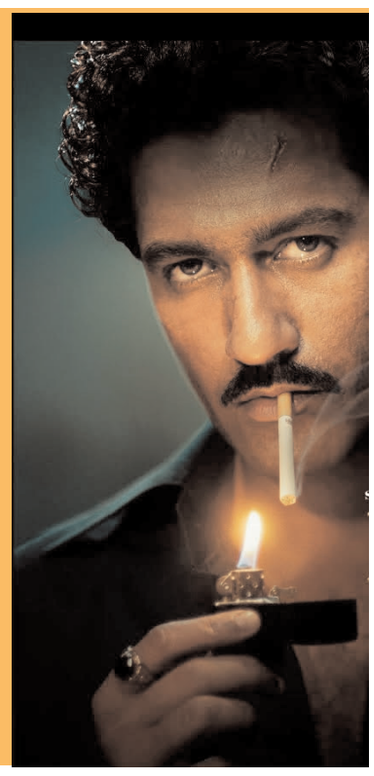
VICKY KAUSHAL'S FIRST LOOK POSTER FROM SANJAY LEELA BHANSALI'S LOVE & WAR IS OUT

Redefining Intensity With A Refreshing Aura Like Never Before

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's much-anticipated Love & War is one of the biggest films of the year and is going to set a new benchmark in Indian cinema. With three of the biggest stars, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, and Vicky Kaushal, coming together for the first time in a mega SLB film, the film is a cinematic spectacle like no other. While the excitement for the film is at an all-time high, the makers treated the audience to the first-look posters of Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, which arrived like a storm and garnered tremendous love. Now, Vicky Kaushal's first-look poster has been unveiled, leaving us absolutely stunned.

Vicky Kaushal, seen with a cigarette and a lighter, sporting an intense gaze, looks nothing short of extraordinary in his first look. The superstar brings an undeniable edge and commanding presence to the character. We have never seen him in a shade like this before, and he is absolutely killing it. The poster says it all — when an actor steps into the world of a Bhansali hero, he emerges as something completely unexpected, and Vicky's look stands true to that. With his undeniable charm blending seamlessly with an intense gaze, this is the kind of magic only SLB can create with a first look.

With Ranbir, Alia and now Vicky, the three first-look posters have offered three distinct glimpses into the world of Love & War, each bringing its own personality and visual language. Vicky's poster, in particular, adds a striking intensity to the canvas, giving audiences a glimpse of the intriguing dynamic and layered world that Sanjay Leela Bhansali is creating with the film.



MALAVIKA MOHANAN'S DESI LOOK LEAVES SPEECHLESS

Malavika Mohanan had a rough patch at the box office with back-to-back disappointments in The Raja Saab and Sardaar 2, both failing to click with audiences despite the buzz around them. The setbacks have put a temporary dent in her recent theatrical run.

But there's good news on the horizon. Malavika has been roped in for Pocket Novel, the upcoming project helmed by acclaimed director Thiagarajan Kumararaja, known for cult favourites Aaranya Kaandam and Super Deluxe. The film marks his third directorial outing and has already got cinephiles curious.

Meanwhile, Malavika continues to keep her fashion game strong. Dressed in a soft pink embroidered saree with statement jhumkas, she strikes an elegant pose in a sunlit corridor, proving that even amid box office lows, her style quotient remains a consistent high.



THE TRAILER OF 'SIGMA' IS VERY ENTERTAINING: CHIRANJEEVI

Sundeep Kishan's action-adventure heist comedy entertainer 'Sigma'. Jason Sanjay is making his directorial debut with this film. Faria Abdullah is the heroine. Produced by Subhaskaran under the prestigious Lyca Productions banner, the film is creating huge buzz with promotional content. While Mythri Movie Distributors Limited is releasing the film in Coastal Andhra and Telangana, NVR will release the film in the seeded region. It will hit theaters worldwide on October 2. On this occasion, the makers organized a pre-release event.



CHAKKORA – LUNAR LOVE BIRD SET FOR A GRAND WORLDWIDE RELEASE ON OCTOBER 9

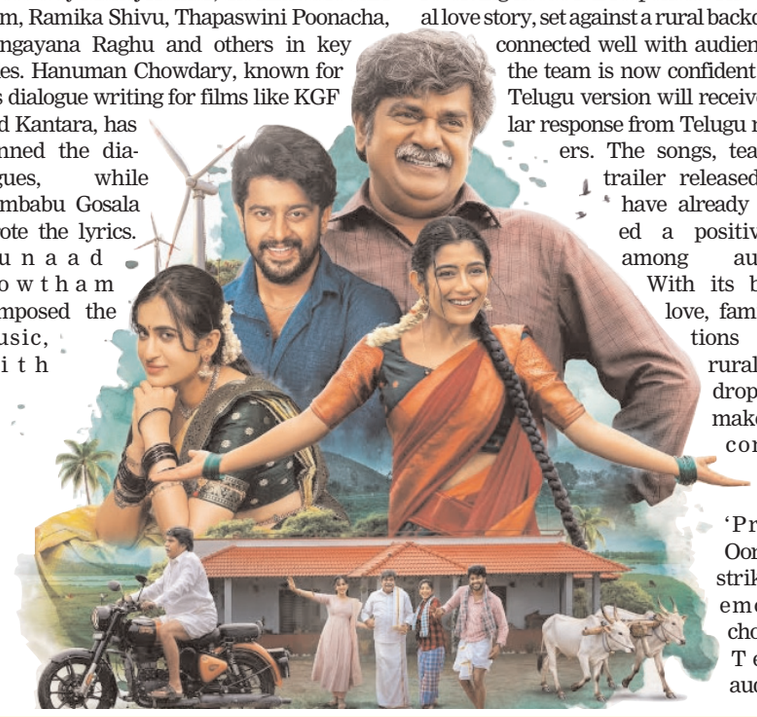


The grand trailer launch event of Chakkora – Lunar Love Bird was held in Hyderabad with hero Aakash Jagannadh attending as the chief guest. Produced by Dr. Chintada Hemarao under the High Joy Commercials banner and presented under VIP – Vintage Iconic Pictures, the mass poetry musical love story is written and directed by Manga Srinivas. Introducing Sravan and Malaika T. Vasupal as a fresh romantic pair, the film is gearing up for a grand worldwide theatrical release on October 9 through Sri Lakshmi Pictures.

'Premane Oorilo' Set for Grand Release on October 2 on Gandhi Jayanti

'Premane Oorilo', produced by Chandu Srinivas, Suresh Kondeti, and Mamatha Devendra M under the banners of Maharatna Productions, SK Pictures, and Vanilla Entertainments, is gearing up for a grand Telugu release on October 2, on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti. Written and directed by Manoj Kumar, the film stars Shri Ram, Ramika Shivu, Thapaswini Poonacha, Rangayana Raghu and others in key roles. Hanuman Chowdary, known for his dialogue writing for films like KGF and Kantara, has penned the dialogues, while Rambabu Gosala wrote the lyrics. Sunaad Gowtham composed the music, with Rajkanth SK handling cinematography and Harshith Prabhu editing.

The film was released in Kannada on September 25 and has received an encouraging response from audiences. The makers state that the film is witnessing strong patronage in Karnataka, with several shows receiving house-full responses. The emotional love story, set against a rural backdrop, has connected well with audiences, and the team is now confident that the Telugu version will receive a similar response from Telugu moviegoers. The songs, teaser and trailer released so far have already generated a positive buzz among audiences. With its blend of love, family emotions and a rural backdrop, the makers are confident that 'Premane Oorilo' will strike an emotional chord with Telugu audiences.



Neha Shetty's Street-Style Swag Is Effortlessly Cool



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