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KOCHI I VIJAYAWADA I CHENNAI I BENGALURU I HYDERABAD

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OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

26-09-2026



Total pilgrims :82,181
Tonsures : 37,633
Hundi kanukalu : 3.94 CR
Laddu sale... 4.89Lac
Annaprasadam.2.82 Lac
Ashwini hospital..3,893
Present Situation on 27-09-2026:
Waiting Compartments... Outside line at Silathoranam.

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



World News

US-China tariff plan covers $30bn each

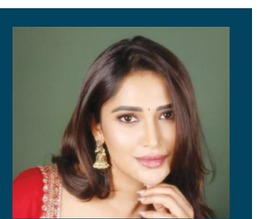
Washington : The United States and China have approved lists of goods worth roughly $30 billion on each side for possible tariff cuts, according to documents released after President Xi Jinping's visit to Washington. The lower tariffs have yet to take effect.

Asiad: Esha Lifts Shooting Gloom, PT Usha's 42-Year-Old Record Broken



SPORTS NEWS

i feel lucky to have acted in tatvam



CINEMA PAGE

SCAN FOR E-PAPER

INBRIEF

1,500 KEDARNATH PILGRIMS RESCUED

Dehradun, Sep 28: Nearly 1,500 pilgrims stranded at Chirbasa on the Kedarnath trek route were rescued and escorted safely to Gaurikund on Monday following a landslide, officials said. Joint teams of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and District Disaster Response Force (DDRF) carried out the rescue operation after the pilgrims were stranded late on Sunday night, the SDRF said in a statement. Sonprayag police received information that several pilgrims were stranded in the Chirbasa area, located around 3 km from Gaurikund, after a landslide blocked the route.

DRI BUSTS GOLD SMUGGLING SYNDICATE

New Delhi (TSIT): The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has busted a pan-India gold smuggling syndicate that allegedly used courier networks to transport smuggled gold across the country, seizing 6.61 kg of foreign-origin gold worth around Rs 10.36 crore and arresting 11 persons, including an alleged key mastermind. According to an official statement issued by the Finance Ministry on Monday, the operation was launched on the basis of specific intelligence inputs against a network allegedly smuggling gold through the Indo-Bangladesh border in West Bengal and Assam and subsequently distributing it to major markets through courier consignments.

INTERNET SUSPENDED AMID LPU PROTESTS

Chandigarh (TSIT) Internet services have been suspended in and around Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Punjab's Phagwara following violent student protests over an unverified allegation of sexual assault on the campus. he move came a day after student protests escalated into vandalism, arson and a prolonged blockade of National Highway-44 outside the university. The agitation began after claims circulated on social media that an outsider had allegedly raped a female student inside the LPU campus. Police have not found evidence to substantiate the allegation so far, while an FIR has been registered and a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed to investigate the matter.

SC takes suo motu cognisance of recurring rape, sexual assault cases in Delhi-NCR



New Delhi, Sep 28 : The Supreme Court on Monday took suo motu cognisance of recent cases of rape and sexual assault reported in Delhi-NCR, including the alleged gang rape of a 17-year-old girl at a park near Delhi's Kalkaji Mandir and the alleged sexual assault of a minor inside a moving sleeper bus.A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K. Vinod Chandran expressed concern over the recurring incidents of sexual offences in the National Capital Region and directed the apex court registry to register a suo motu public interest litigation (PIL) on the issue and list it for hearing.

The Justice Pardiwala-led Bench observed that the incidents, considered alongside other recent reports of sexual offences across Delhi-NCR, raised serious concerns regarding the functioning of law-enforcement and public administrative authorities responsible for ensuring public safety. The Supreme Court stressed that the right to live with dignity and without fear of violence forms an intrinsic part of the fundamental right to life and personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

It further observed that public spaces, including parks, roads, buses, metro stations, subways and footbridges, cannot be allowed to become high-risk zones because of inadequate lighting, surveillance, patrolling or other preventable administrative deficiencies.

The top court called for a measurable response from the authorities and stressed the need to fix accountability on those entrusted with the prevention of crime, maintenance of public order and protection of vulnerable persons. The Supreme Court's intervention comes amid a series of sexual offences reported in Delhi and the adjoining National Capital Region in recent weeks.In the latest incident that triggered concern, a 17-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped by three men posing as policemen at a park near Kalkaji Mandir in Delhi. According to police, the girl had gone to Kalkaji Mandir with a male friend on September 22 and later entered a nearby park. The three accused allegedly approached them, claimed to be police personnel, threatened them and took their mobile phones.

The survivor later told police that two of the men took her towards an isolated part of the park, where she was allegedly sexually assaulted. She also alleged that one of the accused, identified as Asif, displayed a firearm while threatening her. Following a PCR call, police reached the spot. Asif was subsequently apprehended after an encounter and sustained a gunshot injury. Efforts to trace the other two accused were underway. The Supreme Court's suo moto proceedings also cover the alleged sexual assault of a 16-year-old girl inside a moving sleeper bus in the Greater Noida-Delhi region.

The incident, reported in August, involved a girl from Uttar Pradesh's Mainpuri who had travelled towards Noida and later boarded a sleeper bus after missing her stop.The driver and conductor of the bus allegedly sexually assaulted her and later abandoned her near Kashmere Gate in Delhi.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) had earlier taken suo motu cognisance of the incident and issued notices to the Police Commissioners of Delhi and Gautam Buddha Nagar and the Superintendent of Police, Mainpuri, seeking reports on the investigation and compensation, if any, provided to the survivor.Police arrested the driver and conductor and seized the sleeper bus for forensic examination. Investigators also collected CCTV footage along the route to establish the movement of the vehicle and the sequence of events.

Quality Education, Job Skills Are Telangana's Priorities: CM Revanth



Hyderabad ■ (TSIT):

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said quality education, nutrition, and job skills were central to his government's plans for young people. Speaking at The Conclave 2026, organised by Assam-based Pratidin Media Network in Delhi, he said government schools were being strengthened to match private schools.

The Chief Minister said Telangana was focusing on language and communication skills from the early years through Class 12, followed by training linked to employment. English proficiency would help capable students from rural areas express themselves with confidence and pursue better opportunities, he said. Reddy said about 1.8 lakh engineering students graduate in Telangana each year, but only around 20,000 secure jobs suited to their qualifications. The Young India Skills University was established to close that skills gap, he said. Anand Mahindra chairs its board, with Srini Raju as vice-chairperson and industry leaders involved in designing courses relevant to employers.

The state had also upgraded ITIs into Advanced Technology Centres through an agreement with the Tata Group, the Chief Minister said. According to him, Tata provides 86 per cent of the funding and the state contributes 14 per cent.

Indian Coast Guard



Indian Coast Guard responds to maritime distress off PARADIP, in Odisha. PIB Photo..

FAC order raises questions over SC welfare charge

Statistics Department officer on deputation to SC Corporation was given additional charge of a government DSCDO post; 2021 circular, FR-49 provisions and subsequent appointment of a new ED put the administrative trail under scrutiny
Collector's September 2025 order placed K. Srinivasa Rao in full additional charge of DSCDO
SC Development Commissioner's 2021 circular says employees working in government corporations shall not be given FAC of government posts
But records show Rao's parent department is Economics and Statistics, raising a key question over how the restriction applies to a government officer serving a corporation on deputation
Government appointed V. Upendra as Executive Director, Mahabubabad, in September 2026; current distribution of powers needs clarity..



MAHABUBABAD ■ (TSIT):

A series of government orders and departmental proceedings has raised questions over the administrative arrangement under which an officer belonging to the Economics and Statistics Department, while serving on deputation in the Scheduled Castes Cooperative Development Corporation, was also placed in Full Additional Charge (FAC) of the District Scheduled Castes Development Officer (DSCDO), Mahabubabad.

The issue assumes significance in the light of Fundamental Rule 49 and a circular issued by the Commissioner of Scheduled Castes Development Department in October 2021, which specifically dealt with FAC arrangements for DSCDO and ASCDO posts.The records also acquire fresh relevance after the State government, through G.O.Rt. No.233 dated September 11, 2026, posted V. Upendra as Executive Director of the District Scheduled Castes Cooperative Development Society, Mahabubabad. The documents provided show that the government required officers covered by the order to join their promoted posts within 15 days of receiving the posting orders.

Pasted textThe sequence leaves several administrative questions requiring clarification from the competent authorities: what was the legal basis for the DSCDO FAC arrangement, whether the required ratification was obtained, whether any further approval became necessary after the initial period, and what is the present division of responsibilities following the posting of a new Executive Director.

More on Page-6

Vijay gift gold rings to newborns

MADURAI ■ (TSIT):



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay launched the Thai Maaman Gold Ring Scheme at Government Rajaji Hospital on Monday, presenting one-gram gold rings to newborn babies and meeting their families during a visit that drew crowds across the city.

Wearing a white veshti and shirt, CM Vijay began the distribution on stage by placing rings on the fingers of three babies as their mothers sat beside him. He asked the mothers to sit on chairs and carefully placed the rings on the babies' fingers before wishing them.

He then stepped down from the stage to meet 12 other families seated with their infants in the auditorium. CM Vijay handed over rings, held several babies in his arms and spoke to their parents.

Some parents asked the Chief Minister to name their children. Vijay accepted their requests, held the infants and repeated each name three times, following the traditional naming practice. He also posed for selfies and shook hands with mothers who approached him.

SC refuses stay on UPI MDR

NEW DELHI ■ (TSIT):

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to grant an interim stay on the imposition of merchant discount rate (MDR) on specified UPI person-to-merchant transactions above Rs 2,000, which is set to come into effect from October 15.The top court agreed to examine the challenge to the imposition of MDR and asked the Centre, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to respond within four weeks to the plea. The apex court was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by advocate Anjan Datta challenging the Centre's decision to impose MDR on specified Unified Payments Interface (UPI) person-to-merchant transactions above Rs 2,000.

Brent may hit $120 if Hormuz disruption deepens

NEW DELHI ■ (TSIT):

Brickwork Ratings sees oil averaging $95-$110 in H2 FY27, with prolonged supply disruptions posing upside risks

Brent crude prices are likely to remain elevated through the second half of FY27 and could rise to $120 per barrel with geopolitical tensions in West Asia continuing to pose significant upside risks to global energy markets, a report said on Monday.

According to a report by Brickwork Ratings, in the base-case scenario to which it assigns a 55 per cent probability, sees Brent crude averaging between $95 and $110 a barrel in the second half of FY27.

It further assumes that disruptions in the region persist while pipeline and shipping operations recover only partially.

"Brent futures rose about 20 per cent in a month to around $109 on September 15, while physical Brent reached $130.80, indicating tight supply," said Rajeev Sharan, Head of Research at Brickwork Ratings.

According to him, Brent is expected to trade in a broad $100-110 per barrel range over the next one to two months, although risks remain skewed to the upside.

CM Shivakumar hints at national role

BENGALURU ■ (TSIT):



Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has indicated that his political ambitions could extend beyond Karnataka, saying his immediate priority is to bring the Congress back to power in the state before considering a role in national politics.

In an interview with a Kannada television channel, Shivakumar spoke about his political journey, his relationship with former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, factionalism within the Congress, and his equation with the party's central leadership.

Asked about his next political goal, Shivakumar said his first objective was to ensure the Congress returned to power in Karnataka under his leadership. He added that he would subsequently spend some time in Delhi, fuelling speculation about a possible national role.

Shivakumar recalled an interaction with former Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who had suggested he consider contesting for the AICC president's post.

Ranka seeks CEC Gyanesh's resignation

GUWAHATI: CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka on Monday asserted that the outfit would not back down from its demand for the resignation of CEC Gyanesh Kumar over the alleged exclusion of 13 crore names from electoral rolls and challenged him to clear the allegations against him before the press and the public.

K'taka CM seeks nod for Bengaluru projects

New Delhi : Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has sought the Defence Ministry's intervention to expedite clearances and land-related issues involving several major urban infrastructure and development projects in Bengaluru during his meeting with the minister in New Delhi on Monday.



The Chief Minister appreciated the cooperation extended by the Ministry of Defence to the Greater Bengaluru Authority, the five Bengaluru City Corporations and other urban local bodies on defence land-related matters, while flagging seven pending issues requiring expeditious resolution.

One of the key proposals is the development of around 730 acres of Defence land near the Iblur Firing Range as a permanent public park and lung space for Bengaluru. The State has proposed that the land be used exclusively as a public park, without commercial development, while ownership remains with the Defence authorities.

The Chief Minister has also sought a practical solution for 10 notified slums located on about 43.838 acres of Defence land in Bengaluru. The State has proposed transferring government land of equivalent area at a suitable alternative location, citing difficulties in identifying Equal Value Land within Bengaluru. It has also sought urgent permission for repair and redevelopment of the slum areas, particularly as monsoon rains have caused flooding.

Another major issue concerns building height restrictions around HAL Airport and the Air Force Station Yelahanka. The State has sought a review of restrictions within the 20-km radius of the defence airports, while balancing flight safety with Bengaluru's development requirements.

K'taka CM Shivakumar seeks Centre's help on water projects

New Delhi : Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has urged Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil to intervene and expedite clearances for several key water resource projects, including the Rs.16,745-crore Mekedatu Balancing Reservoir and Drinking Water Project.

In a letter handed over to Patil personally at his New Delhi residence, Shivakumar has stated that timely decisions on pending water-related matters were essential to address Karnataka's drinking water, irrigation and drought-mitigation requirements and enable the State to utilise its legitimate share of water resources.



The State has sought the early appraisal and clearance of the Mekedatu project DPR by the Central Water Commission (CWC). Karnataka submitted the DPR, along with its compliance report, to the CWC on August 13, 2026, for appraisal. Shivakumar said the State had been pursuing the matter with the CWC and requested that the appraisal be completed on priority. On the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II (KWDT-II) Award, Shivakumar sought urgent action from the Ministry of Jal Shakti to move and implead itself before the Supreme Court and seek early publication of the award in the Gazette. He pointed out that the matter had come up before the Supreme Court on September 23 and had been posted along with pending civil appeals for November 4, 2026. Early notification of the award, he said, would enable Karnataka to utilise its allocated share of water and take up associated irrigation projects.

The Chief Minister also sought Central assistance for the Upper Bhadra Project, whose revised cost estimate of Rs.21,167.93 crore was appraised at the Ministry of Jal Shakti's Advisory Committee meeting on March 20, 2026.He requested the Union Minister to recommend to the 16th Finance Commission that the project be included under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) and that Central assistance be released at the earliest.

SpaceX's Starship reaches orbit, deploys 26 next-generation Starlink satellites

New Delhi, Sep 28 : SpaceX achieved a major milestone in space exploration on Monday as its Starship spacecraft successfully reached orbit, marking another significant step in the company's efforts to develop a fully reusable launch system capable of supporting future missions to the Moon and Mars. The launch was not without challenges. During the ascent phase, one of the vehicle's six Raptor Vacuum (RVac) engines shut down, creating tense moments for mission controllers.

However, after reviewing the performance and health of the remaining engines, engineers decided to proceed with the mission and continue the spacecraft's journey into orbit. According to SpaceX, Starship is scheduled to complete six orbits around Earth during a flight lasting about 10 hours before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean west of Chile. "All 26 Starlink V3 operational satellites deployed and operating nominally," it said in a post on social media platform X. A key objective of the mission was the deployment of 26 Starlink V3 satellites, the latest generation of SpaceX's internet constellation. The company said the new satellites are expected to significantly improve connectivity speeds, network reliability and overall system capacity worldwide. The Starlink V3 satellites represent a major technological upgrade over previous generations. SpaceX said each satellite is designed to support up to 1 terabit per second (Tbps) of downlink capacity and 160 gigabits per second (Gbps) of uplink capacity, translating into a tenfold increase in downlink capability and a 22-fold improvement in uplink performance compared with the Starlink V2 satellites.Following deployment from Starship, the satellites will unfold their antennas, extend solar arrays and establish initial communications with ground stations and the broader Starlink network through radio frequency and laser links.

NICE Road dispute spans three decades

Beneath competing allegations lies a complicated paper trail spanning decades, court judgments, government orders and committee proceedings

BENGALURU: Karnataka's most contentious infrastructure project is once again at the centre of a political and legal storm. The Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE) project was conceived in the 1990s as a public-private partnership to ease congestion on Bengaluru's roads to Mysuru. The original plan envisaged a 111-km expressway, a 41-km peripheral road, a link road, and five townships.

Only part of the project was completed. The peripheral road and portions of the link road were built, while only about 5 km of the proposed expressway materialised. The townships were not developed as envisaged.

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has urged motorists not to pay toll on NICE Road, while former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda has demanded that toll collection be stopped. The controversy intensified after a Karnataka High Court judgment of July 29, 2026, described the project as one of the "biggest scams" in the State.

Yet the broader history is more complicated. The project dates to a Memorandum of Understanding signed on February 20, 1995, followed by the Framework Agreement on April 3, 1997. Structured on a build-own-operate-transfer model, NICE was to mobilise funds, construct infrastructure, recover investment through tolls, and transfer assets to the government.

Allegations that the project was a vehicle for real-estate development have already been examined by courts. In 1998, the Karnataka High Court upheld the Framework Agreement. In 2005, the High Court held that the State Government's claim of being deceived was false and directed implementation. The Supreme Court upheld that finding in 2006 in State of Karnataka v. All India Manufacturers Organisation, rejecting the fraud allegation and criticising the government's conduct. The toll is governed by a Toll Concession Agreement signed on September 4, 2000, providing rates based on 1998 levels with annual increases up to 10 per cent. A comparison of notified rates shows increases did not exceed the permitted ceiling. The toll regime was challenged in 2009; the High Court dismissed the petition, and the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal in 2011.

On the allegation of 13,000 acres of excess land, government records show the overall project required about 20,000 acres, of which 7,124 acres were handed over and 13,609 acres were not. A separate 2010 affidavit referred to 554 acres of excess land relating to the peripheral road.

Records from KIADB show NICE deposited approximately Rs.359.99 crore towards compensation between January 2003 and May 2025. A separate dispute concerns developed house sites promised to certain landowners. Government correspondence from 2023 shows NICE seeking approval to develop about 480 sites near Kengeri, which was rejected as residential development was not permitted there.

The incomplete expressway remains the strongest visual argument against NICE, but government records indicate land acquisition repeatedly obstructed the project. Acquisition was halted in 2004. In 2009, the Supreme Court found the State in contempt over failure to implement its commitments. The records show the failure to construct the remaining expressway cannot simply be attributed to NICE without accounting for the State's failed to utilise its allocated share of water and take up associated irrigation projects.

Dr. Vikram Biligiri elected IMA Bengaluru secretary

BENGALURU: Renowned city surgeon Dr. Vikram S. Biligiri has been elected as the new General Secretary of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) Bangalore City Branch for the 2026-27 term.

He was selected for this vital leadership role during the association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the IMA Bhavan in Chamarajpet. Notably, Dr. Biligiri was also recently elected unopposed as the General Secretary of another prestigious local medical institution, the Surgical Society of Bengaluru (SSB).



These significant responsibilities have been entrusted to him in recognition of his extensive experience, remarkable achievements, and deep commitment to the medical and surgical fields. Actively involved in both academic and administrative arenas, Dr. Biligiri is an esteemed Fellow of the American College of Surgeons (FACS).

Throughout his career, he has been honored with numerous national and international fellowships and awards. These accolades serve as a testament to his professional excellence, efficiency, and the immense contributions he has made to both the medical fraternity and the broader social sector.

PVR INOX opens new 4DX venue in Bengaluru

New Delhi: PVR INOX Limited, India's largest and most premium cinema exhibition company, has expanded PVR Soul Space Spirit, Bellandur, with three new auditoriums, including Bengaluru's eighth 4DX experience and two mainstream screens. The addition takes the cinema to seven screens and positions Soul Space Spirit as a more expansive entertainment destination for audiences across the Bellandur–Marathahalli–Varthur–Sarjapur Road corridor. Located on Bengaluru's Outer Ring Road, the property is surrounded by established residential communities and major technology hubs, making it a natural leisure destination for audiences who live and work in the area. The location is listed at Soul Spirit Central Mall, Bellandur, on Outer Ring Road. For over 15 years, PVR Soul Space Spirit has served the Bellandur community. This expansion builds on that legacy by adding more choice, contemporary design and a more immersive way to experience films close to home and work.Making its debut at Soul Space Spirit, Bengaluru's eighth 4DX auditorium brings a new layer of immersion to the destination. Motion-enabled seating and multi-sensory effects are designed to place audiences at the centre of the action, extending the experience beyond the screen.The three new auditoriums have a dedicated entrance on the fifth floor, while the existing four screens will continue to operate on the fourth floor. Across the expanded cinema, guests can enjoy superior laser projection, Dolby Atmos Surround Sound and Next Gen 3D.



India's IPO pipeline at Rs 3.86 lac cr signals sustained capital formation

New Delhi, Sep 28 : India's primary market shifts beyond episodic IPO cycles toward a deeper capital-formation ecosystem, with a mainboard offering pipeline of about Rs 3.86 lakh crore, around 3.5 times the Rs 1.10 lakh crore raised through 84 mainboard IPOs so far this year, an industry chamber said on Monday.

The statement from Association of Investment Bankers of India (AIBI) said the pipeline comprises nearly 130 companies that have received SEBI approval and another about 75 firms that have filed Draft Red Herring Prospectuses and are awaiting approval.

The scale of the pipeline points to sustained issuer interest in public markets and provides significant visibility on the potential depth of India's primary market beyond the capital already raised, the industry body said.

"This depth of supply and stronger participation across QIB, HNI and retail investors, demonstrates that the primary market is becoming a broader and more durable channel for capital formation," said Mahavir Lunawat, Chairman, AIBI. Mainboard IPOs have cumulatively mobilised Rs 8.36 lakh crore between 2016 and 2026 YTD, with annual fundraising rising from Rs 26,494 crore in 2016 to Rs 1.76 lakh crore in 2025.

Khader praises Shankara Cancer Hospital for affordable care

BENGALURU: With cancer treatment remaining financially challenging for many families, Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital has emerged as an institution focused on making quality healthcare accessible to people across economic backgrounds. Health Minister U.T. Khader, who lauded the hospital's services at its 15th anniversary celebrations, appreciated its efforts to provide affordable cancer treatment to the poor and middle-income sections of society. Speaking at the event, Khader observed that the growing patient burden on government hospitals and the high cost of treatment at private healthcare institutions had highlighted the need for affordable and accessible medical services. He said Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital had made a significant contribution in addressing this need through its patient-centred approach.



Appreciating the efforts of Dr. B.S. Srinath, head of the institution and managing trustee, Khader said the hospital's steady growth, supported by donors and dedicated medical professionals, reflected a strong commitment to public service. He emphasised that healthcare should not be viewed merely as a profession but as a humanitarian responsibility, particularly when dealing with patients facing serious illnesses.

He also welcomed the hospital's efforts to strengthen its medical infrastructure through advanced laboratory facilities and modern equipment. The hospital's Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, he said, would further enhance Bengaluru's prospects as a healthcare tourism destination. He assured the institution of the government's support for its continued development. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. B.S. Srinath said the Sri Shankara Cancer Foundation, established in 2008, was founded with the objective of making cancer treatment affordable and accessible to all sections of society. With the generous contributions of donors, construction of the hospital began in 2012 and was completed in 2023.

The 500-bed hospital has treated more than 1.10 lakh patients to date. Over 65,000 patients have benefited from free and subsidised treatment worth approximately Rs.168 crore. The institution has also secured NABH, NABL and JCI accreditations, Srinath said. Highlighting the foundation's preventive healthcare initiatives, he said the Sarva Rakshana programme was conducting door-to-door cancer screening in Chintamani taluk of Chikkaballapur district, with a focus on early detection.

BMSIT&M marks silver jubilee with blood drive

Bengaluru: Marking its silver jubilee, BMS Institute of Technology and Management (BMSIT&M), Bengaluru, organised a blood donation camp in collaboration with Lions Blood Bank, Vijayanagar and Yelahanka, highlighting its commitment to social responsibility and community welfare.



The camp aimed to raise awareness about voluntary blood donation and encourage students and staff to contribute to the life-saving initiative. The programme received an enthusiastic response from the BMSIT&M community, resulting in the collection of 755 units of blood. Principal Dr. Sanjay H. A., Vice-Principal Dr. Anil G. N. and Dean of Student Welfare Dr. Usha B. A. were present on the occasion and encouraged the donors to participate in the initiative.

Medical personnel from Lions Blood Bank extended their support to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the camp. Faculty members and student coordinators from the National Service Scheme (NSS), National Cadet Corps (NCC) and Youth Red Cross (YRC) coordinated the programme.

The collection of 755 units of blood added a meaningful social dimension to the institution's silver jubilee celebrations, reaffirming BMSIT&M's commitment to community service and its efforts to promote voluntary blood donation.

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TN, AP fishermen agree on GPS demarcation

The talks coincide with ongoing central government interventions aimed at addressing the root economic trigger of these clashes - dwindling aquatic resources.

TIRUVALLUR: Representatives of 25 fishing hamlets from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh unanimously resolved to discard age-old boundary markers in favour of modern technology, urging both state officials to implement a permanent GPS tracking mechanism to clearly delineate inter-state fishing zones, a source said on Monday.

The representatives put forth this suggestion agreeing for the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) to demarcate the brackish-water Pulicat Lake, at a joint meeting of officials of both the southern states held at Gummidipoondi Panchayat Union Office, about 45 km from Chennai.

Officials from both the states convened the joint meeting on Saturday to address the long-standing territorial and fishing disputes in the Pulicat Lake area.The talks coincide with ongoing central government interventions aimed at addressing the root economic trigger of these clashes - dwindling aquatic resources. Following representations by Tirupati MP Maddila Gurumoorthy, the Union Fisheries Ministry is executing a Rs 133.11 crore project to open and stabilise the Rayadoruvu sea mouth. The representatives had expressed that the palmyrah tree trunks traditionally used as water-bound border markers rot in the saltwater, leading to frequent boundary confusion and disputes between the fishermen of the two states.

Besides the local fishermen representatives, MLAs from Ponneri and Sulurpetta in Andhra Pradesh, Tiruvallur district collector S Kavitha and Tirupati district additional collector R Govinda Rao, participated in the meeting.



Instead of attempting to place fixed physical markers inside the shifting waters of Pulicat Lake, the proposed technological framework shifts accountability directly to the fishing vessels. Motorised and traditional boats operating across the lake will be fitted with automated GPS transponders. Agencies like the National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR) will establish exact digital maritime coordinates and boats approaching or breaching the boundary line will trigger real-time alerts on board and notify Marine Police control rooms in both Tiruvallur and Tirupati, it was suggested. The deployment aligns with pending amendments to the Tamil Nadu Marine Fisheries Regulation Act, which will make intentionally disabling or tampering with a vessel's transponder a criminal offense, the official pointed out.

At the meeting, community leaders emphasised that a decade-old legacy of violence - tracing back to an April 2014 clash where homes, boats, and nets in Tamil Nadu's Chinna Mangodu village were set ablaze - must be resolved.

With 199 police cases still actively pending against Tamil Nadu fishermen, local fleets have strictly refrained from venturing into waters under neighbouring Andhra Pradesh jurisdiction for over 10 years out of fear of arrest or fresh conflict. The representatives made it clear that full peace will require both state governments to fast-track or mutually withdraw these pending charges.

Chidambaram questions voter deletions impact on TN polls



SIVAGANGA: Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Monday (September 28) dismissed claims that alleged voter name deletions were responsible for the TVK's victory or the DMK's defeat in recently held Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, asserting that while deletions were wrong, he does not see them as the cause of the election outcome.

Addressing a press conference in Karaikudi, the former union minister stated that while those voters' names removed should have been included, the opposition party must prove its claims regarding the scale of vote manipulation."They (ECI) have removed them (voters). That is wrong. Those names should have been included. But it is not apparent to me that TVK won and DMK lost only because of that," Chidambaram said.

Turning to the wider nationwide controversy over SIR process, he announced that the opposition's next course of action against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, including approaching the Supreme Court or moving a removal resolution in Parliament, will be decided at upcoming Congress Working Committee (CWC) and INDIA bloc meetings if the CEC does not resign.

Senior Congress leader and former Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram TN election results 2026: After MGR era, DMK's vote share drops below 30 pc

His remarks came amid a report of differences within the three-member Election Commission over several decisions and instructions relating to electoral-roll revision, deletion and addition of names, changes to forms for new voters and access to voter data.However, the EC has asserted that differing views and observations are a normal part of deliberations in any institution and all its orders carry full legal sanction and follow established statutory procedures.

The Congress leader reiterated the demand previously raised by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi for Kumar's resignation, registration of an FIR, and his arrest.

He noted that nationwide demonstrations were held following the expiry of a deadline for the CEC to step down, with protests organised across the country, including in Karaikudi.

Chidambaram also ruled out holding fresh elections, explaining that the Constitution does not permit re-elections for completed polls. Instead, he outlined key demands to remedy the situation: An immediate halt to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in other states, the reinstatement of 13.3 crore voter names allegedly deleted across 20 states, particularly in Bihar, Maharashtra, Haryana, and West Bengal, and a return to standard annual revision protocols.

SIFL signals new growth era at bauma CONEXPO INDIA 2026



GREATER NOIDA, (TSIT): SIFL, a NARCL-promoted company, marked another milestone at bauma CONEXPO INDIA 2026, held from September 15 to 18 at India Expo Centre, Greater Noida. Since recommencing lending operations in May 2025, SIFL has built momentum in Construction and Mining Equipment financing, with healthy growth in Assets Under Management, complemented by partnerships with leading domestic and international OEMs. The company expanded into Supply Chain Finance and signed an MoU with LiuGong India Private Limited to extend financing to its authorised dealer network through the Supply Chain Dealer Finance programme. MD & CEO Hardayal Prasad said the company is crossing significant milestones and entering a new growth phase built on good governance and a customer-first policy.

TN farmers plan Oct 2 protest over sewage pollution

TIRUCHY: Claiming that the Pamaniyaru, the branch river of Vennar, reportedly stenches after the discharge of sewage by households all along the Mannargudi municipality, the farmers have announced a protest and closure of shops, demanding that the civic administration initiate steps to prevent the contamination.

The Pamaniyaru, which branches from Vennar at Needamangalam in Tiruvarur district, flows for around 60 kms through 100 villages and empties at Muthupettai seashore via the storage point at Thoppathanaveli check dam located at Keezhakadu village near Thambikottai in Muthupettai.It is said that Thoppathanaveli check dam plays a crucial role in preventing the intrusion of seawater and ensuring the recharge of the groundwater.

The water is also stored at the nearby Peruga Vazhanthaan check dam, which has been used for irrigation purposes for several thousand acres of land in Tiruvarur and water used to be discharged only during the floodings. While there is a check dam at Serangulam at Mannargudi in Tiruvarur, which plays a major role for irrigation in the Mannargudi taluk in the district

Diabetes care shifts beyond blood sugar control

New Delhi, Sep 28: The management of diabetes has undergone significant changes in recent years, with treatment increasingly moving beyond simply controlling blood glucose levels to addressing a person's overall health and long-term risk of complications.For decades, diabetes treatment has focused primarily on keeping blood glucose levels within the recommended range. Doctors now also consider factors such as a patient's weight, cardiovascular health, kidney function, risk of complications and lifestyle while determining an appropriate treatment strategy.

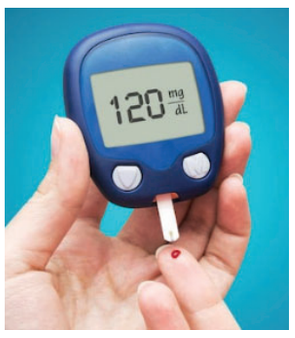
This broader approach has opened the door to newer therapies that can address multiple aspects of diabetes management at the same time.

From glucose control to comprehensive diabetes care

Diabetes is a progressive condition whose effects extend beyond elevated blood sugar. Persistently high blood glucose can damage the heart, kidneys, eyes, nerves and blood vessels. Managing diabetes therefore involves not only controlling blood sugar but also reducing long-term health risks.This has led to greater use of personalised treatment plans. Rather than following the same approach for every patient, doctors increasingly select therapies according to individual clinical characteristics, existing health conditions and treatment objectives.

Emerging therapies in diabetes management

One development is the introduction of once-weekly insulin therapies. People who require insulin have traditionally needed daily injections, which can be inconvenient and may cause discomfort. Once-weekly insulin options such as Awiqli and Onswik are designed to reduce the frequency of injections from 365 a year to 52, subject to the appropriate indication and regulatory approval.



Another area of development is oral GLP-1 therapy. Oral semaglutide is a tablet-based treatment that works through the GLP-1 pathway, helping improve blood glucose control and influencing appetite and body weight. It belongs to the same broad therapeutic class as injectable semaglutide medicines, although formulations and approved uses differ.

Triple-hormone therapies, also known as multi-incretin approaches, are another area under investigation. These medicines target three hormone pathways — GLP-1, GIP and glucagon — with the potential to improve blood sugar control, influence digestion and appetite, and increase energy expenditure. Such therapies remain under clinical investigation.

Sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 (SGLT2) inhibitors are another established class of oral medicines used in type 2 diabetes. They work independently of insulin by reducing the reabsorption of glucose by the kidneys. Normally, the kidneys filter glucose from the blood and reabsorb most of it through proteins including SGLT2. SGLT2 inhibitors block this process, allowing more glucose to leave the body through urine.

Cellular therapy is also being explored for selected people with type 1 diabetes. Lantidra, an FDA-approved donor-derived pancreatic islet cell therapy, involves transplanting insulin-producing cells into the liver. In appropriately selected patients, the transplanted cells can produce insulin and may reduce the need for insulin injections. The treatment has specific eligibility requirements and risks and is not intended for all people with type 1 diabetes.

How effective are these therapies?

Newer diabetes therapies can significantly improve glucose control, while some can also contribute to meaningful weight reduction. Clinical evidence has demonstrated cardiovascular and kidney benefits with certain medicines in appropriate patient populations. However, these treatments are not a universal solution. Their effectiveness and suitability can vary from person to person. Treatment decisions need to consider existing medical conditions, other medicines being taken, treatment goals, tolerability, affordability and other individual circumstances.

The objective should not simply be to prescribe the newest available medicine, but to identify the therapy that provides the greatest overall benefit for an individual patient.

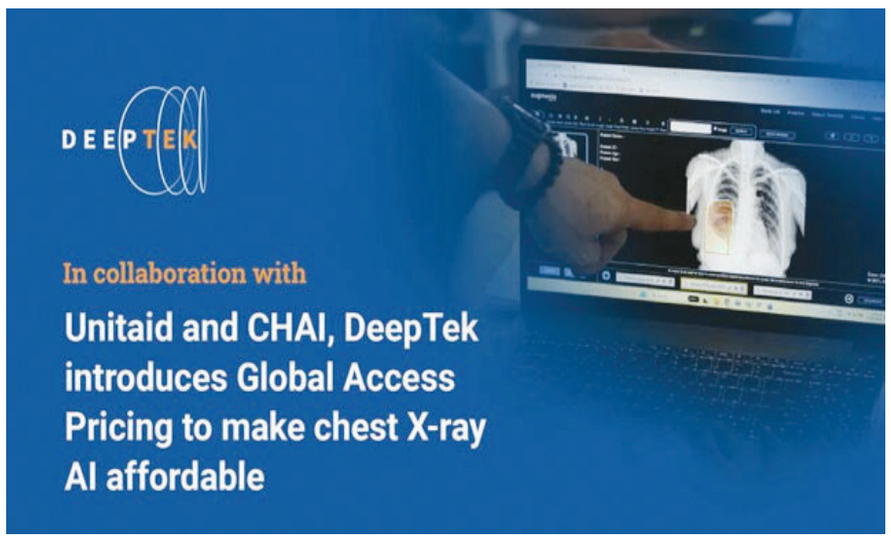
The emergence of newer treatments also does not make insulin obsolete. Insulin remains an essential and highly effective treatment for many people with diabetes. Some patients require insulin as the disease progresses, while others may need it depending on their blood glucose levels and individual clinical circumstances.



Chief Minister Vijay received an enthusiastic welcome from the public upon his arrival in Madurai to launch the Thaimaman Thanga Mothiram Scheme....

DeepTek cuts TB screening AI cost across 138 countries

Mumbai, Sep 28: DeepTek has launched a Global Access Pricing model for its World Health Organization (WHO)-recommended Chest X-ray AI solution, making the technology more affordable for eligible public-sector and not-for-profit healthcare providers across 138 low- and middle-income countries.



The initiative has been enabled through an access agreement with Unitaid and the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), with the aim of helping national tuberculosis programmes expand AI-assisted screening within existing healthcare budgets.

Tuberculosis remains a major global health challenge, with an estimated 1.23 million deaths recorded in 2024. While chest X-rays are an important tool for TB screening, shortages of radiologists in high-burden countries can delay the interpretation of scans. AI-based chest X-ray analysis is increasingly being used to help address this diagnostic bottleneck by identifying signs of TB and supporting faster screening. Under the new pricing model, eligible health systems can access DeepTek's Chest X-ray AI solution at approximately one-third of its previous price. According to the company, the reduction could enable programmes to screen up to three times as many people within existing budgets.

The annual subscription includes unlimited AI analyses per connected X-ray unit, installation, user training, product updates, maintenance and technical support. The solution supports online, offline and hybrid deployment, enabling its use in hospitals, diagnostic centres, mobile screening units and healthcare facilities operating in areas with limited connectivity.

Beyond TB, DeepTek's technology can identify more than 20 clinically relevant chest abnormalities. The company said the pricing framework also provides transparent pricing for additional indications, including cardiomegaly, silicosis and lung cancer, potentially allowing health systems to expand from TB screening to broader lung-health programmes.

DeepTek Co-founder and Managing Director Ajit Patil said the company aims to make its WHO-recommended technology more accessible through a transparent pricing model designed for scale, while supporting wider screening and earlier detection of TB.

Unitaid Executive Director Dr Philippe Duneton said reducing the cost of diagnostic tools could help expand access to timely TB diagnosis amid funding constraints. CHAI Vice President of Global Markets Marie Chantale Lepine said lower annual licensing costs could enable high-burden countries to equip more mobile clinics and community health centres with AI-powered chest X-ray screening capabilities.

EDITORIAL

SEARCHING FOR SCIENTIFIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE MARKET OF MIRACLES

India's strength lies not only in its faith but also in its knowledge tradition. The problem arises not in worship, prayer, or religious belief, but when miracles are replaced by evidence and superstition by reason. Societal insecurity and uncertainty also operate behind claims of astrology, palmistry, prophecy, witchcraft, or miracles. In such times, a scientific outlook does not mean opposing religion, but rather cultivating the habit of asking questions and seeking evidence. Children must be taught to question rather than simply memorizing answers. Laboratories alongside temples, reason alongside faith, and a scientific consciousness alongside tradition are the true needs of modern India. Today's India presents an interesting paradox. While the country is advancing in areas such as space exploration, digital technology, medicine, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence, many segments of society remain fascinated by claims of miracles, prophecy, astrology, palmistry, witchcraft, and so-called divine powers. From time to time, new religious sites, spiritual centers, and popular saints enter the spotlight. As a pilgrimage site becomes a center of devotion, the number of followers of a storyteller or saint rapidly increases. This is not just a matter of religion, but also a matter of understanding the psychological and intellectual tendencies of society. It might be sarcastically said that new "gods" become popular here from time to time. But behind this satire lies a serious question: why do people find such an attraction to miracles and supernatural claims? Humans are inherently curious and fearful of uncertainties. Illness, unemployment, marriage, children, exams, jobs, financial crisis, and worries about the future drive them to seek answers that offer immediate reassurance. Science often takes time to find answers to problems. In contrast, if someone claims to predict the future, explain the cause of illness, or offer a solution to a problem within minutes, a person in distress may be drawn to them. This is the psychological ground where a market for superstition is created. In India, many people have become popular, including those who predict the future by reading palm lines, predicting marriage and career, determining life's direction based on planetary positions, and claiming miracles. Social media has further expanded this trend. Previously, a claim was heard by a limited circle of people; now, a video can reach millions of people in a matter of hours. Visual impact, emotional language, and stories of personal experiences can make a claim seem like evidence, whereas personal experience is not the same as scientific proof. This is where the need for a scientific approach comes into play. A scientific approach does not mean that a person should abstain from worship, visit temples, or abandon their religious beliefs. Faith is a matter of personal life, and everyone has the right to their own beliefs. However, accepting a claim about a natural phenomenon, disease, cure, or miracle based solely on faith is not a scientific approach. The scientific approach says: ask questions, look for evidence, test, and be prepared to change your beliefs if the evidence changes. The Indian knowledge tradition itself has been filled with questions and curiosity. From Aryabhata to modern Indian scientists, our tradition has made significant contributions to mathematics, astronomy, physics, medicine, and other fields. Even today, Indian scientists and technical experts are demonstrating their capabilities worldwide. Therefore, it would not be fair to say that India is a country unfamiliar with scientific thinking.

'DRIVE TAXIS TO MAKE MONEY':

UP Dy CM Pathak's Advice to Youth Embarrasses Yogi Govt Ahead of Polls

OMAR RASHID



Uttar Pradesh chief minister Adityanath's promise of delivering one lakh government jobs ahead of the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election has hit an unexpected PR embarrassment. And its source is none other than his own deputy chief minister Brajesh Pathak, whose public suggestion that youth should drive taxis instead of chasing government jobs has landed the ruling administration in a soup. Although Pathak made the remarks at an official event in Lucknow on September 23, they became a talking point in the state's politics after the main opposition Samajwadi Party (SP) juxtaposed the starkly differing pitches offered by Adityanath and Pathak. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav on September 28 even played a video clip at a press conference, highlighting side-by-side the contradictory statements made by the two Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders regarding jobs and employment opportunities. Pathak, an influential MLA from Lucknow, serves as virtually the number-three most powerful figure in the state government. Incidentally, when he made those comments last week, Adityanath was also on the stage. With a little over four months left for the Assembly election, employment and unfulfilled youth aspirations are predictably emerging as central political battlegrounds across the state. Opposition parties have thrown their complete weight behind student and youth groups protesting against alleged recruitment anomalies, delayed result declarations in recruitment exams, or demanding pay hikes. In response, the Adityanath-led state government has claimed that ever since coming to power in Uttar Pradesh in March 2017, it has successfully provided over 9.5 lakh government jobs. To offset growing youth dissatisfaction and pressure, Adityanath recently pledged to deliver an additional 1 lakh government jobs ahead of the 2027 election. On September 23, during the official launch of the state government's Bharat Taxi services in Uttar Pradesh, Pathak asserted that the new cooperative initiative would ensure self-employment among local youth. "Young people in villages and cities who possess skills and wish to earn an income should drive motor vehicles," he said during his address. What ignited widespread taunt, however, was his explicit call asking youngsters to stop chasing conventional employment opportunities. "Naukri ke chakkar mein matt pado [Don't get caught up in the pursuit of a job]," said Pathak. Bharat Taxi is described as India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform, which was introduced by the central government earlier this year. "Focus on running your own household. Spend the afternoon with your kids. If you work for someone else, will you even be able to sit with your children for two hours?" asked Pathak, whose comments were lampooned across social media platforms. He went on to suggest that driving taxis would not only help youngsters secure a livelihood but would also allow them freedom to spend time with their families during afternoon breaks. "Take the last ride that's close to your house. Spend two hours eating, resting and with your kids, and then head out again and work till 10 pm," Pathak advised the gathering, which included Bharat Taxi service drivers. If required, drivers could simply complete two extra trips whenever they needed additional income on any given day, he added. Mocking Pathak's statements, the Samajwadi Party released a video contrasting his comments against Adityanath's explicit promise of one lakh public sector jobs ahead of the election. The party attached a biting caption stating that the engine (chief minister) and sub-engine (deputy chief minister) of the state government were colliding, much like the two engines (the state government and the Narendra Modi-led Centre) were in friction. Speaking to reporters on September 28, SP chief Akhilesh dismissed Adityanath's promise of one lakh jobs as a classic example of "chamatkar hoshiyari" [clever trickery], asserting that it deliberately excluded the massive number of existing jobs and career opportunities snatched away by the current administration. "They want a debate on the one lakh jobs. You have left the youth unemployed for ten years. You snatched away reservations. You allowed exam papers to be leaked continuously. You simply do not want to provide government jobs. You discriminated against madrasas. You discriminated against teachers," said Yadav. On Monday, September 28, Adityanath distributed appointment letters to 1,375 newly selected gram panchayat officers in Lucknow. Adityanath stated that the youth of Uttar Pradesh are no longer merely job seekers but are increasingly turning into job creators through entrepreneurship. He noted that while Uttar Pradesh had just 120 startups prior to 2017, the state has now built a flourishing ecosystem boasting over 24,000 startups. At a government function on September 19, Adityanath had provided a detailed breakdown of the jobs his administration intended to roll out in the coming months. He said that 25,000 to 30,000 young candidates are set to secure appointments through results to be announced by the Uttar Pradesh Subordinate Services Selection Commission (UPSSC) over the next six months. Approximately 20,000 to 25,000 aspirants are expected to secure recruitment through the Uttar Pradesh Education Selection Commission (UPESC), where examinations for various posts are proceeding rapidly and initial results have begun releasing. The remaining results will be declared within the next three to four months, he said. The chief minister highlighted that the official distribution of appointment letters to 15,000 to 16,000 youths across multiple government departments – based on competitive Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) examinations – was being directly synchronised with result declarations. "Those who have raised questions regarding this process will see the results for themselves in the near future," he said. According to him, the recruitment drive for issuing appointment letters to 36,000 youths in the Uttar Pradesh Police Force alone was moving forward smoothly, with written examinations completed and physical and medical evaluation stages currently in progress. Similarly, 41,000 to 42,000 appointments are set to be finalized in the Uttar Pradesh Home Guards, where examinations have concluded and physical and medical assessment schedules are underway.

Robert Pattinson Steers a Muggy, Diseased Version of the American Dream

TATSAM MUKHERJEE



In the last few years, a strange but recognisable character has emerged on social media feeds: the lifestyle influencer. Preying on our voyeuristic tendencies, some of them stand at the junction of substance and salaciousness. Every trending topic becomes an opportunity to package their grandstanding as introspection, and monetise their exhibitionism. It's an endless repository for 'content', and it is only a matter of time before the dopamine spikes (surrounding engagement) begin to sidestep the ethical quagmires. I was reminded of lifestyle influencers a lot while watching Lance Oppenheim's Primetime, because before one could peek into people's lives through phones, there was reality TV. Even though To Catch A Predator (on NBC) started out as an exposé on creepy men soliciting sex from minors, the quest for ratings and well-known host Chris Hansen's ambition, turned a news piece into a muggy, diseased version of the American dream. Real-life Hansen is considering legal action against Oppenheim's film, which dispels any suspicion whether this is a hagiography. Set in 2006, the film shows Chris Hansen (Robert Pattinson) around the time when the show has picked up momentum. We hear the host memorising his lines in a green room (in front of a mirror), most of which are dirty text messages sent by men to a decoy (an adult man/woman, pretending to be a teenager). He has the intensity of an actor about to go on stage, which is partially true. After the alleged pervert is invited into a home, and settles in for what has been established as a sexual encounter (through questions like: 'Did you get the condoms?'), Hansen emerges. What is supposed to be a sobering admission of depravity, becomes a giddying spectacle of public humiliation in the hands of its host. "What would have happened if I wasn't here?", "You see how this looks, right?" Pattinson asks, like his real-life counterpart, which has become the subject of memes.

For those who didn't follow the news cycle around the controversial NBC show, To Catch A Predator inspired a polarising discourse. While one set of the audience was dazzled by the show's ability to out probable sexual predators, the other was agonised by its mentality to carry out vigilante justice by luring individuals using an assortment of fakery, including cookies and adult actors playing the part of teenagers. Apart from having Hansen's POV, Oppenheim's film is seen through an objective lens by actor Dan Plum (Skylar Gisondo), who is desperate to get a speaking credit to his name, which will qualify him for a Screen Actor's Guild (SAG) card, helping him find agent, and assuring minimum SAG wage and health insurance. Gisondo is marvellous as Dan, Hansen gives him the nickname of Decoy Dan, earnest and sincere about the job. He watches an episode of Billy Bob Thornton in Inside The Actors Studio to prepare for his new assignment, completely unaware about what it's going to entail. It's steady money, but Dan is caught off guard in his first episode – too stunned to respond to producer Andie Bender's (Merrit Weaver) questions about how he's doing. A word for singer Phoebe Bridgers, who is excellent in the cameo as the other decoy, playing both teenage boys and girls, and showing Dan the ropes. Like many media satires (especially TV news) – Network (1974), Nightcrawler (2014), Christine (2016) etc – even Primetime showcases the moral decay of these decision-making rooms. Like when Rene Russo's character puts it in Nightcrawler, "If it bleeds, it leads", and similarly when To Catch A Predator is bumped up to the prime-time slot, to compete with a fictional TV series (Lost), the makers feel the pressure to amp up the spectacle. The care and caution is suddenly replaced with the anxiety to find more eccentric and high-profile 'characters'. Along with that, Hansen's appearances, when he catches these men in a sticky spot, become all the more eccentric like he's going out to enact a play in each episode, wringing out the second-hand embarrassment. "In the good old days, there used to be a pillory post in every town where people would be flogged for their crimes," Hansen tells Dan, in one scene. "Today, there's a television,". The spectacle of seeing another person 'caught' reassures the audience that they're better people. It also taps into a dark impulse, where people relish the deliverance of 'justice' because it gives them a way to feel in control, especially when everything around is in a state of disarray. Hansen, a self-styled arbiter to dispense social justice, is far from a hero. He's shown to be a philanderer, even getting caught by a gossip website. Pattinson understands this dichotomy, and plays it incredibly well. This is the kind of risky, star-making performance Pattinson's filmography is riddled with.

Iran To Saudi, Pakistan Is Now Fast Running Out Of Sides To Play

TARA KARTHA



Pakistan is a country of the most interesting contradictions. Recently, authorities appointed a retired general as the head of the newly created Mecca security pact, created to protect Saudi Arabia against primarily Iranian attacks. The same day, reports indicated that Pakistan had received vital LNG cargo from Qatar using Iranian unofficial contacts. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif promises to stand 'shoulder-to-shoulder' with Riyadh, while his armed forces are unsurprisingly fighting shy of taking on the Iran-backed Houthis. Meanwhile, they seem to be fine with bombing and strafing Afghanistan in an operation that is likely to prove hugely disastrous for internal security. All reports indicate that Pakistan's terrorism story has reached a climax. The long history of playing all parties to its own benefit may have reached the end of its shelf life. Things have just got too complicated. The Alliance Gets Its Act Together First, with regard to the Mecca alliance. A lot seems to be happening in terms of meetings and appointments and setting up a structure of sorts even as the Houthis continue their attacks. Even as files were being passed around from capital to capital, France promised to send "soldiers, radar systems and defence systems" to protect Yanbu. President Macron did say that this was not to 'get involved' in conflicts but for protection of a vital node. Still, that's something. Pakistan, meanwhile, appointed Lieutenant-General (Retired) Nauman Mahmood as the first secretary general of the Mecca Defence Alliance, who will lead the Secretariat that is being established in Riyadh. Foreign Ministers of respective countries met in New York and issued expected statements of 'condemnation' and about Saudi Arabia's right to defend itself under Article 51 of the UN Charter. More importantly, they announced an urgent meeting of their chiefs of staff to discuss ways to support the Kingdom under the Mecca Joint Defence agreement. Apparently, there is now some realisation that something concrete will have to be done other than talk of 'strong support' for the Saudis. Houthis vs Saudis vs Iran, And A Little Help From Friends All that involves some kind of attack against the Houthis, a prospect that will hardly be viewed with gratification in Iran. The Houthis are not quite Iranian 'toys'. Still, their formidable arsenal owes much to Iran, which seems to retain a war-waging capability despite the current conflict and decades of sanctions. It's a strange war, since Iran certainly gets considerable assistance from Russia and China across the board, including in satellite intelligence, which allows high accuracy in its strikes. Wires are increasingly getting crossed since China also supports the Saudis, with most recently Beijing responding to Riyadh's appeals by pressing Iran to stop the Houthis in what seemed to have been a very private message. In short, a lot of wires are getting crossed, but the strangest one yet was this. Caught in a serious energy bind and attendant internal crisis - just days ago, huge protests against fuel costs had politicians riding donkeys to the Sindh Assembly as a mark of protest - Pakistan turned to Iran for help. The latter obliged. At least two shipments of LNG crossed the Strait of Hormuz to Port Qasim with the 'assistance' of Iranian officials. Now try and square that circle. The General Has A Job The retired General soon to take up the mantle of the 'Secretary General' of the Mecca alliance has to take all this into account. No easy task, not even with his formidable profile. A Baloch Regiment officer, he was commissioned into the Pakistan Army in September 1987. He ticked all the right boxes, including a master's degree in War Studies, not to mention a spell at the ISI, notably as Director-General of the Analysis Directorate at Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). That would have involved strong external assessment capabilities, from a national security perspective, and strong contacts with foreign intelligence agencies. He was a contender for the Army Chiefs post in 2022 but lost out to the present - and probably ever-lasting now - incumbent General Asim Munir. More notably, he was in command of XI Corps based in Peshawar, at a time when the US was pulling out and matters were getting hot on the border. He would also have great contacts with the Taliban leadership. If he has to do his magic in Riyadh, none would know better that it would be vital to get a reasonable peace on the Afghan border. It is not just the fighting and the bombing and maiming innocent lives across the border. It's the end effect back home. Pakistan may be in the bottom tier in terms of its economy, but is at the very top in terrorism according to the Global Terrorism Index. You cannot fight a war on foreign shores when your own country is burning.

Tata Trusts Pitch Tata Sons Restructuring As Alternative To RBI's Listing Requirement



Tata Trusts have proposed a strategic reorganisation of Tata Sons that could alter the structure of the Tata Group's holding company while allowing it to remain an unlisted private company. The proposal comes after the Reserve Bank of India rejected Tata Sons' request to surrender its registration as a core investment company, putting the group under pressure to find a way to comply with the central bank's regulatory framework. Under the proposed restructuring, Tata Electronics Systems Solutions Private Limited (TESS) and Tata Consulting Engineers (TCE) would be merged with Tata Sons Private Limited (TSPL). The resulting entity is proposed to be structured in a manner that would mean it is neither a non-banking financial company, or NBFC, nor a core investment company, according to the proposal to Tata Sons Chairman, marked to RBI. The reorganisation would require a prior no-objection certificate from the RBI, and Tata Trusts are expected to engage with the central bank on the proposed structure. The proposed amalgamation is designed around the operating profile of the enlarged entity. As of March 31, 2026, the amalgamated entity would have operating revenues of Rs 1,05,043 crore. Revenue in excess of income from financial assets would stand at Rs 40,072 crore. Based on these numbers, the proposed entity would not meet the "principal business criteria" applicable to an NBFC. It would also not meet the conditions applicable to a core investment company, according to the proposal. This distinction is important because Tata Sons has historically operated primarily as the holding company of the Tata Group, with significant investments across the conglomerate's businesses. Tata Sons has been registered with the RBI as a systemically important non-deposit taking core investment company. The company had sought voluntary surrender of its CIC registration, but the RBI rejected that request earlier this month. Tata Trusts Want Tata Model Preserved Tata Trusts hold about 66% of Tata Sons, making them the controlling shareholder of the group's holding company. The Trusts have consistently opposed a public listing of Tata Sons and have pushed for alternatives that preserve the existing Tata Group structure. At a Tata Sons board meeting on Sept. 17, Tata Trusts Chairman Noel Tata reiterated the Trusts' position that the more-than-century-old structure of Tata Sons and the Tata Group should be preserved. The Trusts said the board should explore all available options rather than considering listing as the only route to compliance. The latest proposal is therefore aimed at addressing the RBI's regulatory requirements while retaining Tata Sons as an unlisted private company. The proposed structure would also preserve what the Trusts describe as the Tata Group's long-standing operating model. TESS Brings Electronics And Semiconductor Business Into The Structure One of the key entities proposed to be merged with TSPL is Tata Electronics Systems Solutions, or TESS. TESS is part of Tata Group's broader electronics and semiconductor push.

HDFC Mutual Fund Launches 'Naari Nivesh Yatra' to Encourage Financial Awareness and Investing Among Women Across India



September 28, 2026: HDFC Mutual Fund's Naari Nivesh Yatra concluded its Tirupati leg after the initiative was flagged off from Chennai on 26th June. As a first-of-its-kind nationwide investor education and awareness initiative, the Yatra engaged citizens across the city to encourage informed investing, long-term financial planning, and greater financial participation. Recognising the increasingly important role women play in household financial decision making and wealth creation, the Naari Nivesh Yatra aims to bring investor education directly to communities across the country through an extensive six-month outreach programme. As part of the initiative, two canters are traveling across India in two different directions, covering multiple cities and towns. At each destination, HDFC Mutual Fund is conducting community engagement activities across multiple locations, featuring Nukkad Natak (street plays) and interactive investor awareness sessions that simplify key financial concepts and encourage conversations around investing. As part of its Tirupati leg, the Naari Nivesh Yatra engaged with local communities across key locations including Korlagunta Market, Tirupati Market, Leelamahal Market, Gandhi Road Market,Local Bazaar, and Weekly Haat.Through nukkad nataks, investor awareness sessions, and community interactions, the initiative brought conversations around financial planning, disciplined investing, and long-term wealth creation directly to women across the city. A key focus of the Yatra is direct engagement with women at the grassroots level. Over the course of the campaign, HDFC Mutual Fund will conduct 60 dedicated sessions with Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) across the country, creating platforms for discussion around financial planning, goal-based investing, long term wealth creation and the importance of developing disciplined investment habits. Commenting on the initiative, Mr. Navneet Munot, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, HDFC Asset Management Company Limited, said, "Across India, women are often the most disciplined savers in a household and yet, structured investing has remained out of reach for many because the right conversation around personal finance never happened. The Naari Nivesh Yatra is built around that conversation. Through street plays, community sessions and direct engagement with Self Help Groups, we want to bring that conversation directly to women and help them see investing not as something complicated and distant, but as a practical tool for financial goals they already have in mind." The Naari Nivesh Yatra is being undertaken as an extension of HDFC Mutual Fund's investor education and awareness initiative, Barni Se Azadi, which encourages individuals to move beyond traditional saving practices and explore the benefits of informed investing to achieve their financial aspirations. Through the Yatra, HDFC Mutual Fund reaffirms its commitment to advancing financial awareness and empowering women to take confident steps towards achieving their financial goals.

'Minors Can't Enter Contracts':

Supreme Court Wants Statutory Rules On 18-Year Age Limit For Social Media



The Supreme Court of India has asked the Centre to examine whether statutory rules can require social-media platforms to comply with Indian laws governing minors, including an 18-year minimum age for independently entering into contracts with such platforms, as reported by NDTV. A bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by NGO Just Rights For Children Alliance. The petition seeks stricter safeguards and digital firewalls to prevent children below 18 from independently creating and using social-media accounts. Senior Advocate H S Phoolka appeared for the NGO. Justice Joymalya Bagchi told Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta: "You must examine this. Opening a social media account requires agreeing to digital terms of service, which functions as a legal contract. Under Section 11 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, minors 12 and 15 year olds cannot enter into contracts, and agreements with minors are void ab initio (void from the beginning)." SG Mehta said: "Yes, it is a void contract. Something can be done..should be done and will be done" "The requirement should not remain a mere guideline. Government must examine giving it a statutory format under the intermediary-rule framework", Justice Bagchi said Respondents in the action include the Union Ministries of Electronics and Information Technology, as well as Law and Justice. The PIL has highlighted various concerns that children face on social media platforms, such as online grooming, sextortion, cyberbullying, sexual exploitation, and misuse of personal data. The petition reminds us that several major social media platforms, like Facebook and Snapchat, enable individuals aged 13 and up to create accounts based primarily on self-declared dates of birth.

Nvidia Boosts Share Buyback By Record $150 Billion; Stock Ticks Higher Pre-Market



Nvidia's board of directors has authorised an additional $150 billion for its share repurchase program, lifting the company's total remaining buyback capacity to $235 billion. The move represents the largest single share repurchase authorisation increase in corporate history, underscoring the tech giant's massive cash generation amid the artificial intelligence boom. Following the announcement, Nvidia shares edged higher in pre-market trading, gaining 0.93%, or $2.10, to change hands at $227.17. The company intends to execute the remaining $235 billion repurchase program through fiscal year 2028. Founder and CEO Jensen Huang emphasized that surging free cash flow gives Nvidia the balance-sheet strength to aggressively reinvest in frontier technologies while returning substantial capital to equity holders, describing the broader transition toward accelerated computing as a once-in-a-generation platform shift. The aggressive capital-return plan caps a historic ascent in Nvidia's market value over the past year. Propelled by relentless enterprise appetite for its data center graphics processors, Nvidia's shares have more than doubled over the past twelve months, repeatedly shattering revenue records and pushing the company past historic multi-trillion-dollar valuation milestones. As cloud hyperscalers and sovereign nations poured tens of billions into building out AI clusters, Nvidia firmly established itself as the primary engine of the global tech rally. The boost in sharebuyback comes days after Nvidia released a bullish outlook for its sales. "We expect to grow revenue by approximately 70% in fiscal 2028,"
Chief Financial Officer Colette Kress said during a post-earnings conference call on Aug. 27. This is higher than the 45% rise projected by analysts, tracked by Bloomberg, for that fiscal year.

IDFC FIRST Bank introduces Zero Forex Markup across all its Credit Cards, existing and new

Hyderabad, September 2026: As part of its customer-first philosophy, IDFC FIRST Bank has become the first bank in India to offer Zero Forex Markup on all existing and new credit card customers, with no conditions attached.
The benefit is available automatically to all cardholders. Customers do not need to apply for a new card, upgrade their existing card, or meet any spending threshold. Their current IDFC FIRST Bank Credit Card now comes with Zero Forex Markup, with no conditions attached.

Key benefits to customers:
1. Meaningful savings on international spends: A transaction of ?1,00,000 typically attracts forex markup charges of 3.5% plus GST, increasing the bill by about ?4,130. With Zero Forex Markup, IDFC FIRST Bank customers avoid these charges entirely.
2. Reward Points continue: Customers will continue to earn Reward Points or Cashback as applicable on international transactions as per the features of their respective cards.
3. No separate forex card required: Customers often purchase forex cards solely to avoid forex markup charges. With this feature, their existing IDFC FIRST Bank Credit Card effectively serves the same purpose.
4. Relevant for modern global spending: International transactions today include not only travel, but also e-commerce purchases, subscriptions, streaming services, software, education payments and business expenses, making this benefit valuable for travelers, students, professionals and businesses alike. Mr. Shirish Bhandari, Head - Retail Liabilities, Credit Cards and Payments, IDFC FIRST Bank, said: "At IDFC FIRST Bank, creating customer-friendly products is central to our philosophy.

Ai+ Smartphone Brings Flagship Innovation to Millions This Festive Season with Pulse 2 FE, NovaTab and LapTab

September 2026: Ahead of the festive season Ai+ Smartphone today announced its portfolio expansion with the launch of Pulse 2 FE, NovaTab and LapTab, bringing three new technology experiences to consumers across communication, learning, entertainment and productivity.
The launch comes at a time when consumers across India are preparing for one of the year's biggest periods for technology purchases, upgrades and gifting. With the new portfolio, Ai+ Smartphone is expanding the choices available to consumers across different needs and price segments from someone purchasing their first smartphone to students looking for a connected learning device and consumers seeking a larger screen that can move seamlessly between entertainment and productivity.
Each product has been built around a distinct consumer need. Pulse 2 FE, positioned as the "First Step to a Smarter World," brings essential smartphone experiences to consumers entering or upgrading their digital journey. The launch also marks Ai+ Smartphone's entry into the 5G tablet category and the next phase of its connected ecosystem strategy with NovaTab and LapTab. NovaTab brings 5G connectivity to a larger screen, with a strong focus on education and learning. LapTab, on the other hand, combines entertainment with productivity through a large 13.2 display, and supports stylus and an attachable keyboard that enables a laptop-like working experience.

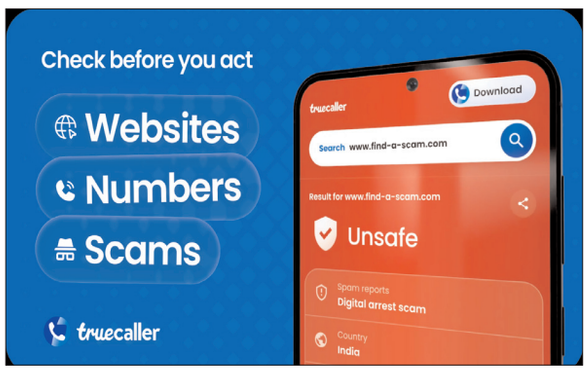


Across the portfolio, Ai+ Smartphone brings together Android 16 with nxtQ OS, high-refresh-rate displays, large batteries and 4G/5G connectivity, with the aim of making relevant technology accessible to a wider set of consumers.
All three devices will go on sale on Flipkart from October 7, 2026, 11:59PM onwards, giving consumers new options as they upgrade their personal technology or choose devices for their families this festive season.
"The festive season is a time when millions of consumers make important technology choices whether it is their first smartphone, an upgrade, a device for education or something that brings work and entertainment together," said Madhav Sheth, CEO, NxtQuantum Shift Technologies (Ai+ Smartphone). "With Pulse 2 FE, NovaTab and Nova Nova LapTab, we wanted to create products for these different moments without losing sight of accessibility. This is also an important step in taking Ai+ Smartphone beyond smartphones and building a connected technology ecosystem designed in India with the ambition to compete globally. As families prepare for Diwali, we want more consumers to have access to technology that adds meaningful value to their everyday lives."

■ AI+ PULSE 2 FE: FIRST STEP TO A SMARTER WORLD
Built around "First Step to a Smarter World," Pulse 2 FE is designed for first-time smartphone users and consumers looking to upgrade this festive season. It combines a 6.67-inch 120Hz display, MediaTek G81 processor, 50MP AI camera, 5000mAh battery and IP64 protection, with 4GB RAM, 64GB storage expandable up to 1TB, and Android 16 with nxtQ OS. Available in Black, Blue, Green and Purple, it brings together the everyday essentials for a simple, dependable smartphone experience.

■ Ai+ NovaTab: A Bigger Screen for Smarter Learning
Designed as an accessible 5G learning companion, NovaTab combines an 11.97-inch 90Hz display, 5G connectivity and an 8000mAh battery to give students a larger, connected canvas for classes, reading, research and entertainment. Powered by the T760 processor with 6GB/8GB RAM and 128GB storage, it also features dual speakers, 13MP and 8MP cameras, and Android 16 with nxtQ OS. NovaTab will be available in Dark Blue and Cinnamon Brown.

Truecaller Scam Checker Brings Together Scam Detection and Community Intelligence



Bengaluru, India. Sep 28 – Truecaller today announced the launch of Truecaller Scam Checker on the web and app, a new destination designed to help people quickly assess whether they may be dealing with a scam and stay informed about the latest fraud trends. The intent is to extend Truecaller's scam protection beyond caller identification and spam blocking.
The solution brings together multiple scam-detection capabilities into a single experience, allowing users to check suspicious web links, search phone numbers, discover relevant scam reports, and better understand potential fraud attempts before taking action.

With Truecaller Scam Checker, people can:

Check a link for signs that it may be malicious or used in a phishing attempt.

Look up a phone number to see what Truecaller's detection systems and community signals indicate.

Search Scamfeed reports to find similar scams described by other people.

Describe a concern in their own words and get relevant results, including checks on links or numbers in the query and related community reports.
Together, these cover the three things a suspicious message usually contains: a number, a link, and a story. A person can check all three in the same place, in seconds.
The company also plans to expand Truecaller Scam Checker with broader coverage of scam techniques, screenshot uploads for richer analysis, user authentication, and additional capabilities in the near future.
"People often sense that something is wrong, but they need a quick way to check before responding," said Rishit Jhunjhunwala, CEO of Truecaller. "Scam Checker brings together our detection capabilities and what our community has reported so that people can investigate a suspicious link, number or story in one place."

Availability
Truecaller Scam Checker launches in India on the Android app, with more regions to follow, and globally on the Truecaller website. Availability in additional markets and iOS support are planned for a later date.

TRUMP-XI SUMMIT: WHAT WASN'T SAID MIGHT MATTER THE MOST

On Monday, China released more information of what was agreed at the talks between Xi Jinping and Donald Tump last week, shedding light on a handful of concrete outcomes. But there were no joint statements and few major breakthroughs. Instead, both governments issued separate accounts of the meeting - perhaps a sign that despite the White House tours and promise of warmer ties, Washington and Beijing remain wary of each other. Here are four things we now know - and still don't - about what transpired at the talks.



A new AI dialogue and communication channel Beijing says it has agreed with Washington to launch a new AI dialogue, with further talks scheduled for the end of November. As both countries race to develop advanced artificial intelligence, the move suggests they see a need for some guardrails around a technology that is increasingly being used in everything from business to military planning. They have also agreed to establish a communication channel for AI-related incidents, aimed at preventing misunderstandings or unexpected developments from turning into a broader confrontation. The meeting was being closely watched for any developments or agreements in relation to AI - especially in the wake of calls by US companies like Anthropic to slow down developments, and revelations that Open AI had gained unauthorised access to government websites in countries like Australia and had "meddled" with multiple US government agency sites. Trade truce - what was included and what was left out Chinese state media confirmed for the first time on Monday that the trade truce has been extended until 10 January. The short extension ensures both leaders will meet again at major international gatherings later this year. Trump will attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Shenzhen in November while Xi is due to travel to Miami for the G20 summit in December. It is rare for the leaders of the world's two largest economies to meet so frequently. But Beijing had hoped for a much longer extension to the truce, making the two month reprieve a modest gain rather than a major breakthrough. China did secure lower tariffs on $30bn (£23bn) of goods entering the US with reciprocal reductions expected from Beijing. Chinese products heading to American stores ranging from toys to small household appliances to Christmas decorations will benefit from the lower tariffs. The Trump administration also said Beijing would buy at least 10 million metric tons of coal annually in 2027 and 2028. What is striking is what was left out. There was no mention of increasing exports of China's rare earth minerals to the US nor was there any indication that restrictions on advanced US semiconductors would be eased.

■ THE US LEFT OUT TAIWAN - BUT CHINA DIDN'T

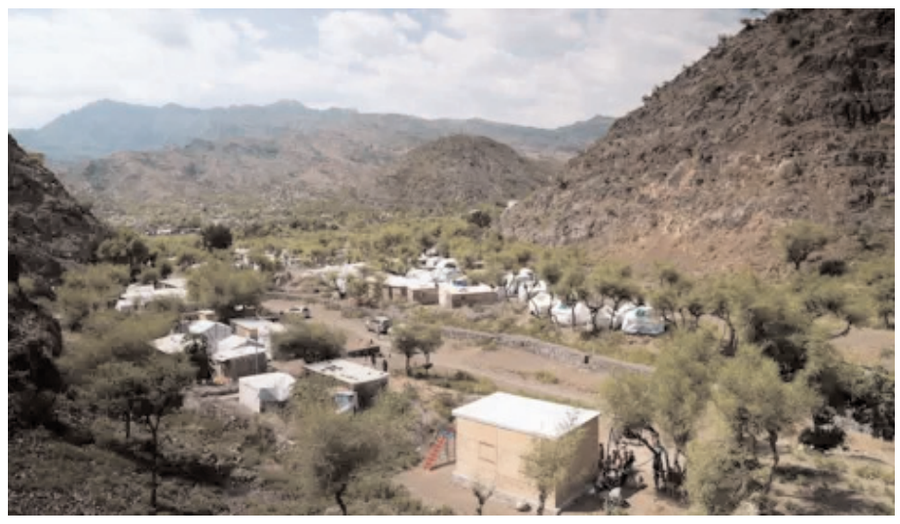
The White House factsheet made no mention of Taiwan, but the issue was clearly a priority for Xi Jinping. According to Beijing's accounts of the talks, Xi urged Donald Trump to formally oppose Taiwan independence and handle the issue with caution. After their previous meeting in May, Trump revealed that Xi directly asked him if the US would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese attack. He told reporters, "There's only one person that knows that, and it is me," and he raised the question whether it made sense for US forces to "travel 9,500 miles to fight a war" over the issue. This time, Trump disclosed far less. "We didn't talk about it too much," he told reporters over the weekend. "Right now, it's fine. It's just moving along," Trump said. "He understands very much how I feel." That silence may be significant. Trump has previously described a proposed $14bn US arms package for Taiwan as "a very good negotiating chip" in his dealings with Beijing. The arms package has been on hold for months. Adding to the confusion, US Ambassador to China David Perdue told Fox News that Trump had offered to sell weapons to Xi during the summit. The State Department later clarified that US law prohibits arms sales to China and there are no plans to do so. Beijing sees the self-governing island as part of China. Most countries, including the United States, do not recognise Taiwan as an independent state, but Washington is opposed to any attempt to take the island by force and is committed to supplying it with weapons.

■ CHINA MAY BE OPENING THE INVESTMENT DOORS

China says it will allow more foreign financial firms, including American-backed banks, investment companies and insurers, to apply to do business and open offices in China. But any approvals will still be subject to Chinese laws and regulations.

The last line is key. China is opening the door, but still controls who gets through it. Foreign financial firms have long complained that regulatory barriers, licensing requirements and concerns over exit bans make it difficult to expand in China, even when market access is technically allowed. Beijing also said it was discussing ways to increase the number of flights between both countries, but neither side has explained how this would happen.

Inside Yemen's front-line city as Houthis battle for control



"This is the first drone," said the soldier accompanying us in south-western Yemen. "It's usually followed by an attack." The buzzing sound overhead got louder as we took cover under the bushes, before climbing back into the vehicle and driving away. Within about 10 minutes, the loud thuds of strikes followed, one after another, though it was unclear where they landed. It is hard to tell where the front line begins in the mountains south-west of the city of Taiz. Saudi-backed pro-government forces are battling to push back Houthi fighters, who swept down the coast of the Red Sea earlier this month, taking control of a key shipping chokepoint and escalating Yemen's civil war. We travelled with government forces from Taiz through checkpoints to the line where their control ends and no man's land begins, in order to see the fighting up close. Homes are scattered across the slopes, but many stand abandoned after families fled to escape the fighting. It is eerily quiet, no sound of the cars or motorbikes that are continuously whizzing through the city. All you can hear is the bleating of livestock and the sound of incoming and outgoing fire. "Two mortars landed here on my property," said Ali, sitting outside his home with a herd of goats, about 1km (0.6 miles) from the front line. He told me he had sent his children to a displacement camp because they could no longer cope with the shelling and gunfire. He had stayed with his wife and sisters to look after their animals. "I am terrified," he said, "but I have no choice, we will all go hungry without our animals and die anyway." He gave only his first name, fearful of repercussions if the Houthis take over the area in the days ahead. Contacts from the Houthi side have told us they are consolidating troops, preparing for a major offensive. When we asked government forces about this they said they are aware and were preparing too. At the closest checkpoint to the front line, we met some fighters who had just returned from positions high on the mountain, just a few hundred metres from advancing Houthis. One of them said the bodies of 18 government soldiers lay in an area his unit could fire across but not reach. "We shoot over them, but we can't pull them out," he said. Fighting around Taiz has intensified since the Houthis seized the strategic Red Sea port of Mokha, 85km to the west of the city, on 10 September, after a ceasefire that had largely held for four years unravelled. The group took control of a swathe of territory overlooking the strategic Bab al-Mandab Strait – a crucial shipping corridor linking Europe and Asia.

PLAN FOR CONTROVERSIAL SYDNEY DATA CENTRE SCRAPPED AFTER PUSH-BACK



Plans for a data centre which would have been built metres from people's homes in a Sydney suburb have been scrapped following intense push-back by campaigners. The data centre was being developed by Goodman Group, Australia's biggest property company, and would have seen it construct a A$1.2bn (£630m; $841m), 90-megawatt facility known as Project Mars in the Lane Cove area. The company confirmed it was withdrawing its application in a letter to the local planning authority. It follows a concerted opposition against the data centre by local residents and campaigners. The dispute captures a wider disagreement in Australia over the role of data centres. With the mainstreaming of generative AI in recent years, there has been a huge swell in demand for data centres, and Australia - with its abundance of clean energy, natural gas reserves, and land - has become a global destination for their construction. However, while the country's government has been keen to attract investment from global AI companies, there has also been stiff opposition due to the huge demands the centres place on water and energy supplies, and the disruption they cause local communities.

SEOUL SUMMONS UKRAINE ENVOY OVER NORTH KOREAN PRISONER-OF-WAR ROW

South Korea has summoned Ukraine's acting ambassador after President Volodymyr Zelensky last week announced his government had transferred two captured North Korean soldiers to Seoul. Vice Foreign Minister Park Yoon-joo lodged a formal complaint with Andrii Vieshkin and expressed "strong regret" that Zelensky had revealed the transfer, which Seoul says was supposed to be a secret. The two North Koreans, who were among thousands of soldiers supporting Russia in the Ukraine war, had earlier told local media they wanted to be sent to South Korea. President Lee Jae Myung called the disclosure "greatly disappointing" and said the transfer was a "highly sensitive issue" impacting national security. Ukraine's foreign ministry declined to comment when approached by the BBC. In early 2025, Ukraine said its forces had captured two North Korean soldiers as prisoners of war in Russia's Kursk Oblast. After more than a year of





negotiations between Seoul and Kyiv, Zelensky announced they had been transferred to South Korea at the UN General Assembly last Wednesday - adding they had not been "easy to capture alive". Seoul confirmed the news but sharply criticised Zelensky for allegedly breaking an agreement to keep the transfer a secret. This was partly to protect the North Koreans' families, President Lee's office said in a statement, which added that Kyiv also wanted the transfer kept secret to avoid criticism that it had given up an opportunity to exchange the soldiers for Ukrainian prisoners of war. Lee's office explained Ukraine had indicated the soldiers would be mentioned in Zelensky's address, but not the fact of their transfer. The spat escalated when Zelensky's office responded claiming that the two countries did not have a non-disclosure agreement. Seoul demanded Ukraine apologise for "announcing a falsehood" and said its actions had seriously damaged trust between the two nations. Lee faced heavy criticism at home after Zelensky's disclosure. The South Korean opposition accused him of covering up the transfer to appease Pyongyang. Lee, whose party takes a conciliatory approach to the North, has been making efforts to reopen peace talks, with little success. Seoul has been sympathetic to Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion, but has refused to break from its longstanding policy of not providing lethal weapons to any country engaged in active war. After North Korean troops were deployed to support Russia in 2024, Kyiv stepped up pressure on South Korea to supply cutting-edge anti-air missiles to help defend Ukraine's energy infrastructure from Russian drone and missile attacks. "When North Korea actively participates in a war in Europe, South Korea cannot remain a distant observer," said Mykhailo Podolyak, a senior adviser to Zelensky. "The transfer of defence technologies and capabilities from Seoul to Kyiv is not just about helping Ukraine; it is about South Korea protecting its own long-term security interests by containing the expansion of an aggressive totalitarian axis." This July, Seoul announced a $100 million assistance package to Ukraine.

Mexico's Pacific coast braces for Hurricane Polo



People living on the northern Pacific coast of Mexico are bracing for the arrival of Hurricane Polo, which is forecast to make landfall later on Monday or early on Tuesday. The category three storm, with maximum sustained winds near 115 mph (185 km/h), is expected to move over the state of Baja California Sur, a region popular with tourists and home to the resort destination of Los Cabos. Meteorologists at the US-based National Hurricane Center (NHC) have warned of heavy rainfall which could lead to life-threatening flooding and mudslides, especially in areas of steep terrain. Residents on Sunday stocked up on essentials such as drinking water and food as the storm approached. The NHC warned of the storm surge Hurricane Polo could unleash, which it said could be accompanied by large and destructive waves. In Cabo San Lucas, famous for its natural rock arch, the authorities restricted access to the beaches. Some restaurants also closed in the town, which acts as a base for sport fishers and whale watchers. The regional government of Baja California Sur has ordered schools to remain closed on Monday as a preventive measure. Governor Víctor Manuel Castro Cosío said temporary shelters had been opened should residents need to be evacuated.



Venezuela releases dozens of political prisoners as election calls grow

EMBATTLED SERBIAN PRESIDENT RESIGNS, PAVING WAY FOR EARLY ELECTIONS

Serbia's president has resigned after more than a year of student-led protests and growing public discontent over allegations of government corruption. Aleksandar Vucic said his administration had preserved peace and stability during his nine-year tenure as he addressed supporters outside the presidential building in the capital, Belgrade. He had already announced his intention to resign in June and is currently standing to be his party's candidate for prime minister in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Vucic cannot run for a third presidential term under Serbia's constitution. The populist leader's administration has been dogged by anger over alleged corner-cutting. It was the collapse



of the Novi Sad railway station's roof, killing 16 people, that first galvanised anger towards the government in 2024. Protests involving a wide range of citizens - from students and teachers to workers and farmers - followed. Demonstrators believed that the disaster reflected more than a decade of governing by the Progressive Party of Vucic, who closely associated himself with the station's renovation, which was supposed to be a symbol of Serbia's progress. A series of resignations of those under the embattled president failed to placate the protesters, who continued to demonstrate throughout this summer, turning to unrest following accusations of police brutality. Vucic's presidency was due to expire next year. Under Serbia's constitution, presidential elections must be held no more than three months after his resignation. This means Serbians will go to the polls twice before the end of the year. Vucic said the presidential election will take place more than a month after the snap parliamentary election in late October, itself called in response to the protests, which had added calls for a vote to their list of demands. He had earlier announced that he planned to run in that election as Progressive Party's leader, leaving the possibility he could retain a position at the top of Serbian politics. Parliamentary speaker Ana Brnabic, also a Progressive Party member, will assume the role of interim president until a new one is elected.

Asiad: Esha Lifts Shooting Gloom, PT Usha's 42-Year-Old Record Broken

India's medal tally at the Asian Games 2026 has surged past the 40-mark, thanks to strong performances in athletics and shooting. India have so far won four gold, 20 silver and 21 bronze medals. After Esha Singh's heroic silver-medal-winning performance in the women's 25m pistol event, India won six medals (three silver and three bronze) in athletics on India's Day 9 at the Asian Games. Esha's triumph helped the country recover, to some extent, from shooting disappointments earlier in the day, as Manu Bhaker missed out on individual qualification and India fell short in the team event after Rahi Sarnobat hit the frame. India's momentum continued elsewhere as Pincky Balhara earned a Kurash bronze in the women's 78kg event, while Lovlina Borgohain, Priya and Kapil Pokhariya assured the country of medals in boxing. Meanwhile, the men's cricket team advanced to the semi-finals after rain washed out their quarter-final against Afghanistan. Indian athlete Vithya Ramraj won the bronze medal in the women's 400m hurdles at the Asian Games 2026 on Monday, clocking her best time of 54.75 seconds and breaking a national record that has stood since 1984. Vithya was able to clear all 10 hurdles to finish third in the final. She broke the previous national record set by the legendary Indian athlete P.T. Usha at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, standing at 55.42 seconds. While she was faster than the set time during her run this time, she had equalled the time mark back in 2023. Mariam Kareem from the UAE won the gold medal with a record time of 54.31 seconds, while Kazakhstan's Adelina Zems took silver after clocking 54.58 seconds. Vithya's superior performance has not only helped her secure a bronze medal but also marked a significant improvement over her previous bests. The achievement comes 42 years after P.T. Usha had established the record, with Vithya now taking the top spot in the Indian record books in the event. Anu Raghavan, another Indian in the field, also clocked a personal-best performance of 55.88 seconds to finish fifth. India has now been able to accrue 40 medals, comprising four gold medals, 17 silver and 19 bronze, with the country currently standing 12th in the overall standings. Vithya gained global recognition when she equalled P.T. Usha's national record at the Hangzhou Asian Games. She equalled the record timing of 55.42 seconds in the 400m hurdles. She was able to secure a bronze medal in the individual event and silver in the mixed relay.She won a bronze medal in the individual event and a silver in the mixed relay while competing with her twin Nithya at the ASIAD. After that, she competed in the relay at the 2024 Paris Olympics and won a bronze medal at the 2025 Asian Athletics Championships.



ALEXA BLISS REACTS TO PAC'S DEATH AT 40

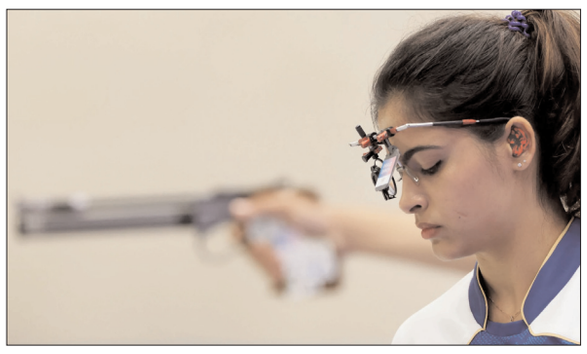


PAC has died at 40, with WWE stars Rhea Ripley, Alexa Bliss and Paul Heyman among those reacting to the news. All Elite Wrestling announced the passing of Benjamin Satterley, known to wrestling fans as PAC, in a statement that did not reveal the cause of death. Ripley described him as an "extremely talented person" and said she was speechless. Heyman struggled to process the news, writing, "Oh no. No no no no no no no." Bliss also shared her disbelief, simply writing, "I cannot believe this. RIP PAC " as tributes began appearing. Rhea Ripley and Paul Heyman share emotional messages for PAC Ripley was among the WWE names to respond after AEW confirmed Satterley's death. Her message also referred to another death announced earlier that day, describing it as a tragic day overall. "What a tragic day. What an extremely talented person. Speechless… RIP PAC," Ripley wrote. Heyman's response was much longer, but the first few words made his reaction pretty clear. He wrote, "Oh no. No no no no no no," before describing PAC as both a "tremendous talent" and an "even finer human being." Heyman then offered condolences to everyone who knew the former WWE star. "My most profound condolences to all who knew him. A truly terrible loss!" he added. PAC's death was announced by AEW, which identified him by his real name, Benjamin Satterley. The company said he was from Newcastle upon Tyne, England, and had started wrestling in 2004. Alexa Bliss reacts as AEW confirms PAC's passing at 40 Bliss also posted about the news, keeping her reaction short. "I cannot believe this. RIP PAC " she wrote, showing just how difficult the announcement was for her to process. AEW's statement said Satterley had worked for wrestling organizations around the world during his career. The promotion also pointed to his high-flying style and in-ring ability while remembering his work. Satterley joined AEW in 2019 and, according to the company, held multiple AEW Championships and competed in several memorable matches during his run there.

"CAN SMELL GUTTER":

Manu Bhaker's Father Questions Asian Games Organisers, Explains Shooters' Slump

Ram Kishan Bhaker, father of double Olympic medalist shooter Manu Bhaker, questioned the organisation of shooting events, travel timings and distance at the ongoing Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya as pistol shooters registered another bad day at work on Monday. In one of the biggest shockers at the ongoing Asian Games, India's double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker has ended her campaign without a medal to her name in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. Manu competed in women's 25 m pistol and 10 m air pistol individual and team events. However, the Paris Olympics star failed to make an impact. Having achieved a gold medal in the women's 25 m pistol team event, Manu was one of India's biggest medal hopefuls after Olympic success. Manu's campaign ended on Monday as India finished fifth in the 25 m pistol team women's final. The trio of Esha Singh, Manu Bhaker and Rahi Sarnobat finished fifth with a score of 1727-56x. The gold medal went to China (1743-68x), South Korea won the silver (1735-65x), while Chinese Taipei secured the bronze medal (1734-48x). Speaking to ANI, Manu's father Ram Kishan said that one shot by Rahi, which yielded nothing, changed India's fortunes, bringing them down just when the team was looking strong for a gold medal in the 25 m pistol team event. "You see, one shot of Rahi, which could have turned things in our favour and given us gold, as we were running for gold really well, that one shot turned everything down. If a shot is not counted, it is zero. That means we slipped 10 points below in the competition," he said.



India Reach Asian Games, Men's Cricket Semi-Final Despite No Match vs Afghanistan

Rain washed out the second quarterfinal between India and Afghanistan at the Karogi Sports Park here on Monday, with India advancing to the Asian Games semifinals as the higher-ranked team. It mirrored the outcome of the first quarterfinal between Pakistan and Hong Kong, China, which was also abandoned without a ball being bowled due to rain as the Nisshin weather played spoilsport with Pakistan qualifying for the semis. It had rained on the eve of the quarterfinal too, and the heavens opened up once again on the match day too. The Pakistan-Hong Kong, China game was scheduled to start at 5:30 AM IST, but it was abandoned without a toss due to rain. The India-Afghanistan clash was slated to be held at 10:30 AM IST with the toss at 10 AM IST, but the relentless rain since morning washed that game out too. India and Pakistan were the higher-ranked teams in the ICC rankings against their respective opponents and made it to the next stage. India are ranked No.1 in the world, while Afghanistan are the 10th-ranked side. Pakistan are placed sixth in the team rankings, while Hong Kong, China are ranked 24th. India T20I captain Shreyas Iyer was also asked about the rain threat, but he kept his focus largely on the game ahead of the quarterfinal. "Yes, rain is there, but that is the reason we can't give up because we have decided that we are a bunch of professionals and all these hurdles will keep coming. We have to be prepared mentally irrespective of whatever the situation is going to be. "So a decent warm-up or a little knocking practice we got today, and tomorrow we will try to adapt to the wicket. We will see how the weather is here tomorrow, but that is secondary. The primary importance is to come and play the match," Shreyas told reporters in a press conference on Sunday. India will now meet the winner of the third quarterfinal between Sri Lanka and Nepal in the semi-final, while Pakistan will face the winner from the fourth quarterfinal between Bangladesh and Malaysia. The QFs are scheduled to take place on Tuesday, while the semifinals will be held on Thursday.



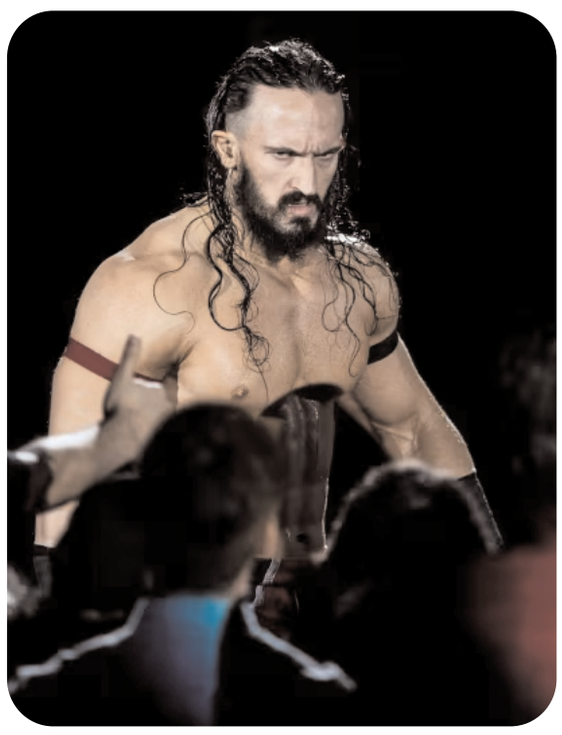
IRFAN PATHAN OPENS UP ON HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, WORLD CUP GLORY AND REPRESENTING INDIA WITH BROTHER

Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan reflected on his journey as a cricketer, stressing that the opportunity to represent the country and help India win a World Cup remains the highlight of his career. Speaking at NDTV YUVA 2026, Irfan said that both he and his brother, Yusuf Pathan, were fortunate to have been given the opportunity to represent India on the global stage. While Irfan was named Player of the Match in the 2007 T20 World Cup final, Yusuf was part of the Indian team that won the ODI World Cup at home in 2011, making the Pathans one of the few sibling pairs to have won World Cups for India. During the interaction, Irfan revealed that playing street cricket alongside boys from older age groups made him and his brother believe they could one day fulfil their dream of representing India. "I first picked up a bat when I was seven or eight years old. Back then, I used to play cricket with my brother. The two of us would often play cricket inside a mosque, and we would be asked to leave because we were making too much noise. We then started playing cricket in our neighbourhood. It was there that we realised we could actually play the game well. The older boys, who were around 14 or 15, wanted both of us to play for their team. That gave us a lot of confidence," Irfan told NDTV's Executive Editor Sports, Gaurav Gala.



AEW wrestling star Benjamin Satterley, known as Pac, dies at 40

Benjamin Satterley, an English wrestling star known by his ring name Pac, has died at 40, according to All Elite Wrestling. "A native of Newcastle upon Tyne, England, Satterley began his wrestling career in 2004 and went on to perform for wrestling organizations all over the world, captivating fans with innovative high-flying moves and incredible in-ring ability," said AEW in its announcement Sunday night. "Pac signed with All Elite Wrestling in 2019 and held multiple AEW Championships and competed in some of the most memorable matches in AEW history," it said, extending condolences to his family, friends and fans.



Parul Chaudhary Wins 5000m Bronze, Bags Second Medal At Asian Games



Indian athlete Parul Chaudhary clinched her second bronze medal in three days at the Asian Games 2026 in Aichi-Nagoya, finishing third in the women's 5000m on Monday with a time of 15:14.61, according to the Athletics Federation of India (AFI). Parul fought until the finish line to secure the bronze, finishing 1.46 seconds behind Japan's Nozomi Tanaka, who won the silver medal with a time of 15:11.65. Bahrain's Winfred Yavi claimed the gold medal after clocking 15:10.18. The 5000m bronze came a day after Parul finished third in the women's 3000m steeplechase, where she clocked 9:08.67 to win bronze and set a new national record. Parul's Aichi-Nagoya campaign began with the women's 1500 m final on September 26, where she finished fourth with a time of 4:09.46. She then secured bronze in the 3000m steeplechase on September 27 before adding another bronze in the 5000m on Monday. With three finals on three consecutive days, Parul returned to the podium in two events and finished fourth in the 1500m. Her latest bronze adds another medal to India's athletics tally at the Asian Games, with Parul producing a strong finish in a closely contested women's 5000m final. With Parul's latest bronze, India's medal tally has risen to 42 medals, comprising four gold, 18 silver and 20 bronze. India is currently placed 12th in the medal standings, with athletics accounting for 16 of the country's medals at the continental event. Earlier on Monday, Vithya Ramraj won bronze in the women's 400m hurdles with a personal best of 54.75s, breaking the national record she shared with PT Usha.

From Tears To Cheers: Murali Sreeshankar's Mother Celebrates Son's Gritty Asian Games Silver



Tears welled up in the eyes of K S Bijimol as she watched her son, long jumper Murali Sreeshankar, struggle with an injury and fail to complete all his attempts in the Asian Games competition in Japan. But those tears soon gave way to joy as Sreeshankar's best effort proved enough to secure the silver medal, turning a moment of anxiety into one of celebration at his home in Yakkara here. Bijimol, relatives and neighbours, along with Palakkad MP V K Sreekandan, had gathered at the house to watch Sreeshankar compete. The mood turned sombre when Sreeshankar suffered an injury during his fourth attempt, with two more jumps remaining. Bijimol immediately contacted her husband S Murali, who is also the athlete's coach. "They said his leg got strained. It is the same leg which underwent surgery," she told reporters. It was a remarkable comeback for Sreeshankar, who had recovered from a career-threatening injury last year. The gathering at the house was visibly disappointed to see him struggle with the injury. But within half an hour, the atmosphere changed as he managed to retain the second position despite the remaining attempts by other long jumpers. "We are happy. We were so upset when his leg got injured. Sreeshankar couldn't complete all attempts, but he gave us the silver medal. Even though he could only do three or four jumps, didn't we get the silver? We are happy," she said. Soon, MP Sreekandan ordered laddoos and distributed them among those gathered at the house. "He worked so hard to return after the injury. We were sure that he would win the gold. Despite being injured on the fourth attempt, he could win the medal. This achievement is as sweet as the gold medal," Sreekandan said. Bijimol, who was also an athlete, said she could not bear the thought of Sreeshankar returning home disappointed after suffering an injury without winning a medal. "When he got that injury, I was praying that he would get at least some medal... even if it was just one medal, he could return happily.

"I FEEL LUCKY TO HAVE ACTED IN TATVAM:



Telugu audiences have always shown good appreciation for new and innovative stories. If a film can keep them engaged throughout, even a small-budget movie can achieve big success. Particularly in the murder mystery genre, the suspense and screenplay have a strong appeal among audiences.

Now, Tatvam is gearing up to thrill audiences with a unique storyline and intriguing elements. Starring Dinesh Tej and Dashvika K. as the lead pair, the film is directed by Arjun Kola. Produced jointly by Trayathi Ishani Creations and S.K. Productions, the film is produced by Vamsi Seemakurthi , Swetha pashupulate Tatvam is slated for a theatrical release on October 2.

Ahead of the release, heroine Dashvika K. interacted with the media on Monday and shared several interesting details about the film and her character.

How does it feel to make your debut as a heroine with Tatvam?

I feel lucky to have got a role with good scope for performance right in my first project. When I heard the story of Tatvam, I found it very interesting. My character has a lot of emotion and the story is set against a village backdrop.

Your character seems to have negative shades in the trailer.

My character does have grey shades, but she is someone audiences will like. I don't want to reveal anything more about the character at this point.

What kind of character do you play in Tatvam?

She is a soft, kind-hearted girl who supports the hero. My character stands by him as he investigates the killer. She is essentially a positive character.

What can audiences expect from Tatvam?

Stories like this are generally made in Malayalam cinema, so I am happy that a film with a similar kind of concept is being made in Telugu as well. The film is not boring at any point. It is a murder mystery thriller, and all the elements that are expected in this genre are present. Personally, I am also a shy person, so that helped me connect with my character. The story unfolds against a village backdrop.

Why did you want to become an actress?

I have loved acting since childhood. When I was in third grade, I even told my teacher that I wanted to become an actress. I have always been interested in cinema and modelling. At my parents' request, I completed my studies before entering the film industry. Now, I have their complete support. I also underwent acting training under Mahathi Bikshu.

Were you scared by what you heard about the film industry before entering it?

Yes, I was scared and quite tense before entering the industry. But I eventually understood that we have to manage things and grow in whichever field we choose. In my case, everything went quite smoothly. The industry is not as bad as people outside perceive it to be.

What can you say about hero Dinesh Tej?

Dinesh is very supportive. He helped me a lot, especially during the action sequences. His character in this film is also very good.

What can you say about director Arjun Kola?

Director Arjun Kola is a very calm and silent person. He has a software job, and I was surprised to learn that he took three months' leave from his job to make this film. He is a director with great clarity.

What else is a major highlight of the film?

Apart from the story and narration, Chetan Bharadwaj's music and the background score will be major highlights of the film.

Does the film justify the title Tatvam?

It is a very different title. Initially, all of us were a little worried about whether audiences would like it. But we received very positive feedback from everyone. After October 2, everyone will definitely say that the film is as different as its title.

ALIA BHATT LOVED-UP PIC GOES VIRAL



Alia Bhatt made Ranbir Kapoor's birthday special with a series of pictures shared on social media. Among them, this romantic throwback picture of the couple has grabbed attention. The picture shows Alia and Ranbir sharing a close and playful moment while posing together.

Alia's birthday post also included a few other personal glimpses from their life. The actress often gives fans a peek into their family moments and this post was no different. The loved-up picture has once again caught the attention of fans, with many appreciating the couple's chemistry and the warmth seen in Alia's birthday wish for Ranbir. Ranbir turned 44 on September 28, and Alia celebrated the occasion by sharing a series of personal photographs featuring her husband. The carousel included intimate moments from home, vacations and a throwback from the time they were shooting for Brahmastra.The first picture showed Alia and Ranbir posing together at home, with Ranbir sitting on her lap. Another image appeared to be from one of Alia's favourite restaurants in New York, giving fans a glimpse of one of their travel memories. Earlier today, Ranbir Kapoor shared his special day with fans as he not only greeted them from his balcony with Alia but also stepped down to meet them, take pictures and give autographs. He even cut a birthday cake with the paparazzi outside his house.Meanwhile, on the work front, Ranbir Kapoor is gearing up for the release of Ramayana this Diwali. Ever since its announcement, the film has generated considerable buzz around its ambitious scale, star-studded cast, and two-part format. Besides Ranbir Kapoor as Ram, the film also stars Sai Pallavi as Sita, Yash as Ravan and Ravie Dubey as Lakshman.

He will also be seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Love and War with Alia Bhatt and Vicky Kaushal. The poster shows Ranbir flaunting a rugged look as he poses with a blood-stained sleeve and a bullet mark on his shirt. Alia Bhatt steps into a glamorous, cabaret-inspired avatar, bringing a mix of confidence, sensuality and old-school charm to the frame.

It was initially expected to arrive around Christmas 2025 before being pushed to March 2026. The release was subsequently postponed again. Love and War is now scheduled to hit theatres on January 21, 2027.

'RICH' BEGINS WITH GRAND POOJA CEREMONY

A new film titled 'Rich' has been launched today with a grand pooja ceremony. The movie is being jointly produced by Padmanabha Reddy and Margam Gopi under the banners of MG Arts and IFX Studios Pvt. Ltd., with Mahendra S Gaikwad as the co-producer. Presented by Baby Aradhya and Adarsh, the film carries the subtitle 'A Basti Boy Love Story'. Mohit Pedada and Srijita Ghosh play the lead roles, while Raja Narendra is directing the movie. The film's grand launch ceremony was attended by directors Gopi Mohan, Dasarath, V. Samudra and G. Ram Prasad, along with D.S. Rao, Mittapalli Surender and Jabardasth Avinash.



MAYOOKHA SET FOR OCTOBER 9 THEATRICAL RELEASE

Mayookha, the female-oriented thriller starring Payal Chengappa in the lead role, is all set for a grand worldwide theatrical release on October 9. Produced by Sasidhar Nalla under the Prashvitha Entertai9ment banner and directed by Shree Tej S.K., the film has completed all its formalities. The makers held a grand trailer launch event in Hyderabad today with the cast and crew in attendance.

Director Shree Tej S.K. said, "My parents believed in me, and that belief is the reason I entered the film industry. No parents would usually agree when someone says they're leaving everything behind in the US to pursue cinema, but they trusted that I would achieve something creatively.

When I narrated the story of Mayookha, Payal believed in both me and my script and immediately agreed to do the film. Producer Sasidhar garu gave me my first opportunity as a director, and I'm grateful to him.

Everyone who worked on this film worked with passion and supported me throughout.



We Won't Stay Silent If Small Films Are Suppressed": Shiraz Mehdi

Alleging that discrimination against small films has reached an alarming level in the Telugu film industry, filmmaker and actor Shiraz Mehdi, who made and played the lead in O Andala Rakshasi, expressed serious anguish and anger over the difficulties faced by small producers in securing theatres.

Speaking at a media conference held at Prasads Labs in Hyderabad, Shiraz Mehdi said he had made the film with the support of several people and experienced technicians and was confident that it could achieve strong results if given a proper theatrical release.

He alleged that small films are being denied adequate theatres, causing severe financial losses to producers and directors. He said he had already addressed more than 40 press conferences and given over 50 interviews regarding the problems surrounding the theatrical release of his film. "Qube and UFO are exploiting small producers"

Shiraz Mehdi alleged that small producers are being charged large amounts in the name of censor-related procedures and the ADCC process. He further alleged that digital cinema service providers Qube and UFO were charging around ?10,000 to ?12,000 per theatre for services that, according to him, could be provided for around ?2,000 a week. He claimed that such practices were placing an additional financial burden on small producers. Criticism of the Film Chamber Shiraz Mehdi also criticised the functioning of the Telugu Film Chamber, alleging that it was not adequately supporting small producers and directors.



He claimed that leading multiplex chains, including INOX, PVR and Asian Films, had initially assured the team that theatres would be provided but later backed out.

RAJA KUMARI DEBUTS AS MUSIC DIRECTOR WITH IMPURE, AND OMG IS THE SANGEET SONG FOR WEDDING SEASON



American musician Raja Kumari, who won over pan-Indian audiences with Jawan and Telugu audiences with They Call Him OG, makes her music director debut with IMPURE, composing alongside Karan Pandav. She also lends her voice and rap to OMG, the Sangeet song in the English-language film, made entirely with a desi cast and technicians.

Impure argues that purity cannot be judged by age-old rules and beliefs, and shows how chasing connection, dreams and passion can be devastating. Directed by Nishanthi Evani, it stars Yashna, Varahi and Sai Krishna. The story is by Varahi Mallipamula, and it is produced by Varahi and her mother, Sridevi Mallipamula.

Director Nandhini Reddy launched the trailer at the film's pre-release event and wished the mother-daughter producers a grand debut. The trailer promises a bold take on the social issues of today through comedy.

Raja Kumari's Sangeet song, with Telugu lyrics by Kadali Sathyanarayana, takes on the women-are-too-much conversation and hands the problem back: men, step up to our level instead of dragging us down to yours. Varahi danced to it in Times Square with American dancers. Raja also makes a special cameo in the film, and the screen gets more regal for it.

IMPURE releases in theatres on October 2.

VIKRAM WILL BECOME A BIG ACTOR: DIRECTOR VV VINAYAK



Anakapalli is a raw and rustic film produced under the banners of Bhavya Sri Movie Makers and Nakkina Narratives by Kandregeula Naidu and Thrinadha Rao Nakkina,

who also played key roles in the film. Vikram Sahidev, Sandhya Vasishta and Tarak Ponnappa play the lead roles. The film is directed by Khagesh Tammineni. Kandregeula Kumar Raja is the co-producer, while Thrinadha Rao Nakkina has provided the story and screenplay.

The movie is slated for theatrical release on October 2. Ahead of its release, the makers held a grand pre-release event on Sunday, which was attended by several prominent personalities from the Telugu film industry.

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