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AP Plans Single-Window System For Faster Film Shooting Permissions

Amaravati, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

The state government has initiated steps to introduce a fast-track and single-window approval system for film shooting permissions, aiming to create a filmmaker-friendly environment and strengthen the State's film industry.

The proposal was discussed during a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Sai Prasad, along with APSFTVDC Chairman Bharath Bhushan, APFDC Managing Director Viswana than and senior officials from various departments.

Officials deliberated on establishing a transparent, efficient and time-bound clearance mechanism to simplify the process of obtaining shooting permissions and reduce procedural delays. The proposed system is aimed at improving coordination among departments and ensuring faster approvals for filmmakers.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, APSFTVDC Chairman Bharath Bhushan said the Andhra Pradesh Government was committed to making the State a preferred destination for film production. He said discussions with officials from different departments were productive and received support for creating a streamlined approval process.

Bhushan said Andhra Pradesh has been attracting an increasing number of film productions and the single-window system would further enhance the State's appeal. He added that the initiative would improve ease of doing business for the film industry while ensuring transparency and quicker permissions. He said the new mechanism would be introduced soon, with detailed operational guidelines to be announced shortly. The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Kumar Vishwajeet, APFDC MD Viswanathan, PCCF Chalapati Rao, CCF N.N. Rao and other senior officials, including Shashi Bhushan Kumar, Kanthilal Dande, Suresh Kumar, Sampath Kumar, Yuvraj, Kannababu, Amrapali, Praveen Aditya, Shubham Bansal, Bharani, Padmavathi and Venkataramana. Officials extended their support to the initiative aimed at accelerating the growth of Andhra Pradesh's film industry.



G. Sai Prasad (Andhra Pradesh CS)



Bharath Bhushan (APSFTVDC) Chairman



K S Viswanathan IAS MD, APSFTVDC



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AP Notifies First Integrated Pedestrian Safety And Accessibility Policy

K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh has become the first State in India to notify an integrated Pedestrian Safety and Universal Accessibility Policy, 2026, along with Operational Guidelines, 2026, aimed at shifting road planning from a vehicle-centric approach to a people-centric model.

The Municipal Administration & Urban Development Department issued Government Orders notifying the policy, bringing pedestrian safety, universal accessibility, road safety audits, accountability mechanisms, technology-based monitoring, citizen participation and circular economy principles under a single statewide framework.

The policy translates the Supreme Court of India directions in S. Rajasekaran v. Union of India, W.P. (C) No. 295 of 2012, decided on October 7, 2025, into an enforceable framework. It covers urban local bodies, rural areas, peri-urban regions and satellite towns, including new infrastructure projects and upgrades to existing roads.

Minister for Municipal Administration & Urban Development Dr Ponguru Narayana said the policy reflected the Government's commitment to placing human life at the centre of infrastructure planning. He said roads should serve as safe public spaces for children, senior citizens, women, persons with disabilities, pedestrians and public transport users.

The Minister said the initiative matched the vision of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to develop Andhra Pradesh as a safe, inclusive and sustainable State. He added that pedestrian facilities would be treated as mandatory com-



ponents of road infrastructure rather than additional works.

The policy focuses on road safety audits, universal accessibility, circular economy principles and behavioural change through public participation. Authorities will identify accident-prone locations and prioritise high-footfall areas such as markets, railway stations, bus stands, religious institutions and educational zones. The guidelines prescribe standards based on MoHUA Harmonised Guidelines, 2021, IRC-103-2022 and IRC SP-117-2018. Footpaths must maintain a minimum two-metre clear walking zone, while kerb ramps, tactile indicators, Braille signage, universal pictograms and accessible pedestrian signals have been made mandatory.

Principal Secretary to Government, MA&UD, S. Suresh Kumar, said the policy would ensure that Supreme Court directions lead to visible improvements. He said the Government had combined

engineering standards, accessibility, technology, accountability and citizen participation to make pedestrian safety an institutional responsibility.

The framework provides for GIS mapping, geo-tagged records, drone surveys, digital inventories and dashboard monitoring. Local bodies will be assessed on accessible footpath development, safety improvements, accident reduction and use of recycled materials.

The policy promotes the use of processed Construction and Demolition waste for pedestrian infrastructure such as pavement blocks, street furniture and protective bollards. Residents' Welfare Associations, NGOs, persons with disabilities and academic institutions will participate in accessibility audits and identification of unsafe locations.

The policy aims to ensure safe and dignified mobility for every citizen, making pedestrian safety a core element of public infrastructure planning.



NDA Govt Indebted To BCs, Will Enact Protection Law Soon Says CM Naidu

Netanna Sevalo Scheme Launched, 71,536 Handloom Families Get Rs.25,000 Assistance Each

Chandrasheker Malla

Chirala : "The NDA government is indebted to the Backward Classes, and we will certainly repay that debt," Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said on Friday, announcing that the Coalition Government would soon enact a law to ensure the protection of BCs.

Addressing the 12th National Handloom Day celebrations at Kothapeta village in Chirala constituency of Bapatla district, the Chief Minister said the draft legislation was already prepared. He reiterated that the government was committed to the welfare and protection of BC communities through legal measures.

During the event, Naidu launched the 'Netanna Sevalo' scheme and released Rs.179 crore financial assistance to 71,536 eligible handloom families, providing Rs.25,000 to each family.

He said handloom was not merely an occupation but an art form representing India's cultural heritage. Andhra Pradesh, he added, was home to world-renowned traditions including Chirala, Venkatagiri, Dharmavaram, Uppada, Mangalagiri, Ponduru, Pedana, Srikalahasti and Narasapuram.

Recalling Chirala's rich textile legacy, Chandrababu said weavers once created sarees that could fit inside a matchbox and Chirala handkerchiefs were exported abroad. He said Chirala was once known as "Mini Mumbai" and promised to restore its former glory.

He said around 1.27 lakh people depend on the handloom sector for livelihood. The government was providing free electricity up to 200 units per month for handloom families and 500 units for powerloom units, benefiting 62,541 handloom families and 10,032 powerloom units. The Chief Minister highlighted welfare measures including NTR

Pension Bharosa for handloom workers from the age of 50, monthly pensions of Rs.4,000 to 85,000 weavers, Rs.79 crore cash credit support to 109 Primary Handloom Cooperative Societies, approval of 10 handloom clusters and improved market access through the Handloom Marketing Assistance programme.

He announced infrastructure projects including special development works in Uppada, a Handloom Park at Mangalagiri, a Handloom and Handicrafts Museum at Shakhmuru in Amaravati and a sustainable textile recycling unit in Visakhapatnam with an investment of Rs.4,200 crore.

Naidu said the government was implementing initiatives for BC communities, including Rs.505 crore assistance over two years to 1.34 lakh fishing families during the fishing ban period, mining leases for Vaddera communities, excise shops for toddy tappers and Rs.20,000 additional subsidy for rooftop solar installations for BC beneficiaries.

He announced Universal Health Insurance coverage of Rs.2.5 lakh for every citizen under the 'Sanjeevani' scheme. The Chief Minister said Amaravati was being developed as a world-class capital and announced that the Seed Access Road would be inaugurated on August 13. He also announced a tourism corridor from Suryalanka to Chirala with Rs.97 crore under the Swadesh Darshan scheme. Ministers Savitha, Gottipati Ravikumar and others participated in the celebrations.

Chandrababu also visited exhibition stalls, released the Bay of Bapatla website and handbook, launched the Bapatla LEAPS youth skill development programme and witnessed agreements with four organisations, including Fabindia, to promote the handloom sector.

Major Administrative Overhaul In AP, Several IAS Officers Transferred

Rawat, Syamala Rao, Kona Sasidhar Get Key Postings

DR Ravi Kumar Boppa Senior Journalist

Amaravati: The state government on Friday issued orders effecting a major reshuffle of senior IAS officers, transferring and posting several officers across key departments with immediate effect. The General Administration Department (GAD) also entrusted many officers with Full Additional Charge (FAC) of important posts to ensure administrative continuity.

Senior IAS officer Shamsheer Singh Rawat has been transferred from the General Administration Department and posted as Special Chief Secretary, Tourism & Culture. He has also been given additional charge of the Youth Services & Sports, Services & HRM, and GPM & AR departments.

J. Syamala Rao has been appointed Principal Secretary, School Education, with additional charge of the Higher Education, Skill Development & Training, and Political Departments. Kona Sasidhar has been shifted as Secretary, Transport, Roads & Buildings, besides holding additional charge of the Infrastructure & Investment Department.

The government withdrew the services of Amrapali Kata as Managing Director of Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) and directed her to report to GAD for further posting. Pattanshetti Ravi Subash, Secretary, APPSC, has been appointed Managing Director, APTDC, while also holding additional charge as CEO, Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority (APTA), and Secretary, APPSC.

S. Suresh Kumar, Principal Secretary, Municipal Administration & Urban Development, has been appointed Special Officer for the forthcoming Godavari Pushkaralu, while Dr. Narayana Bharathi Gupta, Commissioner, Higher Education, has been designated Joint Special Officer for the event.

Among other significant appointments, Mutyalara Revu has been posted as Commissioner, Archaeology & Museums, K.V.N. Chakradhara Babu has been given additional charge as Commissioner of Health & Family Welfare and Managing Director of the National Health Mission, while Hephysiba Rani Korlapati has been appointed Special Secretary, Housing



Department with additional responsibilities in the State Housing Corporation.

The government also appointed P. Arun Babu as Director General, Drug Control Administration, Prakhar Jain as Metropolitan Commissioner of the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA), and assigned Geetanjali Sharma additional charge as CEO of RTGS. Chetan T.S. has been given additional charge as Director of Disaster Management.

In further postings, Dr. A. Sharath (Retd.) has been appointed Joint Executive Officer, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), while Prabhala Gopinadh has been posted as Joint Executive Officer (Health & Education), TTD. A.A.L. Padmavathi has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of NTR Vaidya Seva Trust, M. Jayakrishna as Municipal Commissioner of Tirupati Municipal Corporation, and B. Sunil Kumar Reddy, IFS, has been given additional charge as Managing Director of the Swachh Andhra Corporation. B. Anil Kumar Reddy and N. Tej Bharrath have been directed to report to GAD for further postings.

Adavi Thalli Bata Gains Momentum With 905 Km Roads Completed

Pawan Kalyan Directs Officials To Expedite Works To Make AP Doli-Free

ARN Mahesh

Amaravati: The 'Adavi Thalli Bata' initiative launched under the supervision of Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Pawan Kalyan to provide road connectivity to tribal villages is progressing steadily, with 905 km of roads already completed under the expansion phase.

The initiative aims to transform remote tribal habitations by ensuring all-weather road connectivity and eliminating the hardships caused by the traditional 'doli' (makeshift stretcher) system used for transporting patients in inaccessible areas.

The first phase of 'Adavi Thalli Bata' was launched with road development works covering 1,069 km at an estimated cost of ₹1,005 crore. Subsequently, 'Adavi Thalli Bata 2.0' expanded the programme to develop a total of 2,310 km of roads at a cost of ₹S.2,078 crore. Pawan Kalyan has been regularly reviewing the progress of works with officials from the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department and issuing directions to speed up completion. During a recent review meeting, he instructed officials to complete pending works within the stipulated timelines.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed District Collectors to ensure better coordination among departments and avoid delays in obtaining forest clearances. He said development works should continue without interruption except in areas



affected by heavy rains.

The road construction under the initiative involves overcoming several geographical challenges. In many tribal areas, hillocks were cleared using controlled blasting and rock-breaking methods to create access routes before road works commenced. Difficult terrain and weather conditions also posed challenges in transporting construction materials.

Pawan Kalyan said every tribal village should become free from the 'doli' system and called for collective efforts to achieve a 'Doli-free Andhra Pradesh'. He emphasised that improved connectivity would help tribal communities access education, healthcare and employment opportunities.

He directed officials to establish continuous monitoring mechanisms to ensure quality in the road works being undertaken with the support of the Central government. He also highlighted that the Alliance government had expedited forest clearances for development projects after assuming office.

The Deputy Chief Minister stressed that the 'Adavi Thalli Bata' programme was not merely a road development initiative but a step towards improving the quality of life of tribal communities by connecting remote villages with essential services and opportunities.

AP Accelerates Its Net-Zero Green Building Drive

638 Projects Covering 627 Million Sq. Ft. Strengthen the State's Sustainable Growth Drive

K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

S Suresh Kumar, Principal Secretary, MA&UD, Government of Andhra Pradesh, emphasised that Amaravati's master plan vision must reach people through greater public awareness and social media engagement. He said the continued recognition of Amaravati under the IGBC Green Cities Rating was a significant milestone and stressed expanding the vision across the State for a greener and sustainable Andhra Pradesh.

The Confederation of Indian Industry's Indian Green Building Council (CII-IGBC) hosted the 2nd IGBC Green Andhra Summit 2026 at Novotel, Vijayawada, with the theme "Accelerating Green Growth in Andhra Pradesh - Towards a Net-Zero Future." The summit brought together policymakers, urban planners, architects, developers and sustainability experts to promote climate-resilient development.

Andhra Pradesh has emerged as a leading green building State, with 638 IGBC-registered projects covering 627.58 million sq. ft., of which



300 projects covering 479.60 million sq. ft. have received certification. The projects include commercial, residential, industrial, transit infrastructure and Net Zero developments.

A key highlight was the announcement of enhanced incentives for IGBC-certified green buildings. Projects with Silver, Gold and Platinum ratings will receive 5%, 10% and 15% discounts respectively on Development Charges, along with existing reductions in Impact and AP RERA fees.

The summit was attended by Vijay Rama Raju V, Commissioner,

APCRDA: C Shekar Reddy, National Chairman, IGBC; Dasari Anwesh, Vice Chairman, CII Vijayawada Zone and Director, Efftronics Systems Pvt Ltd; Vijaya Sai Meka, Chairman, IGBC Amaravati Chapter; and Kiran Kumar Paruchuri, Co-Chair, IGBC Amaravati Chapter.

C Shekar Reddy said India has over 20,012 IGBC-registered projects covering 16.33 billion sq. ft., making it the second-largest green building footprint globally. He highlighted Andhra Pradesh's progress and stressed integrating green standards into mainstream development.

The summit released the "Guide for Green Buildings in Andhra Pradesh" and recognised Amaravati with IGBC Green Cities Platinum Certification. The APCRDA Project Office became the first government building in Amaravati to achieve IGBC Net Zero Energy Certification (By Design).

Over 40 new projects covering more than one crore sq. ft. were registered under the IGBC Green Crusaders initiative. With policy support and industry collaboration, Andhra Pradesh is emerging as a model for sustainable urbanisation and Net Zero development under the Swarna Andhra 2047 vision.

CM Fulfils 90-Year-Old Woman's Wish



Chirala, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu fulfilled the wish of 90-year-old Pushpavathi, who had expressed her desire on social media to meet him and take a photograph together. After noticing her request on the social media platform X, the Chief Minister assured her that he would meet her during his visit to Chirala. On Friday, Chandrababu warmly greeted Pushpavathi, spent a few moments interacting with her, and posed for a photograph, leaving the elderly woman overjoyed. During the programme, the Chief Minister also met handloom weaver couple Nageswara Rao and Lakshmi from Etcherla in Srikakulam district. The couple presented him with a handwoven portrait crafted on a loom. Chandrababu appreciated their remarkable skill and congratulated them for preserving the state's rich handloom tradition. He encouraged artisans to continue promoting Andhra Pradesh's weaving heritage through their craftsmanship.

Satya Kumar Launches 'Vidya Vikasam', 'Vidya Vahini'

Dharmavaram, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Health, Medical Education and Family Welfare Minister Satya Kumar Yadav on Friday launched the Vidya Vikasam and Vidya Vahini initiatives aimed at strengthening learning, personality development and career guidance for government school students. Inaugurating the programmes at Sri Ganesh Municipal School, he said students in government schools have immense potential and can excel with proper guidance, discipline and confidence. He urged them to focus on communication skills, creativity, leadership, sports and cultural activities along with academics. The initiatives, implemented by Samskruti Seva Samithi in collaboration with the Ekalavya Foundation, will



cover 30 gram panchayats through after-school academic support and 40 government high schools through personality development and competitive exam coaching. Highlighting local efforts, the minister said 2,087 Class X students received free bicycles worth Rs.98 lakh, along with exam fee support. Schools are also being equipped with toilets and RO drinking water facilities. He added that a mega job fair helped 2,400 youth secure jobs, while coaching and accommodation are being provided for banking aspirants and 25 civil services candidates.

Centre Allocates RS.590 Crore for AP Medical Colleges in 5 years



New Delhi, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Eluru MP Putta Mahesh Kumar raised a question in the Lok Sabha on financial assistance to medical colleges in Andhra Pradesh for infrastructure and expansion. Replying, Union Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel said the Centre released Rs.590.02 crore between 2021 and 2026. Of this, Rs.342.36 crore was for new medical colleges and Rs.247.66 crore for increasing post-

graduate seats. She noted that medical colleges in India rose from 387 in 2014 to 846 in 2026. Undergraduate seats increased from 51,348 to 1,39,489, while postgraduate seats grew from 31,185 to 86,360. The minister also highlighted reforms in medical education, including the Competency-Based Medical Education Curriculum 2024, digital logbooks under PG regulations, and AI-based online training by the National Board of Examinations.

MP Seeks More Overseas Scholarships for Tribal Students

Machilipatnam, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Machilipatnam MP Vallabhaneni Balashowry urged the Central Government to expand opportunities for Scheduled Tribe (ST) students pursuing higher education abroad by increasing scholarships and revising the family income limit under the National Overseas Scholarship (NOS) scheme. Raising the issue during Lok Sabha Question Hour under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Balashowry sought details on the scheme's implementation and suggested reforms to make it more accessible to deserving tribal students. Responding to the query, the Centre informed that the NOS scheme provides full financial assistance to meritorious ST students admitted to Master's, Ph.D., and Post-Doctoral programmes in QS Top-1000 universities worldwide. The scholarship covers tuition fees, maintenance allowance, educational expenses and travel costs. The government stated that only 20 scholarships are awarded annually, including 17 for ST students and three for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), with the annual family income limit fixed at Rs.6 lakh. Balashowry asked whether the government would consider increasing the scholarship number from 20 to 100 and enhancing the income ceiling. The Centre said proposals for both changes are under consideration as part of the Expenditure Finance Committee review for continuation of the scheme from 2026-27 to 2030-31, subject to approval. The MP said expanding the scheme would help talented tribal youth access global educational opportunities.



AP To Procure 1,600 MW Thermal Power To Meet Rising Demand

ARN Mahesh

The state is set to procure 1,600 MW of coal-based thermal power to meet rising electricity demand and strengthen long-term energy security. The Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) has granted in-principle approval to State power distribution companies to initiate the competitive bidding process. The procurement will be carried out through Tariff-Based Competitive Bidding under Section 63 of the Electricity Act, 2003, using the Design, Build, Finance, Own and Operate (DBFOO) model. The bidding will follow the standard Request for Qualification, Request for Proposal, and Power Supply Agreement documents as notified by the Union Ministry of

Power. The 1,600 MW procurement is the first phase of Andhra Pradesh's long-term thermal capacity addition programme. The Central Electricity Authority's Resource Adequacy Plan has recommended phased addition of around 5,588 MW of coal-based thermal generation capacity by FY 2035-36. The initiative follows a review meeting chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on April 27, 2026, during which State distribution companies and the Andhra Pradesh Power Coordination Committee (APGCC) were directed to begin procurement. The APGCC approved the proposal on June 11, 2026, and APERC approved it on August 6, 2026. The proposed thermal capacity is expected to provide reli-

able power for industrial growth, urban expansion and electricity-intensive investments. It will complement Andhra Pradesh's renewable energy capacity by ensuring supply during peak demand, seasonal variations and periods of low wind and solar generation. The regulator clarified that the approval only permits the bidding process and does not approve the final tariff or Power Supply Agreements. After bidding, distribution companies must submit the bid evaluation report, discovered tariff, draft agreements and details of deviations from model documents to APERC. The Commission has directed that bids be rejected if tariffs are not competitive. It has also advised preference for projects connected to the Andhra Pradesh State Transmission



Network to optimise infrastructure use and reduce connectivity risks. Projects connected through the Inter-State Transmission System may be considered if their landed power cost at the State boundary is lower.

Under the DBFOO model, selected developers will design, construct, finance, own and operate projects while supplying electricity through long-term contracts. The procurement is expected to create opportunities for power devel-

opers, equipment manufacturers, lenders, fuel suppliers and infrastructure companies. The AP Power Procurement Cell will issue bidding documents, followed by tariff discovery and regulatory scrutiny of selected proposals.

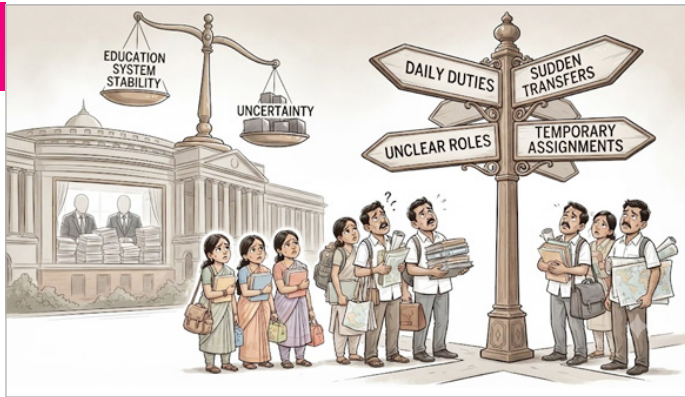
7,000 Cluster Teachers Seek Clarity On Duties And Transfer Issues

K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

Amaravati: Cluster teachers across the state have urged the government to address their concerns over unclear job responsibilities, frequent deputations and transfer-related difficulties. They said the existing system has created uncertainty, particularly affecting women teachers. Since the last academic year, teachers identified as "surplus" based on the student-teacher ratio in high schools have been assigned to cluster high schools across the State. More than 7,000 teachers from various subjects were identified as surplus across districts. Though the move was aimed at

effective utilisation of teaching resources, teachers said the absence of a defined job chart has created confusion. They alleged that Headmasters (HMs) and Mandal Educational Officers (MEOs) frequently assign them to different schools or locations at short notice to handle teacher shortages, attend programmes or perform other duties. The teachers said they are often unaware of their workplace for the day and have to report wherever they are directed, sometimes receiving instructions early in the morning. They said the uncertainty has caused significant stress and inconvenience, especially for female teachers who face additional challenges in managing family responsibilities.

B. Swaminadhudu, S.A. (Telugu), ZPHS Shettipalli, Gudipalle (Mandal), Chittoor District, said cluster teachers were willing to perform their duties but needed clear guidelines and a structured system. He urged the government to address their concerns and ensure a stable working environment. Teachers also expressed concern over the rule requiring cluster teachers to undergo transfers whenever the transfer process is conducted. They said frequent transfers, particularly to remote areas, affect family stability, children's education and personal commitments. S. Chennakrishna, S.A. (Telugu), ZPHS PTM,



Annamayya District, said the government should review the existing arrangements and provide a permanent solution. He appealed to the authorities to consider the difficulties faced by cluster teachers while

framing policies. The teachers requested the government to prepare a clear job chart, rationalise transfer norms and ensure that their services are utilised effectively without causing unnecessary hardship.

Anjaneyulu Resigns As Krishna Milk Union Chairman

Vijayawada, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Krishna Milk Union Chairman Chalasani Anjaneyulu resigned from his post on Saturday, stating that he was stepping down following the decision of the party leadership and to provide an opportunity for another leader to serve the cooperative.

Speaking to the media, Minister Kollu Ravindra said Anjaneyulu's resignation reflected his commitment to the party's collective decision. He said Ministers Kollu Ravindra and Kolu Parthasarathi were involved in discussions regarding the leadership transition. Ravindra said Anjaneyulu voluntarily

resigned and requested the government to appoint a new chairman at the earliest to ensure smooth functioning of the Krishna Milk Union. Anjaneyulu also appealed to the government to provide a title deed for Vijay Dairy lands, stating that it would help the institution's future development.

The Minister said the party leadership would complete the process of appointing a new chairman soon and expressed confidence that the change would strengthen the cooperative's functioning. The resignation comes amid recent political discussions over the leadership of Krishna Milk Union, with the ruling coalition stating



that the transition was carried out as per the party's organisational decision.

APSLBC Holds APY Outreach Drive to Boost Pension Enrolment

Vijayawada, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

The State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), Andhra Pradesh, organised the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) Credit Outreach Programme in Vijayawada on Thursday to accelerate enrolment under the Central Government's social security scheme. Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Chief General Manager Praveesh Kumar, who attended as chief guest, stressed the importance of APY in ensuring financial security

after retirement, especially for workers in the unorganised sector. He urged banks to enhance awareness campaigns, customer counselling and Business Correspondent involvement. The SLBC Convener said APY, launched on May 9, 2015, provides a guaranteed monthly pension of Rs.1,000 to Rs.5,000 for eligible subscribers aged 18 to 40 years after attaining 60 years. He said the scheme has covered 9.45 crore subscribers nationwide, including 46 lakh in Andhra Pradesh. During 2025-26, banks in the state enrolled 5,97,777 subscribers against the



annual target of 6,74,265. For 2026-27, Andhra Pradesh has been assigned a target of 7,50,760 enrolments. As of July 31, 2026, banks achieved 2,30,871 enrol-

ments, accounting for 31% of the target. Senior officials reiterated their commitment to expanding pension coverage across the state.

Aadi Krithika Celebrated at Kapileswara Temple

Tirupati, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

The annual Aadi Krithika festival was celebrated with spiritual fervour at Sri Kapileswara Swamy Temple in Tirupati on Friday, with a large number of devotees participating in special rituals.

As part of the celebrations, Snapana Tirumanjanam was performed to the processional deities Sri Subrahmanyeswara Swamy, along with Sri Valli and Sri Devasena. The deities were ceremonially bathed with milk, curd, honey, sandalwood paste and other

sacred substances amid Vedic chants. A special Abhishekam was also performed to the presiding deity. Devotees thronged the temple throughout the day to offer prayers on the auspicious occasion dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya. The evening Tiruveedhi Utsavam

of Sri Subrahmanyeswara Swamy and the consorts was conducted with traditional rituals and devotional programmes. Temple authorities made elaborate arrangements for the smooth conduct of the festival. Temple Deputy Executive Officer Nagarathna, Superintendent Chandra Sekhara, priests, officials, staff members and devotees participated in the celebrations.



PIB Director Calls For Coordinated Outreach

Vijayawada, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

The Press Information Bureau (PIB), Vijayawada, under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, convened a meeting of the Inter Media Publicity Coordination Committee (IMPCC) on Friday to strengthen coordination among the publicity wings of Central Government departments and improve the dissemination of information on flagship schemes and public initiatives. Addressing the meeting, G. Suresh Kumar, Director, PIB Vijayawada, emphasised the need for closer collaboration among government departments to enhance public outreach, effectively communicate welfare programmes, and counter misinformation. He highlighted the crucial role played by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's media units,



including the Press Information Bureau, Central Bureau of Communication, Doordarshan, and All India Radio, in ensuring timely and accurate dissemination of government information. Suresh Kumar assured participating departments of the Ministry's full

support in promoting government programmes and initiatives through coordinated communication efforts. He noted that effective collaboration among media and publicity wings would help improve public awareness and ensure that citizens receive authentic and reliable informa-

tion. The IMPCC meeting brought together representatives from more than 15 Central Government departments and organisations to share their key activities, achievements, and communication strategies. Participants included officials from the Department of Posts, Indian Railways, AIIMS, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Food Corporation of India (FCI), Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), National Statistical Office (NSO), School of Planning and Architecture, Airports Authority of India, Bureau of Indian Standards, Doordarshan, and Akashvani. During the interactive session, members exchanged ideas and shared updates on recent publicity initiatives, while offering suggestions to strengthen coordinated communication efforts and expand the reach of government information across the region.

Jagan Assures Support to Aided College Staff



Gannavaram, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Former Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party President YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday assured full support to part-time lecturers, unaided lecturers and non-teaching staff working in aided junior colleges across the state, promising

to stand by them until their long-pending demands are addressed. Representatives of the Andhra Pradesh Aided Junior Colleges Part-Time Lecturers Association met Jagan at Gannavaram Airport and submitted a memorandum detailing the issues faced by employees who have been serving in aided junior colleges for the past 15 to 25 years. Association President Ariga Joshi Rao appealed to Jagan to take up their demands with the state government and seek a fair resolution. The representatives said that despite decades of service, thousands of part-time lecturers, unaided lecturers and non-teaching staff continue to face inadequate salaries, lack of job security and the absence of welfare benefits. They urged the government to give priority to experienced part-time and unaided lecturers while filling contract teaching posts under the 10+2 education system. They also sought recognition of their years of service, academic qualifications and teaching experience during recruitment. The association further demanded implementation of the minimum time scale for part-time and unaided staff, enforcement of the principle of "equal pay for equal work," and a special policy for the regularisation of employees who have served for several years.

After hearing their grievances, Jagan said the government has a responsibility to ensure justice for those who have dedicated many years to the education sector. He assured the delegation that the YSR Congress Party would continue to raise their legitimate demands before the government through every available forum and work towards an early and fair resolution.

BJP Targets Greater Tribal Outreach Ahead of Local Polls



Vijayawada, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced an intensified outreach programme to strengthen its presence among tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh ahead of the local body elections. Addressing the BJP ST Morcha State Executive Committee meeting at the party office in Vijayawada on Friday, BJP State Vice-President Garapati Seetharama Anjaneya Chowdary (Tapana Foundation) said the party aims to reach every tribal household in hill and plain areas. He said the ST Morcha would coordinate with NDA allies during local elections and spread awareness about Central Government welfare schemes among tribal communities. Chowdary highlighted initiatives such as the PM JANMAN scheme, under which Rs.24,000 crore has been allocated nationwide for tribal development. He also mentioned the strengthening of Eklavya Model Residential Schools and said 10,710 students were enrolled during 2025-26, while scholarships benefited 32,490 tribal students in 2024-25. He added that Stand-Up India has supported tribal entrepreneurs, with Rs.157 crore in loans sanctioned to beneficiaries in Andhra Pradesh. ST Morcha State President Pangri Rajarao urged workers to ensure effective implementation of welfare schemes. BJP leaders, including Madhukar Ji, ST Morcha National Vice-President Satyanarayana Reddy and other office-bearers, attended the meeting. Traditional tribal performances marked the event.

YSRCP Intensifies DSC Probe Demand



Chirala, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

The YSRCP in Chirala continued its relay hunger strike for the second consecutive day, demanding a CBI inquiry into alleged irregularities in the DSC recruitment process. The protest was held at the YSRCP camp office in Ramakrishnapuram under the leadership of YSRCP Chirala Assembly constituency in-charge Karanam Venkatesh Babu. Senior party leaders, activists, and women representatives participated in the demonstration. Addressing the protestors, Karanam Venkatesh Babu alleged that the coalition government had compromised the DSC recruitment process and caused injustice to thousands of unemployed candidates. He demanded a comprehensive CBI investigation and urged the government to take steps to safeguard the interests of aspirants. He also sought immediate payment of the promised Rs.3,000 monthly unemployment allowance to eligible youth, stating that the government should fulfil its election commitments. Karanam warned that the party would intensify its agitation if the government failed to respond to their demands. YSRCP leaders and activists from across the Chirala constituency participated in the relay hunger strike and vowed to continue the protest.

Narayana Accuses YSRCP Of DSC Misinformation

Nellore, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister Dr. Ponguru Narayana on Friday defended the Mega DSC teacher recruitment process, stating that the initiative has provided employment opportunities to 16,000 aspiring teachers across Andhra Pradesh. He accused the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) of making baseless allegations and attempting to politicise the recruitment process. Speaking to the media during his tour of Nellore City constituency, Dr. Narayana said the YSRCP had earlier approached courts seeking to halt the Mega DSC recruitment but failed to stop the process through legal means. He alleged that the opposition party was now resorting to relay hunger strikes and protests due to its inability to accept the success of the recruitment drive.

The Minister said the appointments had brought happiness to thousands of families, with newly selected teachers already serving in government schools across the state. He questioned the reason behind the YSRCP's protests, stating that people were unable to understand the purpose of the agitation. Dr. Narayana criticised the previous YSRCP government, alleging that it had failed to conduct teacher recruitment during its five-year tenure. In contrast, he said the coalition government was giving priority to education, employment generation, and strengthening government schools. He announced that Education Minister Nara Lokesh would soon release another job calendar to provide further employment opportunities for youth. Dr. Narayana said the government was committed to transparent recruitment and creating more job opportunities across sectors. The Minister alleged that the YSRCP was



attempting to create unnecessary controversy for political gains instead of focusing on public issues. He expressed confidence that people

would support the government's initiatives aimed at employment generation and development in the state.

Appala Naidu Slams YSRCP Over Mega DSC Allegations



Eluru, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

APSRTC Vijayawada Zonal Chairman and Jana Sena Eluru In-charge Reddy Appala Naidu on Friday accused the YSRCP of attempting to create unrest by making baseless allegations over the ongoing Mega DSC teacher recruitment process. Addressing a press conference at the Jana Sena Party office in Eluru, Appala Naidu criticised the YSRCP's demand for the resignation of Education Minister Nara Lokesh over alleged irregularities in recruitment. He alleged that the opposition was trying to

exert pressure on police through protests and relay hunger strikes. He said the coalition government was conducting the Mega DSC recruitment process transparently to provide employment opportunities to unemployed youth. He accused the YSRCP of spreading misinformation without producing evidence and misleading candidates. Appala Naidu alleged that the previous YSRCP government failed to conduct Mega DSC recruitment for several years, affecting thousands of job aspirants. He also criticised the opposition for opposing development initiatives such as road works, doorstep pension delivery, Anna Canteens, and the Stree Shakti scheme. He said the coalition government under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and Education Minister Nara Lokesh was committed to transparent governance. He challenged the YSRCP to approach legal authorities with evidence instead of making allegations publicly. Former Deputy Mayor Siripalli Sivarama Krishna Prasad and other Jana Sena leaders attended the press conference.

Eluru MLA Highlights Coalition Government's Welfare, Development Spending

Eluru, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Eluru MLA and TDP District President Badeti Chanti on Friday said the coalition government restored Andhra Pradesh's financial stability through disciplined fiscal management while increasing spending on welfare and development. Addressing a meeting at his camp office, Chanti said the government allocated Rs.1.49 lakh crore for welfare schemes and Rs.1.34 lakh crore for development works during its first two years in office. He said the government also saved Rs.8,269 crore through loan restructuring, cleared Rs.30,849 crore in employee dues, and settled Rs.19,357 crore in pending bills.



Chanti alleged that the YSRCP was criticising the government for political reasons as it could not accept the coalition's public support. He asserted that the government remained committed to transparent governance and effective utilisation of funds. Referring to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's remarks, he

said strict action would be taken against activities affecting public order and development. He also greeted handloom workers on National Handloom Day and appreciated their contribution. Market Yard Chairman Mamilapalli Parthasarathi, TDP leaders and party workers were present.

MLA Launches Fine Rice Sales Centre



Rajanagaram, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Rajanagaram MLA Battula Balarama Krishna on Friday inaugurated a subsidised fine rice sales centre at the HSBC Rythu Bazaar in Lalacheruvu, stating that the initiative aims to provide quality rice at affordable prices to all sections of society. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said the NDA

coalition government is committed to ensuring access to nutritious food grains for economically weaker sections. He said the programme was launched under the guidance of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar. Balarama Krishna said fine rice is being sold at prices Rs.10 to Rs.12 lower than prevailing market rates, reducing the financial burden on consumers. He added that the initiative is another welfare measure aimed at public benefit. He said the programme has started at 45 centres across East Godavari district, with plans to expand outlets further. The MLA urged people to support the scheme and ensure its benefits reach eligible beneficiaries. The inauguration was attended by AMC Vice Chairman Mukka Devi Rambabu, Jana Sena leader Adapa Srinivas, senior BJP leader Neerukonda Veeranna Chowdary, officials, and leaders of TDP, Jana Sena Party, and Bharatiya Janata Party.

Balija Leaders Seek Greater Representation in NDA Govt



Tirupati, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Leaders of the Greater Rayalaseema Balija Mahasabha on Friday urged the Andhra Pradesh coalition government to ensure adequate political representation for the Kapu and Balija communities in nominated posts and forthcoming local body elections. Addressing a press conference at the Tirupati Press Club, Mahasabha executive committee representative Chennai

Shivaprasad said the communities had not received adequate justice during the previous YSRCP governments led by Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy and Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. He expressed hope that the NDA coalition government would address their long-pending aspirations. The leaders said they plan to meet Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and BJP Andhra Pradesh president P.V.N. Madhav submitted a

representation seeking fair opportunities for Kapu and Balija community members. They requested that members of the two communities, who they said had worked for the coalition's electoral victory, be considered for nominated posts as well as positions such as mayors, deputy mayors and corporators in the upcoming local body elections. The Mahasabha leaders said their demand was aimed at ensuring equitable political participation and representation for the communities in the coalition government's administration. Among those present at the media conference were Kapu Nadu State Vice-President Karunanidhi, retired Inspector Krishnaiah, Varadarajulu, Ramu, Prasad, Naveen, and other representatives of the Greater Rayalaseema Balija Mahasabha.

MP Kesineni Chinni's Parliament Intervention Draws Praise



Vijayawada, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Supporters of Vijayawada MP Kesineni Chinni on Friday welcomed the reported release of Rs.8.76 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), saying the allocation followed the MP's intervention in Parliament on issues concerning minority welfare. Addressing the media, NTR District Minority Cell President Sheikh Karimulla said MP Chinni had questioned the Union Government in Parliament regarding the implementation of the PMJVK scheme, the allocation of funds, and measures being taken

for the development and welfare of minority communities. He stated that the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs, in its reply, informed Parliament that Rs.8.76 crore had been released under the scheme. (To mark the occasion, minority community members organised thanksgiving events across all seven Assembly constituencies in NTR district. Milk abhishekams were performed to portraits of MP Chinni, with a prominent programme held at Labbipet in Vijayawada East constituency, where representatives from the city's three Assembly segments participated. Karimulla also noted that Rs.101 crore had been allocated under the PMJVK scheme during the 2025-26 financial year and expressed confidence that the latest allocation would strengthen initiatives in education, women's empowerment, sports, infrastructure, and economic development for minorities. The celebrations were attended by Sheikh Karimulla, Feroz, Sharif, Siraj, Nooruddin, Karim, M.D. Intiaz, minority women, and other community representatives.

Shettibali Corporation Chairman Stresses Breastfeeding Benefits



Rajamahendravaram, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Shettibali Corporation Chairman Kudupudi Sattibabu stressed the importance of breastfeeding for infant health and development during World Breastfeeding Week celebrations organised by GSL College of Nursing under the National Service Scheme (NSS). The awareness programme was held at Bilal Shadi Khana in Nehru Nagar, Rajamahendravaram, where Sattibabu attended as the chief guest. Addressing mothers, healthcare workers, and nursing students, he highlighted the benefits of breastfeeding, maternal nutrition, and the need to protect the health of both mother and child. He distributed flowers, sweets, fruits, and bangles to pregnant women and lactating mothers and appreciated the efforts of the college management, faculty, NSS volunteers, and students in creating awareness. Sattibabu said the coalition government led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is giving priority to maternal and child healthcare through Women and Child Welfare Department, ICDS-Anganwadi centres, and Health and Family Welfare Department initiatives. He said Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, ANMs, and health staff are spreading awareness on infant care and breastfeeding at the grassroots level. Emphasising that newborns should be breastfed within the first hour of birth and exclusively for six months, he called for collective efforts to remove misconceptions about breastfeeding. Local representatives, doctors, Anganwadi workers, NSS volunteers, nursing faculty, students, and beneficiaries attended the programme.

YSRCP Names Sheikh Dastagiri Noor Basha Cell Working President



Vijayawada, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Sheikh Dastagiri has been appointed as the State Working President of the YSRCP Noor Basha Cell, recognising his long-standing contributions as a social activist and party leader. The party acknowledged his efforts in highlighting community issues before governments, advocating for greater political representation, and strengthening the organisation across the state. Expressing gratitude to the party leadership, Dastagiri said he would discharge his new responsibilities with greater commitment. He reaffirmed that the welfare of the Noor Basha community, the empowerment of Backward Classes, and further strengthening of the YSRCP would remain his key priorities.

Putta Sivashankar Alleges Bid to Undermine Krishna Milk Union

Tadepalli, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) State Spokesperson Putta Sivashankar on Friday alleged that the coalition government was attempting to interfere in the functioning of the Krishna Milk Union by forcing its newly elected Chairman Chalasani Anjaneyulu to resign soon after his unanimous election. Addressing a press conference at the YSRCP Central Office in Tadepalli, Sivashankar claimed that Anjaneyulu was elected democratically by the union's directors but was allegedly pressured by Ministers Kolusu Parthasarathi and Kollu Ravindra to step down. He alleged that the pressure continued even when Anjaneyulu was undergoing medical treatment and claimed that messages were sent seeking his resignation. Sivashankar also alleged that efforts were made to convene a meeting of directors to move a no-confidence motion against the chairman. Describing the developments as interference in a cooperative institution, he questioned whether the government was following a similar approach adopted during the earlier TDP regime against cooperative dairies. He demanded a white paper explaining the role of ministers in the issue. Sivashankar warned that the government would be held responsible if any harm occurred to Anjaneyulu and alleged that democratic institutions were being subjected to political pressure.

Durgesh Calls For Greater Participation Of Girls In Sports

Rajamahendravaram, Aug. 7 | TPN Bureau

Tourism, Culture and Cinematography Minister Kandula Durgesh on Friday stressed the importance of sports in shaping confident and disciplined individuals while reaffirming the coalition government's commitment to rural development through large-scale infrastructure projects. Addressing the CBSE South Zone-1 Girls' Football Championship-2026 at the Sri Prakash Educational Institutions sports complex in Rajamahendravaram, the Minister encouraged young girls to actively participate in sports and extracurricular activities, describing them as essential for overall personality development. The three-day championship, being held from August 6 to 8, has attracted nearly 51 teams from vari-

ous states. Durgesh said success in both sports and life depends on self-confidence, determination and perseverance. He reminded players that victory and defeat are natural parts of competition and urged them to uphold the true spirit of sportsmanship. Citing the achievements of sports icons Mary Kom, PV Sindhu and Bala Devi, he said women can excel in every field when provided equal opportunities. He also praised Sri Prakash Educational Institutions for promoting both academic excellence and sporting talent. Rs.28 Crore Development Works In Nidadavole Later, at Chivatam village in Undrajavaram mandal, the Minister Durgesh inaugurated cement concrete roads worth Rs.1.20 crore under the Palle Panduga 2.0 programme. He said the coalition government had spent



Rs.6.82 crore on the village's development over the past two years, covering roads, drinking water projects under the Jal Jeevan Mission, panchayat infrastructure, NABARD-funded works and welfare initiatives. Durgesh further announced that Rs.28 crore had been sanctioned for special development works across the

Nidadavole Assembly constituency, with projects in Nidadavole, Peravali and Undrajavaram mandals set to begin after September 15. He also urged farmers to adopt less water-intensive crops in view of below-normal rainfall and assured continued government support through technical assistance, subsidies and welfare schemes.

water, sanitation, quality food and educational support for students. He reviewed the implementation of scholarships, self-employment schemes, skill development programmes and livelihood support initiatives. He also instructed officials to identify eligible youth and link them with employment opportunities. Reviewing SC atrocity cases, the NCSC Chairman called for prompt registration, fair investigation, timely compensation, legal assistance and protection for victims. He stressed coordination among departments to ensure comprehensive implementation of welfare programmes. Collector Dr. S. Venkateswar informed the Commission that the district administration was taking steps to extend welfare benefits and strengthen educational, economic and social support programmes for SC communities.

NCSC Chief Reviews SC Welfare Measures



Tirupati, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) Chairman Kishor Makwana directed officials to ensure

effective implementation of welfare schemes for Scheduled Caste communities and protect their constitutional rights. Chairing a review meeting with Social Welfare Department officials at Sri

Padmavathi Guest House in Tirupati on Friday, Makwana said every eligible SC family should receive government benefits without delay. He stressed transparency in beneficiary selection and instructed officials to ensure that no deserving person is excluded. The meeting was attended by Tirupati MP Gurumoorthy, NCSC Secretary Srinivas, Director Sunil Kumar Babu, Research Officer Vara Prasad, District Collector Dr. S. Venkateswar, Superintendent of Police L. Subbarayudu and other officials. Makwana directed authorities to fill vacant SC backlog posts and improve facilities in social welfare hostels by ensuring better accommodation, drinking

Minister Janardhan Reddy Inspects Projects

Banaganapalle, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Minister for Roads & Buildings, Investments and Infrastructure BC Janardhan Reddy on Friday inspected key infrastructure projects in Banaganapalle, inaugurated development works, received public grievances and participated in the "Intintiki Telugu Desam" outreach programme. The Minister reviewed the progress of the Banaganapalle bypass, ring road bridges and the bridge under construction across the SRBC canal. He directed officials to maintain quality standards and expedite the works. He also inspected the RDO office construction and development works at Jurreeru stream. Visiting Ravvalakonda, associated with the writings of Pothuluri Veerabrahendra Swamy, Janardhan Reddy proposed developing the area as a spiritual tourism destination with better road connectivity. At his camp office, the Minister received public petitions and instructed officials to resolve genuine issues promptly. Later, he inaugurated development works worth nearly Rs.45 lakh at Erragudi village, including CC roads, drainage facilities and a mineral RO water plant. Addressing residents during the outreach programme, Janardhan Reddy said nearly 90 per cent of the Super Six promises had been implemented. He highlighted schemes including Thalliki Vandanam, Shree Shakti, Ann Canteens and Netanna Sevala, along with initiatives in education, irrigation and rural infrastructure. Criticising the YSR Congress Party, he alleged that misinformation was being spread over the Mega DSC recruitment process and said the coalition government was focused on employment generation and balanced development.



Rajamahendravaram Entrepreneur Inspires Through Creativity and Social Impact

Rajamahendravaram, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

From an engineering educator to a successful fashion entrepreneur, digital creator, and social worker, Davuluri Parvathi, founder of Paru Designers in Rajamahendravaram, has emerged as an inspiration for women and young entrepreneurs. Parvathi began her career as an engineering faculty member before entering the fashion industry, where she blended traditional Indian aesthetics with contemporary designs through Paru Designers. Her creative vision has earned recognition and established her as a successful entrepreneur. She has also built a strong digital presence by creating content on culture, travel, knowledge and positive values, gaining over one million subscribers on YouTube and millions of views. Apart from her professional achievements, Parvathi actively promotes Indian

heritage, spirituality and cultural traditions through her work. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she extended support to needy people by distributing clothes, food, medicines and essential supplies. Her journey reflects perseverance, creativity and social responsibility. Through entrepreneurship and digital platforms, Parvathi continues to inspire women, youth and aspiring creators to pursue their goals while contributing to society.



Arrangements Reviewed For CM Naidu's Kalidindi Visit

Eluru, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Preparations are underway for Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's visit to Kalidindi village in Kalidindi mandal of Eluru district on August 10, with district officials reviewing arrangements to ensure the programme is conducted smoothly. Eluru District Collector Vetri Selvi and Superintendent of Police K. Pratap Shiva Kishore jointly inspected the venues and route of the Chief Minister's visit on Friday along with Revenue and Police officials. During the inspection, the officials reviewed arrangements at key locations and directed departments concerned to complete all works well in advance. They stressed the importance of effective coordination among departments to avoid any inconvenience during the visit. Collector Vetri Selvi instructed officials to ensure proper implementation of pro-



toocol arrangements and focus on public convenience. SP Pratap Shiva Kishore directed police personnel to make comprehensive security arrangements, regulate traffic effectively, and ensure smooth movement along the route. The officials also reviewed logistical requirements, security measures, and other arrangements related to the Chief Minister's programme. The district administration stated that coordinated efforts by all departments would help conduct the visit successfully without disruptions. Senior officials from the Revenue, Police, and other departments participated in the inspection and reviewed the ground-level preparations.

Life Imprisonment For Murder Accused In Kalidindi Case



Eluru, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

A court sentenced a murder accused to life imprisonment in a case under Kalidindi Police Station limits in Eluru district. The 9th Additional District and Sessions Court / Special Court for Trial of Crimes Against Women, Machilipatnam, delivered the verdict. Police said Peddiraju (48) of Kattavanipalem in S.R.P. Agraharam village murdered Katta Jayalakshmi over a property dispute. He allegedly attacked her with a sharp weapon after

planning the crime and later tried to mislead investigators. The case was reviewed by Sub-Inspector V. Venkateswara Rao, while Circle Inspector V. Ravi Kumar investigated and filed the charge sheet. The court awarded life imprisonment till natural life and imposed a Rs.10,000 fine, with one month's simple imprisonment in default. Special Public Prosecutor Addepalli Niranjan Rao examined 21 witnesses. Eluru SP K. Pratap Shiva Kishore appreciated the police efforts.

BJYM Appoints Madepalli Kalyan as Kakinada District In-Charge

Rajamahendravaram, Aug. 7 | TPN Bureau

The Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) has appointed senior youth leader from Rajamahendravaram Madepalli Kalyan as Kakinada District In-Charge, recognising his long association with the organisation and contribution to youth politics. The appointment was announced through official orders by the BJP high command and BJYM state leadership. Party leaders said Kalyan's organisational experience since his student days made him suitable for the responsibility. Kalyan started his political journey with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) from 2006 to 2012, serving as Rajamahendravaram City Joint Secretary, City Secretary and State Executive Member. After joining the BJP in 2012, he held various BJYM posts, including Rajamahendravaram Urban District Secretary, District General Secretary, State Executive Member and State Secretary.



Thanking the leadership, Kalyan expressed gratitude to BJYM Andhra Pradesh State President Sunil Reddy and vowed to strengthen the organisation in Kakinada district, promote Central Government welfare schemes and address youth issues. BJP and BJYM leaders congratulated Kalyan on his new responsibility.

TDP Activist Murdered, Police Launch Probe

Kurnool, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

A Telugu Desam Party (TDP) activist was brutally murdered in Kurnool city on Friday morning, creating tension in the area and prompting demands for a thorough investigation. The victim, identified as Intiaz, was allegedly attacked with stones by unidentified assailants near Masoom Basha Dargah and died on the spot. Police reached the scene after receiving information, conducted a preliminary investigation, and shifted the body to the Government General Hospital for post-mortem examination. A case has been registered, and efforts are underway to identify the accused and determine the motive behind the murder. According to local sources, Intiaz had contested the 2014 Kurnool Assembly elections as an independent candidate before joining the TDP and remaining active in public affairs. Condemning the incident, Kurnool District TDP General Secretary P. Nagaraju Yadav demanded strict action against those responsible. Addressing a



press conference, he alleged that attempts were being made to disturb peace and law and order in the city. He described Intiaz as a leader who raised public issues and fought against alleged land encroachments in the Handri river belt. He also recalled that another TDP activist had survived a murder attempt two months ago. Nagaraju Yadav said State Industries Minister T.G. Bharat visited the bereaved family and assured support. He urged police to conduct an impartial investigation, identify all culprits and maintain peace in Kurnool

Durgesh Supports Student Selected For Mission ShaktiSat



Rajamahendravaram, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Tourism, Culture and Cinematography Minister Kandula Durgesh extended support to Kandula Jessy, a student of Government Girls High School, Dhavaleswaram, who was selected for the prestigious Mission ShaktiSat programme aimed at promoting girls in space science. As promised earlier, the Minister provided Jessy with a smartphone, smartwatch, power bank and flight tickets for her visit to New Delhi. The assistance was handed over at his

camp office in Rajamahendravaram in the presence of her parents. Jana Sena leader Yadla Mahesh coordinated the programme. Durgesh said Jessy's achievement as a government school student participating in a national-level space initiative was a matter of pride. He encouraged more girls to pursue science, technology and space research, assuring continued government support for talented students. Jessy and her parents thanked the minister for fulfilling his promise and supporting her educational journey.

MEO-1 Association Seeks Release of MRC Management Grants

Vijayawada, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

MEO-1 Association Seeks Release Of Pending MRC Grants, Infrastructure Support The MEO-1 Association of Andhra Pradesh has urged the State Government to release pending Mandal Resource Centre (MRC) management grants and strengthen infrastructure facilities for Mandal Education Offices. Association State President Samala Simhachalam said a delegation met Samagra Shiksha State Project Director B. Srinivasa Rao and submitted a memorandum highlighting key issues affecting the functioning of Mandal Education Offices. The association requested enhancement of the MRC management grant to Rs.2 lakh, citing increased administrative expenses. It also sought official vehicles for Mandal Educational Officers to improve school inspections and monitoring. Other demands included appointing senior MEO-1 officers as Samagra Shiksha Sectoral Officers and providing dedicated chambers for Mandal Educational Officers in newly constructed MEO office buildings. Simhachalam said the State Project Director responded positively and assured that the representations would be examined for necessary action. The delegation included ASR District President Baburao, Srikakulam District President Dhananjaya Majji, Visakhapatnam District President Ravindra Babu, State Vice Presidents A. Tirumala Rao, Chelliah, Krishna Murthy Nayak, and Sriramulu.



MLA Kandula Narayana Reddy Lays Foundation for Rythu Bazaar

Markapuram, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Markapuram MLA and Andhra Pradesh Assembly Estimates Committee Member Kandula Narayana Reddy laid the foundation stone for a new Rythu Bazaar on Tarlapadu Road on Friday, aimed at providing better market access to farmers and affordable fresh produce to consumers. Narayana Reddy said the coalition government is focusing on farmers' welfare by creating direct marketing platforms to eliminate middlemen and improve farm incomes. He said the Rythu Bazaar would help farmers sell produce directly to consumers while ensuring quality vegetables and fruits at reasonable prices. The MLA directed officials to complete the construction with quality standards within the stipulated timeframe. He reiterated his commitment to strengthening infrastructure and development initiatives in Markapuram constituency. District Collector M. Vijaya Sunitha, RDO Venkata Sivarami Reddy, Jana Sena Markapuram In-charge Immadi Kasinath, District BJP President P.V. Krishna Rao, officials, coalition leaders, party workers and farmers participated in the program.



Apollo University, University of Hyderabad Renew Academic Partnership



Chittoor, Aug 7 | TPN Bureau

Apollo University and the University of Hyderabad have renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further strengthen collaboration in higher education, research, and skill development. The renewed agreement aims to expand cooperation in student training, internships, research projects, curriculum development, and faculty and student exchange programmes. The partnership will focus on key disciplines, including life sciences, medical sciences, public health, psychology, optometry, and management. Officials said the collaboration will provide students with greater exposure to practical research, emerging technologies, and industry-oriented learning, while enhancing their employability. The universities also plan to undertake joint national and international research projects, workshops, conferences, and academic events to promote innovation and knowledge sharing. The MoU will remain in force for three years, with provisions for extension

based on mutual agreement. Authorities expressed confidence that the renewed partnership would significantly strengthen academic and research cooperation between the two institutions. Representing Apollo University were Vice-Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Nitin M. Nagarkar, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academics) Dr. Alfred J. Augustine, Registrar S. Anil Kumar, and Head of Academic Affairs Dr. Prabhakar K. The University of Hyderabad delegation included In-charge Vice-Chancellor Prof. J. Anuradha, Registrar Dr. Devesh Nigam, School of Management Studies Dean Prof. G.V.R.K. Acharyulu, and faculty member Ranjith Kumar. Officials from both institutions said the renewed agreement reflects their shared commitment to academic excellence, collaborative research, and developing a skilled workforce capable of addressing emerging challenges in healthcare, science, technology, and management. The partnership is expected to create new opportunities for innovation, interdisciplinary learning, and institutional growth in the years ahead.

Editorial

Beyond A Hit-And-Run: Questions On Safety, Accountability And Justice

The tragic incident in Rajamahendravaram, where a young medico was critically injured after being hit by a vehicle allegedly driven by drunken persons, has shaken public conscience. While the incident is being investigated, reports that she had a confrontation with the accused at a mall a few hours earlier have raised serious questions about whether it was merely a case of reckless driving or something more deliberate. The truth must emerge through a fair and transparent investigation.

Regardless of the motive, the incident exposes a larger failure - the growing sense of insecurity faced by citizens, especially women, in public spaces. A young medical student who dedicated her life to serving society is now fighting for survival, reportedly with severe brain injuries. Such tragedies cannot be treated as routine accidents.

Law and order cannot function only after a crime occurs. Preventive policing, strict monitoring of suspicious activities, effective response systems and confidence-building measures among citizens are essential. If any evidence suggests intentional harm, the investigation must leave no room for doubt and the guilty must face the strictest punishment.

Several countries have built safer environments for women through a combination of strict laws, accountable policing and social awareness. Sweden's gender-sensitive policing model, Japan's disciplined public safety culture and Norway's strong community-based safety systems are often cited among successful approaches. These countries emphasise prevention, quick response and creating public spaces where women feel secure.

India must strengthen similar systems suited to its own conditions. CCTV networks, faster forensic investigations, better street surveillance and stronger action against drunken driving and harassment are urgently needed.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and Minister Nara Lokesh have repeatedly emphasised people-centric governance. Ensuring safety on roads and in public spaces must become a key priority under this vision.

A society's progress is not measured only by economic growth and infrastructure but also by how safely its people can live. The Rajamahendravaram incident should become a turning point for stronger enforcement, faster justice and renewed commitment towards women's safety.

Editor

A Digital Solution for Blood Donor Search in Surgical Emergencies

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OR a family preparing for major heart, cardiothoracic surgery or pediatric surgery, the operation itself is often not the only source of anxiety. The hospital asks the patient's attendants to arrange blood donors of the patient's blood group on the day of surgery or a day earlier. At a time when the family should be concentrating on the patient's treatment and recovery, they are compelled to search for suitable donors among relatives, friends, colleagues and neighbours. If donors cannot be found in time, the situation can become more stressful in that hour of distress. This problem needs a modern, technology-driven solution.

Doctors ask for fresh blood in some surgeries

Doctors ask for direct blood donors on the day of cardiac and pediatric surgery because the fresh blood (usually blood stored for less than 48 hours to 7 days) preserves vital clotting properties, maximizes oxygen delivery, maintains low potassium levels and minimizes toxic biochemical buildup. During open-heart surgery, the patient's blood is run through a cardiopulmonary bypass (CPB) machine. This process severely damages platelets and dilutes clotting factors, creating a high risk for massive bleeding. Fresh blood acts as a high-functioning, all-in-one resource to safely stabilize the patient.

This additional burden on patients' families in trauma is severe

In many hospitals, particularly where cardiac or cardiothoracic procedures or pediatric surgeries are being performed, patients or their attendants are being asked to arrange replacement donors. For an anxious family, finding the right blood group at short notice is not always easy. A patient requiring surgery may have relatives living in another town. Friends may be at work or travelling. Some potential donors may have recently donated blood and therefore may not be eligible to donate again. Others may be medically unsuitable on the day of donation. The situation becomes particularly difficult when a family cannot locate a donor quickly. In desperation, some people may be tempted to approach intermediaries or paid/professional donors. This is not an acceptable solution. Professional blood donation has been prohibited in India since 1 January 1998, and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare continues to emphasize voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation. The answer, therefore, is not to create another informal donor market. The answer is to build a safe, voluntary and technology-enabled donor network.

B.V.S. Kumar



State Coordinator
Red Cross Blood Centers
Andhra Pradesh

e-RaktKosh provides the platform

India already possesses an important digital foundation for such a system through e-RaktKosh, the national Blood-Center management platform developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

e-RaktKosh already provides blood-stock information, Blood-Center locations, donor registration, donation-camp information and donor-management functions. C-DAC describes it as a national platform integrating Blood Centers, blood availability, donor repositories and related services.

The existing donor-registration system also captures important information such as the donor's name, mobile number, blood group, location and donation-related details. The portal allows voluntary donors to register and explicitly provides for Blood Centers to contact them in emergencies.

The e-RaktKosh platform is also being integrated with the digital health ecosystem, including ABHA-related identification and verification. Shortly, the Government is contemplating to make ABHA registration mandatory for every

blood donor. This digital infrastructure could be taken one step further.

Proposal for "999" National Helpline for Blood Donors

The Government of India could consider establishing an easy-to-remember Toll-Free number such as "999" or any another nationally available short code exclusively for urgent voluntary blood-donor coordination.

Suppose a patient with AB Positive group is scheduled for cardiac surgery at a hospital in Vijayawada and the Hospital or Blood Center anticipates a requirement for AB Positive donors, the hospital, with the patient's consent, could enter the essential request into a secure government system thru "999" mentioning:

- Hospital and location
- Date and approximate time of surgery
- Blood group required
- Number of voluntary donors required
- Contact details of the hospital
- Whether whole blood or a particular component is required



The system could then identify eligible voluntary donors of AB Positive in the relevant geographical area of Vijayawada, maybe within a proposed 50-kilometre radius and send them an SMS or app notification using the Cell Broadcast Alert system, which is being used presently for alerting heavy rains, lightning strikes, wind gales, etc. in states like Andhra Pradesh.

A message could simply say: "Your voluntary blood donation may be required at hospital/location on (date) for a patient in emergency. If you are eligible and willing to donate, please contact the Blood Center /Hospital immediately."

Importantly, the system should not reveal patients' personal medical information to donors. Donors should opt in, and their contact details should remain protected. The Blood Center should remain responsible for donor selection, medical screening, blood grouping, infection screening, compatibility testing and collection. From Replacement Donors to Community Donors

The greatest advantage of such a system would be that the patient's family would no longer have to personally locate a blood donor in emergencies.

A registered voluntary donor living within 50 kilometres may receive an alert, respond willingly and reach the designated Blood Center. Since several others may receive the same request, the patient may therefore benefit from the strength of a community donor pool rather than the limited circle of relatives and friends.

India's blood-donation system is already moving strongly in this direction. WHO reported that annual blood collection increased from 12.6 million units in 2023 to 14.6 million units in 2024, with voluntary donations accounting for 74.55% of total collections. The challenge now is to connect these voluntary donors more intelligently with genuine, time-sensitive needs.

Technology should remove the Family's burden and ease their pain

The proposed system should create an additional Emergency Voluntary Donor Alert Network on top of the existing infrastructure.

There should also be safeguards: donor consent, privacy protection, duplicate-request prevention, eligibility checks, opt-out facilities and strict prohibition of any payment for donation.

A family facing an emergency surgery should be able to concentrate on the patient, not spend an entire day searching for blood donors.

India already has the technology, Blood Center network and millions of voluntary donors. What is needed is better integration. I believe that it is possible with e-RaktKosh.

"The next revolution in Blood Services could be a National Digital Bridge connecting a patient in need with a willing Voluntary Blood Donor nearby."

E20 Petrol Transition in India: Know the Facts, Figures, and Consumer Concerns

Ram Kamal



Social Engineer

The recent implementation of E20 petrol, a blend of 20% ethanol and 80% pure petrol, has sparked significant debate across India. As the central government accelerates its nationwide rollout, consumers and experts alike are raising questions regarding its true benefits, vehicle compatibility, and long-term consequences. A new wave of protest is gathering momentum, threatening to bring unrest back to Delhi. Why rush the implementation now, only to inevitably backtrack and cut a sorry figure?

The Economic Paradox:

Macro Gains vs. Micro Losses:

From a macroeconomic perspective, the shift to E20 offers substantial benefits for the nation. By replacing 20% of standard fuel with domestically produced ethanol, India secures massive forex savings and reduces its heavy reliance on imported crude oil. This bolsters the country's energy security, buffering the economy against global market shocks, wars, and the steady depreciation of the Indian Rupee against the dollar.

However, at the microeconomic level, the everyday consumer currently bears the brunt. NITI Aayog had initially recommended that blended petrol should be

sold at a lower price or with a tax differential to benefit the public. Yet, the government has ignored this recommendation. E20 is sold at the same price as pure petrol, offering zero financial relief to the buyer.

Compounding this financial loss is the issue of fuel efficiency: studies indicate that E20 petrol yields 6% to 7% less mileage than pure petrol. Essentially, consumers are paying the same price for a fuel that takes them

less distance, resulting in a direct financial loss. Environmental and Agricultural Realities Proponents argue that E20 burns cleaner, potentially lowering carbon emissions. However, because vehicles must burn a higher volume of E20 fuel to achieve the same mileage as pure petrol, the net reduction in total carbon emissions remains highly debatable. On the agricultural front, ethanol production utilizes surplus crops like sugarcane and maize, providing an alternative income stream for farmers without

threatening food security. Yet, ethanol production is highly water-intensive; it is estimated that producing just one liter of ethanol requires up to 10,000 liters of water. The extensive use of fertilizers for these crops poses additional environmental concerns that have yet to be thoroughly addressed. The Compatibility Crisis and Engine Health A major point of contention is vehicle compatibility. While vehicles manufactured in India from 2023 onwards are officially E20 compliant, older vehicles are not. Shockingly, it is

estimated that only about 20% of petrol vehicles manufactured in the last 15 years are fully designed to handle E20 fuel. Because ethanol is a hygroscopic substance, meaning it naturally attracts moisture. If we leave E20 fuel idle can lead to water accumulation and severe internal corrosion. This moisture threatens vital engine components, including fuel lines, gaskets, O-rings, injectors, fuel pumps, and elastomers. The long-term damage this could inflict on non-compliant vehicles remains a massive worry for vehicle owners.

A Rushed Rollout?

Globally, transitioning to higher ethanol blends has been a slow, methodical process. Brazil took roughly 50 years to successfully transition to its current E30 standard. Similarly, the United States provided a 25-to-50-year transition window, allowing older vehicles the choice to continue using pure petrol while newer ones adapted to E15. In stark contrast, India is attempting to mandate this shift in a matter of months, abruptly stripping consumers of their choice.

The Way Forward: To prevent widespread public backlash and protect consumer investments, the central government must take corrective steps:

Provide Consumer Choice: Petrol stations should feature dedicated pumps for both pure petrol and E20, allowing owners of older vehicles to safely refuel. After all, prices are the same.

Price Adjustments: E20 must be sold at a discounted rate to offset the guaranteed loss in mileage. Now, to compensate for the 6 to 7% loss per liter, consumer have to buy more Liters for their travel.

Manufacturer Assurances: The government must coordinate with automakers and insurance companies to guarantee warranties and engine protection against ethanol-induced corrosion.

Subsidized Spares: If corrosion occurs due to the government's policy shift, affected spare parts should be offered at discounted rates. Ultimately, clear communication and a longer transition window are essential. Without providing citizens with choices and transparent reassurances, the E20 mandate risks becoming yet another well-intentioned policy marred by rushed implementation.

Amit Shah Meets Om Birla as Lok Sabha Deadlock Continues

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla amid the continuing deadlock in Parliament over opposition demands for a discussion on police action against protesting students and allegations related to Ram temple donations. The meeting between Shah and Birla lasted nearly an hour and took place as opposition parties continued to disrupt Lok Sabha proceedings. The opposition has been demanding a response from the Home Minister regarding the alleged use of force by police during a student march towards Parliament on July 20. Opposition members have also raised concerns over alleged theft of donations



made for the Ram temple, seeking clarification from the government on the matter. Their protests have resulted in repeated disruptions, preventing normal functioning of the House. During the day, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar also met Amit Shah at his Parliament House office. The meetings came amid efforts to address the ongoing impasse and ensure smooth functioning of parliamentary proceedings. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, meanwhile, said in the Lok Sabha that the opposition could not decide

which minister should respond to issues raised in the House. He stated that Shah regularly attends Parliament and remains available for parliamentary duties. Rijiju maintained that the government was ready to discuss issues according to parliamentary rules but rejected demands that a particular minister must respond to every matter raised by opposition members. The standoff between the government and opposition has continued as opposition parties insist on answers from the Home Minister over the student protest incident. With both sides maintaining their positions, uncertainty remains over when normal proceedings in the Lok Sabha will resume.

India Urges China to Resume River Data Sharing Amid Tibet Mega Dam Concerns



India has urged China to resume sharing water-flow data as concerns grow over Beijing's construction of the world's largest hydroelectric dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River in Tibet, which flows into India and Bangladesh. The issue was raised during the 36th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs held in New Delhi. The Ministry of External Affairs said India emphasized the need for an early meeting of the Expert Level Mechanism on trans-border rivers and highlighted the importance of sharing technical details regarding upstream river projects. China is constructing a massive hydroelectric project on the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet at an estimated cost of around 1.2 trillion yuan (\$178 billion). The project, expected to take about a decade to complete, has raised concerns over its possible impact on the environment and downstream countries, including India. The Yarlung Tsangpo enters India as the Brahmaputra River before flowing into Bangladesh, providing water resources to millions of people. Indian authorities have expressed concerns over the availability of hydrological information, stating that China has not shared river data since June 2023. During the border talks, both countries also reviewed measures to improve bilateral relations and manage differences along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). They agreed to continue using existing diplomatic and military channels to maintain communication and avoid misunderstandings or miscalculations. India and China share a 3,488-kilometre-long disputed border, which has witnessed military tensions and standoffs in recent years. Relations between the two nuclear-armed neighbours began improving gradually after a prolonged freeze following the June 2020 border clash. The recent diplomatic engagements, including the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Tianjin last August, have indicated efforts by both sides to restore stability and continue dialogue on key issues.

Eight Detained After Protest Near Rahul Gandhi's Residence

At least eight people, including sadhus and women protesters, were detained by the Delhi Police on Friday after they attempted to stage a demonstration near the residence of Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi. According to a police official, the group gathered in the high-security area surrounding Rahul Gandhi's residence despite restrictions on protests and public gatherings in the vicinity. The protesters reportedly attempted to hold a demonstration, prompting security personnel to intervene. Police officers stationed in the area quickly stepped in to prevent the protest from escalating or causing any disruption to law and order. The demonstrators were subsequently detained and taken away from the spot. Officials said the action was taken as a precautionary measure because of the security protocols in place around the residence of the Leader of the

Opposition. The area is classified as a high-security zone where public demonstrations and unauthorized gatherings are generally prohibited to ensure the safety of protected individuals and maintain public order. Among those detained were several sadhus, including women ascetics who had joined the protest. However, police did not immediately disclose the purpose of the demonstration or the demands raised by the protesters. No details were released regarding the organisation behind the protest or whether any formal permissions had been sought before attempting to gather near the residence. The police officer stated that security personnel acted promptly to prevent any breach of law and order. The protesters were removed peacefully, and the situation was brought under control without any reports of violence or damage to property. There were no immediate reports of injuries during the operation. Authorities also did



not indicate whether any cases had been registered against those detained or if they would be released after questioning. The incident highlights the strict security arrangements maintained around the residences of senior political leaders in the national capital. Law enforcement agencies routinely enforce restrictions in these areas to prevent unauthorized protests and ensure the smooth functioning of security operations. Friday's protest was swiftly contained, and normalcy was restored in the area shortly after the demonstrators were taken into custody. Police continued to maintain heightened security around the residence as a precautionary measure. Officials have not issued any further statement regarding the incident or the identities of those detained. More information is expected once the police complete the necessary legal and procedural formalities.

India Clarifies It Had No Role in Sheikh Hasina's Press Conference



The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday clarified that the Government of India had no involvement in former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent media interaction in New Delhi, stressing that the event was organised independently by a private media organisation. Speaking at the weekly media briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the press conference was hosted by the

Foreign Correspondents' Club (FCC) of South Asia and not by the Indian government. He emphasized that New Delhi neither organised nor endorsed the event or the views expressed during it. "The Government had no role to play in what was an event by a private media entity. The Government does not endorse anything said at the forum, especially with regard to the duly constituted Government of Bangladesh," Jaiswal said. He reiterated that the event was solely the initiative of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of South Asia. The clarification came after Sheikh Hasina held her first virtual press briefing from New Delhi on Wednesday,

marking her first interaction with the media since leaving Bangladesh in 2024. During the briefing, Hasina expressed her determination to return to Bangladesh later this year despite potential risks. Addressing journalists, the former Prime Minister said she could not remain away from her country while its people were facing difficulties. She stated that she intended to return in December, regardless of the consequences. Hasina stepped down from office in 2024 following a student-led movement that brought an end to her government. Her remarks drew a sharp reaction from Bangladesh. The country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs described the press conference as an "affront to the sovereignty of Bangladesh" and warned that such events could adversely affect efforts to strengthen bilateral relations between the two neighbouring countries. In its official statement, issued on the second anniversary of the July Revolution, Bangladesh accused Hasina of using the platform to make hostile

remarks against the country and its citizens. Dhaka described the event as a serious insult to the memory of those who lost their lives during the movement that led to the change in government. Responding to questions about the controversy, Jaiswal reiterated that the Indian government had maintained its distance from the event from the outset. He noted that New Delhi had previously clarified that the interaction was entirely organised by a private media body and that the government had no involvement whatsoever. The clarification also follows reports that Bangladesh's Foreign Affairs Advisor, Humayun Kabir, had requested India to prevent Awami League leaders, including Sheikh Hasina, from using Indian territory to make political statements. India's latest statement appears aimed at distancing the government from the controversy while reaffirming its official position of respecting the duly constituted government of Bangladesh and maintaining balanced diplomatic relations with its neighbouring country.

India, China Review LAC Situation at 36th WMCC Meeting

India and China on Friday reviewed the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and discussed boundary delimitation, border management, and trans-border cooperation during the 36th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on Border Affairs (WMCC). The meeting was held amid social media claims of a fresh Chinese incursion and stand-off in the Taksing circle of Arunachal Pradesh. The Indian government said both sides held frank discussions and reaffirmed that maintaining peace and tranquillity along the border remains essential for the overall development of bilateral relations. The Indian delegation was led by Sujit Ghosh, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of External Affairs, while the Chinese delegation was headed by Hou Yanqi, Director General of the Boundary and Oceanic Affairs Department of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the two countries agreed to continue using existing diplomatic and mili-

tary communication channels, including the WMCC, local commander-level meetings, and other established mechanisms, to address outstanding issues and prevent misunderstandings or miscalculations along the LAC. The discussions followed the outcomes of the 24th Special Representatives' Talks, with both sides holding detailed exchanges on boundary delimitation, border management, confidence-building mechanisms, and trans-border cooperation. India also reiterated the need for an early meeting of the Expert Level Mechanism on trans-border rivers and stressed the importance of China sharing technical details regarding upstream projects. The meeting took place as a video circulated on social media claiming a fresh military stand-off in Arunachal Pradesh after an alleged 60-km Chinese intrusion. The video purportedly showed an Indian Army commander questioning the presence of a larger number of Chinese troops in the area. However, Arunachal



Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu dismissed the claims as false, stating that the Indian Army maintains firm control over the territory and continuously monitors the region. The latest WMCC meeting reflects the

continued engagement between India and China through diplomatic and military channels to manage border issues and maintain stability along the LAC while working toward resolving pending matters through dialogue.

Kejriwal Accuses Centre of Using IT Rules to Curb Criticism



Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday accused the Centre of tightening the Information Technology (IT) Rules, 2021, to suppress criticism instead of addressing public concerns. He alleged that the government was attempting to control public discourse rather than focusing on governance. In a video statement posted on X, Kejriwal said governments should concentrate on solving people's problems and delivering good governance instead of trying to restrict voices of criticism. He claimed that criticism cannot be silenced through regulatory measures and warned that attempts to suppress public opinion would only increase dissatisfaction among citizens. There was no immediate response from the government or the ruling BJP regarding Kejriwal's allegations. Kejriwal's remarks came after the Centre announced amendments to the IT Rules, 2021, reducing the deadline for social media platforms to remove content related to sensitive matters from 24 hours to two hours. The government said the changes were aimed at strengthening the regulatory framework and addressing risks arising from synthetically generated information (SGI), including deep-fakes and artificial intelligence-generated content. The AAP leader also referred to the recent Cockroach Janta Party-led protest at Jantar Mantar while alleging that the

government was trying to silence public voices instead of responding to people's grievances. He said that democratic governments should accept criticism and work toward addressing issues raised by citizens. Kejriwal further claimed that efforts to restrict criticism would lead to greater public resentment. He said people ultimately support governments based on their performance and the work they deliver. Under the amended IT Rules, significant social media intermediaries (SSMIs), which are platforms with more than 50 lakh registered users in India, are required to take reasonable steps to identify and address harmful content. The rules mandate the use of technical measures, including automated tools, to proactively detect content involving child sexual abuse, rape-related material, or similar harmful information that has previously been removed. The Centre has maintained that the updated rules are intended to improve online safety and prevent misuse of digital platforms, particularly with the growing threat of AI-generated misinformation. However, opposition leaders and critics have raised concerns over the possibility of such regulations being used to restrict free expression. The debate over digital regulation and freedom of speech is expected to continue as social media platforms adapt to the revised compliance requirements.

Dipke Urges BJP to Follow Bhagwat's Advice on Gen Z Protests

Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) convener Abhijeet Dipke on Friday urged the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to follow RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's advice and avoid branding protesting Gen Z youth as anti-national. He claimed there was a lack of coordination between the BJP's stand and Bhagwat's views on youth-related issues. Speaking to reporters, Dipke said the ruling party should acknowledge Bhagwat's remarks that the grievances raised by young protesters during the Jantar Mantar agitation over NEET examination irregularities were genuine. He said the BJP should take note of the RSS chief's statement supporting the concerns of students and youth. Bhagwat, during an interaction with Gen Z in Mumbai, had said that the concerns of young people were genuine and that protesting youth should not be labelled as anti-national. His remarks came amid criticism over the government's handling of the protests led by CJP over alleged NEET irregularities. Dipke said Bhagwat's statement was the most important message regarding the protests and claimed that it contradicted the BJP's earlier response. He alleged that BJP leaders had used harsh remarks against protesters, referring to comments made by BJP president and former Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. "Earlier, the BJP president called us a virus, and former Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan called us the B-team of terrorists. Now they should lis-



ten to Mohan Bhagwat because he is the mentor and godfather of the BJP," Dipke said. He claimed there was "zero synchronisation" between the BJP's approach and Bhagwat's views, adding that ignoring the RSS chief's advice was a matter of concern. He suggested that Bhagwat should directly communicate with BJP leaders on the issue. Addressing videos circulating on social media related to the Jantar Mantar protests, Dipke demanded an investigation and alleged that fake videos from the BJP IT cell would be exposed if examined properly. Dipke also said CJP teams had been sent to Jharkhand to support candidates protesting alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations. He warned that if youth-related issues were ignored, separate agitations could develop into a larger nationwide movement. He said the CJP would continue efforts to unite people over issues affecting youth, claiming that collective action beyond political and ideological differences could put pressure on the government.

Trump Considers Iran Compromise as Strait of Hormuz Deal Nears



US President Donald Trump is reportedly weighing a possible compromise with Iran as negotiations over reopening the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz move closer to an agreement. The talks come amid mounting economic and political pressure following months of conflict between the United States and Iran. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important energy corridors, carrying nearly 20 percent of global oil supplies. Disruptions to shipping through the waterway have raised concerns over global energy markets and fuel prices, making a resolution a priority for both sides. A major sticking point in the negotiations is control of the strait. The Trump administration has ruled out any agreement that would allow Iran to impose fees or establish permanent control over the waterway. Iran, however, insists that it should retain some level of authority over the route, arguing that the pre-war arrangement cannot simply be restored. Analysts say any compromise could prove politically challenging for Trump. Eliot Cohen, a former US State Department official, said the president has built his political image around projecting strength and may find it difficult to accept concessions that could be viewed as a setback.

However, David Schenker, a former State Department official during Trump's first administration, believes growing economic pressures could encourage the White House to strike a deal. He said resolving the crisis has become increasingly urgent despite the potential strategic implications. Trump has dismissed reports suggesting the US military is facing shortages of advanced weapons following months of military operations. While acknowledging that some munitions are "a little bit tighter," he insisted the United States still possesses substantial military capabilities and continues to expand production. Meanwhile, negotiations continue over a possible arrangement that would restore commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. US officials have indicated that Washington's preferred solution remains a diplomatic one and have reiterated that any agreement should allow vessels to pass freely without tolls or additional charges. Although vessel traffic has increased in recent weeks, shipping volumes remain well below normal levels due to ongoing security concerns. A successful agreement could ease tensions in the Gulf, stabilize global oil supplies, and reduce uncertainty in international energy markets.

US Court Orders Meta to Pay \$567 Million for Teen Mental Health Fund



A New Mexico state court has ordered Meta to pay \$567 million into a teen mental health fund and implement major safety changes across its platforms for young users after ruling that the company contributed to harming children's well-being. Judge Bryan Biedscheid of the Santa Fe court found that Meta had created a public nuisance in New Mexico, siding with Attorney General Raúl Torrez. The lawsuit accused the social media giant of designing Facebook and Instagram in ways that encouraged addiction among young users while failing to adequately protect children from sexual exploitation. The latest ruling follows an earlier phase of the case in which a New Mexico jury ordered Meta to pay \$375 million after determining that the company had misrepresented the safety of its platforms for teenagers. The new judgment expands the penalties by requiring financial contributions and significant operational reforms. Under the court's order, Meta must introduce several youth safety measures over the next five years. These include monthly limits on teenagers' use of Facebook and Instagram, tighter restrictions on notifications, stronger controls to prevent adults from contacting minors, enhanced safeguards for artificial intelligence chatbots, and improved review systems for reports related to child sexual abuse. The court also directed Meta to pre-

vent children in New Mexico from engaging in romantic or sexualized conversations with its AI chatbots and to stop adults from using the chatbots to simulate or discuss sexual interactions involving children. Meta has announced that it will appeal the decision. In a statement, the company said it remains confident in its efforts to protect teenagers online and argued that the claims presented in the lawsuit do not accurately reflect the facts. Meta also maintained that it has continued to improve its systems for identifying and removing harmful content. Attorney General Raúl Torrez welcomed the ruling, saying it marked the first time a court had required a major social media company to make broad changes aimed at protecting children. He described the decision as a model that other states and countries could follow in addressing similar concerns. The case is part of a broader legal battle involving the social media industry. More than 40 US states and over 1,300 school districts have filed public nuisance lawsuits against social media companies, seeking damages and demanding changes to platform design and safety practices. Meta also faces another major trial next week in federal court in California, where 29 states allege that Facebook and Instagram were deliberately designed to addict children while misleading users about their safety. The company is also defending a similar lawsuit filed by the state of Tennessee.

DR Congo Ebola Cases Cross 4,000 as Officials Investigate Possible Virus Mutation

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) is battling one of its most severe Ebola outbreaks in recent years, with confirmed infections surpassing 4,000 cases. The sharp rise in infections has prompted health authorities to investigate whether the Ebola virus is undergoing mutations that could affect efforts to control the outbreak. Officials have expressed concern that genetic changes in the virus may complicate ongoing containment measures. While investigations are still underway, experts are examining whether any mutations have altered the virus's ability to spread, increased the severity of the disease, or reduced the effectiveness of existing vaccines, treatments, and diagnostic tests. The outbreak has placed enormous pressure on DR Congo's healthcare system, with hospitals and treatment centres working to manage the growing number of patients. Health workers continue to provide medical care while simultaneously carrying out surveillance and emergency response measures in affected regions. Authorities have intensified vaccination campaigns in communities at risk, aiming to protect people who have been exposed to confirmed cases and those living in high-transmission areas. Contact tracing teams are also working to identify individuals who may have come into contact with infected patients,

enabling health officials to isolate potential cases quickly and reduce further spread of the disease. Public awareness campaigns have become another key component of the response. Health officials are encouraging communities to report suspected infections promptly, cooperate with contact tracers, and follow preventive measures designed to limit transmission. These efforts are particularly important in remote regions where access to healthcare remains limited. Scientists are closely monitoring samples from infected patients to determine whether the virus has developed significant genetic changes. Although viruses naturally evolve over time, researchers stress that further analysis is required before concluding whether the suspected mutations have any meaningful impact on the outbreak or current medical countermeasures. DR Congo has experienced multiple Ebola outbreaks over the past several decades and has developed considerable expertise in responding to the disease. However, the current outbreak has raised fresh concerns because of its scale and the country's ongoing humanitarian and security challenges, which have complicated emergency response operations in several affected areas. International health organizations are working alongside Congolese authorities by providing technical expertise, medical



supplies, laboratory support, and funding for outbreak control efforts. Continued global cooperation is expected to play a crucial role in preventing the virus from spreading beyond the affected regions. Health officials have urged the international community to maintain support for surveillance, vaccination, treatment, and public education programmes. They caution that sustained efforts will be essential to bring the outbreak under control and minimize its impact on communi-

ties. As investigations into the possible virus mutation continue, authorities remain focused on strengthening healthcare services and implementing proven public health measures to contain the outbreak. They have also called for continued vigilance from the public, emphasizing that early detection, rapid treatment, and effective community cooperation remain the strongest tools in the fight against Ebola.

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan Sign Mecca Joint Defence Agreement

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan on Friday signed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, marking a significant step in strengthening military cooperation amid escalating tensions in the Middle East. The pact comes against the backdrop of the ongoing US-Iran war, renewed Houthi attacks, and increasing instability affecting the Gulf region and key international shipping routes. The agreement was announced through a joint statement issued by the official Saudi Press Agency and Pakistan's Foreign Ministry. The three nations reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing collective security while promoting peace, stability and regional cooperation. According to Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, the agreement includes a collective defence clause under which an attack on any one of the three member nations will be considered an attack on all. The ministry said the arrangement is intended to strengthen collective deterrence and improve security cooperation among the participating countries. Saudi Arabia has been seeking to diversify its security partnerships as regional conflicts intensify. The ongoing confrontation between the United States and Iran has disrupted maritime trade



through the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea, while Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen have resumed attacks on Saudi territory and commercial shipping. Analysts believe the new defence pact reflects Riyadh's efforts to reduce its dependence on the United States by building stronger regional alliances. Since the conflict intensified, Saudi Arabia has increased diplomatic engagement with Turkey, Egypt and Pakistan,

all of which have supported mediation efforts aimed at reducing regional tensions. Umar Karim, an expert on Saudi foreign policy at the University of Birmingham, described the agreement as a highly significant development. He said the alignment is largely aimed at addressing Iran's expanding regional influence. He also noted that Turkey and Pakistan, which both share borders with Iran,

could provide additional diplomatic and strategic leverage in dealing with Tehran. Andreas Krieg of King's College London said the agreement demonstrates Saudi Arabia's intention to create multiple layers of security rather than relying solely on American support. He added that the partnership could strengthen Saudi Arabia's ambitions to play a leading role in regional security while offering Turkey and Pakistan greater political influence and opportunities for economic and investment cooperation. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Mecca ahead of the signing ceremony. Pakistan was represented by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Asim Munir, who travelled to Saudi Arabia for the event. The agreement also comes as hostilities in Yemen have intensified. Iran-backed Houthi rebels have resumed missile and drone attacks against Saudi Arabia and Yemeni government forces, while threatening Red Sea shipping following the collapse of a truce that had largely held for four years. The renewed violence has heightened concerns over regional stability and the security of global energy supplies.

Student Opens Fire at Thailand School, Casualties Reported

A shooting at a high school in Thailand's Nonthaburi province on Friday left several people dead or injured, prompting a major police response and raising fresh concerns about school safety in the country. According to Thai authorities, the incident took place at Debsirin Nonthaburi School, located in Nonthaburi province, northwest of Bangkok. Police officers were immediately deployed to the campus after receiving reports of gunfire. Royal Thai Police spokesperson Trairong Piwpan confirmed that the shooting had occurred at the school and said authorities were responding to the emergency. Officials confirmed that the incident resulted in casualties, although they did not immediately disclose the exact number of deaths or injuries. Arsit Sampantharat, Permanent Secretary of Thailand's Interior Ministry, told local broadcaster PPTV that the suspected shooter was a student enrolled at the school. He added that the suspect remained inside the campus as security forces responded to the situation. Authorities focused on securing the premises, protecting students and staff, and bringing the incident under control. Officials have not yet released details regarding the motive behind the shooting or identified the victims. Investigators are expected to examine the circumstances leading up to the attack once the immediate security operation is completed. The shooting has sent shockwaves across Thailand, where such incidents remain relatively uncommon but have



raised increasing concern in recent years. Parents and residents gathered near the school as emergency personnel worked to manage the situation and ensure the safety of those on campus. The incident follows another school shooting earlier this year. In February, a 17-year-old stole a firearm from police before opening fire at a public high school in southern Thailand. During that attack, the teenager briefly held people hostage in a two-hour standoff, leaving one person dead and two others injured before the situation was brought under control. Friday's attack is likely to renew discussions about school security, firearm access, and measures to prevent violence involving young people. Authorities are expected to conduct a detailed investigation into how the student obtained the weapon and whether any security lapses contributed to the tragedy. As police continue their operation at Debsirin Nonthaburi School, officials have urged the public to avoid speculation and wait for verified information. More details, including the identities of the victims, the number of casualties, and the circumstances surrounding the attack, are expected to be released as the investigation progresses.

US Imposes Sanctions on Cuban Entities, Individuals Over Military Links

The United States has imposed fresh sanctions on five Cuban entities and eight individuals accused of supporting Cuba's military procurement network and security apparatus, further escalating tensions between Washington and Havana. The sanctions were announced by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who alleged that Cuba poses a threat to American national security. In a statement posted on X, Rubio said the measures target individuals and organizations involved in acquiring military equipment and supporting Cuba's armed forces. He accused the Cuban government of engaging in activities that undermine US security interests. Rubio described the Cuban Communist government as a state sponsor of terrorism, alleging that it conducts espionage against the United States, supports violent extremist groups, promotes Marxist ideology, and serves as a strategic base for countries including Russia, China, and Iran. He said the sanctions are intended to counter those activities and reinforce the United States' national security objectives. The US Secretary of State also warned that financial institutions, businesses, or individuals providing services or support to the sanctioned entities could themselves face US sanctions. He urged foreign banks and companies to immediately cease transactions involving the designated organizations. According to the US State Department, the sanctions were imposed under President Donald Trump's Executive Order 14404, signed on May 1, 2026. The order authorizes sanctions against individuals and organizations considered responsible for repression in Cuba or actions deemed to threaten US national security and foreign policy. The State Department alleged that the sanctioned entities assisted Cuba's Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR) and other security agencies in obtaining military equipment from overseas. Rubio also identified Grupo de Administración



Empresarial S.A. (GAESA), Cuba's military-run business conglomerate, as a key institution supporting the country's security establishment and domestic control. The Trump administration said it would continue using sanctions and other measures to address what it considers national security threats posed by the Cuban government while encouraging political and economic reforms on the island. Cuba strongly rejected the new sanctions. In a statement posted on X, the Cuban Embassy in the United States described the measures as another example of Washington's long-standing "hostile policy of harassment" against the country. The embassy said the Cuban people and the country's revolution would remain steadfast despite the latest restrictions, adding that sanctions would not undermine Cuba's independence. The latest action marks another deterioration in relations between the United States and Cuba. While Washington maintains that the sanctions are necessary to protect national security and counter military cooperation involving the Cuban government, Havana insists the measures are politically motivated and part of a decades-long campaign of economic and diplomatic pressure.



CAS Volatility in Sensex, Nifty Eases for First Time

Volatility in the benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty declined significantly on Friday for the first time since the implementation of the Closing Auction Session (CAS), indicating that the market may be gradually adapting to the revised closing mechanism.

The sharp swings witnessed during the post-closing auction in recent trading sessions were largely absent on August 7, providing relief to investors and traders who had expressed concerns over abrupt fluctuations in benchmark indices.

At the end of the continuous trading session at 3:15 pm, the BSE Sensex stood at 78,491.26 points. Following the Closing Auction Session, the index settled at 78,499.17, reflecting an adjustment of only about seven points.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty saw a post-CAS adjustment of just 14 points before closing at 24,570.65. The Bank Nifty also recorded a relatively modest adjustment of 57 points after the auction session.

The reduced movement marked a significant improvement compared to previous sessions, when benchmark indices experienced much larger post-CAS adjustments, creating uncertainty among market participants. Analysts believe the lower volatility indicates improving market participation and better price discovery during the auction process. The Closing Auction Session was introduced to determine a more transparent and efficient closing price for listed securities. However, in its initial days, the mechanism resulted in sharp price movements, particularly in heavily weighted stocks, leading to sizeable changes in benchmark indices after the regular trading session had ended. Market participants had raised concerns that these sudden swings could affect portfolio valuations, derivative settlements and passive investment strategies that rely on official closing prices. Friday's trading session, however, suggested that the market is gradually stabilising under the new system.

Experts said improved participation by institutional investors and greater familiarity with the auction process may have contributed to the reduction in volatility. As more investors adapt to the revised closing mechanism, post-auction price movements are expected to become more stable. Despite the easing in CAS-related volatility, the broader market ended the day in negative territory. The Sensex closed 455.59 points lower at 78,499.17, while the Nifty declined 65.35 points to settle at 24,570.65, as weakness in financial stocks outweighed gains in the automobile and information technology sectors. The moderation in post-closing adjustments is being viewed as a positive development for market stability. If the trend continues in the coming sessions, it could strengthen investor confidence in the Closing Auction Session and support smoother price discovery at the end of each trading day.

India's Stock Market Outshines Emerging Peers



India's equity market has strengthened its lead over emerging market (EM) peers as growing interest in artificial intelligence (AI)-related investments continues to attract global capital, according to a report by Elara Capital. The brokerage said India-focused long-only funds have outperformed emerging market long-only funds by around 10 percent since mid-June. This marks the strongest period of relative outperformance since February-April 2025, highlighting renewed investor confidence in Indian equities.

Elara Capital attributed the trend to sustained foreign investor interest in India's structural growth story, particularly in sectors linked to technology, digital transformation and AI. The report noted that global investors continue to view India as one of the most attractive destinations among emerging markets due to its resilient economic outlook, strong corporate earnings and expanding domestic demand.

The AI-driven investment theme has emerged as a major catalyst for capital inflows into Indian markets. Companies expected to benefit from increasing adoption of artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure and technology-led innovation have attracted significant investor attention. This has helped Indian equities outperform many other emerging market counterparts despite global economic uncertainties.

The report also highlighted that India's improving relative performance has been supported by healthy domestic liquidity, stable macroeconomic indicators and sustained participation from both institutional and retail investors. These factors have enabled the market to absorb external volatility more effectively than many other emerging economies.

According to Elara Capital, the ongoing AI investment cycle has strengthened India's appeal among global portfolio managers looking for long-term growth opportunities. Continued investment in digital technologies and innovation is expected to remain a key driver of market performance over the coming quarters.

The report further noted that gold funds have also continued to attract investor interest, reflecting a balanced investment approach amid global uncertainties. However, the overall preference for Indian equities remains strong due to favourable economic fundamentals and earnings growth prospects. Market experts believe that India's ability to consistently attract global capital, supported by structural reforms and technology-led growth, has reinforced its position as one of the best-performing emerging markets. If AI-related investments continue to expand and corporate earnings remain resilient, India is expected to maintain its relative strength against other emerging market economies in the months ahead. The sustained outperformance of India-focused funds underscores growing global confidence in the country's long-term growth story, with AI-led opportunities emerging as a significant factor shaping investment decisions.

Sensex Falls 456 Points as Financial Stocks Drag Markets Lower

Indian benchmark equity indices ended lower on Friday as heavy selling in financial stocks outweighed gains in automobile and information technology shares. The BSE Sensex declined 455.59 points, or 0.58 percent, to close at 78,499.17, while the NSE Nifty 50 slipped 65.35 points, or 0.27 percent, to settle at 24,570.65.

The biggest drag on the market came from financial stocks, with Bajaj Finance tumbling 5.84 percent to emerge as the top loser on the Nifty. Bajaj Finserv fell 3.70 percent, followed by Trent, ICICI Bank and Shriram Finance. Axis Bank, Titan, Tata Steel and Cipla also ended in negative territory. On the positive side, TCS led the gainers by rising 3.36 percent. Grasim Industries, Hindalco and Mahindra & Mahindra also posted gains of more than 2.5 percent. HCLTech, SBI, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, Wipro and Reliance Industries closed with modest gains. Among sectoral indices, Nifty Auto was the best performer, advancing 1.84 percent, followed by Nifty IT,



which gained 1.42 percent. PSU Bank, Infrastructure and Metal indices also ended higher. In contrast, the Nifty Private Bank index declined 1.04 percent, making it the worst-performing sector of the day.

Consumer Durables, Realty and Pharma also closed lower. The broader market delivered a mixed performance. The Nifty Midcap 100 index edged up 0.22 percent, while the Nifty Smallcap

100 index ended nearly flat with a marginal decline of 0.05 percent. India VIX remained largely unchanged, easing 0.08 percent to 12.15. On the BSE Midcap index, Tata

Technologies emerged as the top gainer with an 8.74 percent jump. Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services, Aurobindo Pharma, Sonata BLW Precision Forgings, JSW Infrastructure, Exide Industries and Clean Science also registered strong gains. On the losing side, Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals fell 6.85 percent, while Blue Star, Gujarat Energy, GE Vernova T&D India, L&T Finance, Aditya Birla Capital and Ramco Cements also closed lower.

For the week, Indian equity markets extended gains for a second consecutive week, with both the Sensex and Nifty advancing around 1 percent. Hindalco emerged as the top Nifty gainer during the week, while Bajaj Finance, Power Grid, Max Healthcare, Sun Pharma and ONGC were among the major laggards.

Among sectoral indices, PSU Banks, Defence and Metal outperformed, whereas the Capital Market index was the weakest performer. The rupee ended nearly unchanged at 95.21 against the US dollar.

Titan Q1 Profit Jumps 65% to Rs 1,699 Crore, Revenue Rises 24%

Titan Company Ltd reported a robust financial performance for the first quarter of FY27, with consolidated net profit rising 65 percent year-on-year to Rs 1,699 crore, surpassing market expectations. The Tata Group company also recorded a 24 percent increase in revenue, driven by strong demand across its key jewellery and watches businesses.

The company's jewellery division remained the primary growth driver during the quarter. Revenue from the jewellery portfolio surged 43 percent year-on-year to Rs 18,253 crore, supported by healthy consumer demand during the festive season and the Akshaya Tritiya buying period. The strong performance highlighted continued consumer preference for branded jewellery despite elevated gold prices. Titan's watches and wearables business also delivered steady growth during the quarter, contributing positively to the company's overall revenue. The eyewear segment maintained stable performance, while other emerging businesses continued to expand their presence. The better-than-expected earnings reflected



strong consumer sentiment, effective product offerings and improved demand across major categories. The company benefited from festive purchases and wedding-related jewellery sales, which significantly boosted overall revenue during the quarter.

Titan has continued to strengthen its retail footprint by expanding its store network across the country while focusing on premium product offerings and customer experience. Its diversified business portfolio has helped the company maintain steady growth despite fluctuations

in commodity prices and changing market conditions. Analysts noted that the impressive growth in the jewellery segment was the key contributor to the company's earnings, with higher sales volumes and improved operating performance supporting profitability. The quarter also demonstrated Titan's resilience in navigating market challenges while sustaining strong demand across its core businesses.

The company remains optimistic about future growth, supported by favourable consumer trends, continued expansion of its retail presence and sustained demand in the jewellery market. Management expects festive and wedding season demand to continue supporting business momentum in the coming quarters. Titan's strong first-quarter performance reinforces its position as one of India's leading lifestyle and consumer companies. The sharp rise in profit and revenue, led by the jewellery business, has provided a positive start to FY27 and strengthened investor confidence in the company's long-term growth prospects.

Hindalco Posts Record Q1 Profit of Rs 7,013 Crore



Hindalco Industries Ltd reported its best-ever quarterly performance for the first quarter of FY27, with consolidated net profit rising 75 percent year-on-year to a record Rs 7,013 crore. The Aditya Birla Group company also recorded a 32 percent increase in consolidated revenue, reflecting strong operational performance across its businesses and a recovery at its overseas subsidiary, Novelis.

The company reported consolidated revenue of Rs 84,825 crore during the April-June quarter, supported by robust demand, improved product mix and favourable market conditions. Consolidated earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) surged 73 percent compared to the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year, highlighting significant improvement in operational efficiency and profitability.

Hindalco attributed the record performance to strong growth in its India operations and a steady recovery at Novelis, its global aluminium rolling and recycling business. Improved demand across key sectors, higher production volumes and better cost management contributed to the company's earnings growth. The India business continued to benefit from healthy demand for alu-

minium and copper products from sectors such as infrastructure, construction, transportation, packaging and electrical equipment. Operational efficiencies and value-added product sales further strengthened profitability during the quarter.

Novelis also delivered a stronger performance compared to the previous year, supported by improving demand conditions in global markets and better operating margins. The recovery at the subsidiary played an important role in boosting Hindalco's consolidated financial results. Following the announcement of the results, Hindalco's shares gained nearly 2 percent during trading, reflecting positive investor sentiment. Although the stock pared some of its early gains later in the session, it remained higher as investors welcomed the company's record quarterly earnings and improved outlook. Market analysts said the results exceeded expectations, driven by strong domestic operations, better pricing, disciplined cost management and improving performance at Novelis. They noted that the company's diversified business model has enabled it to benefit from both domestic demand and global recovery trends. The company has continued to focus on expanding value-added products,

improving production efficiency and strengthening sustainability initiatives. Investments in technology, recycling and downstream manufacturing have also contributed to enhancing long-term competitiveness. Industry experts believe Hindalco is well positioned to benefit from increasing demand for aluminium and copper as infrastructure development, renewable energy projects, electric vehicles and industrial manufacturing continue to expand. The recovery in global aluminium markets and improving demand from overseas customers are also expected to support future growth.

The record quarterly performance underscores Hindalco's strong operational capabilities and resilience amid evolving global market conditions. With higher revenue, improved profitability and a recovering international business, the company has made a strong start to FY27. Analysts remain optimistic about Hindalco's growth prospects, citing healthy domestic demand, continued focus on operational excellence and the improving performance of Novelis. The company's robust first-quarter results have reinforced investor confidence and positioned it for sustained growth in the coming quarters.

India's Margin Trading Book Touches Record Rs 1.4 Lakh Crore

India's Margin Trading Facility (MTF) book has reached a record high of Rs 1.4 lakh crore, reflecting growing participation by retail investors and increased appetite for leveraged equity investments. While the rapid expansion has raised concerns about potential risks during a market downturn, brokerage firms maintain that the current situation remains manageable and does not pose an immediate threat to market stability.

The Margin Trading Facility allows investors to purchase shares by borrowing funds from brokers, enabling them to take larger positions than their available capital would otherwise permit. The sharp rise in MTF exposure highlights growing confidence among investors amid a strong rally in Indian equity markets.

Industry participants say the increase in leverage has largely been driven by sustained optimism about India's economic growth, robust corporate earnings and continued participation by retail investors. Strong inflows into equity markets over the past several months have encouraged investors to use margin funding to maximise potential returns.

Despite the record size of the MTF book, brokerage firms believe the risks remain under control. They point out that margin trading is governed by strict regulatory norms and risk management systems, including margin requirements, daily monitoring of client positions and automated margin calls whenever account values decline below prescribed levels.

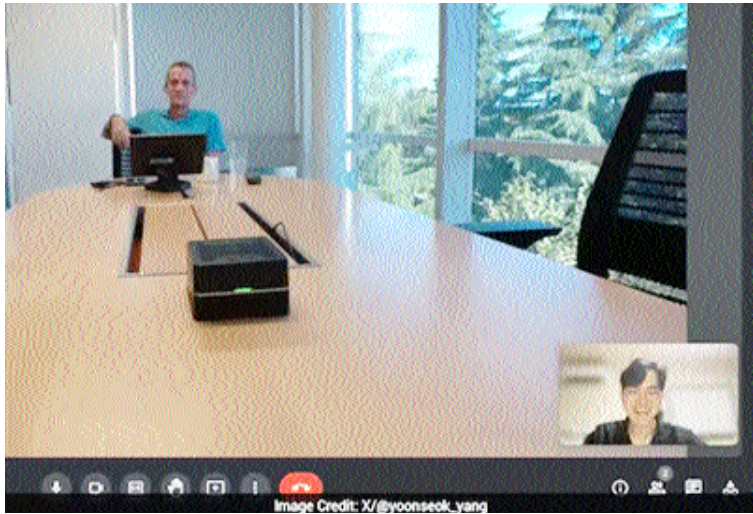
According to market experts, brokerage firms continuously monitor leveraged positions and take corrective measures whenever necessary to limit potential losses. This disciplined approach, they argue, reduces the likelihood of widespread defaults even if markets witness short-term volatility.

However, some analysts have cautioned that the rapid growth in margin funding represents an area of concern because the current level of leverage has not yet been tested during a major market correction. If equity markets witness a sharp decline, investors using borrowed funds could face significant losses, leading to forced selling and increased market volatility.

Experts warn that heavy leverage can amplify both gains and losses. During rising markets, borrowed funds can enhance returns, but in falling markets, declining portfolio values may trigger margin calls, forcing investors to either deposit additional funds or liquidate their holdings. Such selling pressure could accelerate market declines if a large number of leveraged positions are unwound simultaneously. Even so, brokerage firms remain confident that existing safeguards are sufficient to prevent systemic risks. They believe investor awareness has improved significantly, with many clients using margin funding selectively rather than excessively. Advances in technology have also strengthened risk management through real-time monitoring and automated compliance systems.

The record MTF book reflects the growing maturity and depth of India's capital markets, supported by increasing retail participation and favourable market conditions. While concerns over leverage remain valid, market participants believe the overall ecosystem is better equipped than in the past to manage potential risks. Analysts say the true resilience of the current margin trading ecosystem will only become clear during a significant market correction. Until then, the record Rs 1.4 lakh crore MTF book stands as a sign of strong investor confidence, accompanied by a reminder that prudent risk management remains essential for both investors and brokerage firms.

Former Google Intern Shares How a Calendar Invite Led to Meeting Jeff Dean

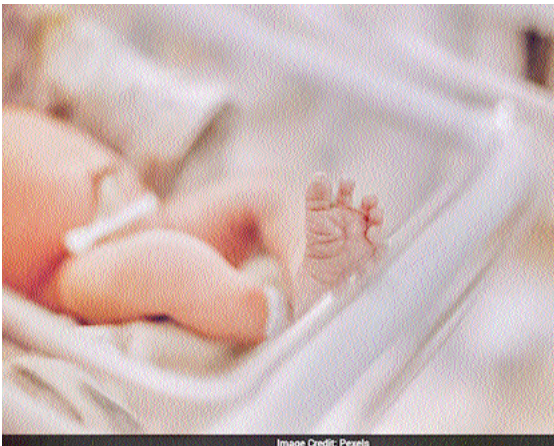


A former Google intern has shared how a simple calendar invitation led to an unexpected meeting with Google veteran Jeff Dean, offering a glimpse into the leadership style of one of the technology industry's most respected engineers. Yoonseok Yang, who interned at Google in 2022, revealed in a post on X that he decided to send a random calendar invite to Dean after noticing that his schedule was accessible even to interns. To his surprise, the invitation was accepted. "In 2022, as a Google intern, I sent a

random calendar invite to Jeff Dean. He accepted," Yang wrote. "His calendar was accessible even to interns, so I figured I had nothing to lose. The next day, I sent this photo to my team. Everyone was shocked." Yang described Dean as one of his biggest inspirations and said it was difficult to imagine Google without him after his 27-year career at the company. "It's hard to imagine Google without Jeff. He's been one of my biggest inspirations. Thank you for everything, Jeff,"

Yang added. The post quickly gained widespread attention on social media, prompting Dean to respond. "I remember this. It was great chatting with you!" he wrote, confirming the memorable meeting. Dean has earned praise throughout his career for his engineering contributions and approachable leadership style. He played a key role in developing foundational technologies that have shaped Google's products and modern computing infrastructure. Following his departure from Google, Dean is launching a new artificial intelligence startup called Discovery Loop alongside longtime collaborators Sanjay Ghemawat, Oriol Vinyals and Quoc Le. Structured as a public benefit corporation, Discovery Loop aims to use AI to automate experimental workflows in science and engineering. The founders plan to develop AI systems capable of proposing, conducting and evaluating thousands of experiments simultaneously, with the goal of accelerating scientific research and technological innovation. Yang's experience has resonated widely online, with many praising Dean's willingness to engage with interns and junior employees despite his senior position, highlighting the value of accessibility and mentorship in the technology industry.

Women Switched at Birth Reunite After 37 Years in China



Two women in southern China have discovered that they were accidentally switched at birth 37 years ago and spent their entire lives growing up just four kilometres apart, in a remarkable case that has drawn widespread attention. The discovery came after one of the women began searching for her biological family, eventually uncovering a decades-old hospital mix-up, according to the South China Morning Post. Huang Xiaolin and Li Hui were born 55 minutes apart at Qingyuan People's Hospital in Qingyuan, Guangdong province, in October 1989. Shortly after their births, nurses briefly showed the babies to their mothers before taking them to the nursery. At the time, the hospital did not use identification wristbands. Instead, newborns were identified using name cards placed inside their swaddling, a system believed to have contributed to the accidental exchange. Huang was raised in a financially stable household by adoptive

parents who worked for the government. However, her adoptive father became suspicious after noticing that Huang had a different blood type and little physical resemblance to him. His doubts led him to suspect infidelity, and the couple eventually divorced when Huang was five years old. She was thereafter raised by her adoptive mother. In 2022, hoping to improve her strained relationship with her adoptive father, Huang underwent a DNA test. The results revealed that neither of her adoptive parents was biologically related to her. With assistance from police, she traced her biological family in April last year and discovered that Li Hui was the other child involved in the hospital error. Li's upbringing was markedly different. Her adoptive family ran a small grocery store until her adoptive father lost the family's savings in an investment scam. Financial hardship forced Li to leave secondary school and take up jobs as a tour guide, hotel receptionist and salesperson to support her family. Years of demanding work affected her health, leading to a blood disorder and thyroid surgery. The two women met for the first time at a café and described the emotional encounter as "nervous, exciting, and slightly awkward." Li was particularly shocked to learn that she had lived only four kilometres from her biological parents throughout her life. Despite the revelation, both women have chosen to maintain close relationships with the families that raised them. Li said her adoptive mother still depends on her financial support, while Huang's adoptive mother did not want to disrupt the lives of the other family. When the women requested their birth records from Qingyuan People's Hospital, they were informed that the documents could not be located. Huang was also told that some hospital staff involved had retired, while others had passed away, making it difficult to determine exactly how the mix-up occurred.

Air India Appoints Tewolde Gebremariam as CEO After PIA Link

Air India has appointed former Ethiopian Airlines chief Tewolde Gebremariam as its new Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, marking a significant leadership change as the Tata Group-owned airline enters the next phase of its transformation. The appointment comes weeks after reports suggested that Gebremariam had been selected to head Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) following its privatisation. Gebremariam will succeed Campbell Wilson, who announced his resignation in April and is scheduled to step down in September. Air India's board announced the appointment after conducting a global search that considered both internal and external candidates with expertise in large-scale airline turnarounds, safety management and profitable growth. According to a Bloomberg report, Gebremariam had earlier been shortlisted to lead PIA. Soon after, Arab News, citing two officials familiar with the matter, reported that PIA had selected him as its next chief

executive. The report stated that the announcement had been delayed because the airline was awaiting mandatory security clearances. A major shareholder in PIA also reportedly confirmed the appointment, describing Gebremariam as an experienced aviation executive with a proven record of leading successful airline transformations. The reported move came after Pakistan completed the first phase of PIA's privatisation. Management control of the airline shifted to a consortium led by the Arif Habib Group, which reportedly infused fresh equity to support fleet expansion and route development. However, Gebremariam ultimately accepted Air India's offer. Air India Chairman N Chandrasekaran said the airline had completed its initial stabilisation phase under Campbell Wilson, including major fleet commitments, and was now entering a new phase focused on execution, operational excellence and expansion. Gebremariam brings more than 36 years of aviation experience to Air India. He joined

Ethiopian Airlines in 1985 and became Group CEO in 2011, serving until 2022. During his tenure, Ethiopian Airlines grew into Africa's largest and most profitable airline. The carrier's revenue increased more than fourfold, while its fleet nearly tripled in size. He also led the airline's entry into the Star Alliance and expanded its maintenance, repair, training and aviation support businesses. Air India, which returned to Tata Group ownership in 2022, currently operates a fleet of around 185 aircraft and is pursuing an ambitious expansion strategy with large aircraft orders, network growth and service improvements. In contrast, Pakistan International Airlines operates a fleet of about 30 aircraft and is working to modernise its operations following privatisation. With Gebremariam at the helm, Air India hopes to accelerate its transformation into a globally competitive full-service carrier and strengthen its position in the international aviation market.



Texas Couple Sues Popeyes for \$1.5 Million Over Alleged Object in Fried Chicken



A Texas couple has filed a lawsuit seeking more than \$1.5 million in damages against fast-food chain Popeyes, alleging they discovered a condom-like object embedded in a piece of fried chicken purchased from one of the company's Houston outlets. The lawsuit was filed on August 3 in the Harris County District Court by Justin Howard and Danielle McKinnon. According to court documents cited by PEOPLE magazine, the couple purchased the meal from a Popeyes restaurant on South Sam Houston Parkway West on July 25. Howard claims he bit into a piece of fried chicken before noticing what appeared to be a condom lodged inside it. The lawsuit describes the incident as turning an ordinary family meal into a disturbing experience, leaving the couple fearful that they may have already consumed contaminated food. The petition states that the couple immediately stopped eating and experienced nausea and anxiety because they could not determine what the object actually was, how long it had been inside the food, or whether the rest of their meal had also been contaminated. The lawsuit names Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, its parent company Restaurant Brands International, which also owns Burger King, and local franchise operator AAMANA Businesses as defendants. It includes allegations of negligence, unsafe food handling practices and violations of Texas consumer pro-

tection laws, according to reports by the Houston Chronicle and Houston Stringer. The couple further alleges that their experience worsened when they returned to the restaurant to report the incident. According to the lawsuit, staff members laughed at their complaint and repeatedly attempted to replace the chicken instead of issuing a refund or conducting a proper investigation. The petition claims a refund was eventually provided only after the couple insisted. The incident had already attracted local attention before the lawsuit was filed. Houston community activists Candice Matthews and Quanell X visited the restaurant in late July, urging management to conduct a thorough investigation and temporarily suspend chicken sales at the outlet until the matter was fully examined. Neither Popeyes nor Restaurant Brands International had publicly responded to the allegations at the time of the reports. The claims made in the lawsuit remain allegations and have yet to be tested in court. Founded in New Orleans in 1972, Popeyes has grown into one of the world's largest fried chicken chains, operating more than 4,000 restaurants across the United States and several international markets. The outcome of the case could draw further attention to food safety standards and complaint handling practices within the fast-food industry.

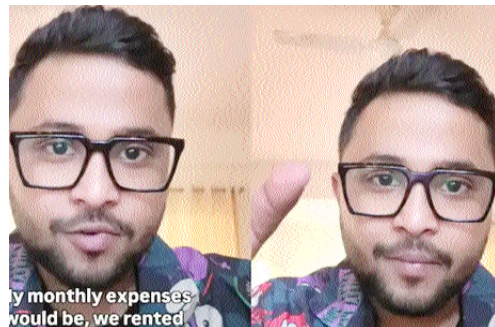
Bengaluru Resident Says Living Costs Can Reach Rs 12 Lakh in Two Years

A Bengaluru resident has sparked discussion on social media after revealing that he spent nearly Rs 12 lakh on living expenses over a little more than two years as a bachelor in the city. His detailed breakdown of monthly costs has highlighted how routine expenses can quickly add up in one of India's largest technology hubs. Harsh Agarwal shared the figures in a video posted on his Instagram page, "unfiltered bachelor," where he explained that his monthly expenses total around Rs 50,000 despite maintaining what he described as a fairly

typical lifestyle. According to Agarwal, the biggest expense is accommodation. He lives in a villa with friends and pays approximately Rs 28,000 per month as his share of the rent. Grocery bills add another Rs 5,000 every month, while cooking and maid services together cost about Rs 4,500. He also spends around Rs 1,000 each month on internet and other miscellaneous household expenses. Transportation is another significant cost, with fuel expenses averaging Rs 3,000 per month. Food ordered from

restaurants and online delivery platforms accounts for an additional Rs 5,000 every month. Agarwal also includes the cost of travelling to his hometown and returning to Bengaluru, estimating that these trips cost him around Rs 4,000 per month on average. Adding all these expenses together, Agarwal said his monthly expenditure comes to nearly Rs 50,000. Over a year, this amounts to roughly Rs 6 lakh, and after living in Bengaluru for a little over two years, his total spending has crossed Rs 12 lakh. Reflecting on the figures,

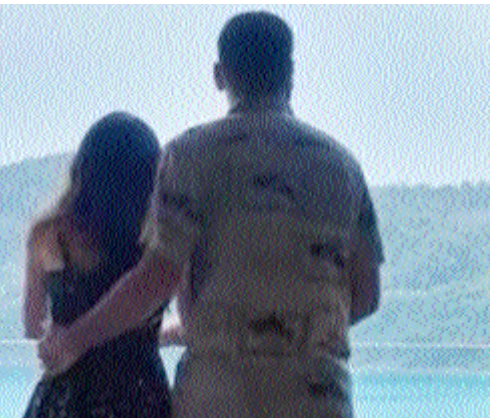
Agarwal said many people fail to realise how quickly everyday expenses accumulate. Even when spending is planned carefully, small recurring costs can gradually become a major financial burden. "You finally calculate your living expenses and reality hits hard," he wrote on social media. He added that expenses such as villa rent, Swiggy food orders and weekend fuel bills pile up much faster than most people expect. Agarwal encouraged people, especially young professionals and those living away from home, to regularly moni-



tor their monthly expenses instead of waiting until the end of the year. His post has resonated with many social media users, who shared similar experiences of managing rising living costs in Bengaluru. The video has sparked conversations

online about the increasing cost of urban living, with many users pointing out that housing, transportation and food remain the biggest contributors to monthly expenses in India's major metropolitan cities.

Influencer Reveals Rs 3 Lakh Monthly Cost of Living in Singapore



An Instagram content creator has sparked discussion online after revealing that she and her partner spend more than Rs 3 lakh every month to live in Singapore, highlighting the high cost of residing in one of Asia's most expensive cities. Kritika Jain, who lives in a one-bedroom apartment in central Singapore, shared a detailed break-



down of her household expenses on social media. According to her, the couple's monthly expenditure ranges between 4,700 and 4,900 Singapore dollars, which is approximately Rs 3.01 lakh to Rs 3.14 lakh. Jain explained that while Singapore is known for its excellent infrastructure, safety, cleanliness and quality of life, these

advantages come with substantial living expenses. Her post aimed to give followers a realistic picture of the day-to-day costs of living in the city-state. The biggest expense for the couple is rent. Jain said they pay around 3,000 Singapore dollars, or nearly Rs 2.2 lakh, every month for their one-bedroom apartment

in central Singapore. Housing alone accounts for more than 60 per cent of their total monthly budget. Food is the second-largest expense. The couple spends between 800 and 1,000 Singapore dollars, roughly Rs 75,000, each month on groceries and dining out. Jain said they eat at restaurants three to four times a

week while preparing the rest of their meals at home. Utilities and internet services add another 200 Singapore dollars, or about Rs 15,000, to their monthly expenses. This includes electricity, water, Wi-Fi and mobile phone bills. Transportation costs are also estimated at around 200 Singapore dollars per month. According to Jain, the couple mainly uses Singapore's efficient public transport system and relies on taxis only occasionally, helping keep travel expenses under control. In addition, they set aside approximately 500 Singapore dollars, or nearly Rs 37,000, each month for shopping, entertainment, subscriptions and other miscellaneous expenses.

Sharing the figures with her followers, Jain remarked that living in Singapore "comes at a price" and asked whether people felt the experience was worth the expense. Her post has since generated widespread debate on social media, with many users discussing the affordability of life in Singapore. Several users noted that while the costs are undeniably high, Singapore continues to attract expatriates and young professionals because of its strong economy, career opportunities, efficient public services and high standard of living. Others pointed out that housing remains the single biggest factor driving up monthly expenses, making accommodation the most significant financial commitment for many residents.

Ashwin Suggests MI Seek Harshit Rana, Rinku Singh for Hardik Pandya Trade

Rumours surrounding Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya's future have intensified ahead of the next Indian Premier League season, with reports suggesting the franchise is exploring trade options with Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders. Former India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has weighed in on the speculation, recommending that Mumbai Indians demand Rinku Singh and Harshit Rana if Hardik is traded to Kolkata Knight Riders. Hardik, who began his IPL career with Mumbai Indians in 2015, left the franchise before the 2022 season to captain Gujarat Titans. Under his leadership, Gujarat won the IPL title in their debut season and reached the final the following year. Mumbai Indians later brought him back through the transfer window and appointed him captain. However, Hardik's second stint as MI captain has produced mixed results. The team finished at the bottom of the IPL 2024 points table, reached Qualifier 2 in the following season, and ended the IPL 2026 campaign in ninth place, leading to speculation about a possible change in leadership. Speaking on his Tamil YouTube channel, Ashwin said Mumbai should prioritise strengthening their squad if they part ways with Hardik. "Don't count out Hardik going to a franchise other than CSK or KKR. The talk is that CSK will give Shivam Dube and a pacer, while KKR will give away Cameron Green. What happens if Green decides to focus on the Ashes next year? If I were MI, I would accept a deal with KKR on only one condition: getting Harshit Rana and Rinku Singh in return. That is the only way MI get stronger," Ashwin said. He also noted that Mumbai must carefully evaluate which rival would become stronger through such a deal. According to Ashwin, Chennai Super Kings would improve with Hardik, but Kolkata Knight Riders could become a far more formidable side because of their already strong batting lineup. Ashwin added that Mumbai Indians should ensure any trade benefits them while preventing a direct rival from gaining a decisive advantage in the race for future IPL titles.



Gill Misses Warm-Up Match After Finger Injury, Rahul Leads India

India captain Shubman Gill missed the opening day of the warm-up match against Sri Lanka XI after sustaining an impact injury to his right ring finger during a practice session. The team management opted to rest him as a precaution ahead of the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka, which begins on August 15 in Galle. In Gill's absence, KL Rahul led the Indian side and captained the team at the toss. Sri Lanka XI won the toss and elected to bat in the three-day warm-up fixture, India's final preparation before the Test series.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed Gill's injury in a statement on social media. "Captain Shubman Gill sustained an impact injury to his right ring finger during India's practice on Thursday. As a precautionary measure, he will not take the field on Day 1 of the warm-up game against Sri Lanka XI. The BCCI Medical Team is monitoring his progress. KL Rahul will lead the team in Gill's absence," the board said. Originally planned as a four-day match, the fixture was shortened to three days and is expected to provide India with valuable match practice in spin-friendly

Sri Lankan conditions. The team last played Test cricket in June and will use the game to fine-tune its preparations. The warm-up match also marks the beginning of Subhadeep Ghosh's tenure as India's fielding coach. Ghosh takes charge after the BCCI decided not to extend the contracts of former fielding coach T Dilip and assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate. India will also be without premier fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who is continuing his recovery from a knee injury. His absence has paved the way for Jammu and Kashmir pacer Auqib Nabi to earn his maiden Test call-up. Off-spin all-rounder Saransh Jain has also been added to the squad to strengthen India's spin resources against Sri Lanka's left-handed-heavy batting lineup. Left-handed batter Sai Sudharsan is recovering from a niggle at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru but remains unavailable for selection. India,



currently fifth in the World Test Championship standings, will be eager to perform well in the series and improve its chances of reaching the World Test Championship final, with hopes that Gill regains full fitness before the opening Test.

Irfan Pathan Reveals Fake Pakistan Media Story Linked Him to Babar Azam



Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan has revealed how he became the target of fake news and online trolling after a fabricated story involving Pakistan batter Babar Azam was circulated by sections of the Pakistani media. Speaking on JioHotstar's Cheeky Singles, Pathan said the false report claimed that he had approached Babar for an interview but was refused because of his alleged views on Pakistan. According to the former cricketer, the story was completely fabricated using a photoshopped image. "The trolling and fake attribution happen every day. The media in our neighbouring country once ran a story claiming that I had gone to interview Babar Azam, and that he refused because, according to him, 'He trolls our country, so I won't give him an interview.' It was a complete lie. Someone had photoshopped my face onto a picture," Pathan said. He explained that the original photograph actually featured a young Bangladeshi reporter who had gone to a cricket ground for the first time and was denied an interview. Pathan said his face was digitally edited onto the reporter's body before the image was widely circulated online.

"The person in the original image was a young Bangladeshi reporter who had gone to the ground for the first time and was refused an interview. They literally put my face on his body and spread the story. It got over a million views, and people believed it was me," he said. Pathan added that such misinformation has become a regular occurrence and that he chooses not to react to every false claim. "This happens every day, but I don't respond. Every day, some lie is told in our name or about some player. If you keep responding to everyone, you won't be able to live your life," he said. Pathan represented India between 2003 and 2012 and established himself as one of the country's premier pace-bowling all-rounders. During his international career, he scored 2,821 runs in 141 innings at an average of 26.12, including one century and 11 half-centuries, while claiming 301 wickets at an average of 29.85 with nine five-wicket hauls and two 10-wicket match hauls. In the Indian Premier League, Pathan played for Punjab Kings, Delhi Capitals, Rising Pune Supergiant and Gujarat Lions. He featured in 103 IPL matches, taking 80 wickets and scoring 1,139 runs, including one half-century.

Panchal Questions Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's East Zone Vice-Captaincy



Domestic cricket veteran Priyank Panchal has questioned the decision to appoint 15-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi as East Zone vice-captain for the upcoming Duleep Trophy, saying the responsibility could place unnecessary pressure on the youngster. The selectors named Ishan Kishan as captain and handed the vice-captaincy to Sooryavanshi following his impressive performances in India's recent T20I series against Zimbabwe, where he was named Player of the Series. The move

was reportedly aimed at preparing the teenager for future leadership responsibilities. However, Panchal believes the appointment has come too early in Sooryavanshi's career, particularly given his limited experience in first-class cricket. The Bihar batter has played only eight first-class matches so far. "I think the zonal selectors could have avoided making Vaibhav Sooryavanshi the East Zone vice-captain. It could put unnecessary pressure on the young kid. Let him understand the dynamics of red-ball cricket first, properly, before entrusting such duties upon him. Thoughts? #DuleepTrophy," Panchal wrote on X. While Panchal expressed reser-

ervations about the leadership role, England wicketkeeper-batter Jos Buttler recently offered glowing praise for Sooryavanshi, predicting a bright future for the young Indian. Buttler created history during Manchester Super Giants' match against Welsh Fire in The Hundred by becoming the highest run-scorer in T20 cricket. The England star scored an unbeaten 51 off just 20 balls, hitting two fours and six sixes at a strike rate of 250. The innings took Buttler's T20 tally to 14,833 runs in 522 matches, surpassing West Indies all-rounder Kieron Pollard, who scored 14,803 runs in 746 matches. Buttler also moved ahead of another West Indies great, Chris Gayle, who

amassed 14,562 runs in 463 T20 matches. Speaking after achieving the milestone, Buttler said he was proud of the record but believed it would eventually be broken. He even identified Sooryavanshi as a likely future record-holder. "It's really cool, actually, to think you've got the most T20 runs out of anyone. Someone will surpass it one day - and his name's probably Vaibhav Sooryavanshi - but it's a proud moment," Buttler told Sky Sports, as quoted by Cricinfo. The contrasting opinions from Panchal and Buttler highlight the high expectations surrounding Sooryavanshi, whose rapid rise has already made him one of Indian cricket's most closely watched young talents.

Sarfraz Khan Shares Cryptic Post After Missing Sri Lanka Test Squad

India batter Sarfraz Khan has posted a cryptic message on social media after being left out of the squad for the upcoming two-Test series against Sri Lanka, signalling his determination to fight for a return to the national side. Sarfraz last represented India during the three-match home Test series against New Zealand in 2024. He scored 171 runs in six innings but has not featured for the national team since then. Despite his omission from the squad for the Sri Lanka tour, the middle-order batter indicated that he remains motivated to earn another opportunity. The 28-year-old shared a picture from a movie on Instagram with the caption, "I may not fit in, but I'll fight with everything I've got." The post quickly attracted attention from cricket fans, many of whom interpreted it as Sarfraz's response to being overlooked for the Test series. The batter has been one of the consistent performers in domestic cricket over the past few seasons and continues to push

for a place in India's red-ball setup. Meanwhile, the Indian team received an injury concern ahead of the Test series as captain Shubman Gill was ruled out of Day 1 of the warm-up match against Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) XI after suffering an impact injury to his right ring finger during a practice session on Thursday. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said the decision to rest Gill was purely precautionary, with the medical team closely monitoring his recovery ahead of the opening Test. "Captain Shubman Gill sustained an impact injury to his right ring finger during India's practice on Thursday. As a precautionary measure, he will not take the field on Day 1 of the warm-up game against SLC XI. The BCCI Medical Team is monitoring his progress," the board said in a statement on X. With Gill unavailable for the opening day of the three-day practice match, KL Rahul took charge of the Indian team. Sri Lanka Cricket XI won the toss and elected to



bat. India's tour of Sri Lanka begins with the first Test in Galle on August 15, followed by the second and final Test from August 23. While the focus remains on India's preparations, Sarfraz's social media message has also sparked discussion about his international future as he continues to await another opportunity in the Test side.

Rahane Names Sachin Tendulkar as India's Greatest Cricketer



Former India batter Ajinkya Rahane has named Sachin Tendulkar as the greatest Indian cricketer of all time, citing the batting legend's remarkable consistency and ability to excel across different eras of the

game. Rahane made the remarks during a podcast shortly after announcing his retirement from international cricket. When asked to identify India's greatest cricketer, Rahane admitted that selecting

a single player was difficult but ultimately chose Tendulkar because of his extraordinary achievements and long-lasting impact on world cricket. "I think it's very hard to take one name but... probably Sachin Tendulkar. I think all the eras," Rahane said, praising the legendary batter's sustained excellence over more than two decades. Tendulkar remains the highest run-scorer in the history of international cricket with 34,357 runs across all formats. He also holds the record for the most international centuries and remains one of the most celebrated players the sport has ever produced. The former India captain played a record 200 Test matches, scoring 15,921 runs, including 51 centuries and 2,058 boundaries. He also became the fastest player to reach 15,000 Test runs, achieving the feat

in just 300 innings. In One-Day Internationals, Tendulkar enjoyed a career spanning 22 years and 91 days, the longest in the format's history. His memorable 1998 campaign saw him score 1,894 runs and nine centuries in a calendar year, records that still stand. He also holds the record for the most ODI half-centuries with 145 and was the fastest batter to reach 18,000 ODI runs, accomplishing the milestone in 440 innings. Rahane's praise reflects the enduring respect Tendulkar commands within the cricketing fraternity. His unmatched records, longevity, and influence on generations of cricketers continue to make him the benchmark of excellence in Indian cricket and an enduring inspiration for players and fans around the world.

Pujara Recalls Hazlewood's Funny Refusal to Bowl in CSK Nets



Former India batter Cheteshwar Pujara has shared a humorous incident involving Australian fast bowler Josh Hazlewood during their time together at Chennai Super Kings (CSK), revealing that the pacer jokingly refused to bowl to him in the practice nets after their intense battles in Test cricket. Pujara and Hazlewood were involved in several memorable contests during India's historic Border-Gavaskar Trophy victories in Australia in 2018-19 and 2020-21. The Indian batter spent long hours at the crease, repeatedly facing the Australian pace spearhead in hard-fought Test matches. Recalling the incident on JioHotstar's series Cheeky Singles, Pujara said Hazlewood was reluctant to bowl to him after they became teammates at CSK in the Indian Premier League (IPL). "During the Australia series in 2018 and 2021, I played a lot against Josh Hazlewood. Then I got picked by CSK. The first time I went to bat in the nets, Hazlewood refused to bowl to me. He said, 'I won't bowl to him.' Even though he was my teammate, he refused," Pujara recalled. He explained that Hazlewood's reaction was made in jest, as the Australian believed he had already bowled enough deliveries to Pujara during the Test

series. "He joked that he had bowled to me far too much over the previous few months before the IPL, so he wasn't going to bowl to me again. He was kidding, but he actually didn't bowl to me," Pujara said with a smile. The veteran batter, who represented India in 103 Test matches, also reflected on his early days in the IPL with Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR). Pujara admitted experiencing a "fanboy moment" when he first met the franchise's co-owner, actor and producer Shah Rukh Khan. However, he stressed that while meeting a celebrity owner was exciting, professional cricketers ultimately value the environment and learning opportunities provided by a franchise. "I started with KKR. Shah Rukh Khan was the owner there. When I met him for the first time, I definitely had that fanboy moment. But when you think about cricket, you can't think, 'Just because Shah Rukh Khan is the owner, I want to stay here,'" Pujara said. He added that players choose franchises based on the team culture, opportunities to learn from legendary cricketers and the chance to improve their game, rather than the glamour associated with celebrity ownership.

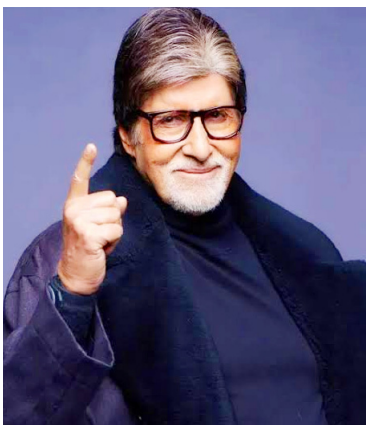
Korean Kanakaraju to Continue as Franchise, Director Confirms Sequel



Varun Tej's latest horror-comedy Korean Kanakaraju has hit theatres with strong pre-release buzz and has already sparked excitement among moviegoers with the announcement of a sequel. Director Merlapaka Gandhi confirmed that the film is designed to continue as a franchise, revealing that the story concludes with an open-ended climax that sets the stage for the next chapter. The film, which released on Friday, had generated significant anticipation in the days leading up to its theatrical debut. Advance bookings and paid premiere shows received encouraging responses, creating positive momentum ahead of its official release. The blend of horror, comedy, and entertainment had already attracted considerable attention, and the sequel announcement has added to the excitement surrounding the project. Speaking during a recent interaction, Merlapaka Gandhi disclosed that he already has a concept ready for the next installment. According to the director, Korean Kanakaraju was always envisioned as a story with the potential to expand beyond a single film. He stated that the climax intentionally leaves several possibilities open and introduces a fresh setting that will be explored in the sequel. The film concludes by shifting the narrative to Africa, offering audiences a glimpse of the next phase of the story. This transition not only broadens the scope of the franchise but also hints at a larger adventure awaiting the lead characters. While the makers have not yet announced when the sequel will begin production, the director has confirmed

that the follow-up is definitely in the pipeline. Although no official timeline has been revealed for the commencement of filming, Merlapaka Gandhi expressed confidence that the story will continue in a meaningful way. More details regarding the cast, production schedule, and release plans are expected to be announced at a later stage. Korean Kanakaraju features Varun Tej in the lead role, with Ritika Nayak and Satya playing pivotal characters. The film has been produced by UV Creations in association with First Frame Entertainment. Music for the horror-comedy has been composed by Thaman, whose background score and soundtrack have contributed to the film's overall appeal. The combination of comedy, supernatural elements, and an adventurous storyline has positioned Korean Kanakaraju as an entertaining commercial entertainer. The decision to end the film with an open climax suggests the makers are aiming to build a long-running franchise rather than a standalone feature. With the sequel now officially confirmed, fans can look forward to another chapter in the Korean Kanakaraju universe. While audiences are currently enjoying the first installment in theatres, expectations have already shifted toward discovering how the story unfolds in its African setting. The makers are expected to share additional updates on the sequel once development moves forward, keeping anticipation alive for the next adventure in the franchise.

Amitabh Bachchan's 24-Hour Shoot at 83 Wins Praise from Fans



Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan has once again demonstrated his unmatched dedication to work, leaving fans and the film industry in awe. At 83 years of age, the veteran actor recently completed a continuous 24-hour shooting schedule for the upcoming season of the popular television quiz show Kaun Banega Crorepati 18 (KBC 18), earning widespread appreciation for his professionalism and commitment. Amitabh Bachchan shared the details of the demanding schedule through his official blog, revealing that the shoot began at 7 A.M. on one day and continued uninterrupted until 7 A.M. the following morning. The actor explained that the marathon schedule was necessary to ensure the production stayed on track ahead of the show's premiere. According to Bachchan, the makers were working against a tight deadline, with Kaun Banega Crorepati 18 scheduled to begin airing on August 10. Determined not to disrupt the production timeline, he chose to complete the required portions in a single extended shift rather than risk delays.

The veteran actor also spoke humorously about the importance of meeting deadlines. He remarked that the premiere date had already been announced and that any delay on his part could result in someone else replacing him. Stressing the importance of professionalism, he said he completed the work as quickly as possible to ensure everything remained on schedule. His comments reflected not only his humility but also his strong sense of responsibility toward the project. Despite decades of unparalleled success in the film industry, Bachchan continues to approach his work with the discipline and dedication expected from a new-comer. Kaun Banega Crorepati has become one of India's most successful and longest-running television shows since its launch in 2000. Amitabh Bachchan has hosted almost every season of the quiz show, with Shah Rukh Khan serving as the host only for the third season. Over the years, Bachchan's commanding presence, warmth, and interaction with contestants have become defining features of the program. Fans and members of the film fraternity have praised the actor's extraordinary commitment, especially considering his age and the health challenges he has faced over the years. Social media has been flooded with messages admiring his relentless work ethic and passion for entertaining audiences. As Kaun Banega Crorepati 18 gears up for its premiere, Amitabh Bachchan's remarkable 24-hour shoot has become another example of his enduring professionalism. Even after more than five decades in the entertainment industry, the legendary actor continues to inspire millions with his dedication, discipline, and unwavering commitment to his craft.

Pallaburusu Trailer Promises an Emotional Father-Son Drama

The makers of the upcoming rural drama Pallaburusu have released the film's theatrical trailer, offering audiences a glimpse into an emotional story centered on the relationship between an elderly father and his son. Backed by Annapurna Studios, the small-budget film stars Sudhakar Reddy and Muralidhar Goud in lead roles, while Prajwal Yadma and Gomathy play key characters. After unveiling a glimpse and teaser earlier, the production team has now launched the full theatrical trailer, which expands on the film's central theme. The story revolves around a strained bond between an aging father and his son. The father repeatedly asks his son to buy him a toothbrush, but the son remains preoccupied with his own family responsibilities and fails to pay attention to the simple request. As the neglect continues, the elderly man decides to seek legal intervention and files a complaint against his own son. The unusual nature of the complaint surprises judges and police officials, who are left stunned after learning the reason behind the case. This unexpected premise adds a unique touch to the narrative while also highlighting the emotional struggles within a family.



The trailer balances humor and emotion effectively. Its first half focuses on light-hearted and entertaining moments, while the latter half shifts towards the emotional conflict between the father and son. The elderly father is deeply hurt by the way his son treats him, especially when he compares his situation with that of other elderly parents who

receive better care and affection from their children. At the same time, Muralidhar Goud's character is shown dealing with his own personal and family challenges, presenting both sides of the conflict. Apart from the family drama, the film also features a youthful love story, adding another layer to the narrative. The trailer suggests that the film aims

to appeal to audiences with a blend of comedy, sentiment, and family values. Pallaburusu is written and directed by Uday Chauhan. The film is co-produced by Aditya Pittie and Vivek Krishnani under the Epic Studios banner, while Pawan CH has composed the music. Annapurna Studios is backing the project, further raising expectations for the

release. With its emotionally driven storyline, relatable family issues, and engaging performances showcased in the trailer, Pallaburusu appears set to offer a heartwarming cinematic experience. The film is scheduled for a theatrical release on August 14, 2026, coinciding with the Independence Day weekend.

Idhayam Murali Begins OTT Journey on Netflix in Telugu and Four Other Languages



Atharvaa's coming-of-age romantic drama Idhayam Murali has officially made its digital debut on Netflix following the completion of its theatrical run. The film, which was released in Telugu as Hrudayam Murali, is now available for streaming in multiple languages, giving audiences across the country an opportunity to watch the romantic entertainer from the comfort of their homes.

The movie enjoyed a decent response during its theatrical release, particularly among viewers who appreciated its emotional narrative and youthful romance. After completing its run in cinemas, the makers have now brought the film to the OTT platform, where it is expected to reach a much wider audience. Netflix is streaming Idhayam Murali in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Malayalam, and Kannada,

making the film accessible to viewers across different linguistic regions. The multi-language release is expected to enhance the film's reach and introduce it to audiences who may have missed its theatrical release. The transition to OTT comes at a time when regional films are finding increasing success on digital platforms. Many films that perform moderately in theatres often gain renewed popu-

larity through streaming services, thanks to their accessibility and growing subscriber base. The makers of Idhayam Murali will be hoping for a similar response as the romantic drama begins its second phase of release. Directed by Aakash Baskaran, the film features Atharvaa in the lead role alongside Preity Mukhundan and Kayadu Lohar. The supporting cast includes Natarajan Subramaniam, Ramki, Niharika NM, Rakshan, and several other actors who play important roles in the narrative. The film also features special cameo appearances by Fahadh Faasil and Malavika Mohanan, adding further appeal to the project. Produced under the Dawn Pictures banner, Idhayam Murali blends romance, emotion, and youthful drama, exploring relationships and personal growth through its coming-of-age storyline. The performances of the lead cast and the film's emotional moments were among the aspects appreciated by audiences during its theatrical release. Music for the film has been

composed by Thaman, who also appears in a supporting role. His soundtrack and background score play a significant role in enhancing the emotional and romantic elements of the story. The combination of music and visuals contributes to the film's overall appeal, making it suitable for family audiences as well as younger viewers. With its arrival on Netflix, Idhayam Murali now has an opportunity to connect with a broader audience beyond cinema halls. The availability of the film in five major Indian languages is expected to boost its viewership and increase its popularity among OTT subscribers. As digital platforms continue to become an important avenue for film consumption, the performance of Idhayam Murali on Netflix will be closely watched. Whether the romantic drama can replicate or surpass the appreciation it received in theatres remains to be seen, but its OTT release has certainly expanded its potential audience and given the film a fresh opportunity to find new admirers.

Akhil Akkineni's Lenin Arrives on OTT

Akhil Akkineni's blockbuster action drama Lenin has finally made its digital debut on the streaming platform ZEE5 after enjoying a successful theatrical run. The film, directed by Murali Kishor Abburu, emerged as the biggest commercial success of Akhil's career and marked a significant milestone at the box office. While fans were eagerly waiting for its OTT release, the film's digital premiere has been accompanied by an unexpected disappointment. Ahead of the release, ZEE5 had officially announced that Lenin would be available in four languages-Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam-allowing audiences across South India to enjoy the action drama in their preferred language. However, when the film premiered on the platform, viewers discovered that only the Telugu version had been made available for streaming. The absence of the promised dubbed versions came as a surprise to many subscribers. Fans from Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam-speaking regions who had been eagerly anticipating the release expressed disappointment after finding that the multilingual versions were missing despite the earlier announcement. The unexpected development has sparked discussions among movie enthusiasts on social media, with many questioning the delay. As of now, ZEE5 has not issued any official statement explaining why the dubbed versions are unavailable or when they will be added to the plat-



form. The lack of clarity has left audiences waiting for an update, while many continue to hope that the remaining language versions will be released in the coming days. Despite the OTT setback, Lenin remains one of the biggest successes in Akhil Akkineni's film career. The action drama received a strong response during its theatrical run, with audiences appreciating its engaging storyline, action sequences, and performances. Its impressive box office performance established it as the actor's highest-

grossing film to date and strengthened his position as a commercial hero. The film has been produced jointly by Nagarajuna Akkineni and Suryadevara Naga Vamsi. Bhagyashree Borse plays the female lead opposite Akhil Akkineni, while Brahmaji, Shivaji, Pramod Panju, and several other actors play important supporting roles. The soundtrack and background score have been composed by Thaman, whose music contributed significantly to the film's commercial appeal. With its arrival on OTT, Lenin is

expected to reach an even larger audience beyond theatres. However, the absence of the Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam versions has overshadowed what was otherwise expected to be a smooth digital launch. Fans are now eagerly awaiting an official clarification from ZEE5 regarding the delayed multilingual release. Until then, only Telugu-speaking audiences can stream the film, while viewers waiting for the dubbed versions will have to wait for further announcements from the platform.