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## "Operation Vijay was not just military triumph, but chapter of courage, patriotism": Rajnath Singh



**Indore :** Madhya Pradesh Congress president Jitu Patwari on Tuesday flagged off the party's two-day 'Gen-Z Cyclothon Yatra' from Indore to Bhopal, alleging large-scale irregularities in competitive examinations and demanding free, quality education from KG to PG. The cyclothon yatra commenced from Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya in Indore, with hundreds of Congress leaders, workers and youth participating in the rally. The yatra is being organised to protest the alleged NEET paper leak, examination malpractices and what the party described as injustice to students.

The participants are scheduled to reach Bhopal on July 15, where the Con-

tion," Patwari said.

Demanding free education, he said every child should have access to quality education irrespective of financial background. "From KG to PG, quality education should be available free of cost. Education is the right of every child and every parent. Today, only those with money have access to education, while the poor are left behind. After 80 years of Independence, this remains a matter of concern," he added.

Targeting the BJP government over alleged examination irregularities, Patwari alleged that since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power, there had been "90 paper leak incidents" and "50 examinations had been cancelled", questioning why those allegedly involved in the "education mafia" were "linked to the BJP."

"Be it the alleged irregularities in NEET or other examinations, there have been paper leaks 90 times since Narendra Modi came to power, and 50 examinations have been cancelled. Why is it that whenever an education mafia comes to light, it is linked to the BJP? This is a question before the

people of the state today. Rahul Gandhi has, in a non-political manner, launched a movement across the country to protect education and safeguard the future of the nation through education. We are contributing to that effort," the Congress leader said. He added that they want free education from KG to PG in Madhya Pradesh. Another objective is to free the education system from examination irregularities, commercialisation of education, and the repeated corruption of the Bharatiya

Janata Party. Meanwhile, senior Congress leader Sajjan Singh Verma said the Gen-Z cyclothon was being launched from Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, an important centre of education, to raise the issue of alleged examination paper leaks and to voice students' concerns over their future.

"NEET examination papers are leaked and CBSE examination papers are leaked, which examination is left whose papers are not leaked? Today, the youth of this country are worried about their future.

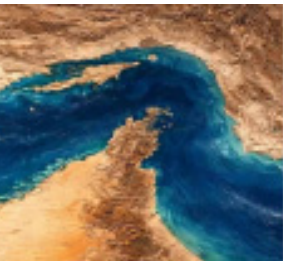
## Trump Cancels 20% Strait Of Hormuz Fee Plan, Seeks 'Massive' Gulf Investments In US Instead

**Washington:** US President Donald Trump has decided to replace his proposed 20% fee on ships using the Strait of Hormuz with trade and investment deals involving Gulf countries. Trump announced the decision in a Truth Social post on Tuesday, saying the move followed talks with Middle East leaders. Trump had earlier proposed a 20% United States Reimbursement Fee for cargo ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz. However, he said that after "highly productive conversations



with Middle East leadership", he decided to replace the fee with trade and investment deals that Gulf states will make in the United States.

"Those investments will be MASSIVE but, at the same time, extraordinarily good for them, and their fu-



ture," Trump wrote in his Truth Social post. The US President also said oil was "flowing like never before" and credited the US military with keeping the Strait of Hormuz open. According to Trump, the waterway is open to all ship traffic except vessels linked to Iran.

## Ayodhya Court to hear police remand plea of Ram Shankar Yadav, Subhash Srivastava in Ram Mandir donation case

**Ayodhya :** An Ayodhya Court is scheduled to hear on Tuesday the police remand plea of Ram Shankar Yadav alias Tinnu Yadav and retired bank employee Subhash Srivastava, who were arrested in connection with the alleged embezzlement of donations meant for the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple. The hearing will take place before the court of Special Judge (Anti-Corruption) Rajat Verma. Investigating Officer and Circle Officer

(Ayodhya) Ashutosh Tiwari has sought a seven-day police remand of the two accused to facilitate further investigation into the case. So far, the police have interrogated four other accused, Avinash Shukla, Anukalp Mishra, Lavkush Mishra and Karunesh Pandey, during their police custody remand. Earlier on Monday, an Ayodhya court had extended the judicial custody of all eight accused in the Ram Mandir donation

embezzlement case by 14 days. The accused appeared before the court through video conferencing and are scheduled to appear again on July 27. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court on Monday issued notices to the Centre, the Uttar Pradesh government and the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust on petitions seeking an independent, court-monitored probe into the alleged misappropriation of donations at the Ram Janmabhoomi temple.



## YSRCP Leader Mudragada Padmanabha Reddy Passes Away



**From Our Staff Reporter Kakinada, July, 14 :** YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader Mudragada Padmanabha Reddy (73) passed away on Tuesday evening. He breathed his last at around 6 PM while undergoing treatment for health complications. Mudragada had been admitted to a private hospital in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, on June 16 due to kidney-related ailments and had been receiving treatment there since then. However, his condition deteriorated on Tuesday evening, and he passed away.

Mudragada's native place is Kirlampudi in East Godavari district. He was born on January 22, 1953. He was first elected as an MLA in 1978. During his political career, he served as an MLA four times, a minister twice, and a Member of Parliament once. He was particularly known as a prominent Kapu community movement leader. Several YSRCP leaders have expressed their condolences over the demise of Mudragada Padmanabha Reddy.

## Changes in Donation Scheme; Priority for Common Devotees – TTD Takes Key Decision



**Tirumala, July 14:** The meeting of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Board concluded on Tuesday under the chairmanship of B.R. Naidu. Several important decisions were taken during the meeting, in which 72 agenda items were discussed.

TTD Chairman B.R. Naidu said that Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar had made comments regarding the Nitya Harathi ritual without proper understanding. He stated that TTD would send him a letter explaining the rules and traditions followed at Tirumala.

The board approved the construction of permanent queue lines for devotees near the ATC for issuing SSD tokens at a cost of ₹6.31 crore. It also approved the construction of a bridge at Kumaradhara and Pasupu Dhara streams at a cost of ₹2.77 crore. To promote green energy, the board decided to install an 800-kilowatt windmill near GNC. The Chairman further announced that an entry fee of ₹50 would be charged for visitors above 12 years of age at the SV Museum. Proposals would be sent to hand over the museum's management to the Tata Group. A sum of ₹5.5 crore

was sanctioned for the removal of thousands of tons of waste accumulated at Kakula Manukonda. For devotees' safety, fire safety systems would be strengthened in TTD temples at a cost of ₹2.35 crore. Twelve old buildings near ATC and TBC will be demolished and replaced with new structures with the support of donors. The board also approved tenders for the printing of the 2027 diaries and calendars at the lowest possible cost. A proposal will be sent to the government for undertaking FMS works at the Octopus Base Camp at a cost of ₹2.91 crore. The board also approved the allocation of one kilogram of gold for preparing a golden covering (Kavacham) for the deity at the Ontimitta Temple. Approval was granted for the construction of 100 rooms at a cost of ₹17.86 crore. Additionally, ₹2.11 crore was sanctioned for the expansion of the temple streets (Mada Veedhis) at Ontimitta. The board sanctioned ₹2.5 crore for the development of the Tatayya Gunta Gangamma Temple. It also approved the recruitment of 791 Vedic scholars for daily recitation (Nitya Parayanam) in major temples across Andhra Pradesh.

## Jagan Has Ruined Rayalaseema : Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy

**From Our Staff Reporter Nellore District, July 14:** Senior Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader, former minister, and Sarvepalli MLA Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy launched a sharp attack on YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, alleging that he had severely harmed the interests of Rayalaseema. Speaking to the media in Nellore on Tuesday, Somireddy said YSRCP leaders should hold an introspection meeting at the "Tadepalli Palace" to assess what they had actually done for Rayalaseema. He mocked the party for organizing what he described as meaningless meetings for "politically unemployed" leaders.

**"Stop Creating Divisions Through Gun Culture Politics"**

Somireddy advised Jagan and his associates to stop allegedly creating divisions among the regions of Rayalaseema, North Andhra, and Coastal Andhra through what he termed "gun culture" politics. He said YSRCP leaders did not even have the right to speak about irrigation and development projects in Rayalaseema and Nellore districts. According to him, during Jagan's five-year tenure, only about ₹2,000 crore was spent on projects in the region. In contrast, he claimed that within two years of the coalition gov-



ernment coming to power, more than ₹12,000 crore had been spent on projects in Rayalaseema and Nellore districts, while an additional ₹10,000 crore had been allocated.

Somireddy alleged that

## Jagan Has No Moral Right to Speak About Fishermen: Minister Atchannaidu

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, July, 14 :** Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu strongly criticized YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy following his visit to Visakhapatnam. The minister said Jagan has no moral right to speak about fishermen. Atchannaidu stated that during the five years of YSRCP rule, several natural disasters claimed the lives of many fishermen, with a total of 270 people reportedly losing their lives due to calamities. However, he said, his party would not make irresponsible statements alleging that Jagan was directly responsible for those deaths. He questioned why Jagan had not visited or consoled even a single family among those 270 victims.

**Speaking on the occasion, Atchannaidu said:**



"Jagan Mohan Reddy, the leader of the Axe Party, visited Visakhapatnam today. The son of your former minister Seediri Appalaraju allegedly hit a person with his vehicle. I thought you were going there to console that victim. The Axe Party was built on a foundation of lies. Due to natural calamities, six fishermen went missing in Visakhapatnam. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has a history of responding immediately during disasters to save lives.

Although the government acted promptly, technical limitations prevented us from locating the exact place where the fishermen's boat sank."

The minister said information about the missing boat was received at around 10:30 a.m. on July 4. He explained that transponders had been installed on fishing boats to help prevent accidents and facilitate rescue operations. According to Atchannaidu, once the transponder signal was received, authorities identified the location and informed the Indian Coast Guard and the Indian Navy by 11:30 a.m., following which a rescue operation was launched. He alleged that Jagan was making comments without understanding the difference between kilometers and nautical miles. The incident, he said, occurred about 11 nautical miles from the coast.

## Twist in Agriculture Officer Srihari Murder Case; Main Accused Harikrishna and Family Die by Suicide

**Prakasam District:** A shocking development has emerged in the murder case of Agriculture Officer (AO) Srihari. Harikrishna, the prime accused in the case, allegedly died by suicide along with his family after coming under a train near Singarayakonda. According to police, Harikrishna, his wife, and their two children were killed in the incident. Railway and local police rushed to the spot after receiving information about the tragedy. The bodies of the four deceased were taken into custody and shifted to a government hospital for post-mortem examination.

Police have registered a case and are investigating the incident from all possible angles. During the preliminary investigation, police found that Harikrishna had allegedly murdered his brother-in-law, Agriculture Officer Srihari, over a property dispute.

Meanwhile, Nellore District Superintendent of Police (SP) Ajitha Vejendla suspended the Buchireddypalem Circle Inspector (CI) and Sub-Inspector (SI) for alleged negligence in the investigation of the case. In addition, 23 personnel attached to the Buchireddypalem Police Station were transferred as part of disciplinary action.



# EDITORIAL

## Nations' focus is on Hormuz again

The situation in West Asia is gradually deteriorating as the US and Iran retaliate. The US launched retaliatory attacks on Iran after Iran attacked a commercial ship in the Strait of Hormuz. The US Federal Command announced that they had attacked a total of 14 million across Iran. Enraged by this, Tehran launched retaliatory attacks on several Arab countries. With these tensions, the Strait of Hormuz route is in danger of being closed again. However, according to the Union Ministry of Commerce's data for May, the share of oil imported from Russia has exceeded 40 percent. An additional price of \$ 46 per ton had to be paid for oil imported from Russia. This increased the value of imports by 83 percent. The result has been a decrease of 2 percent. It is known that Western countries have imposed sanctions on Russia due to Russia's war in Ukraine. However, India has continued to import crude oil from Russia due to its cheap availability.

Due to this, crude oil reserves in India have reached pre-sanction levels. Moreover, this is the largest import of such a large amount of oil from a country in the last two years. Although the Strait of Hormuz is closed now, our country will not suffer any immediate damage, but if the blockade continues for a few months, it will face serious problems. A large percentage of the hydrocarbons required by India, i.e. crude oil and natural gas, are transported through the Strait of Hormuz. Almost 90 percent of the liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) used in homes and industries are transported through this route. During the temporary exemption from the sanctions, oil refineries stored crude oil, LPG and LNG in advance, giving the country immediate flexibility to cope with any emergency. However, if the Strait of Hormuz route is obstructed for a long time, there is a risk of a repeat of the crisis experienced in March and April this year. Some gas products that were supposed to reach India have been stopped due to international issues or delays in transportation. But India has made up for the shortfall through other means. These are currently available.

India has been closely monitoring developments since the March crisis. It is in talks with partner countries to ensure that the movement of crude oil, LPG, LNG and chemicals is not disrupted. About 20 percent (one-fifth) of the world's crude oil trade and a large amount of liquefied natural gas (LNG) are transported through the Strait of Hormuz. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Qatar, the UAE, and other countries send crude oil through this strait. In such a situation, if Hormuz is closed, ships will have to travel through safer alternative routes. This will increase the transit time and freight charges of ships, and lead to a shortage of petrol and diesel supplies worldwide, causing prices to skyrocket. Moreover, India buys about 89 percent of its crude oil from other countries for its needs. Freight costs will also increase dramatically. Although the US insists that ships are currently passing through the Strait of Hormuz, in reality no ships are passing through. Black market ships may be transporting to evade international sanctions. These are called shadow tanker operations. This is illegal oil smuggling. Ajay Sahay, Director General of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations, believes that there will be no problems in the movement of ships as of now. He said that commercial ships have already stopped moving through the Strait of Hormuz. It is noteworthy that Pankaj Chadha, the current chairman of the Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC), which deals with exports of engineering goods, said that the availability of gas is a serious concern for exporters of engineering goods rather than shipping. He said that when the initial agreement to open the strait was signed, engineering manufacturers could get quality gas supply, and gas prices also became affordable from July 1. But now the situation seems to be changing. He believes that gas prices are likely to increase again and industries that are just recovering from shortages will have to face problems again.

# The Politics Of Satluj: A Film That No Party Can Fully Own

The controversy surrounding Satluj has moved far beyond a debate over a film. It has become a political litmus test for every major party in Punjab, exposing decades of contradictions on the issue of justice for the victims of militancy, counter insurgency and the human rights violations of the 1980s and 1990s. For years, Punjab's mainstream parties have largely treated this painful chapter as an issue to be managed rather than confronted. Satluj has disrupted that equilibrium. Every statement, every silence and every political calculation is now being closely scrutinised. The sharpest intervention has come not from a political party but from Paramjit Kaur Khaira, widow of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khaira, whose investigation into the alleged secret cremation of unidentified bodies cost him his life. In a strongly worded message ahead of the Harike Pattan remembrance ceremony, Paramjit Kaur Khaira refused to spare any political formation. She accused the Congress of presiding over widespread human rights violations, alleged that successive Shiromani Akali Dal governments protected and rewarded police officers accused in such cases, charged the Aam Aadmi Party government with failing to ensure that convicted officials were brought to justice, and also referred to allegations against the BJP led Union government over targeted killings abroad.

Her intervention is politically significant because it exposes a different vulnerability for each party. For the Congress, Satluj inevitably revives allega-

tions linked to the counter insurgency period under its governments. For the Shiromani Akali Dal, which seeks to reclaim the Panthic space, the film also brings renewed scrutiny of its own tenure in power, when critics allege successive governments did little to pursue accountability against police officers facing serious allegations.

The Aam Aadmi Party, despite presenting itself as a break from traditional politics, is now being asked whether it has fundamentally altered the state's approach to these unresolved cases. The BJP, meanwhile, must balance its national security narrative with its efforts to expand politically among Sikhs, making the debate particularly sensitive. Rather than allowing any one party to claim the moral high ground, her statement places the entire political establishment under scrutiny. The political dilemma is evident. It explains why almost every political party has adopted a guarded approach. Their responses suggest they are still trying to assess how Punjab's Hindu and Sikh voters will react before taking an unequivocal stand. For the BJP, the issue carries particular sensitivity because any perception of endorsing a narrative critical of the state's counter insurgency operations could alienate sections of its core support base. At the same time, appearing insensitive to Sikh grievances risks reinforcing political barriers that have historically limited its expansion in Punjab.

The Congress has to balance acknowledging historical wrongs without accepting po-

litical responsibility for decisions taken during its tenure. The Akali Dal cannot afford to alienate its traditional Panthic constituency but also faces uncomfortable questions about its own record in government. The AAP government, which came to power promising clean governance and change, is under pressure to demonstrate that it is willing to revisit unresolved questions of justice rather than merely administer the status quo. Yet, electoral evidence suggests that Panthic politics has not disappeared from Punjab. The victories of Amritpal Singh from Khadoor Sahib and Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa from Faridkot in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections demonstrated that there remains significant political space for candidates campaigning around Sikh identity, justice and unresolved historical issues. Amritpal Singh's victory reflected the continuing appeal of Panthic mobilisation centred on questions of Sikh identity and perceived injustice, while Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa's election carried its own symbolism.

As the son of Beant Singh, one of the two bodyguards who assassinated then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi after Operation Blue Star, his victory underscored that the legacy of 1984 and its aftermath continues to influence sections of Punjab's electorate. Together, these victories showed that Panthic politics remains electorally relevant despite repeated assertions that it has receded. Satluj taps directly into that sentiment. For mainstream parties, this creates a dilemma. Remaining silent risks



ceding political space to Panthic voices, while taking a clear position could unsettle carefully cultivated support bases across communities. The film, therefore, has the potential to reshape political messaging even if it does not immediately alter electoral outcomes. That is precisely why Satluj has become politically consequential. The film is not merely reopening old wounds; it is reopening unresolved political questions. Every party recognises that an aggressive embrace of the film's narrative could consolidate one section of voters while alienating another. Conversely, distancing itself from the issue risks appearing indifferent to demands for justice. The result is a carefully calibrated politics of ambiguity. Satluj has already

achieved one political outcome: it has forced every major party to revisit questions that have remained politically unresolved for four decades, how Punjab remembers the excesses of the militancy and counter insurgency years, whether successive governments did enough to deliver justice to victims' families, and how the State should reconcile competing narratives of national security, human rights and Sikh identity. These questions have rarely found political consensus, making them among Punjab's most enduring fault lines. In that sense, Satluj is no longer just a film. It has become a test of political credibility, revealing not only how parties remember Punjab's past, but also how they intend to navigate its future.

# A Quiet Indo-Pacific Revolution Is Underway, And India Is At Its Centre

It seems the building blocks of India's vision for the Indo-Pacific are being put in place rapidly. What's more, its receiving enthusiastic support from key countries that are actually in this region and have strong interests in making it happen. Certainly, there is much more to do, but the process has begun. Its not just the rather dizzying number of initiatives coming out of the visit by the Prime Minister to Indonesia and Australia, but also a squaring of the circle in another event that happened just before his travel. Besides, each of these are cooperating with the other in almost exactly the same areas, in an interlocking mesh of jigsaw moves, about as complicated to fathom. It's a process to watch, with huge implications.

## Interlocking Parts

Take these visits in terms of their individual focus. Indonesia lies at the heart of ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), and for years, the now rather shaky Quad - comprising India, Japan, Australia and the US - talked about the 'centrality' of ASEAN without anyone actually knowing how this was to be achieved. Now it's a done deal, at least as far as India and two other members of the Quad are concerned. In February 2026, Australian Prime Minister Albanese and Indonesian President Subianto signed the vital Australia-Indonesia Treaty on Common Security (the Jakarta Treaty). It not only commits the two nations to "consult each other on security threats", but also "establishes defense interoperability, and expands military education exchanges". In March, Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae was in Indonesia to sign an enhanced agreement to sanction the export of arms and equipment - a huge change in policy for pacifist Japan - and also signed protocols for exchange of sensitive information. And in July, there was the Indian Prime Minister, signing on to significantly enhanced defence coop-

eration, not just limited to BrahMos and air-to-air missile deals, but much more besides. Just before that, on July 2, the Japanese Prime Minister in Delhi signed on to a "Partnership of Strategic Convergence and Trust", again shared with the others. One can almost hear an audible 'click' as things fall into place.

## The Mechanics On The Ground

Now break that up into its component parts in terms of mechanics on the ground. Australia has now embedded a senior Indonesian officer inside the Australian Defence forces, in addition to a joint training programme. India has just invited Indonesia to be part of the Indian Navy-run Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), a multinational maritime security and information-sharing hub designed to monitor threats like piracy, trafficking, and illegal fishing. That means sharing of data on a real-time basis.

Japan and Indonesia signed on to an Integrated Defence Dialogue Mechanism and "enhancing discussions on measures to protect classified military information, with a view to strengthening operational co-operation". Australia is already part of the Fusion Centre, as is Japan. Both are also signed on to vital logistics cooperation agreements, which essentially means each can use the others' ports and airfields. Indonesia and India went one important step further in signing on not just to the integrated development of Sabang port - which will provide on-shore services for the huge gas discoveries in the Andaman sea recently - but also to enhancing the Andaman-Aceh connectivity. Look at the map, and the location of the naval base in Nicobar, with its upgraded air field and the massive Great Nicobar project. That clicks into place as well.

Meanwhile, Australia has beefed up the Coco islands, where the Indian Navy and Air force deploy regularly. As the



world gets the jitters about 'straits' in general, the Malacca Straits seem to be now tied up neatly into a cooperative knot. Interestingly, both China and Thailand have backed off from the proposed Kra canal, a project that would have brought Chinese ships directly into the Andaman sea, in favour of a Land Bridge project. That is far less threatening, but still a concern.

## Quick Reactions To The Energy Crisis

There is something else that is interesting among the four. All are targeting energy security, with India signing a separate agreement on this with Australia, recognising specifically the dangers from energy disruption from the (implied) Iran war. That includes renewables, LNG and, notably, "the export of Australian uranium to India for exclusively peaceful purposes ... as provided for under the Australia-India Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (2015)". The original agreement is more than a decade old but was never implemented. Now, it is. Similarly, a separate agreement has also been signed between Japan and India, which, interestingly, includes "strengthening the voice of oil and gas-consuming countries" and has plans for investment in upstream sectors in three countries. Indone-

sia and India also tickbox energy security to include green hydrogen, LNG and solar power. Japan is probably going to provide Indonesia with safe "nuclear energy solutions". Indonesia has never had nuclear power before, operating three small research reactors. In short, all are worried about volatility in West Asia, and all have had serious disruptions in energy, leading to a scramble to tap into reserves. Not all were able to manage like India. Japan for instance, was in a precarious state.

## Those Elusive Value Systems

Last, but far from least, all tickbox a value system for the Indo-Pacific. That doesn't include just 'Free and Open Indo Pacific' but also calls upon "all parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate tensions, and ensure protection of civilians" in Iran and Ukraine by India and Australia. That's one in the eye for the US. The same sentiment is echoed across the other bilaterals, both with India and between the others. The calls for upholding international law are not just morality lessons; it matters intensely to the security of each country. Breaking the law in one part of the globe makes it that much easier to do it in another. To wrap up then, while there is considerably worry about Chinese action, this

is also not just about Beijing. The whole thing is a reaction to unpredictability of US policy, particularly following the 'dressing down' by Secretary Pete Hegseth of the Department of War at the Shangri La dialogue, where he demanded that all follow the American 'gold standard' of 3.5% spending on defence, noting, "We expect every single ally and partner to match that kind of (US) resolve". He promised expedited arms sales and rewards for those who did, and dire warnings for those who did not. This when every one of these countries are struggling with the costs of the Iran and Ukrainian wars. Each has also been targeted by tariffs, leading to huge losses. Indonesia only recently signed a Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) with the United States, which bought it breathing space, by reducing tariffs from a punishing 32 % to 19%, and highly unfavourable conditions. Both India and Australia are being targeted by supposed 'forced labour' clauses for more tariffs, despite the latter having a free trade agreement with the US. In sum, a new Indo-Pacific policy is being crafted by the Indo-Pacific countries, while keeping the US 'in play' to the extent possible. All have complicated security relations with the US, with Japan hosting US troops, and Australia an ally country.



## Take a Selfie with Rayanapadu Amrit Station and Win Exciting Prizes South Coast Railway Launches #SelfieWithStation Contest



**Vijayawada, Pen Power July 14 :** To mark the inauguration of the redeveloped Rayanapadu Railway Station under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, the

Vijayawada Division of South Coast Railway has launched a special social media campaign titled #SelfieWithStation. As part of the contest, passengers

and members of the public are invited to take a selfie with the newly redeveloped Rayanapadu Amrit Station as the backdrop and share it on Facebook, Instagram, or X (formerly Twitter) by tagging the official social media handles of Vijayawada Division. Entries may also be submitted via email to welfarebza@gmail.com. The Railway authorities have announced attractive prizes for the best entries. The last date for participation is July 16, while the winners will be felicitated during the inauguration ceremony of the station on July 17. Speaking on the occasion, P. E. Edwin, Additional Railway Manager (Infrastructure), Vijayawada

Division, said that the campaign aims to create greater public awareness about the remarkable transformation of Rayanapadu Railway Station and encourage community participation in celebrating India's rapidly modernising railway infrastructure. Located about 9 kilometres from Vijayawada Junction, Rayanapadu Railway Station has been redeveloped under the Government of India's Amrit Bharat Station Scheme at an estimated cost of ₹35 crore. The station now offers modern passenger amenities while its contemporary architectural design reflects the rich cultural heritage of Andhra Pradesh, drawing inspiration from the state's traditional art forms.

## GM, South Coast Railway Reviews Worksite Safety and RailMadad Performance

**Visakhapatnam, Pen Power July 14:** South Coast Railway (SCoR) General Manager Shri Sandeep Mathur chaired a high-level review meeting at the SCoR Headquarters to assess worksite safety, the performance of the RailMadad grievance redressal system, and passenger complaint management.

During the review, the General Manager reiterated that worksite safety remains the highest priority across the Zone. He directed all departments to strictly adhere to prescribed safety protocols, ensure the availability of adequate safety equipment for staff, and maintain continuous supervision at worksites to eliminate unsafe practices. He emphasized that fostering a strong safety culture is vital for protecting both railway employees and passengers.

Reviewing the functioning of the RailMadad platform, Shri Mathur instructed officials to focus on reducing the backlog of pending complaints by ensuring their prompt disposal. He stressed that every passenger grievance should be addressed in a timely, professional, and satisfactory



manner, with quality feedback provided after resolution. The General Manager also directed departments to closely monitor complaint trends, identify recurring issues, and implement preventive measures to enhance service quality and improve passenger

satisfaction across the South Coast Railway network.

The meeting was attended by the Principal Heads of Departments (PHODs) of South Coast Railway and the Divisional Railway Managers of the four divisions—

Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur, and Guntakal. The officials reviewed the status of ongoing safety initiatives and grievance redressal mechanisms in their respective divisions and discussed measures for further strengthening operational safety and passenger services.

## Bidadi Township Row: Farmers Allegedly Attack Officials During Survey, Deve Gowda Threatens Protest

**Bengaluru:** The Bidadi township project in the Bengaluru outskirts, which has run into controversy during the last four months, has heated up with the farmers, who are opposing the project, beating up the Revenue Department officials who had gone there for a survey.

Meanwhile, former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda has threatened to sit on protest with the farmers if the state government does not withdraw the project immediately. The incident took place on Monday evening, when the Revenue officials went to the project site for surveying land. The farmers, including women, picked up broomsticks and assaulted the women officials, while the men assaulted the men. When the police tried to interfere, even some of the police personnel were attacked, leaving four of them injured. Bengaluru, Karnataka: Former Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda says, "I have already said that the Chief Minister made a promise. When he tried to remove Siddaramaiah, he promised that he would stand by the High Command to fight the election battle. It



is already established. On Tuesday morning, the Bidadi police registered a case against 11 farmers for assaulting the officials. This has triggered another round of fury among the agitating farmers, who have threatened to take up the protest to the next level. Former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda threatened to join the farmers' agitation if the state government failed to drop the project. "Don't make me come out and sit for protest at this age. If the government continues its atrocities against the farmers, I will be forced to sit for a protest," the 93-year-old leader told the media.

**Political battle over Bidadi project**

The Bidadi project has been a contentious issue between Congress and JD(S), when D K Shivakumar, who was on the verge of becoming

the Chief Minister, said that he would be hastening up the project. Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy, who, as the State Chief Minister, had notified the project and 9,000 acres for the project at Bidadi, opposed the move, saying that it was against the farmers' interest. He alleged that Shivakumar himself had resorted to real estate business in the name of developing the Bidadi township. The township area has political significance as it falls in Vokkaliga-dominated Ramanagara district. While D K Shivakumar originally belonged to the district, Kumaraswamy migrated from Hassan and tried to dominate the district. D K Shivakumar executing the project would definitely give him an upper hand in the fight for Vokkaliga dominance.

Bengaluru, Karnataka: BJP MLC, C. T. Ravi says, "...This government is behaving in a tyrannical manner. It is not acting like a democratic government. The farmers are opposing the Bidadi township. Kumaraswamy's statement divided the farmers coming under the township area. While the farmers in JD(S)-dominant areas started a protest, saying that they would not part with their land for the township, the others stood by the government. Though the government tried to convince them, saying that Kumaraswamy administration had declared it under a 'red zone', which means farmers cannot do anything other than farming on that land, at least eight villages coming under the project refused to budge. The government also announced the highest-ever compensation for the land, running up to Rs.2.5 crore per acre, along with a site in the developed area. However, the issue is heating up day by day, with Kumaraswamy spending most of his time on the Bidadi issue itself.

## Maha Dy CM Eknath Shinde Orders Immediate Structural Audit Of Hoardings After Banner Collapse On Eastern Express Highway

**Thane:** Following a narrow escape on the busy Eastern Express Highway, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has directed the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) to conduct an immediate structural audit of all large hoardings in the city and aggressively dismantle unauthorised banners. Taking serious and immediate note of the banner collapse, Shinde telephoned the TMC Commissioner to order stringent legal action against those responsible for placing hazardous, illegal structures in public spaces.

The Deputy Chief Minister's intervention comes after a potentially catastrophic accident was narrowly avoided on the highway. A large banner, installed on a pedestrian flyover, was dislodged by strong winds and crashed directly onto a passing two-wheeler during peak traffic hours. The impact caused



the motorcyclist to momentarily lose balance, creating a brief, tense scare of a collision with oncoming traffic. However, showing immense presence of mind, the rider managed to regain control of the vehicle and avert a major crash. Both individuals on the two-wheeler fortunately escaped without serious injuries.

**Monsoon Safety And**

**Civic Crackdown**

The incident sparked intense public outrage, with citizens criticising the TMC for failing to regulate risky public hoardings as the monsoon season brings heavy winds and rain. To prevent further wind-induced mishaps, Deputy CM Shinde's directives mandate a comprehensive, city-wide structural audit of all high-rise billboards. He

emphasised that the administration must enforce harsh legal penalties on individuals putting up illegal banners as well as those maintaining unsafe structures. Responding to the Deputy CM's orders, the Thane civic administration immediately swung into action, launching a massive removal and enforcement campaign across the city starting Tuesday night.

## 'Remove Your Dark Glasses': Gen Z Protesters Demand Nepal PM Balen Shah Face The People After Ride-Sharing Driver's Death

**Kathmandu:** Nepal Prime Minister Balen Shah, whose meteoric political rise was fuelled by Gen Z voters demanding change, is now facing a backlash from the very generation that once championed him. Large-scale protests erupted across Nepal over the weekend, with hundreds of young demonstrators taking to the streets after the death of a ride-sharing driver. According to a report published in the Hindi news portal Aaj Tak, Public anger intensified, opposition leaders joined the chorus of criticism, urging Shah to "take off your dark glasses" and face the people instead of remaining detached from their concerns. The slogan, which quickly became a rallying cry during the protests, reflects growing frustration with Shah's leadership style and his government's response to the crisis. During heated proceedings in Parliament, opposition lawmakers criticised the Prime Minister, with one leader asking him to remove his signature dark shades and confront the realities faced by ordinary citizens. Several lawmakers also demanded his resignation.

**Driver's Death Sparks**



**Nationwide Outrage**

The protests were triggered by the death of 25-year-old Ganesh Nepali, a ride-sharing driver who allegedly set himself on fire after Kathmandu Metropolitan City police locked the wheel of his motorcycle during an enforcement drive over parking violations. According to Nepali media reports, Ganesh Nepali suffered severe burn injuries and died on Friday before he could be airlifted to AIIMS New Delhi for advanced medical treatment. His death sparked outrage, with students, youth groups and civil society organisations accusing authorities of heavy-handed and insensitive policing.

**Protests Spread Across Nepal**

What began as demonstrations over the driver's death quickly evolved into broader protests against the government's handling of law enforcement and public accountability. Hundreds of protesters, many of them young people, gathered in Kathmandu and other parts of the country, demanding justice for the deceased and greater accountability from the government. Balen Shah first emerged as a political phenomenon after winning the Kathmandu mayoral election in 2022 as an independent candidate. A former rapper and engineer, he became a symbol of a new generation of politics,

attracting widespread support from Gen Z voters with promises of clean governance, transparency and decisive leadership. His popularity eventually propelled him to the office of Prime Minister. However, critics now argue that his administration's strict enforcement campaigns and governance style have alienated many of the young supporters who once viewed him as a reformist leader. The latest protests underscore a dramatic shift in public sentiment, with the youth-led movement that helped elevate Shah to power now demanding greater accountability and increasingly, his resignation.

## 6 Civilians Killed As Pakistan Forces Open Fire During Clashes In PoK: Reports

**PoK:** At least six civilians were killed after Pakistani security forces allegedly opened fire during clashes with protesters in Rawalakot in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, further escalating tensions in the region amid weeks of anti-government demonstrations. The violence broke out near Rawalakot's New Bus Terminal, where security personnel launched a crackdown on civilians protesting against the authorities, triggering fierce confrontations. Those killed included Zahid Mughal, Zafar Mughal, Arsalan Akbar, and Wajid Hayat, who was shot dead at the Matial Mira Bus Terminal in Rawalakot. Two other civilians were also killed during the clashes. The latest bloodshed has intensified public anger in PoJK, where protests against Islamabad have steadily grown over issues including governance, economic hardship and alleged state repression. Reacting to the violence, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the unrest in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir was the direct out-



come of Pakistan's decades-long exploitation and denial of basic rights to the people of the region. Addressing a weekly media briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "The ongoing protests in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir are a direct consequence of Pakistan's decades-long systemic exploitation, denial of fundamental rights and administrative oppression in areas under its illegal and forcible occupation." He alleged that instead of addressing the concerns of the local population, Pakistani authorities had responded with excessive force. Meanwhile, The MEA accused Pakistan of resorting to police brutality against protesters, including

women and children, while blocking essential supplies such as food and medicines, enforcing internet blackouts, and using lethal force against unarmed civilians.

"We expect and hope that the international community will hold Pakistan fully accountable for these egregious abuses and misdeeds," Jaiswal said.

### CHANGE OF NAME

**I, JYOSNA KAMINENI (Old Name), W/o.KAMINENI SAI KUMAR, resident of S/o Mohan Rao, 11-2-27, Kota Katta Street, Kandukur, Pra kasam dist - 523105. (A.P) I have changed my name as KAMINENI JYOTHSNA. (New Name), W/o. KAMINENI SAI KUMAR, Hereafter my name is known as KAMINENI JYOTHSNA (New Name), W/o. KAMINENI SAI KUMAR**



# Northeast Sees Unprecedented Science & Technology Growth Under PM Modi: Jitendra Singh



Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today said that the North Eastern Region has witnessed an unprecedented expansion of scientific infrastructure during the last decade under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, correcting decades of neglect despite the region's strategic importance and unique geographical challenges. Referring to the remarkable transformation in scientific capabilities, he said that before 2014 the entire North East had only two weather radars, including just one in Meghalaya, despite Cherrapunji recording the world's highest rainfall. Today, the region has 13 weather radars. Likewise, the number of seismicological observatories has in-

creased from 84 before 2014 to 171 at present, while specialised lightning detection stations, which did not exist earlier in the region, have now been established in Meghalaya and Tripura. He said these interventions reflect the Government's sustained commitment to strengthening scientific preparedness, disaster resilience and technology-based development across the North East.

Dr. Jitendra Singh made these remarks while chairing a comprehensive review meeting of Science & Technology institutions under the Department of Science & Technology at the North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR), Shillong. During the meeting, Heads of various DST institutions presented updates on their ongoing programmes, major achievements and future initiatives relating to scientific research, innovation, technology dissemination and capacity building in the

North Eastern Region. The Minister also inaugurated NECTAR's state-of-the-art Geo-Informatics Laboratory and visited several flagship technology facilities, interacting with scientists, researchers, students, beneficiary farmers and officials.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that science and technology must directly improve the lives of ordinary citizens and appreciated NECTAR for successfully translating laboratory innovations into practical technologies benefiting farmers, youth, entrepreneurs and rural communities across the North East. He said institutions such as NECTAR have become important instruments for ensuring that the benefits of scientific research reach the grassroots. The Minister witnessed the demonstration of the Mobile Food Processing Unit (MPU), jointly developed by NECTAR and CSIR-CFTRI, and described it as an innovative "processing on

wheels" model that brings food processing technologies directly to farmers' doorsteps. He said the facility enables value addition at the farm level, particularly for small and marginal farmers, while promoting skill development, food quality assurance and entrepreneurship. The Minister said such interventions strengthen farmers' confidence by creating livelihood opportunities from even small agricultural produce. Reviewing NECTAR's interventions under the PM-DevINE programme, Dr. Jitendra Singh appreciated the establishment of the Vasundhara Soil Organic Carbon Detection Laboratory-cum-Manufacturing Unit using technology transferred from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). He said the facility provides accurate in-situ soil testing and scientific recommendations that will significantly benefit farmers, agricultural universities and research institu-

tions. He was informed that nearly 2,500 farmers have already received soil testing kits and that the initiative will eventually help create a comprehensive soil health database for the region. The Minister also visited NECTAR's STEM Education Laboratory, which promotes experiential learning through robotics, coding, artificial intelligence, 3D printing and innovation-based activities. He said the laboratory has generated remarkable enthusiasm among school students since becoming operational in January 2025 and appreciated the initiative to establish 50 STEM laboratories across five North Eastern States in collaboration with IIT Kanpur, benefiting nearly 25,000 students, particularly in remote and underserved areas. Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated NECTAR's advanced Geo-Informatics Laboratory and described it as one of the most sophisticated geospatial technology fa-

cilities in the North Eastern Region. Equipped with 17 advanced drones, including LiDAR and hyperspectral-enabled VTOL platforms, supported by high-performance computing systems and specialised geospatial software, the laboratory has already executed projects covering more than 2,000 square kilometres in areas such as forest carbon assessment, biodiversity conservation, mining restoration and disaster resilience. Drone-based mapping has also supported over 700 villages under the SVAMITVA Scheme besides scientific organic agriculture projects under PM-DevINE involving nearly 25,000 farmers. The Minister appreciated NECTAR's emphasis on capacity building, noting that the Centre has trained 569 drone technicians, 247 GIS and Remote Sensing professionals, 107 certified drone pilots through its Remote Pilot Training

Organisation and more than 4,500 students in emerging technologies. These initiatives have also generated livelihood opportunities for over 190 youth from the North Eastern Region while contributing to India's Drone Mission and the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Dr. Jitendra Singh said NECTAR has emerged as a key technology implementation agency in the North East through initiatives covering scientific organic agriculture, community seed banks, banana fibre value addition, post-harvest management, food processing, bamboo and natural fibre technologies, technology incubation and entrepreneurship promotion. These interventions, he said, are strengthening farmer collectives, improving market access, promoting rural enterprises and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities throughout the

region. The Minister also expressed satisfaction over the progress of NECTAR's permanent campus at New Shillong, which is expected to provide world-class infrastructure for research, innovation, technology demonstration, incubation, training and capacity building. He said the upcoming campus will further strengthen the institution's role in addressing the unique developmental requirements of the North Eastern Region through science-driven solutions. Congratulating NECTAR and all partner institutions, Dr. Jitendra Singh expressed confidence that the Centre would continue to emerge as a national hub for geospatial science, drone technology, artificial intelligence and technology-enabled rural development, making a significant contribution towards the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

## Good News For UP, Bihar Travellers: Chhapra-Pathankot Weekly Special Train From July 20



**New Delhi:** Accommodate the expected increase in passenger traffic and improve travel convenience, the Railway Administration has announced a weekly special train service between Chhapra in Bihar and Pathankot in Punjab. The Chhapra-Pathankot-Chhapra Weekly Special Train (No. 05193/05194) will operate from July 20 to September 30, completing a total of 15 trips during the period. **Train to Operate Every Monday**

According to the schedule released by the Railways, Train No. 05193, the Chhapra-Pathankot Weekly Special, will run every Monday from July 20 to September 28. The train will depart from Chhapra Junction at 2:00 pm and arrive at Pathankot at 10:15 pm the following day. Along the route, it will stop at several important stations, including Chhapra Kacheri, Dighwa Dubauli, Thawe, Tamkuhi Road, Padrauna, Kaptanganj,

Gorakhpur, Basti, Gonda, Sitapur, Shahjahanpur, Bareilly, Moradabad, Laksar, Roorkee, Saharanpur, Yamunanagar Jagadhri, Ambala Cantonment, Ludhiana and Jalandhar Cantonment. **Return Service Every Wednesday** In the return direction, Train No. 05194, the Pathankot-Chhapra Weekly Special, will operate every Wednesday from July 22 to September 30. The train will leave

Pathankot at 12:30 am and travel via Jalandhar Cantonment, Ludhiana, Ambala Cantonment, Saharanpur, Moradabad, Bareilly, Sitapur, Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur, Kaptanganj, Padrauna, Tamkuhi Road, Thawe and Dighwa Dubauli. It will reach Chhapra Kacheri at 8:35 am the following day before terminating at Chhapra Junction at 9:15 am.

### 19 Coaches to Be Attached

Officials said the special train will have 19 coaches, including AC Second Class, AC Third Class, Third AC Economy, Sleeper Class, General Second Class, and luggage-cum-generator coaches. The service is expected to offer a direct and convenient travel option for passengers across Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, and Punjab, improving connectivity and easing travel for those commuting between the regions.

## Bengal Man Poses As IAS Officer, Dupes Job Aspirant Of Rs 20 Lakh In Odisha

**Kolkata:** The Commissionerate Police arrested a 40-year-old man from West Bengal on the charges of duping a job aspirant by falsely posing as a promoted IAS officer in the Odisha Government. The accused identified as Rabinarayan Das, a native of Kendrapada district, is presently staying at Uttarpara police station area in Hooghly district of West Bengal. Das was apprehended in connection with a case registered at Lingaraj Police Station on the basis of the complaint lodged by the victim, Manoranjan Pradhan.

The police sources claimed that the investigating officers during the course of investigation found that the accused Das, falsely introduced himself as a promoted IAS officer of the Odisha Government and, with the assistance of co-accused Manoj Kumar Lenka, lured the complainant by promising him a job as Deputy General Manager in the Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC). Believing



this false promise, the complainant Pradhan paid a total of Rs 20 lakh to the accused on different occasions through online transactions and in cash. Subsequently, the accused provided the complainant with fake appointment and interview letters purportedly issued by the Odisha Mining Corporation. Upon verification, the victim found the documents were forged and fake ones. The cops during the probe examined bank transaction details and

other relevant records. The police also came to know that the accused had cheated the complainant of Rs 20 lakh by falsely impersonating a senior government officer and using forged recruitment-related documents. Acting on reliable information, police conducted a raid in Hooghly district of West Bengal and apprehended the accused from his hideout. The Commissionerate police also stated that verification of his criminal

record revealed that accused Das was previously involved in a similar job fraud case registered at Lingaraj Police Station and in a cyber fraud case registered at Jajpur Cyber Police Station in Odisha. In another case, the Commissionerate police arrested a 52-year-old man, who allegedly impersonated as an additional Superintendent of Police and engaged in a fight with a person in Kharavelnagar police limits of Bhubaneswar.

## Boy, 12, Dies In Sleep After Neighbouring House Collapses In Thane

**Maharashtra:** A 12-year-old boy was killed and two members of his family were injured after a portion of an old house collapsed in Maharashtra's Thane. The incident occurred at around 3:35 pm on Friday at Madras Chawl in Azad Nagar, Brahmamand, and triggered a rescue operation. According to officials, the ground-plus-one-storey structure involved in the incident was around 25 to 30 years old. Preliminary information suggested that a section of the building's gallery gave way and crashed onto a neighbouring house, where family members were asleep at the time.

Jaykumar Jaiswal, 12, suffered critical injuries in the accident and was immediately taken to the Civil Hospital. However, doctors declared him dead before treatment could begin. "A portion of this structure's gallery suddenly collapsed onto an adjacent house where three members of a family were sleeping. Jaykumar Jaiswal (12) sustained severe injuries and was rushed to civil hospital where doctors declared him dead on arrival," an official said, news agency PTI reported. Two others injured in the incident were identified as 35-year-old Urmila Jaiswal and 9-year-old Vinit Jaiswal.



Both sustained head injuries and were admitted to Titan Hospital in Manpada, where they are undergoing treatment. "Three adjacent houses within Madras Chawl have been vacated as a precautionary measure. Further structural assessments and clearing operations are currently being carried out by the

Majiwada Ward Committee, Public Works Department (PWD), and the Encroachment Department," the official said, according to PTI. Emergency teams rushed to the spot soon after the collapse was reported. The operation involved two fire engines, a rescue vehicle, a disaster management utility vehicle and an ambulance.

## Promised Mutton, Served Chicken: Fight At Bihar Wedding Leaves 12 Injured

**Patna:** All was going well at this wedding in a Bihar town - until lunch was served. A fierce fight broke out between the groom's side and the bride's side that left about a dozen people injured. The reason? The bride's side had promised the groom's side a feast of mutton but served chicken instead. Angered, the groom's side protested. The bride's family then allegedly thrashed the baraatis. The incident took place during a wedding in Simri Bakhtiyarpur town of Saharsa district in Bihar. The nikah of Mohammad Abdullah alias Chand, son of Mohammad Anwar, was solemnised with Mohammad Javed



alias Moto's daughter on Thursday afternoon around 3 PM. Officials said the ceremony was held in a peaceful and cordial atmosphere. A relative of the groom said the trouble began after the nikah, when all the baraatis sat down for the feast. The groom's side alleged they had been

promised mutton on the wedding menu. But when the plates were served, they found chicken instead. That led to a heated argument between guests and hosts. The verbal spat quickly escalated into a brawl, with both sides seen exchanging blows. Videos of the fight have gone vi-

ral on social media. In one clip, men are seen hitting guests with sticks and even waving swords. The injured have been admitted to the Sub-Divisional Hospital in Simri Bakhtiyarpur. The situation was brought under control only after police reached the spot. An investigation is underway.



## 'Zero Occupants, Regular Funding': Auditor Flags Ghost Hostels In Maharashtra



**Mumbai:** The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has uncovered six "ghost hostels" in Maharashtra that received Rs 1.62 crore in government funding over four years despite housing no students. The finding has exposed serious lapses in the implementation and monitoring of welfare schemes meant for students from socially and economically disadvantaged communities. The revelation is part of the Compliance Audit Report 2024, tabled in the Maharashtra Assembly during the ongoing monsoon session. The audit paints a broader picture of administrative failures, citing poor infrastructure, inadequate staffing, weak financial oversight and delays in expanding hostel facilities across the state.

**Rs 1.62 Crore Released To Non-Functional Hostels**

The CAG found that the Department of Social Justice and Special Assistance continued to disburse funds to six non-functional hostels between 2020 and 2024. The facilities had no occupants. One of the most striking examples is Modikhan Hostel in Jalna, where auditors found a dilapidated, locked building with no signs of occupancy.

However, official records showed that 38 students were enrolled and that a superintendent was in charge, and the government continued to release Rs 18 lakh in honorarium payments to the institution for four years.

Another hostel in Jafrabad (Jalna district), built to accommodate 24 students, was found deserted, with dust-covered beds and no occupants. Similar "ghost hostels" were identified at four locations in Jalna district and one each in Buldhana and Latur. The report concluded that the department had released Rs 1.62 crore to non-functional entities, highlighting major deficiencies in verification and oversight mechanisms.

**Welfare Infrastructure Falling Short**

**As of March 2024, Maharashtra had:**

- 443 government-run hostels
- 2,388 government-aided hostels
- Capacity for 1,21,971 boys and 40,543 girls

The state spent approximately Rs 2,321 crore on hostel operations during the audit period. The CAG physically inspected 18 government-run and 21 government-aided hostels,

uncovering widespread deficiencies in basic infrastructure.

**Many hostels lacked:**

- Dining halls
- Libraries
- Computer laboratories
- CCTV surveillance
- Daily newspapers
- Television facilities

**Power backup**

In several hostels, students had to sit on the floor during meals because tables and chairs were unavailable. Regular medical check-ups were either irregular or absent, while auditors also found poor sanitation, inadequate lighting, unsafe drinking water and poor-quality food at several facilities.

**Safety And Accessibility Concerns**

The audit also highlighted serious violations of accessibility norms. In hostels located in Ahilyanagar, Dharashiv, Jalna and Nagpur, differently-abled students were allotted rooms on upper floors despite government guidelines requiring ground-floor accommodation. Technology-based monitoring was also found to be ineffective. Of the 280 government hostels equipped with biometric attendance systems, only 46 had functioning devices, limiting the

department's ability to monitor occupancy accurately. Auditors further noted that several hostels failed to maintain the mandatory one-month buffer stock of food grains, raising concerns over food security for resident students.

**Funds Left Unspent, Students Left Without Hostels**

The report criticised the government's financial management, noting that Rs 56.65 crore out of the Rs 487 crore allocated for government hostels in 2023-24 remained unspent.

**The failure to utilise available funds also impacted expansion plans. According to the audit:**

- 8,930 students across 117 talukas were deprived of hostel facilities because the government's policy of establishing at least one government hostel in every taluka was not implemented.
- 49 government hostels were operating without superintendents. Five girls' hostels were being managed by male superintendents. The CAG also observed that Maharashtra failed to meet its target of constructing 500 government hostels by 2020. Despite funds being sanctioned, only 443 hostels had been established by March 2024, with delays affecting access to accommodation for thousands of eligible students.

**Audit Raises Questions On Monitoring**

The findings suggest that the problems extend beyond isolated cases of financial irregularities. The audit points to weak verification systems, inadequate supervision and poor implementation of welfare policies, allowing funds to continue flowing to hostels that existed only on paper while thousands of students remained without accommodation.

## US Man Caught Near Nepal Border With No Passport Claims Navy Past

**New Delhi:** A 36-year-old man claiming to be a US citizen has been arrested by the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) in the Maharajganj district of Uttar Pradesh while trying to cross over to Nepal without valid travel documents. The man identified himself as Jordan Brown and claimed to be a resident of California in the United States, according to authorities. Brown was arrested on Saturday during a routine patrol near border pillar number 516 in the Mainihwa area under Sonauli police station limits when the 22nd Battalion of the SSB intercepted him and signaled to stop at the border. The accused allegedly tried to flee the spot but was apprehended by Indian border forces. He did not possess any valid travel or identity-related documents when he was arrested, said Siddharth, the additional superintendent of police (Maharajganj). During interrogation, the police learned that Brown had allegedly travelled to Thailand on a tourist visa, where he lost his passport. He also reportedly told police that he was a former US Navy officer. "He subsequently reached Sri Lanka via a sea



route and arrived in India from there by sea on 2 November, 2025. Since then, he had been residing in Goa," the additional SP said. This means he had spent nearly seven months in India without carrying his passport. The official said Brown traveled from Goa to Bengaluru and from there to the Sonauli border, intending to enter Nepal. "He was attempting to enter Nepal when he was apprehended without any valid travel documents or proof of identity," the officer added. During a search, Rs 31,460 in cash and two mobile phones were recovered from Brown's possession, but he was unable to produce a passport, visa, or

any other valid travel documents. He was questioned by the SSB and other security agencies before being handed over to the Uttar Pradesh police in Sonauli for further legal action, said SSB Assistant Commandant Priya Yadav. The police are verifying his claims, and a case has been registered against him at the Sonauli Police Station under Sections 21/23 of the Immigration and Foreigners Act for entering India without valid documents, the official said.

**In Other News**

Meanwhile, in a separate case, five Ukrainians and one US national, arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for their

alleged involvement in providing terrorist and combat training to ethnic armed groups in Myanmar, were produced before the Patiala House Court on July 3. The accused are alleged to have entered India on tourist visas before allegedly travelling through Mizoram into Myanmar, where they came into contact with ethnic armed groups operating against the Myanmar military junta. The NIA alleged that the accused provided training and support relating to drone warfare and other military technologies to such groups, raising concerns affecting India's national security. The accused persons are presently in judicial custody, and the investigation remains ongoing.

## PM Modi Stopped Putin From Nuking Ukraine In 2022: Polish Minister



Poland has praised India's role in trying to prevent the Russia-Ukraine war from spiralling further, with Deputy Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Teofil Bartoszewski saying that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is one of the few world leaders whose views are taken seriously by Russian President Vladimir Putin. He also referred to developments in late 2022, claiming that PM Modi had played a role in persuading Russia against using tactical nuclear weapons during the war. Speaking to news agency ANI, Bartoszewski said India's decades-old relationship with Russia gives New Delhi a unique position, making it an important player in efforts to push for peace. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a very well-known world statesman who is very respected, and India has a long-stand-

ing relationship with the Russian Federation and, before that, with the Soviet Union as a non-aligned nation. President Putin actually pays attention to what Prime Minister Modi tells him," he said. The Polish minister went a step further, saying PM Modi is among the handful of leaders who can influence the Russian president at a time when communication with Moscow has become increasingly difficult. "Prime Minister Modi is one of the few people who can actually exert some pressure and influence on President Putin, and that is clearly something India could do to help stop this conflict," he said. According to Bartoszewski, appeals for restraint carry greater weight when they come from countries that Russia does not consider hostile. Along with India, he also mentioned China as a

country whose voice matters in Moscow. "Everybody is against escalation, not only India with Prime Minister Modi but also China's Xi Jinping. It's important, especially when it comes from countries that are not seen as hostile to Russia. India's role here is crucial," he said.

**Poland Says Oil Differences With India Have Eased**

Bartoszewski also said Poland and India have moved past their differences over New Delhi's imports of discounted Russian crude oil. He acknowledged that Warsaw had previously criticised India's purchases, arguing they indirectly supported Russia's wartime economy. At the same time, he said Poland understood why India chose to buy the oil because of the significant price advantage. According

to him, both countries now have a better understanding of each other's positions, and the issue is no longer a major sticking point. "I think we were critical about India buying Russian oil. We understood the economic reason for that because it was at a heavy discount, about 40 per cent less than the market price. We understood that, but it was fuelling the Russian war economy. So we had a different view on that," he said.

**Putin's Praise For PM Modi**

The remarks come just weeks after Putin praised India's independent foreign policy, saying attempts by other countries to pressure PM Modi over New Delhi's ties with Moscow would be useless. "Everyone has understood that putting pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and India, which has the largest population in the world, is detrimental for international relations and for bilateral relations," Putin said in a remark on the sidelines of the St Petersburg International Economic Forum in Russia. "It doesn't matter where this pressure comes from. We don't see any negative consequences." "We are glad that India is developing its relations with all countries it thinks important for its national interests," he added.

## Tests Found Aftab Poonawala Had "Psycho, Sociopathic" Tendencies: Sources



**New Delhi:** Aftab Poonawala, the accused in the Shraddha Walkar murder case, showed psycho and sociopathic tendencies during polygraph tests in 2022, sources have said.

The tests included aggressive tendency scale, Eysenck personality test, picture frustration test and emotional maturity test. Sources said the results indicated personality traits marked by emotional detachment, lack of empathy and manipulative behaviour. The Eysenck personality inventory measures two pervasive and in-

dependent dimensions of personality, called extraversion-introversion and neuroticism-stability. Picture frustration test is another method to check how a person handles everyday stress and aggression. During the assessments, he did not show any remorse for the crime, sources said. His main concern remained "self-preservation" and he looked for ways on how he could save himself from legal consequences. These forensics details emerged amid developments in the case from May 2022, when Poonawala killed his live-in

partner Walkar, dismembered her body and scattered them at different places over several days. On July 11, the lawyer representing Walkar's family alleged the defence in the 2022 murder case had been "deliberately delaying" the trial, due to which they will go to the Delhi High Court for a speedy hearing. Lawyer Seema Samridhi Kushwaha said this after a local court cancelled a hearing in the case scheduled on July 20 because Poonawala had informed the court that he would be appearing for his MA (So-

ciology) examination at an IGNOU centre in Tihar jail on the same day. "The trial has already faced delays. The court had previously fixed hearings from July 20 to July 27. However, Aftab Amin Poonawala's side filed an application stating he had an exam on July 20, following which the court cancelled that date. We were not given an alternative date," the lawyer said. She said the delay in the trial has prevented the family from performing Walkar's last rites since her body parts "constitute the case property", which cannot be released until the trial ends. Consequently, the last rites could not be carried out. Walkar's mother died in 2020. Her father died of a heart attack in February 2025; he had been deeply troubled by the murder of his daughter. Her grandmother also died some time later. "She has a brother who visits occasionally, but I am representing them," the lawyer said.

## Ebix Group Chairman Vikas Garg Arrested In Mahadev Betting App Case

**New Delhi:** In a high-profile arrest, the Enforcement Directorate has taken Ebix Group Chairman Vikas Garg into custody for his alleged links with the Mahadev online betting case.

The ED had recently attached properties belonging to Garg, his family members and entities linked to him, valued at Rs 940.77 crore. Officials from the probe agency said the ill-gotten money from the app was routed into companies con-

trolled by the Ebix Group chairman. They were then layered through various entities and used to acquire shares, securities and other assets. Garg, they said, is the promoter of three listed firms - Vikas Ecotech Limited, Vikas Lifecare Limited, and Eraaya Lifespaces Limited. He allegedly acquired a 64% stake in EbixCash through Eraaya Lifespaces Limited by utilising funds generated from illegal betting activities. EbixCash is a well-known

digital payments and forex company. Garg, 53, was arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on Tuesday after searches were conducted at premises linked to him in Delhi. He was produced before a special court in the capital, which granted the probe agency 24-hour custody to take him to Chhattisgarh's Raipur. He will be produced before a special PMLA court in Raipur on Wednesday. The

ED has said that the Mahadev betting app case involves various high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats from Chhattisgarh and the alleged proceeds of crime are to the tune of Rs 6,000 crore. The agency has alleged that the Mahadev app operated as a large-scale international betting syndicate that facilitated alleged illegal betting through multiple online platforms and domain names such as 'Tiger Exchange', 'Gold365' and 'Laser247'.

**New Delhi:** Noting that comedian Samay Raina violated its orders and "took the court for a ride", the Supreme Court on Tuesday told the comedian that he will have to face consequences. "We believe Samay Raina has taken court for a ride, brazenly violated our orders. If you don't know how to mend your ways or respect the sentiments of the society members then you have to face consequences," the Supreme Court said, directing the comedian to pay Rs 10 lakh as fine. The

comedian's lawyer, seeking last chance, appealed for leniency. The top court then brought down the fine from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 3 lakh, warning that it will slap Rs 30 lakh fine if it is not satisfied in the next hearing. "The misconduct is sought to be compounded by stating that a compliance affidavit was filed yesterday, however, no affidavit has been filed," the bench said. The Chief Justice remarked that they think sitting outside the country they are beyond jurisdiction. "Let

them suffer now. If this is not arrogance, then we have to change the Oxford dictionary also," the Chief Justice observed. The top court was hearing a plea filed by Cure SMA India Foundation alleging that Raina made insensitive remarks over the high cost of treatment for Spinal Muscular Atrophy and also allegedly ridiculed a person with such a disability. The plea flagged jokes made by "India's Got Latent" host Samay Raina and other social media influencers Vipun Goyal,

Balraj Paramjeet Singh Ghai, Sonali Thakkar and Nishant Jagdish Tanwar. Earlier, the court had directed the comic to host fundraising shows on his platforms for specially abled individuals who have inspiring stories every month. "It's a social burden we are putting on you, not a penal burden. You are well-placed persons in society. If you have become too popular, then share it with others," Chief Justice Surya Kant said during a hearing last year.



## Asian Paints Q1 FY27 Preview: Revenue, profit may rise in double digits; margin seen flat - Check details



**New Delhi** :Investors will also closely track the management's commentary on demand trends, raw material costs, margins and the progress of the company's raw material integration plans when it announces its quarterly results on July 29.

**Revenue, profit likely to grow in double digits**

According to Zee Business estimates, Asian Paints is likely to report consolidated revenue of Rs 10,157 crore for the June quarter, up 13.6 per cent from Rs 8,939 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. Operating performance is also expected to remain healthy. EBITDA is estimated to increase 14.6 per cent year-on-year to Rs

1,862 crore, compared with Rs 1,625 crore in the year-ago period. The EBITDA margin is expected to remain largely stable at 18.3 per cent, against 18.2 per cent a year earlier. Consolidated net profit is estimated to rise 14.1 per cent to Rs 1,255 crore, compared with Rs 1,100 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year.

**Volume growth, price hikes to support performance**

The company's domestic decorative paints business is expected to remain the key growth driver during the quarter. Analysts estimate domestic decorative paint volumes to grow by around 12 per cent, aided by a weak

base and higher channel stocking before the implementation of price increases. Asian Paints is estimated to have taken a price hike of around 7 per cent during the June quarter. The increase is expected to support revenue growth and partly offset rising input costs. However, higher raw material prices may put some pressure on profitability. Gross margin is expected to decline by around 20 basis points on a year-on-year basis due to increased raw material costs, although operating margins are expected to remain broadly stable.

**Management commentary, market share in focus**

Apart from the financial performance, investors will closely watch the management's outlook on demand across urban and rural markets, the sustainability of volume growth and the impact of recent price hikes on consumer demand. Market participants will also monitor the company's comments on raw material prices and the margin outlook for the

coming quarters. Channel checks indicate that Asian Paints may have gained market share during the June quarter. The Street will also look for updates on the commissioning of the company's VAM-VAE project, which is expected to strengthen its raw material integration strategy and improve long-term cost efficiency.

**Stock remains below 52-week high**

Asian Paints shares were trading at Rs 2,639, down Rs 13.10 or 0.49 per cent, in afternoon trade on July 14. Despite the expected improvement in quarterly earnings, the stock remains 11.6 per cent, or Rs 346.70, below its 52-week high of Rs 2,985.70, touched on December 4, 2025. The stock has declined 4.05 per cent so far in 2026 and is down 3.89 per cent over the past month. The company currently has a market capitalisation of Rs 2.53 lakh crore. However, the stock is trading about 24.8 per cent above its 52-week low of Rs 2,115, recorded on March 23, 2026.

**Strong Q4FY26 provides a healthy base**

Asian Paints ended FY26 on a strong note, reporting a 69.2 per cent year-on-year increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,185.49 crore in the March quarter, supported by higher sales and improved operating performance. Revenue from operations during the quarter rose 10.8 per cent to Rs 9,228.46 crore. The company said its domestic decorative business recorded 12.4 per cent volume growth and 10.2 per cent value growth, reflecting an improvement in demand. Its international business also delivered a healthy performance, with sales increasing 11 per cent to Rs 888.1 crore, led by strong growth in Sri Lanka, Egypt and the UAE. For the full financial year FY26, Asian Paints reported an 18.5 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 4,394.69 crore, while consolidated revenue rose 5.3 per cent year-on-year to Rs 36,307.34 crore.

## SBI Funds Management IPO: 3 reasons why India's largest AMC is going public

**New Delhi** :SBI Funds Management IPO: As the public issue of SBI Funds Management hit the primary market on June 14, 2026, the company's top leadership outlined the rationale behind the IPO, growth plans, technology investments and future strategy in an exclusive interaction. In a conversation with Anil Singhvi, Managing Editor at Zee Business, Debashish Mishra, MD & CEO, SBI Funds Management, Joint CEO D P Singh, SBI Mutual Fund and Executive President, Chief Strategy Officer and Head of Investor Relations R S Srinivas Jain, SBI Mutual Fund, shared why the company believes the IPO marks an important milestone despite not requiring fresh capital.

**Why did SBI Funds Management launch an IPO despite being profitable?**

Addressing the obvious question of why a profitable company with a strong track record is entering the capital markets, Mishra said the IPO is not driven by a need for capital but by three strategic objectives:

1) First, the company wants to boost investor confidence at a time when many investors have remained on the sidelines due to market uncertainties over the past several months.

According to Mishra, India's economic fundamentals remain strong, and the company wants hesitant investors to return to the markets.

2) Second, he said listing is a natural progression for India's largest asset management company and will help deepen the country's capital markets.

3) Third, becoming a listed company will further strengthen governance, accountability and transparency. Mishra added that SBI Funds Management aspires to become not only India's largest fund manager but also one of the world's leading asset managers.

**What makes SBI Mutual Fund different?**

Joint CEO D P Singh said the biggest differentiator is the trust associated with the SBI

brand. He noted that SBI Mutual Fund currently manages around Rs 13.5 lakh crore in mutual fund assets, making it the country's largest fund house. Its scale enables the company to invest significantly in research, technology and investment processes. Another major advantage, Singh said, is SBI's nationwide distribution network. With nearly 23,000 SBI branches and access to more than 98 per cent of India's PIN codes, the company believes it has the reach to bring millions of new investors into the formal investment ecosystem.

**TER changes unlikely to hurt profitability**

Responding to concerns over SEBI's efforts to reduce Total Expense Ratio (TER), Executive President and Chief Strategy Officer R.S. Srinivasan Jain said the regulator's initiatives are aimed at protecting investors. He said the industry had been discussing the proposed framework with SEBI for over a year before the new telescopic pricing model was introduced. According to him, the changes have had virtually no material impact on profitability so far, and the company does not expect any major revenue pressure from TER reductions in the foreseeable future.

**How was the SBI Funds Management IPO priced?**

On the valuation of the IPO, Mishra said the pricing was determined through an extensive book-building exercise involving institutional investors in India as well as international financial centres, including the US, London, Hong Kong and Singapore. He said the final valuation reflects prevailing market conditions while ensuring that investors also have the opportunity to benefit after listing. "We have left some money on the table," Mishra said, indicating that the company wanted investors to participate meaningfully in the value creation.

**Strong response from anchor investors**

The management highlighted the strong demand from anchor investors.



According to Mishra, the company received participation from several marquee global institutions, including BlackRock and GIC. He also pointed out that leading domestic competitors such as HDFC Mutual Fund and ICICI Mutual Fund invested around Rs 200 crore each as anchor investors, describing it as a reflection of confidence in the business and the industry's long-term growth prospects. D P Singh said the mutual fund industry shares the common objective of increasing financial awareness and encouraging greater participation in investments across the country.

**AI and technology at the core of operations**

Rejecting the perception that a traditional institution may lag in technology adoption, Singh said SBI Funds Management has made technology one of its biggest priorities. He said the company's investor application is AI-powered and offers portfolio insights and recommendations. Investors can also apply for the IPO digitally within about 30 seconds through the app. The company is integrated with major fintech platforms such as Groww and Zerodha, while nearly 90 per cent of all transactions are already executed digitally.

According to Singh, technology remains one of the company's largest areas of investment after manpower.

**Passive investing will not derail growth**

Responding to concerns about the growing

popularity of passive investing, Srinivas Jain said SBI Funds Management is already India's market leader in passive products. The company currently manages around Rs 4 lakh crore in passive assets with nearly 30 per cent market share. He said SBI Mutual Fund offers one of the widest product ranges while maintaining low tracking errors and competitive expense ratios. He added that active assets have continued to grow faster than passive assets over the last three years, helping improve margins. Given India's expanding capital markets and stock selection opportunities, he believes active fund management will continue to remain relevant for retail investors.

**Promoters committed to long-term partnership**

Discussing the shareholding structure, Mishra said the IPO comprises a 6.3 per cent stake sale by SBI and a 3.67 per cent stake sale by Amundi, taking the total offer size to a 10 per cent stake sale. He said SBI and Amundi have been partners for over 22 years and intend to continue working together across technology, global investments and international business. The promoters plan to gradually reduce their holdings over the next decade in line with SEBI's requirements.

**Leadership in fixed-income business**

Beyond mutual funds, the company also enjoys a dominant position in fixed-income asset management. According

to Srinivasan Jain, SBI Funds Management manages around Rs 17 lakh crore in fixed-income assets through its portfolio management services (PMS), including mandates for EPFO, SBI employees and several large corporates. He said the company is currently India's largest fixed-income manager.

**Future growth strategy**

Looking ahead, the management identified multiple growth opportunities for the company. These include expansion in newly approved product categories such as Specialised Investment Funds (SIFs) and lifecycle funds, continued growth in hybrid products, retail portfolio management services, alternative investment funds (AIFs), international business through GIFT City, and leveraging Amundi's global distribution network to bring more overseas capital into India. The company aims for these emerging businesses to contribute at least 10 per cent of incremental profits over time.

**IPO or mutual funds?**

Asked whether investors should invest in the IPO or continue investing in SBI Mutual Fund schemes, the management's answer was straightforward. "Both." The executives said investors can participate in the company's growth both as mutual fund unitholders and as shareholders through the IPO. Summing up the company's long-term vision, Mishra said, "Just as State Bank of India is every Indian's bank, we want SBI Mutual Fund to become every Indian's fund manager."

## Nestle India Q1 FY27 Preview: PAT seen at Rs 830 crore; volume may remain strong

**New Delhi** :Nestle India Ltd will announce its financial results for the first quarter of FY27 on July 22, with investors expected to closely track volume growth, margin trends and management commentary on demand and raw material prices. In a regulatory filing, the Maggi maker said its Board of Directors will meet on Wednesday, July 22, to consider and approve the unaudited standalone and consolidated financial results for the quarter ended June 30, 2026. The company also said the trading window for dealing in its securities will remain closed from July 1 to July 24, 2026 (both days inclusive). While Nestle India has not disclosed the timing for the earnings announcement, the company had released its March quarter results during market hours.

**Nestle India Q1FY27 preview**

According to Zee Business estimates, Nestle India is likely to report a strong year-on-year performance in the June quarter, driven by robust domestic demand, healthy volume growth and continued momentum in its confectionery and beverages businesses. Revenue is estimated to rise 18.5 per cent to Rs 6,040 crore from Rs 5,096 crore in the year-ago period. EBITDA is expected to increase 22.3 per cent to Rs



1,345 crore, compared with Rs 1,100 crore a year earlier, while EBITDA margin is projected to improve to 22.3 per cent from 21.6 per cent. Net profit after tax (PAT) is estimated at Rs 830 crore, marking a 28.3 per cent jump from Rs 647 crore reported in the corresponding quarter last year. Analysts expect domestic volume growth of 9-11 per cent, with the domestic business likely to expand around 18 per cent year-on-year. Gross profit margin is also seen improving by nearly 30 basis points. The confectionery and beverages segments are expected to remain key growth drivers, while exports are projected to rise around 18 per cent. Investors will also watch management commentary on consumer demand, commodity costs and the outlook for raw material prices.

**Nestle India Q4FY26 highlights**

Nestle India had reported a strong performance in the March quarter of FY26. On a standalone basis, net profit rose around 26 per

cent year-on-year to Rs 1,114 crore from Rs 885 crore, while revenue increased about 23 per cent to Rs 6,748 crore from Rs 5,504 crore. On a consolidated basis, profit after tax climbed 27.18 per cent to Rs 1,110.9 crore, while revenue from operations also grew around 23 per cent to Rs 6,748 crore. The company's performance was supported by double-digit volume growth, a more than 50 per cent increase in advertising spends and a healthy EBITDA margin of 26.3 per cent. For FY26, Nestle India delivered volume-led growth and continued to gain market share across key brands despite a challenging commodity cost environment.

**Nestle India share price**

Nestle India shares settled 0.35 per cent lower at Rs 1,422 on the NSE on Tuesday. The stock opened at Rs 1,418.50, touched an intraday high of Rs 1,448.70, and hit a low of Rs 1,418.50. The FMCG major currently commands a market capitalisation of Rs 2.74 lakh crore. The stock has traded between a 52-week high of Rs 1,498.10 and a 52-week low of Rs 1,084.70.

## Laser Power & Infra IPO Allotment Status: How to check share allotment online via NSE, BSE, MUFG Intime India



**New Delhi** :Laser Power & Infra IPO Allotment Status: The basis of allotment of Laser Power & Infra IPO shares is expected to be finalised today, July 14, 2026. The IPO received robust investor demand and was subscribed 38.94 times at the end of the three-day bidding period, as per the provisional exchange data.

**How to check Laser Power & Infra IPO allotment status?**

The IPO applicants can get the details of allotment status of the IPO from the official website of BSE and NSE or the issue registrar, MUFG Intime India website. The following is the procedure for getting allotment status directly from these links:

**Laser Power & Infra IPO allotment status check on NSE website**

1) Go to NSE website:- [www.nseindia.com/invest/check-trades-bids-verify-ipo-bids](http://www.nseindia.com/invest/check-trades-bids-verify-ipo-bids)

2) Choose "Equity and SME IPO bid details"

3) Select 'LASERPOWER' from drop down menu

4) Provide PAN and application number

5) Click on submit button

**Laser Power & Infra IPO allotment status check on BSE website**

1) Go to the BSE website :- [www.bseindia.com/investors/appli\\_check.aspx](http://www.bseindia.com/investors/appli_check.aspx)

2) Choose 'Equity' in issue type

3) Select 'Laser Power and Infra Limited'

4) Provide application number/ PAN

5) Click on search but-

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**Check Laser Power & Infra IPO allotment status on MUFG Intime India**

1) Go to the MUFG Intime India website:- [in.mpms.mufg.com/Initial\\_Offer/public-issues.html](http://in.mpms.mufg.com/Initial_Offer/public-issues.html)

2) Choose company name from the dropdown menu

3) Provide your PAN, application number, or demat account details

4) Click submit

**Laser Power & Infra IPO subscription highlights**

Laser Power & Infra IPO details

The Rs 742-crore IPO was a book-built issue comprising a fresh issue of 2.53 crore equity shares worth Rs 542 crore and an offer for sale of 0.93 crore shares aggregating to Rs 200 crore. According to the company's red herring prospectus (RHP), promoters Deepak Goel, Rakhi Goel, and Devesh Goel are offloading part of their holdings through the OFS. The company had fixed the price band at Rs 203-214 per share, valuing it at a pre-IPO market capitalisation of around Rs 3,003.88 crore. Investors could bid in lots of 70 shares and in multiples thereafter. At the upper end of the price band, the minimum investment required for retail investors was Rs 14,980. The IPO closed on July 13, with the basis of allotment expected to be finalised on July 14. Refunds and credits of shares to successful bidders are expected before the company's proposed listing on July 16. For the issue, IIFL Capital Services Ltd and ICICI Securities Ltd are acting as the book-running lead managers, while MUFG Intime India Pvt Ltd has been appointed as the registrar. The issue has been reserved with 50 per cent for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs), 35 per cent for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs), and 15 per cent for Non-Institutional Investors (NIIs).

**About Laser Power & Infra Ltd**

Founded in 1988 and headquartered in Kolkata, Laser Power & Infra Ltd is an integrated manufacturer of power cables, conductors, and specialised electrical products catering to India's power transmission and distribution sector. The company also operates an engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) business that executes turnkey projects involving rural and urban electrification, power distribution infrastructure, and substitution installations. As of March 31, 2026, Laser Power & Infra operated three manufacturing facilities in West Bengal with a combined installed capacity of 85,448 metric tonnes. Its operations are divided into two key segments—manufacturing of power cables, conductors, and specialised electrical products, and EPC services that provide end-to-end power infrastructure solutions.



# India women script history at Lord's with clinical 270-run Test victory over England



**New Delhi:** India's cricket fraternity rose in unison to celebrate the national team's historic victory in the first-ever women's Test at Lord's with former India captain Ajinkya Rahane, all-rounder Irfan Pathan and women's team captain Mithali Raj leading the tributes after Harmanpreet Kaur's side crushed England by 270 runs in a memorable performance at the Home of Cricket. Rahane celebrated the achievement on social media, writing, "What a special win! Congratulations to Harmanpreet Kaur and the entire team for making history at Lord's. A performance to remember." (IPL T20) Former India women's captain Mithali Raj said, "A complete team performance to seal a legendary, historic Test win in England! Two names added to the iconic Lord's honours board in a single game, huge congratulations to @yastikabhatia for

her sensational hundred and Kranti Gaud for her clinical five-wicket haul, brilliantly set up by @mandhana\_smriti's exceptional composure across both innings." Off-spinner Sneha Rana excelled with figures of 4-42 as India secured a solid victory on Monday, bowling England out for 186 while defending a challenging target of 457. Deepthi Sharma contributed with 2-36, breaking down England's lower order in the opening session of the fourth day. Starting with 130/6, England's slim hopes relied on overnight half-century Amy Jones. However, Sneha struck early, dismissing her for 54. Deepthi then took out Issy Wong and Lauren Bell while Sneha finished the match by bowling Sophie Ecclestone, who had earlier made her maiden Test fifty, through the gate. This decisive win gave India their seventh victory in the last 11 women's Tests and

maintained their unbeaten record in red-ball cricket on English soil. Tributes flooded in after this historic victory. Former England captain Michael Vaughan praised India's all-around performance, while National Cricket Academy head VVS Laxman congratulated the team on their important win and highlighted the significance of conquering Lord's. "A truly special win. Congratulations to the Indian Women's team on a memorable Test victory at Lord's. Your skill, resilience, and fighting spirit have made the whole nation proud. Keep it up @BCCI," Laxman posted on X. "Fantastic win for India at Lord's in the historic test match. India completely dominated an England team that once again fell far short of where they should be. Two showcase moments for the women's game this past week. I enjoyed watching," Vaughan wrote on X. BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla also praised the team for making history with their strong performance at the famous venue. (IPL T20). "Congratulations to Team India for winning against England @BCCI." India's victory was supported by outstanding performances over all four days. Vice-captain Smriti Mandhana scored 83 and 70; Yastika Bhatia hit a remarkable 113—the first century by a woman in a Test at Lord's—

while Richa Ghosh smashed an unbeaten 50 off just 52 balls. Kranti Gaud also made her mark in the record books with the first five-wicket haul in a women's Test at the venue. Former India cricketer Irfan Pathan posted, "Victory with a touch of class. Well done, Indian Women's team on the test match victory vs England w. Smriti Mandana, Deepthi Sharma, Kranti Gaud, Yastika Bhatia, Richa Ghosh, Sneha Rana. You all were amazing. Well done, Captain Kaur." Former India opener Shikhar Dhawan joined the chorus in praising the team for the memorable victory at Lord's. "Champions don't wait for history to happen. They create it. ??? Congratulatory to Team India Women on a memorable victory at Lord's. @YastikaBhatia's century, mandhana\_smriti's outstanding performance, and Kranti's brilliant bowling will be remembered for a long time. Proud moment for Indian cricket," Dhawan said in a post on X. The win took place in front of batting legend Sachin Tendulkar, who spoke to the team before play began, along with ICC chairman Jay Shah, BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla, and secretary Devajit Saikia. This capped a dominant performance by India in the first women's Test held at Lord's in its 142-year history.

## NMDC Hyderabad Marathon becomes first in India to win World Athletics ABW Silver Standard for sustainability



**Hyderabad:** The NMDC Hyderabad Marathon 2025, organised by the Hyderabad Runners Society, has become the first marathon in India to receive the prestigious World Athletics – Athletics for a Better World (ABW) Silver Standard. Valid for three years, this international recognition honours sporting events that create a meaningful positive impact on the environment, communities and society. In a significant global recognition, the NMDC Hyderabad Marathon 2025 has earned a place alongside some of the world's most prestigious athletics events for its sustainability initiatives. The marathon now stands in distinguished company with the Boston Marathon (USA), Generali Berliner Halbmarathon (Germany), Golden Gala (Italy), Wanda Diamond League Xiamen (China), and BAUHAUS-Galan (Sweden)—events renowned not only for sporting excellence but also for their commitment to environmental responsibility. This achievement places Hyderabad on the global sustainability map of athletics and reinforces India's growing leadership in organizing world-class sporting events that balance performance, community engagement and environmental stewardship. From Boston to Berlin, Rome to Hyderabad, the NMDC Hyderabad Marathon has demonstrated that Indian events can match global benchmarks in sustainability and responsible event management. Key initiatives that contributed to this achievement include a Zero

Waste to Landfill approach, ensuring that all waste was segregated and either composted, converted into biogas or recycled. Single-use plastics were eliminated through the use of biodegradable cornstarch plates, wooden cutlery and recyclable paper cups, while waste reduction measures such as reusable drinking glasses, improved food planning and a voluntary "No Tee Shirt" option—chosen by nearly 30% of participants—helped minimize unnecessary consumption. The event achieved 100% recycling of water bottles used at the stadium, while all flex banners were upcycled into useful products through a partnership with Goonj. Green mobility was encouraged through the deployment of over 100 buses for participant transportation and the use of electric vehicles for elite runners and volunteers. Environmental stewardship extended beyond the venue, with month-long air quality monitoring and inspections undertaken to identify and eliminate garbage dumping and waste-burning hotspots along race routes. The marathon also generated meaningful social impact by engaging GHMC Safai Saathis and local ragpickers in waste management activities, thereby supporting livelihoods and promoting inclusive participation. Further reinforcing its sustainability commitment, the event featured eco-friendly trophies made entirely from agricultural waste, sourced nearly 75% of its products and services from local businesses, and conducted extensive

sustainability awareness campaigns in partnership with GHMC, with specially abled individuals playing a prominent role in inspiring thousands of runners and spectators to embrace environmentally responsible practices. These initiatives were independently evaluated under the World Athletics ABW framework across planning, implementation, documentation and measurable impact. The marathon scored 84 points, earning the coveted Silver Standard. Rajesh Vetcha, Race Director, NMDC Hyderabad Marathon, said: "A marathon can do much more than bring people together to run. It can reduce waste, support communities, protect the environment and inspire better habits. This recognition belongs to every runner, volunteer, sponsor, partner and supporter who helped make this achievement possible. Venkat Ankam, Sustainability Lead, NMDC Hyderabad Marathon, said: This award reflects hundreds of thoughtful decisions made across every aspect of the marathon—from eliminating single-use plastics and achieving zero waste to landfill, to supporting Safai Saathis and ragpickers, promoting public transport, reducing unnecessary consumption and creating awareness. Our goal was to show that a world-class sporting event can also create a lasting positive impact on people, the city and the environment. We hope this inspires many more sporting events across India.

## BCCI congratulates Indian women on historic Lord's Test win

**Lord :** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) congratulated the Indian women's cricket team on scripting history with a memorable 270-run victory over England in the one-off Test at Lord's Cricket Ground. Winning a Test match at the Home of Cricket is a landmark achievement for any cricketer. For this young Indian side, it is a defining moment that reflects the remarkable growth of women's cricket in the country and the resilience, skill and character the team continues to display on the world stage. BCCI President Mithun Manhas said: "This is one of the finest moments in the history of Indian women's cricket. To win a Test match at Lord's is incredibly special and is a reflection of the courage, discipline and belief this team has shown throughout the contest. They embraced the occasion, played with tremendous character and made the entire nation proud. I would like to acknowledge the astute leadership of our former Honorary Secretary and current ICC Chairman, Mr Jay Shah, whose resolute commitment to the growth of women's cricket has



helped lay the foundation for achievements such as this. On behalf of the BCCI, I congratulate Harmanpreet Kaur, the players, coaches and support staff on a truly unforgettable achievement." BCCI Honorary Secretary Devajit Saikia said: "This historic victory is the result of years of sustained investment and belief in women's cricket. The BCCI has remained committed to creating the right environment for our women cricketers to succeed through

stronger domestic structures, enhanced opportunities and greater professional support. I would also like to acknowledge the visionary leadership of our former Honorary Secretary and current ICC Chairman, Mr Jay Shah, whose landmark initiatives, including pay parity for centrally contracted women cricketers, enhanced match fees for domestic women cricketers and the launch of the Women's Premier League, have transformed the landscape of

women's cricket in India. Today's achievement at Lord's is a proud reflection of those efforts and, above all, the extraordinary dedication and hard work of our players and support staff." The BCCI congratulated the players, coaches, support staff and everyone associated with the Indian women's cricket team on a remarkable triumph that will inspire generations of cricketers and further strengthen the growth of women's cricket in India.

## Jacob Bethell to open as England announce playing eleven for first ODI against India

**Birmingham:** Batting all-rounder Jacob Bethell is set to open the batting alongside Ben Duckett as England announced their playing eleven for the opening One-day International (ODI) of the three-match series against India, to be played at Edgbaston in Birmingham on Tuesday. The match will also mark a momentous personal milestone for wicketkeeper-batter Jos Buttler, who will be making his 200th ODI appearance. Buttler, a vital cog in England's white-ball set-up, made his 50-over international debut against Pakistan in Dubai back on February 21, 2012, and has amassed 5,515 runs so far at an average of 39.11, including hitting 11 centuries and 29 fif-

ties. The decision to elevate the young and dynamic Bethell, who has made 21 ODI appearances so far, to the top of the order signals England's intention to find a stable opening partner for Duckett. Interestingly, Bethell is all set to become Duckett's fifth opening partner in recent times, following stints by Phil Salt, Jamie Smith, Zak Crawley, and Rehan Ahmed. Harry Brook-led England have also opted for a spin-heavy bowling combination in Will Jacks, Liam Dawson, and Adil Rashid to stifle the robust Indian batting lineup, featuring the likes of captain Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and KL Rahul. Jofra Archer, who had a good time in the 4-0 T20I series win,



is back in the ODI set-up for the first time since November last year and will handle fast-bowling duties with Josh Tongue, which means there's no

place for Gus Atkinson. Following the series opener at Edgbaston, India and England will play further ODIs in Cardiff (July 16) and Lord's (July 19).

## Japan Open badminton: Satwik-Chirag return from injury to lead Indian campaign in Tokyo



**Tokyo:** India's top badminton stars will be back in action at the BWF Japan Open Super 750, beginning Tuesday at the Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium, with the return of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty headlining the country's campaign. The tournament, carrying a prize purse of USD 950,000, is a key stop on the BWF World Tour as players chase crucial ranking points ahead of next month's World Championships in New Delhi and the Asian Games later this year. The spotlight will be on Satwik and Chirag, who return for the first time since the Indonesia Open in June, where Satwik aggravated a shoulder injury. The setback forced the former Asian Games champions to miss four tournaments, halting their momentum soon after they snapped a two-year BWF World Tour title

drought by winning the Singapore Open in May. Seeded third, the world No. 4 pair will begin their campaign against Denmark's Mads Vestergaard and Daniel Lundgaard. India's men's doubles challenge also includes MR Arjun and Hariharan Amsakarunan, who arrive in Tokyo after consecutive quarter-final finishes in Indonesia and Australia. In men's singles, Lakshya Sen returns after his Indonesia Open appearance and opens against Japan's Kenta Watanabe, while Ayush Shetty faces a stern first-round test against former world champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand. Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu, who has not competed since reaching the Australian Open semi-finals last month, will begin her campaign against Malaysia's Wong Ling Ching. Youngster Unnati Hooda will face Chi-

nese Taipei's Huang Yu-Hsun in the opening round. India's mixed doubles hopes rest with Olympian Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila, alongside Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika Shivani Gadde. However, the country will have no representation in women's doubles after Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand Pullela withdrew ahead of the tournament. The field boasts several of the sport's biggest names, including world No. 1 Shi Yu Qi, Anders Antonsen, Kunlavut Vitidsarn, and Kodai Naraoka in men's singles, while defending champion An Se Young, Wang Zhi Yi, Chen Yu Fei, and four-time winner Akane Yamaguchi headline the women's draw. India is yet to win a Japan Open title, and the contingent will be eager to end that drought while building momentum ahead of two of the biggest events on the 2026 badminton calendar.



# No Actress Deserves the Iron Leg Tag: Bhagyashri

Celebrating the success of Lenin, her first clean commercial hit, Bhagyashri Borse turned emotional while reflecting on the criticism she faced earlier in her career. In a recent interview, she opened up about being unfairly labelled an Iron Leg after a couple of films failed. The actress revealed that she heard such comments after Kantha and Andhra King Taluka did not perform as expected. She said it is common for people to blame heroines after consecutive failures, but such judgments are neither fair nor justified. Bhagyashri pointed out that actors do not have complete control over the filmmaking process. She explained that crucial decisions regarding editing, screenplay changes and even the final cut are made by the director and producers, leaving actors with very little control. She added that if she were involved in every major creative decision alongside the hero, director and producer, then she



would accept equal responsibility for a film's result. Until then, she believes such labels have no meaning.

Bhagyashri's candid remarks have resonated with many. After finally tasting success with Lenin, she hopes audiences

stop judging actresses based solely on a film's box office result and recognize that cinema is always a team effort.

## Will Varun Tej Revive Chiru's Vishwambhara?

Varun Tej's Korean Kanakaraju is all set to hit the screens on August 7, 2026. The makers released the teaser today, and it features a very interesting backdrop. Varun plays a fun character with multiple shades, which has caught the audience's attention.

UV Creations has bankrolled the film, and if it hits the bull's-eye, the production house will breathe a huge sigh of relief. The banner is going through a tough phase and needs to score a hit. If the Varun Tej starrer becomes a success, it will give UV Creations renewed energy and could help them fast-track their much-awaited biggie, Vishwambhara, which has been in the making for a very long time and is yet to lock its release date. Chiranjeevi plays the lead role in Vishwambhara, and he too would love to see the film released as soon as possible. UV Creations has backed several big



films, but when it comes to Vishwambhara, things have not gone entirely as planned. The graphics work is being redone,

and the makers are yet to lock an OTT deal, both of which have delayed the film significantly. As of now, the banner's hopes are

pinned on Korean Kanakaraju, and the success of this crazy entertainer could bring UV Creations back into the game.

## Rayalaseema Slang Is Defining Character Arcs In Tollywood

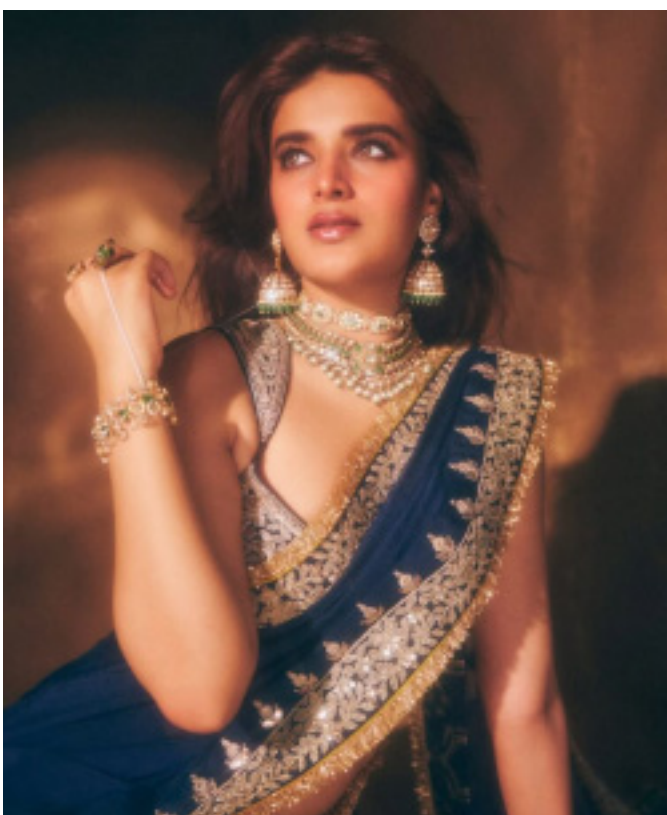
In the late 1990s and early 2000s, most Telugu films had a Rayalaseema backdrop, and many of them ended up as smash hits. However, the faction genre became so overused that filmmakers gradually moved away from the slang and setting. After a long gap, though, the Rayalaseema backdrop is making a comeback, and this time it has become a defining character trait for many protagonists. Going into details, Samantha's blockbuster Maa Inti Bangaaram and Akhil's recent hit Lenin prominently featured the Rayalaseema dialect. The protagonists of both films delivered the slang effectively, and audiences lapped it up. Interestingly, this dialect will also be used extensively in Anil Ravipudi's upcoming film featuring Venkatesh and Kalyan Ram. The faction-based comedy is set against a Rayalaseema backdrop, and the makers are expected to create plenty of fun within this setting. Knowing Anil Ravipudi, he will likely use the dialect in a hilarious manner and generate solid comedy. Whether in serious dramas or comedies, the Rayalaseema slang is making a strong comeback and has been adding significant weight to lead characters in recent films. It remains to be seen what kind of films will be made with this backdrop and dialect in the days to come.



## Nidhhi Agerwal Proves Ethnic Wear Is Her Forte

Nidhhi Agerwal is back in the spotlight, and this time it's not about box office numbers, it's about pure style. The actress recently dropped a stunning new photoshoot draped in a deep royal blue saree, paired with heavy gold-thread embroidery, a statement choker, jhumkas, and a bold red lip that screamed old-world glamour. The look is regal, elegant, and proves once again that Nidhhi knows exactly how to switch gears, be it ethnic drapes or edgy two-piece outfits, she pulls off every avatar with equal ease.

This comes at a time when Nidhhi is trying to shift focus back to her fashion game after her last big-ticket release, "The Raja Saab" alongside Prabhas, turned out to be a massive box office disappointment and got trolled heavily online. Looks like the diva is choosing glam over gloom.



## Manasa Varanasi's Soft Waves Complete Glam Look



Former Miss India Manasa Varanasi may not have had the box office outcome she wanted with Couple Friendly, but she's making up for it in style. Her songs from the film went viral for their sweet, romantic chemistry with Santosh Sobhan, even though the movie itself failed to connect with audiences at large. Now, the Hyderabad-born actress-model is trending for an entirely different reason, a series of glamorous new photos that have taken social media by storm. Dressed in a floral off-shoulder outfit, Manasa's effortless poses and radiant look have fans and Tollywood buzzing, proving her star power goes well beyond one film's performance. The former engineer-turned-actress, known for her Miss India World 2020 crown, currently has no upcoming movies announced, but if these viral pictures are anything to go by, offers may not be far behind.

## Sandeep Vanga Heaps Praises On Rao Bahadur



Director Sandeep Reddy Vanga has come out in strong support of Satya Dev's Rao Bahadur, showering praise on the film after watching it and urging audiences to experience it on the big screen.

Taking to X, the filmmaker described Rao Bahadur as one of those rare cinematic experiences that rekindles the love for movies. Sandeep appealed to every genuine film enthusiast to dedicate three hours to the film. "I have one request to every genuine film lover... give this film three hours of your life. It deserves your attention, your patience, and your applause." Vanga has special praise for director Venkatesh Maha, lauding him for crafting the film with remarkable precision while staying within financial limitations. He noted that making a film of this nature demands immense courage and unwavering conviction. The Animal director also heaped praise on Satya Dev, calling the actor sensational for his performance. He remarked that Rao Bahadur succeeds without unnecessary noise or shortcuts, describing it as pure filmmaking. He also congratulated the entire team, adding that films like Rao Bahadur deserve to be celebrated and supported by audiences.