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## Ayodhya Ram Temple Gets Air Force Veteran As CEO, 3 New Members



**Ayodhya:** Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra (Retired) has been selected as the first chief executive officer of the Ram Temple Trust from a long list of over 5,000 applicants. The former officer held several commanding positions in the Indian Air Force and was the chief of its Western Command during Operation Sindoor. He will have on his hands the onerous task of making the management and financial accountability of the temple robust, which had been hit by a debilitating donation theft controversy earlier this year.

Air Marshal Mishra was commissioned in the Indian Air Force as a fighter pilot in December 1986. He retired in May 2026 after serving for over 38 years. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Pune,

Air Force Test Pilots School, Bangalore, Air Command and Staff College, USA and the Royal College of Defence Studies, UK.

Mishra's appointment is part of the structural changes brought in the Ram Temple Trust following the donation theft in Ayodhya. Three new members have been added to the trust. They are: Madan Mohan Pandey from Ayodhya, Mahesh Bhagchandka from Delhi and Nirmala Yadav from Shikohabad.

Eight people, mostly linked to the counting of donations, have been arrested. The trust's general secretary, Champat Rai, also resigned in the wake of the row. The search panel was headed by retired judge Pramod Kohli and included retired Lieutenant General Vishnukant Chaturvedi and

former scientist Suresh Haware. The applicants were evaluated based on a 600-mark framework. The final interviews of 16 candidates took place in Ayodhya on August 11 and 12. A trust official told news agency PTI that "three highly qualified professionals" had been recommended. They were evaluated on parameters like institutional leadership, management expertise, integrity and vision required to head an institution of national and international significance. The former IAF officer met all these criteria. Air Marshal (Retired) Mishra is known for his exceptional leadership. He has served as Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Operations), commanding officer of a fighter squadron, Chief Test Pilot at the Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE), Air Officer commanding two frontline air bases, Director (Operational Planning and Assessment Group), Principal Director (ASR), Commandant ASTE and Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Doctrine, Organisation and Training).

## "ALARMING APATHY"

### India Condemns Century-Old Temple's Demolition In Pakistan

**New Delhi:** New Delhi also said that Pakistan must take immediate remedial measures to restore the "desecrated temple" and fulfil its primary obligation to guarantee the safety, security and well-being of all its minority citizens and their cultural heritage. India on Wednesday unequivocally condemned the reported destruction of a Hindu temple in the Narowal region of Pakistan, demanding that Islamabad promptly investigate the

incident and hold those responsible fully accountable. "We have noted with deep concern the disturbing reports of the destruction of a historic Hindu temple in village Siraj, Narowal, Pakistan. We unequivocally condemn this reprehensible act of vandalism against a century-old minority place of worship," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "The apparent apathy of authorities and failure to protect this century-

old temple is alarming," he said. Jaiswal said such incidents are a "stark reminder" of the continuing "vulnerability" of minority communities and the "egregious violations" of their religious freedoms and places of worship in Pakistan. Jaiswal was responding to media queries on the incident. "We call upon the Government of Pakistan to conduct a prompt and transparent investigation into this incident and ensure that those responsible are held fully accountable."



### Nepal Floods: Death Toll Crosses 1,050, Nearly 4,000 Missing; PM Shah Cites Climate Change

**Kathmandu:** At least 1,050 people have died in devastating floods in Nepal, while nearly 4,000 remain missing, the country's disaster management authority said on Tuesday. Security forces continued to recover bodies from eight districts as rescue operations remained underway. Nearly 12,000 people have been rescued, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA). Prime Minister Balendra Shah on Tuesday linked the devastating floods to climate change. The flood-

waters entered Rasuwa through the Bhotekoshi River, which borders Tibet, last week. "There is no doubt that climate change has caused this disaster, as it has been confirmed that the temperature in the Himalayan region has increased by 1.8 degrees," Shah said in a social media post. Shah said climate change was a global challenge and disaster response remained a global responsibility. "This incident points towards the growing risk we have to bear as the consequences of climate change in the Himalayas," he said. The

flash floods, triggered by a collapse or avalanche of ice and rock near the Nepal-Tibet border, devastated towns and villages across northern and central Nepal on Aug 26. The Bhotekoshi River, which flows south from the Himalayan border region, carried the floodwaters downstream, sweeping away homes, vehicles, roads and bridges. The floods also damaged hydropower projects. According to the NDRR MA, 321 bodies were recovered in Chitwan district, the highest among the eight affected districts. Nawalparasi



East recorded 216 bodies, followed by Nawalparasi West with 170, Nuwakot with 95, Gorkha with 65, Dhading with 57, Rasuwa with 41 and

Tanahun with 38. Rescue and recovery operations continued as authorities searched for nearly 4,000 people who remained missing.

## Several Fall Ill in Gollaguppa; Pawan Orders Medicines to Be Sent to Lab

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, September 2:** Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan directed officials to immediately conduct medical examinations for all residents of Gollaguppa village in Etapaka mandal of Polavaram district. He also instructed them to send the malaria tablets (chloroquine) distributed to the villagers to a laboratory for testing. On Wednesday, he spoke to the district Collector over the phone and enquired about the death of a seven-year-old girl. He sought details about the incident and expressed his grief over the death of the Class 2 student. He conveyed his deep condolences to the girl's family. The District Collector informed the Deputy Chief Minister that a special medical team was continu-



ing to monitor the situation in the village. As many as 53 people who took tablets for malaria prevention fell ill. Several people were affected and are undergoing treatment in Bhadrachalam in Telangana as well as Lakshimpuram. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has already reviewed the incident and directed officials to provide better treatment to

the affected persons. He also ordered a comprehensive inquiry into the incident. In Gollaguppa, chloroquine tablets were distributed to 74 people as a preventive measure against malaria. Several people reportedly fell ill after taking the tablets. A seven-year-old Class 2 student, Jamuna, died after reportedly suffering an adverse reaction to the tablets.

## 'Axe Party' Trying to Steal Credit for Everything: CM Chandrababu

**Anakapalli District, September 2:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu said that all rivers in the state would be interlinked. He said the government would repay its debt to Telugu Talli by providing water to every acre.

On Wednesday, the Chief Minister released Godavari water to North Andhra and performed Jalaharathi. Speaking on the occasion, he said they had brought the Godavari River to North Andhra. He noted that the Godavari had travelled across rivers, streams and waterways to reach the region. He said the Krishna River was diverted through the Veligonda Project to

provide water to drought-hit Markapur. He added that the Krishna had made its way through the Nallamala hills. Despite overcoming numerous challenges, Godavari water had finally been brought to North Andhra, he said.

**We Will Make the State Prosperous**

CM Chandrababu said Rs.4,000 crore had been spent on the Polavaram Left Canal. He said the government would transform the state into a prosperous one. Describing the water achievement as a victory for the people, he termed irrigation projects the "modern temples" of the state.

He said water was essential for security and confidence in the future. Water availability would also attract industries and create employment opportunities, he explained.

He said that after coming to power in 2014, his government had focused on the Polavaram project. By 2019, 72 per cent of the Polavaram works had been completed, he said. He added that the project was monitored every Monday. He alleged that the "Axe Party" came to power in 2019 and became a curse for Polavaram. He accused the party of allowing the diaphragm wall to be washed away due to negligence.

**Polavaram Freed from Its Curse Under Our Government**



CM Chandrababu expressed anger that the "Axe Party" had not paid even a single rupee to Polavaram project displaced families. He said that after the coalition government came to power, Polavaram had been

"freed from its curse." He announced that 12 projects would be completed and dedicated to the nation by 2028. He said the dreams of North Andhra had gained wings after the coalition government came to power.

## We Will Develop Kurnool into a Modern City: Minister TG Bharat



Pattabhi Ram, District Collector Siri and Municipal Commissioner Challa Obulesu participated in the programme.

The Minister said that difficulties were being faced earlier due to poor maintenance of the vehicles used for garbage collection. Following the directions of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, new electric vehicles are now being introduced in their place. He said using electric vehicles as an alternative to petrol and diesel vehicles would help protect the environment while making garbage collection and transportation faster and easier. Door-to-door garbage collection is already being carried out in Kurnool

city, and the new vehicles would make the system more efficient, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister TG Bharat said, "The coalition government is giving top priority to the development of Kurnool city. We are establishing modern garbage collection systems in all municipal corporations across the state. A 15-MW Waste-to-Energy plant will be established within the limits of Kurnool Municipal Corporation. Nearly ₹140 crore has already been allocated for the development of the corporation, and more than ₹100 crore will be sanctioned for development works including parks, roads and drainage.

## Pawan's Efforts to End Misrule Are Unforgettable: Kesineni Chinni

**NTR District, September 2:** Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Konidela Pawan Kalyan's birthday celebrations were held on a grand scale in Tiruvuru town of NTR district. Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) participated in the celebrations organised by Jana Sena Party workers at the party office in Tiruvuru. He cut a large cake and conveyed birthday greetings to the Deputy Chief Minister. Speaking on the occasion, the MP said Pawan Kalyan's efforts to bring an end to misrule would never be forgotten.

He praised Pawan Kalyan as a great leader who believed that the state could develop only when the alliance parties worked together without expecting



personal benefits. He urged the youth to take Pawan Kalyan as their role model and follow his path. He made it clear that everything Pawan Kalyan does is aimed at protecting the interests of the state and its people. He said Pawan Kalyan was a great leader who stood by the TDP even during difficult times and added that such lead-

ership was very much needed in the state. MP Kesineni Chinni said the friendship between Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan was remarkable, and urged all alliance leaders to move forward unitedly on the strength of this friendship.

## Don't Play Politics Using Farmers as Pawns: MLA Rajasekhara Reddy

**Srisailem, September 2:** Srisailem MLA Buddha Rajasekhara Reddy alleged that former MLA Shilpa Chakrapani Reddy and his son Ravi Kishore Reddy were staging dramas in the name of besieging the Velugodu Reservoir to demand Srisailem water.

He said it had already been made clear six months ago that water availability would be affected due to the impact of El Niño and that farmers should therefore focus on alternative crops. However, he said that YSRCP leaders were misleading farmers by using them as a front for protests demanding Srisailem water. He advised that it was inappropriate to stage political dramas by using farmers to protect their political existence. Rajasekhara Reddy questioned what the YSRCP had done for farmers' welfare



during its tenure if it genuinely cared about farmers. He challenged Shilpa Chakrapani Reddy to explain how many times water was supplied to farmers when he served as an MLA. "During the YSRCP government, when we approached then Irrigation Minister Anil Kumar Yadav to resolve the water problems in Kurnool, what did you do? Didn't you stop the farmers with the help of the police? Where was your sincerity then?" the MLA questioned.

# EDITORIAL

## Welfare for the Eligible... Welfare for the State

The poverty index reports released by NITI Aayog reveal the revolutionary social transformation that has taken place in Telangana. According to the data, poverty in Telangana stood at 13.18 percent in 2015-16. As a result of government welfare schemes and economic development, it declined to 5.88 percent by 2019-21. NITI Aayog estimates that by 2022-23, it had declined further to 3.76 percent. This means that poverty in Telangana has fallen by nearly 70 percent over the past decade. This is certainly a matter of pride for the state.

However, this is where a natural administrative contradiction arises. When nearly 70 percent of families have come out of poverty and achieved better living standards, why has the number of beneficiaries of welfare schemes intended for the poor not declined proportionately? This contradiction is mainly due to certain systemic shortcomings. A recent survey audit of Telangana's social security pensions (Aasara) has revealed eye-opening facts. Of approximately 20,000 to 25,000 pension beneficiaries who were physically verified, more than 2,000 — nearly 10 percent — were found to be ineligible. There are currently around 42.67 lakh pension beneficiaries in the state. If this 10 percent leakage is analysed on a larger scale, the extent of wasteful expenditure being incurred by the government under various schemes becomes clear. The government spends around Rs.14,000 crore annually on Aasara pensions. If 10 percent of the beneficiaries are assumed to be ineligible, nearly Rs.1,400 crore is being misused every year.

Poverty eradication and social security are fundamental responsibilities of any democratic government. However, welfare should not become a system that makes citizens permanently dependent on the government. It should serve as a ladder that helps people move out of poverty and achieve self-reliance. A detailed analysis of Telangana's economy, current budget figures and the implementation of social security schemes makes it clear that instead of abolishing welfare, there is a need to cleanse and redirect it towards those who genuinely need it. An examination of Telangana's budget figures for the financial year 2026-27 makes both the immense importance given to welfare in government expenditure and the growing financial constraints evident. The state's total budget size is Rs.3.24 lakh crore. Although this indicates the expansion of the state's economy, a deeper analysis reveals imbalances within it. The fiscal deficit in the budget stands at a massive Rs.58,459 crore. This means that the government has to depend heavily on borrowings from the open market and other loans to meet its day-to-day and development expenditure. More worrying is that nearly 75 to 80 percent of the total budget is being spent under revenue expenditure. A major share of expenditure goes towards government employees' salaries, pensions of retired employees, interest payments on existing debts, various welfare schemes and subsidies. As a result, capital expenditure, which generates real returns and future revenue for the state, is restricted to around 15 to 20 percent. The funds available for roads, irrigation projects, infrastructure required by industries, modern hospitals and educational institutions have consequently become very limited. The poverty index reports released by NITI Aayog reveal the revolutionary social transformation that has taken place in Telangana. According to the data, poverty in Telangana stood at 13.18 percent in 2015-16. As a result of government welfare schemes and economic development, it declined to 5.88 percent by 2019-21. By 2022-23, NITI Aayog estimated that it had declined further to 3.76 percent. This means that poverty in Telangana has fallen by nearly 70 percent over the past decade. This is certainly a matter of pride for the state. However, this is where a natural administrative contradiction arises. When nearly 70 percent of families have come out of poverty and achieved better living standards, why has the number of beneficiaries of welfare schemes intended for the poor not declined proportionately? This contradiction is mainly due to certain systemic shortcomings. First, even when the economic condition of a beneficiary who has once entered a welfare scheme improves, they are not removed from the beneficiary list due to political considerations and fears of losing vote-bank support. Second, there is no mechanism to review changes in beneficiaries' income, assets and living standards every year. Third, land records under Dharani, vehicle registration data and income-tax payment information are not integrated with welfare scheme databases.

A recent survey audit of Telangana's social security pensions (Aasara) has revealed eye-opening facts. Of approximately 20,000 to 25,000 pension beneficiaries who were physically verified, more than 2,000 — nearly 10 percent — were found to be ineligible. There are currently around 42.67 lakh pension beneficiaries in the state. If this 10 percent leakage is analysed on a larger scale, the extent of wasteful expenditure being incurred by the government under various schemes becomes clear. The government spends around Rs.14,000 crore annually on Aasara pensions. If 10 percent of the beneficiaries are assumed to be ineligible, nearly Rs.1,400 crore is being misused every year. With this amount alone, the state could construct three to four model IIT/NEET-level educational institutions or three regional super-speciality hospitals every year. Similarly, around Rs.10,000 crore is spent annually on free electricity and fuel subsidies. A 10 percent leakage in this expenditure would amount to Rs.1,000 crore. With these funds, more than 400 kilometres of four-lane roads could be constructed every year. Of the Rs.20,000 crore spent annually through other direct cash-transfer schemes such as Rythu Bandhu, Cheyutha, Mahalakshmi and scholarships, if 10 percent goes to ineligible beneficiaries, it would mean a waste of Rs.2,000 crore every year. If even 10 percent of ineligible beneficiaries can be eliminated in these sectors alone, the government could save more than Rs.4,000 crore annually. No democratic government can abruptly stop welfare schemes, nor would doing so be desirable. However, a permanent solution can be found by implementing a "welfare graduation" model that guides people from welfare towards self-reliance. For this, land records, vehicle registrations, electricity consumption and income-tax details should be brought onto a single integrated digital platform based on Aadhaar numbers.

# What 'Lalmunia Ki Mai' Can Teach Us About Feminism And Smashing Patriarchy

There are many things many of us take for granted, so much so that we rarely pause to think about what they mean to someone living a very different life. Even the most ordinary things can mean something entirely different depending on where and how you live. Take the toilet. It is so basic, so ordinary, that we barely give it a thought. It is simply there. But what happens when that basic necessity simply isn't there? Imagine a young woman in a very different setting. Let us call her Lalmunia. She is nineteen years old and has just been married to a young, healthy man from a nearby village. The wedding is over. Everyone is happy. She has arrived at her new home and is beginning her first night as a married woman. At some point that night, Lalmunia needs to pee. She looks for the toilet. There isn't one. Her husband shyly tells her that there is no toilet in the house. She will have to go to the nearby field, land that belongs to another family. She must go quietly, relieve herself, and return before anyone notices. If someone from the family that owns the field sees her, they may shout at her, abuse her, or tell her to leave.

And this is not just about that one night. From now on, Lalmunia has to think about when she can pee, when she can defecate, whether there is enough darkness, whether someone might be watching, and whether she has someone to accompany her. She cannot simply walk into a bathroom whenever she needs to. Daylight is no longer just daylight. An empty field is no longer just an empty field. Going to the toilet is no longer a simple bodily act. For her, the toilet is not merely a toilet. What looks like a basic, almost invisible part

of everyday life to one person can mean privacy, safety, and dignity to another. Lalmunia was not one girl. In 2014, there were roughly 11 crore rural households in India without a toilet. Behind that number were crores of women like Lalmunia for whom going to the toilet was not a private, ordinary act, but something that had to be planned around darkness, safety, other people's land, and the possibility of being seen.

Someone eventually decided that Lalmunia's situation could not simply be accepted as the way things were. In 2014, Narendra Modi made sanitation a national priority through the Swachh Bharat and Har Ghar Toilet Mission, with the goal of bringing toilets to every rural household and ending open defecation. In the years that followed, more than 10 crore household toilets were constructed under the rural mission. This is one of the ways Modi empowered women, practised feminism and smashed patriarchy, not through slogans, not through speeches or writing theses, but simply by doing what needed to be done. Let's read another story, this time about another woman. Let's call her Lalmunia ki Mai, the mother of Lalmunia. Lalmunia ki Mai sells vegetables in a nearby town. She takes a small amount of cash to the mandi, buys vegetables and sells them at retail. She has no bank account and little access to formal credit. When she needs money, she borrows from a moneylender at high interest. Her business remains small because she cannot access affordable capital.

Whatever she earns, she hands over to her husband. For her own needs, she has to ask him for money. She earns, but she does not control her earn-

ings. If government support is available, it rarely reaches her directly. And we all know what used to happen to government money on the way. 85% of it simply vanished! Then came the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana in 2014. For women like Lalmunia ki Mai, who earned money but had little control over it, a bank account in her own name changed the equation. By 2026, nearly 59 crore Jan Dhan accounts had been opened, of which more than 32 crores were held by women. Banking was no longer something meant only for people with formal jobs, large savings, or connections.

Direct Benefit Transfer took this a step further. Aadhar and Mobile linkages helped. Government benefits could now go directly into a woman's bank account instead of passing through layers of intermediaries. Schemes such as Ujjwala also put a basic household necessity, a cooking-gas connection, directly in the hands of women, with more than 10 crore connections provided to poor households. PM Awas Yojana strengthened women's economic and social security by encouraging or requiring homes to be registered in women's names, giving millions of women a formal asset, greater security and a stronger say within the household. The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana went a step further by giving small entrepreneurs access to collateral-free institutional credit. By 2025, more than 50 crore loans had been sanctioned, with women accounting for around 70% of the loan accounts. The Lakhpati Didi initiative seeks to help rural women in self-help groups raise their annual household income to at least 1 lakh rupees through skills, enterprise, and access to



finance. More than 3 crore women had become Lakhpati Didis. This is what real empowerment looks like: not merely telling women to be liberated, but giving them privacy, a bank account, direct access to money, and greater control over everyday choices.

This is where Rahul Gandhi's language of "smashing patriarchy", including his recent remarks in Pune, represents a very different idea of women's empowerment. It starts from the assumption that women everywhere are primarily trapped in a social order controlled by fathers, husbands, and sons, and that liberation therefore means breaking these structures of control. But for crores of women like Lalmunia or Lalmunia ki Mai, the barriers may be much more concrete: no toilet, no bank account, no independent access to money, no house in her name, no affordable credit, and no oppor-

tunity to expand her livelihood. Her empowerment begins when these constraints are removed.

There is something elitist about assuming emancipation must first be expressed through ideological slogans. A woman who gets a toilet, a bank account, a house in her own name, a gas connection, a business loan, or money directly into her account gains something tangible. That is a different, more grounded idea of feminism. It does not ask a woman to declare herself free. It gives her the means to exercise that freedom herself. Let me conclude. Lalmunia's husband loves her. These days, he sometimes asks her if she can spare some cash. And Lalmunia, if she is in a good mood, simply smiles and transfers the money to his phone through UPI. That, too, is what empowerment looks like: the freedom to say yes or no, and to have some money that is strictly her own.

# China's Quiet Power Grab Is Hiding In Plain Sight

This time around, the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is going to be viewed rather differently. Earlier, hardly anyone noticed its somewhat lengthy and verbose statements. This time, however, every foreign correspondent worth his salt is going to be glued to its every move, every handshake, and body language. And that is not just because of the Iran war, or the Ukrainian escalation, though those things are important. It is that Chinese President Xi Jinping is to arrive in Washington at the end of this month, after his visit to India. The equations built before that, in India, Egypt, and the massive SCO meeting, will matter in how the meeting with US President Donald Trump turns out. And that, in turn, will feed back into how everyone else weighs their options. It is like a series of jigsaw puzzle pieces falling into place, in unpredictable ways.

***An Economic Maze, With One Anchor***

First, the SCO itself. It is all very impressive upfront. Some 20-plus countries are meeting at the summit, which includes not just the member states - Russia, China, Belarus, India, Iran, Pakistan, and four Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan - but also some 15 dialogue partners or observers; after last year's Tianjin summit, all have been converted to 'Partners'. That list includes Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the UAE, among others. Three aspects are common among all members, and, increasingly, the 'Partners'. All are neighbours of China, and for all, it is their biggest trading partner. That means this is a huge Chinese-dominated economic maze. The third is that almost all are also operating Chinese equipment - with Uzbekistan recently opting to buy J-10 CE fighter jets - adding to an existing roster of Chinese-made weaponry. Nota-

bly, this buy replaces ageing Soviet-era weaponry. Russian equipment is nowhere to be seen, as it struggles with replacing its own inventory. In short, China is the top dog in this grouping, and everyone knows it.

***'And So What?'***

The question is what it does about it. For that, a disaggregation of the Bishkek Declaration, which oddly, is available so far only in Russian, is indicative, even if the text itself meanders on about multiple issues - this being a consensus document. The text stresses the desirability of strengthening the UN, concedes with Iran, swears to help Afghanistan stabilise, and, rather surprisingly, comes down heavily on cross-border terrorism and drug trafficking. But if the existing cooperation on terrorism through the SCO centre for the purpose - the Regional Anti Terrorism Structure (RATS) - is any guide, it won't deliver much.

Even so, Beijing seems serious. It faces a massive drug misuse problem among its teens and has cracked some 12,000 cases so far in 2026. And - surprise! - it also cooperates closely with the US for interdiction. That means it is serious. It has also extended the list of precursors. Indian pharma companies had better watch out. A lot of those vital chemicals, deliberately or otherwise, are going from here.

But look at not just the Declaration but also 28 other documents signed, and a pattern emerges. The main document stresses connectivity, thus enhancing the movement of Chinese goods well beyond its borders. Then consider President Xi's speech. A key sentence is that it welcomes all "to take an active part in the 'Big Market for All: Export to China' event series to seize the opportunities on China's super-sized market". That's the exact opposite of what the US is doing.

But dig a little deeper, and you'll find that it's not that easy to export to China. In fact, an advisory from the Indian embassy warns of fraud and cheats, quite apart from high tariff barriers. No, China has no intention of doing the SCO members any favours. Quite the reverse.

Look also among the welter of mundane documents at an 'Action Plan (Roadmap) for the Development of Ports and Logistics Centers 2026-2030', and a 'Concept for the Establishment of Regional Data Processing Centers, Computing Capacities and the Development of the Artificial Intelligence Industry within the SCO'. Guess where those ports are going to be and whom they are likely to benefit. Pakistan will certainly see a boost in its already rapidly rising port capacities following the complete breakdown of Chabahar and other Iranian ports. And yes, the race for hugely environmentally damaging and power-hungry data centres has begun in the SCO as well, with the poorest countries likely to be targeted to expend their resources. In short, China is not very different from the exploitative US companies that look for foreign shores, including India, when they feel hemmed in by environmental laws of their own countries.

***What The SCO Has And Hasn't Done***

Now consider the SCO for what it has actually done to deal with the multiple crises that it outlines. On the face of it, it seems China has done nothing to help Iran in its corrosive war with the US. But then, a US force battering itself against the Iranians suits Beijing very well. Not only does it leave it free to exercise its 'rights' in Taiwan, but it also gives it an image of being the less destructive power. In fact, that's the central message in Bishkek. In addition, it has

managed to play Washington so well that its own oil shipments were earlier exempt from sanctions, while India was arm-twisted. There is also the mystery of how a battered Iran continues to produce drones, missiles, and all its sub-components. That help is detailed in a US report that notes not just continued oil exports, but also the supply of dual-use components by Beijing, even when it stops short of providing a formal defence commitment.

Simply put, China has the cake and eats it too. Chinese ships are now regularly docking at the one, dormant Gwadar port, and in Karachi, where goods are shipped via Gabb - part of six routes opened ostentatiously by Pakistan - to bypass sanctions on Iran. Other SCO members/partners are apparently involved in 'mediation' with Iran, which doesn't seem to be going anywhere. That includes not just Pakistan, but Turkey, Qatar, and the UAE. As for the Ukraine war, China has sworn a strong partnership with Russia, and buys its weapons. American 'sanctions' on Russia didn't prevent Turkey from getting a Russian nuclear plant, its very first. So no, SCO has done nothing to stop the wars, but, in fact, has encouraged them in a way.

***That Spotlight Visit***

Meanwhile, after a year of not stepping outside his country, barring a visit to North Korea, the Chinese president is on a roll, with a visit due to Egypt - his first in a decade - and then presumably to Delhi, before he lands in Washington in late September. China has also increased its presence along the Suez, and after years of doling out a few million to Afghanistan, has suddenly announced \$100,000 in aid to that beleaguered country. In terms of ground effect, multiply that by ten. Kabul will

now have its own priorities, and expect that Chinese companies will move in soon. While Chinese prowess still outstrips the US' - for instance, the ASPI Critical Technology Tracker found China leading in 69 of 74 tracked technologies against just five for the US - expect that Beijing will now be even more aggressive in its economic policy to address overcapacity, which will include attempts to strangle the Indian economy rather than encourage it.

India has to take that one lesson away from the SCO. Sure, we are the only democracy in the grouping, but that has less coinage in a world where dictators like Munir are feted. However, the reason India is at the high table, at the SCO or elsewhere, is because of that impressive 7.6% growth. That is also precisely what may be a problem going forward, with severe climate change impacting our vital agriculture sector, and poor power, logistics capabilities, and, let's face it, bureaucratic inertia and corruption. All of this has to be tackled literally on a war footing. The Ministry of External Affairs will have its ducks in a row before BRICS, which will also be focused on the economy.

The second takeaway stems from all this and is indicated in PM Modi's impassioned plea to Russia to end the war in Ukraine. That's not going to be easy, given that there are specific countries making sure the war goes on by supplying Ukraine with all manner of weaponry and encouraging it to retain a maximalist position.

But Russia has to come back into business, at least in Asia. There's no other pushback to Beijing. The biggest problem is getting Trump to see that. A quiet little reach-out to all concerned before that is strongly indicated.

## "Lights, Camera and INACTION"

*: Kharage slams PM Modi's GDP growth celebration; cites unemployment, price rise, inequality*



in higher education. Digital learning tools can help faculty members prepare lessons based on students' learning requirements, save teaching time and make complex concepts easier to understand.

The college noted that digital resources and 3D virtual laboratories would be particularly useful for students studying science subjects such as Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Such facilities can provide students with better conceptual understandings while helping them acquire

technology-oriented skills needed for the future.

The college also acknowledged the efforts of its alumnus Sri Kondepudi Sriiramachandra Rao, a student of Sri Ippagunta Mallikarjuna Rao, whose efforts contributed significantly to securing the CSR assistance from the Virchow Foundation.

The Foundation had extended its support to the college earlier as well, donating 15 HP desktop computers and a UPS system worth ₹11 lakh for skill development and digital learning facilities. The college management, teaching and non-teaching staff, and students conveyed their sincere gratitude to Sri M. Narayana Reddy and the Virchow Foundation for their continued support in strengthening digital education infrastructure at the institution.

**New Delhi :** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his celebration of India's 7.8 per cent GDP growth in the first quarter of FY27, alleging that common people continue to face unemployment, price rise and inequality. In a post shared on X, Kharge said, "Lights, Camera and INACTION. This is the story of Modi ji's PR when it comes to the Economy." "@narendra modi ji, You are saying that the country is celebrating GDP Growth. You may have that luxury, but the Aam Aadmi does NOT! Our Common people are burdened by 3 'U's and YOU are responsible for that!" he said.

Kharge listed the three "U"s as "Unprecedented Unemployment, Unbearable Price Rise & Unbridled Inequality". On unemployment, the Congress chief said, "Unemployment at a 50-year-high. 40% of young graduates jobless. 1 in 6 young Indians aged 15 to 29 unemployed in July 2026. The promise of 2 crore jobs every year lies shattered." On inflation, Kharge alleged, "Retail inflation at a 19 month high. Sugar, Onion, Tomato, Dal, Cooking Oil, Rice, Milk, every kitchen staple on fire. Petrol, Diesel, LPG and CNG is becoming unaffordable." "Middle class families are somehow battling to survive and the poor has given up hope," he added.

Kharge also attacked the government over wealth inequality, saying, "Inequality worse than British rule. The top 1% owns 40% of India's total wealth. The bottom 50% survives on a humiliating 15%." "Your government has engineered the greatest transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich in independent India's history. Rampant Crony Capitalism is your only Economic Policy," he alleged. The Congress president further alleged that the government had written off over Rs 16 lakh crore in corporate loans since 2014. "And in the latest jaw-dropping example, creditors recovered just Rs 6.5 crore against admitted claims of Rs 22,006 crore, giving a 99.97% haircut," Kharge said. "The nation has seen that the Prime Minister of India is functioning as a personal travel agent for a crony friend!" he added.

Kharge also criticised PM Modi's appeal to people to avoid unnecessary foreign travel and gold purchases. "Your repeated sermons of asking Indians not to buy gold and not to travel abroad shows the ground reality. Fact remains: Nothing has changed except your ability to LIE to the people!" he said. Kharge's remarks came after PM Modi hailed India's 7.8 per cent real GDP growth in the first quarter of FY27, calling it a reflection of the "collective strength" of the people and accusing the Opposition of "spreading despair". In a video message posted on X, PM Modi said the growth had come despite global challenges, including wars, crises and disrupted supply chains.

"7.8 per cent growth. The

country is filled with happiness. I congratulate the countrymen for their willpower, for their hard work. It is a reflection of a collective strength. The world is immersed in war. News of war is coming from all around. The world is surrounded by crises. The supply chain is completely disrupted. From the COVID period in 2020 until now, stability is not visible anywhere. Despite that, India is progressing at a pace. On the other hand, even within India, people immersed in the abyss of despair, jhoot ki goonj (echo of lies), are busy spreading despair all around. Crossing all these things, tearing through all those things, the country has achieved 7.8 per cent growth," PM Modi said.

"We have to maintain this speed. We also have to grow. And for this, it is very important to become a self-reliant India," PM Modi added. Calling for greater emphasis on domestic products and local consumption, he said, "The mantra of Swadeshi, Vocal for Local: foreign trips, if you go for sightseeing, should not be done. If you do weddings abroad, it should not be done. One should live the mantra of 'Wed in India'.

And if it's not necessary, then gold should not be bought either." "The more we emphasise Swadeshi, the more we emphasise self-reliance. I am sure that when 100 years of independence are completed, we will have over a developed India to our young generation," he said. "We will fulfil the dreams of our young generation today with our hard work. And therefore, come countrymen, let's not leave any stone turned in our hard work. Our policy is right, our intention is clear, and the strength of 140 crore countrymen is today unitedly taking the country to new heights," PM Modi added.

Urging people to celebrate the latest growth figures while also making a commitment to further development, he said, "Come, celebrate happiness as well, make a resolution as well, and to fulfil the resolution, walk with me." According to data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), India's real GDP grew 7.8 per cent in Q1 FY27, covering the April-June period. Real GDP was estimated at Rs 81.36 lakh crore in Q1 FY27, compared with Rs 75.46 lakh crore in the same quarter of FY26.

## CM Yogi's 'mafia left UP' claim false, gangsters coming in numbers and committing murders: Akhilesh Yadav



deployment of the indigenous Automatic Train Protection system, the Railways Ministry stated. The implementation of Kavach 4.0 will provide an advanced safety layer for train operations across the identified sections. Kavach is an indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system designed to enhance operational safety. It helps prevent Signal Passing at Danger (SPAD), automatically applies brakes when required to avert unsafe situations, controls train speed in critical conditions, and significantly reduces the risk of collisions, a release said.

The initiative forms part

of Indian Railways' continued efforts to expand Kavach coverage across its network and modernise railway signalling and train protection systems. In July, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed the Lok Sabha that Kavach Version 4.0 has been successfully commissioned on 2,633 route kilometres as of July 31. The deployment covers 1,423 route km on the Delhi-Mumbai corridor and 1,210 route km on the Delhi-Howrah corridor. "Kavach Ver. 4.0 is planned for large-scale deployment over Indian Railways," the reply said. According to the reply, trackside Kavach implementation work has been

taken up on 21,794 route kilometres covering the entire Golden Quadrilateral, Golden Diagonal, High Density Network, and other identified sections of Indian Railways. The government said key components installed under the Kavach programme include 11,547 km of optical fibre cable, 1,721 telecom towers, station data centres at 1,009 stations, trackside equipment covering 7,726 route kilometres and Kavach systems installed in 6,290 locomotives. Work has also been taken up to equip another 7,190 locomotives and 1,200 EMU/MEMU trains with the system.

**Lucknow :** Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday targeted the Uttar Pradesh government over law and order, alleging that criminals from other states have entered the state and accused the BJP government of shielding those involved in crimes. In a post shared on X, Yadav said, "The Chief Minister kept claiming that mafia and criminals have left Uttar Pradesh; but here, the opposite has happened—gangsters and thugs from other states have come to UP, firing dozens of rounds and committing murders." His remarks came after Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said the state had moved beyond its earlier image as a "Bimaru" state and now had a respectable image due to improvements in healthcare, connectivity, education and law and order. Addressing a programme in Deoria, where he inaugurated and laid the

face either jail or "hell". "A parallel mafia rule operated across the state. Today, the mafia has been crushed, wiped out completely. For those who threaten the safety of daughters and traders, there are only two places: either jail or hell; there is no third option," he said. CM Yogi said the state's focus had shifted from "one district, one mafia" to "one district, one medical college", highlighting the establishment of medical colleges in Deoria and Kushinagar. He also credited the

government's healthcare initiatives for the eradication of encephalitis in the state and alleged that previous Samajwadi Party and Congress governments had failed to address the issue. "Encephalitis was not merely a disease; it was a sick mindset. It was the sick mentality of the Samajwadi Party and Congress governments of that time," Yogi said. Highlighting development works in Deoria, the Chief Minister said the district had received a medical college named after Maharishi Deoraha Baba and that connectivity infrastructure was being improved through bypasses, flyovers and upgraded roads. He also mentioned initiatives such as Abhyudaya coaching facilities for competitive examinations and the transformation of basic education schools under the government's 'Operation Kayakalp' programme.

## Delhi CM Rekha Gupta orders strict action over child safety after Jafrabad playschool case, alleged rape in bus



**New Delhi :** Union Minister Jitendra Singh hailed India's 7.8 per cent real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and 8.2 per cent real Gross Value Added (GVA) in the first quarter of FY 2026-27, stating that the numbers reflect the strength and resilience of the economy. India remained the fastest-growing major economy in the April-June quarter of 2026, with real GDP growth of 7.8 per cent, significantly ahead of other major economies including China, the United States and several large European economies. Jitendra

Singh posted on X, "India's 7.8% real GDP growth in Q1 FY2026-27, along with 10.3% nominal GDP growth and 8.2% real GVA growth, reflects the strength and resilience of our economy."

"These numbers embody the enterprise, aspirations, and confidence of 1.4 billion Indians. India's reform-driven transformation, backed by prudent governance and decisive policymaking, carries the imprint of the visionary leadership of PM Narendra Modi Ji. A stronger, more resilient and self-confident India is steadily advancing

towards Viksit Bharat," the post read. Earlier today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also called the GDP growth a reflection of the "collective strength" of the people, while taking a swipe at the Opposition, accusing them of "spreading despair" in the country. In a video message posted on X, PM Modi congratulated the people of India for their hard work and said the country's economic growth came despite global challenges, including wars, crises and disrupted supply chains. He also took a dig at the opposition for echoing falsehoods and spreading despair.

Calling for greater emphasis on domestic products and local consumption, he said, "The mantra of Swadeshi, Vocal for Local: foreign trips, if you go for sightseeing, should not be done. If you do weddings abroad, it should not be done. One should live the mantra of 'Wed in India'. And if it's not necessary, then gold should not be bought either." Odisha Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati too highlighted that India has demonstrated strong economic momentum despite

global uncertainties. "India's 7.8% GDP growth in Q1 of FY 2026-27 is a powerful reflection of the nation's resilience, strength and collective effort. Despite global uncertainties, India continues to demonstrate the confidence and capability to sustain strong economic momentum. Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, the journey towards a stronger, self-reliant and Viksit Bharat continues with renewed momentum," Kambhampati posted on X. As per official data, India's growth rate was well above China's 4.3 per cent during the same period (April-June). Malaysia and Singapore recorded growth of 6 per cent and 5.9 per cent, respectively, while Indonesia grew 5.29 per cent and South Korea 3.7 per cent. This growth is attributed to the rising demand across both urban and rural markets, with vehicle sales providing a clear sign of stronger economic activity. Higher demand is also feeding into industrial activity. Industrial production grew strongly in July, while manufacturing output increased, with 19 of 23 manufacturing groups recording growth.

**New Delhi :** Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has ordered strict action over a recent case of alleged abuse of a three-year-old child at a private daycare and playschool in Jafrabad, making it clear that their safety cannot be compromised. She said school management and other officials found negligent will also be held accountable. CM Gupta directed officials to seal the school. She also assured the child's family of legal support from the Delhi government, if needed. Delhi Police said on Sunday that have arrested an attendant in connection with the alleged assault of a child at a play school in Delhi's

Jafraabad area. The woman arrested was working at the play school. Another woman has been served a notice to join the investigation, Delhi police said. Police said CCTV footage purportedly shows a woman assaulting the child inside the play school. The Chief Minister has also expressed concern over the alleged sexual abuse of a three-year-old nursery student in Bawana involving a school bus driver. She directed schools to strictly verify and monitor bus staff and warned that management would be held responsible for lapses. Gupta also raised concerns over the alleged

rape of a 16-year-old girl in a moving bus in Delhi-NCR. She said Delhi and neighbouring states would work together to improve safety on buses, including exploring GPS-based monitoring of buses entering the

capital. According to Delhi Police, the conductor made obscene advances before both the driver and conductor allegedly gang-raped the minor and threatened her life. The vehicle travelled approximately 47 kilometres across the National Capital Region. The accused dropped the victim off near the Ring Road adjacent to the Kashmere Gate terminal late at night and fled. After the victim reported the assault to the police, authorities traced and seized the sleeper bus for forensic analysis and arrested both suspects.

# Nepal Floods: 32-Member Kolkata Group Among Many From West Bengal Untraceable



A 32-member group from Kolkata on Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra was among many from West Bengal who went untraceable after the flash floods in Nepal on Wednesday, an official said.

The group, comprising 30 tourists and two tour managers, left the city on August 21 and reached Nepal the following day, he said. The group reached Rasuwagadhi in the morning to cross into Tibet. Its members were at the immigration office around 8.30 am when the flash flood struck the area along the

Nepal-Tibet border, he added. "There has been no communication with any of the 32 members since the flash flood struck the area," the official told PTI. "We are trying to establish contact with all those from West Bengal who may have been in the affected areas. The situation on the ground is extremely difficult, and communication has been disrupted," he said. More than 100 people were killed and over 750, including 133 Indian nationals, remain missing after the flash flood originating in Tibet swept through

central Nepal, devastating several towns and villages, washing away critical bridges, and crippling a dozen hydropower projects. Chief Minister Suvenudhikari expressed deep anguish over the loss of lives in the flash floods. "I am deeply saddened by the tragic loss of lives. My heartfelt condolences are with those who have lost their relatives, friends and loved ones. I pray for Nepal and the affected people," he said in a social media post. Adhikari said the West Bengal government was closely monitoring the situation and

coordinating with the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and Nepalese authorities to assist affected tourists, pilgrims, workers and businessmen from the state. The Kolkata group was travelling through a city-based travel agency, which said it had contacted Nepal Tourism authorities and the Indian Embassy but had not received any information about those missing. "Samrat Travel Agency in Kathmandu organised the tour. They have their own helicopter. All these tourists had gone for Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra. Our two managers, Jayanta Sanyal and Nripen Sarkar, are also with the 30 tourists," said Dibya Jyoti Basu, a representative of the Kolkata-based travel agency. "The two managers had mobile roaming facilities and were last contacted around 8 am. Some of the tourists had also reportedly gone live on Facebook around that time. But after the news of the flash flood came, there has been no contact with them," he said. The agency handling the international ar-

rangements has sent a helicopter to the affected area, he added. Apart from Kolkata, residents of Chandannagar in Hooghly and Barasat in North 24 Parganas are also believed to be among those stranded or missing in Nepal, the state government official said. The flash floods have severely disrupted communication and access to the affected areas, making it difficult for authorities to ascertain the whereabouts of those caught in the disaster. The West Bengal government has opened helplines at the state police headquarters in Bhabani Bhavan to assist families seeking information about relatives who may have been affected in Nepal. Families can contact (033)24793311 or 9147890181 for assistance, the state government said. Nepal Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal told the parliament that an earthquake hit the Tibet region at 8.37 am (local time) and the flash floods were reported three minutes later, suggesting the tremors may have caused a glacial outburst, which triggered the disaster.

## In Tamil Nadu, A Battle Over Proposed Airport Turns A Clash Of Sons-In-Laws



**Chennai:** The Tamil Nadu Assembly debate over the ruling TVK government's decision to scrap the proposed Parandur airport project took an unexpected turn - becoming a political battle over two sons-in-law. Law Minister Nirmal Kumar, defending the government's decision, alleged that the earlier DMK regime had pushed the project in a way that would benefit those who had invested their "black money" in the vicinity of the proposed airport site. He used the phrase "G Square Mapillai", a tacit reference to Sabareesan, DMK chief MK Stalin's son-in-law and a key strategist for the DMK. The remark triggered protests from the DMK benches. Former Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu hit back, saying that if the government was proposing a new airport site, he too could question whether it was being done for the benefit of the "Lottery Mapillai" - a tacit reference to PWD Minister Aadhaav Arjuna, whose wife Daisy is the daughter of lottery businessman Santiago Martin. The exchange turned the Parandur debate into an unusual "Mapillai (son in law)" battle, with the political spotlight shifting from the airport project to the family and business associations of political figures. The controversy spilled outside the assembly. AIADMK MLA Leema Rose, who is Daisy's mother and Aadhaav Arjuna's mother-in-law, appealed to legislators to spare her husband, who she said was not in politics.

She also claimed that her minister son-in-law Aadhaav Arjuna was no longer involved in the lottery business. The political sparring came amid a larger debate over the future of the Parandur airport project. The ruling TVK government has scrapped the project, standing by farmers who had opposed it for years. The proposed airport had faced strong resistance because it would displace a large number of families and affect extensive tracts of fertile agricultural land and water bodies. For Chief Minister Vijay, the decision also carries political significance. Parandur was among the first major locations he visited after launching his political party. During that visit, Vijay had assured protesting farmers that he would not permit the airport project if his party came to power. Now, as Chief Minister, he has fulfilled that promise. Instead of proceeding with the Parandur project, Vijay's government has said it plans to increase the passenger-handling capacity of Chennai airport by adding a fifth terminal. The government would also identify another site for the airport which would not require large scale displacement or destruction of water bodies, which the opposition says is impossible. The opposition DMK has criticised the government's decision, arguing that scrapping an already delayed project would hurt Tamil Nadu's development and investment prospects. The party has warned that uncertainty over major infrastructure projects could prompt new investors to look at neighbouring

states. Industries Minister S Keerthana said the land acquired for the project could be put to alternative industrial use without affecting the people. "We will use the acquired land for alternate industrial purposes without affecting the people. There will be industrial and economic development besides employment opportunities," she said. The minister also defended the decision on environmental grounds, pointing to agricultural and water resources in the area. She said the region has fertile agricultural land where cultivation takes place even without rainfall and has two canals that play a role in releasing and pumping water towards Chembarambakkam Lake and the Adyar river. "This is a fertile agricultural land where there is cultivation even if there is no rain. There are also two canals. These water bodies release pressure and pump waters on their own into Chembarambakkam Lake and river Adyar. If we destroy these, there are many possibilities for Chennai city to get flooded", she added. The Parandur debate, therefore, is now about much more than where Chennai's next airport should come up. It has become a clash between the government's development-versus-environment argument and the opposition's concerns over infrastructure and investment - with the "G Square Mapillai" versus "Lottery Mapillai" exchange adding an unusual political subplot to the Assembly battle.

## 77 From Isha Foundation Missing In Nepal, Sadhguru "Ready" To Join Rescue Ops

**New Delhi/ Kathmandu:** At least 77 pilgrims from Sadhguru's Isha Foundation are missing after horrific flash floods hit Nepal this morning. The team was at the immigration office on its way back from Kailash Mansarovar in Tibet, the spiritual leader said in an online post. Nepal media have reported 157 deaths so far in the floods that swept through villages and washed away bridges and houses in the Rasuwa district bordering Tibet. Visuals showed a massive wave surging in the Gyirong Port area in Tibet and collapsing on the immigration office before crossing into Rasuwa, causing destruction along the Bhote Kosi River. Sharing a video of what appeared to be no less than an apocalypse, Sadhguru announced the tragedy that had struck his

team in Gyirong in Tibet while on their way back from Kailash. "A terrible and tragic flash flood has taken place at Gyirong in Tibet - China, and one of our Kailash groups was caught in it. While on their way back, they were at the immigration office when the flood occurred, and the building and much of the town seems to have been flooded," Sadhguru said. There is no official word on the whereabouts of those who were at the immigration office, the spiritual leader lamented, adding that his volunteers and support teams are deeply anguished and are doing their utmost to assist in the rescue operation. "We are working with the authorities to see if we can get to the location and stand ready to be part of the rescue efforts, regardless of



the risk involved," Sadhguru said. He also shared that of the 21 groups who were part of their sojourn, 495 people have already returned safely, while 743 are currently in Tibet and 148 are in Nepal. Three volunteers are in Timure, Nepal, he added. The 77 people who were at the im-

migration office are believed to be among the 105 Indian Kailash pilgrims reported missing by the Nepal Tourism Board. A statement noted that at least 384 travellers had been out of contact in the flood-affected area, including 291 foreigners and 93 Nepali nationals. "To the families and loved

ones of those in our group and hundreds of others who are affected in the region, I share your pain and we are sparing no effort during this profoundly difficult time. I am personally in the region to ensure the best can be done in the given circumstances," read Sadhguru's post.

## Agonising Wait For News In Tamil Nadu As Nepal Flood Hits Pilgrim Convoy



**Chennai:** In Tamil Nadu's Kumbakonam, the wait for a phone call from Nepal has become agonising for the families of 57 pilgrims from Tamil Nadu. Since the news broke, they have gathered at the office of Super Yathra -- the travel agency in Kumbakonam that organised the journey -- desperate for even a few words confirming that their loved ones are safe. The pilgrims were travelling in three buses towards Tibet when the region was hit by flash floods that scientists say were triggered by an avalanche. With communication lines disrupted and

the situation on the ground still unclear, the families are struggling to establish contact. Super Yathra owner Sadiq Ali said the rescue officials have assured him

that 20 members of the group are safe and that they will be airlifted once the weather improves. Some others have reportedly been hospitalised, but there is still

no clarity on the exact number of people who remain unaccounted for. "I am leaving for Kathmandu to bring the pilgrims back," Sadiq Ali said. At Kumbakonam, officials, too, are trying to piece together information from intermittent communication. "57 people had gone in three buses. The first bus went fine. There was a loud noise when the second and third buses crossed. We are unable to establish contact with any of them. We are able to speak only when there is a tower link. We are following it up and are trying to speak to everyone," said Kumbakonam Tahsildar Poongodi. The Tamil Nadu

government has also stepped up efforts to establish contact with the pilgrims and ascertain their safety. Chief Minister Vijay has expressed shock and sorrow over reports of Tamils and Indians caught in the Nepal disaster. The state government said it is coordinating with the foreign ministry and the Indian Embassy in Nepal to collect information on the pilgrims and ensure their safety. Vijay has also directed officials at Delhi's Tamil Nadu House to expedite rescue and relief efforts. Helpline numbers have been announced for affected families and reached individuals seeking information.

## Cross-Border Drug Cartel Busted In J&K, Heroin Worth Crores Seized

**Jammu:** A cross-border heroin cartel in Jammu and Kashmir has been busted by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) as part of its crackdown on the Pakistan-backed narco-terror network. The

anti-drug agency has seized 5.16 kg of high-grade heroin worth crores and arrested its mastermind and two traffickers. Acting on a precise intelligence input, NCB officials intercepted a vehicle at

Panjirthi in Jammu on August 22 and recovered the heroin from two Baramulla residents. During interrogation, they revealed details about the kingpin of the syndicate who had supplied the consignment.

Launching a swift follow-up operation, NCB teams mounted intensive surveillance and tracked down the mastermind hiding in Leh. He was arrested on Monday, within 48 hours of the seizure.

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## Ex-Union Minister Mukul Roy's Daughter-In-Law Missing In Flood-Hit Nepal



**Kolkata:** Former Trinamool Congress MLA Subhranshu Roy's wife is among those reported missing after flash floods struck parts of Nepal near the border with Tibet, leaving hundreds of people unaccounted for. Sarmistha Bhowmik Roy, who lives in North 24 Parganas district, has had no contact with her husband since the night of August 25. Roy is a former Trinamool MLA from Bijpur and the son of former Railway Minister Mukul Roy. His wife had travelled to Nepal on August 21 as part of a tour arranged through a travel agency and was travelling alone. A 32-

member group from Kolkata travelling towards Mount Kailash and Mansarovar is also among those who have gone missing. The group consists of 30 tourists and two tour managers. It left Kolkata on August 21 and reached Nepal the following day. On Wednesday morning, the group reached Rasuwagadhi, near the Nepal-Tibet border, where its members were at an immigration office around 8:30 am. The floods have devastated settlements in central Nepal, destroying bridges and damaging infrastructure, including hydropower facilities.

Around 270 people have been reported dead, while more than 750 remain missing, including 288 Indians. Nepal's Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said that an earthquake struck the Tibet region at 8:37 am on Wednesday, with reports of flash flooding emerging three minutes later. According to Nepalese officials, the tremor may have triggered a glacial outburst that caused the sudden flooding. With roads and bridges damaged and communications disrupted, rescue teams have faced major difficulties reaching some of the worst-hit locations.

# "Obligation Of Large Nations": Nepal Seeks Climate Justice After Floods



**Kathmandu:**Nepal is seeking climate-linked "justice" from "large nations" for deadly flash floods in the Bhotkoshi River that

swept away villages across at least three districts in the country a week ago. So far, emergency teams have recovered more than 1,100

bodies, but nearly 4,500 people remain missing after the gigantic wave of freezing water, rocks, and debris triggered by a high-altitude

glacial collapse roared down the Tibet-Nepal border last week. Launching a diplomatic pitch to seek international monetary assistance, Nepal Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal asserted that post-disaster aid should be treated as a matter of "moral liability". The minister said in Nepali during an interview with Kantipur TV, the excerpts of which were published by The Kathmandu Post newspaper and news agency PTI. He pointed out that despite contributing "virtually negligible" greenhouse gas emissions, Nepal is bearing the disproportionate consequences of global warming, including rapid glacier melt and extreme mountain disasters. "We are paying the ultimate price for a global crisis we did not create. The rapid melting of glaciers and these catastrophic mountain tsunamis are direct consequences of global climate change," he said, per excerpts of his interview published by PTI. Khanal said Nepal is shifting its diplomatic framework from "aid" to "justice". "This is not a matter to be limited merely to relief or rehabilitation assistance. The role of the world's large and wealthy nations in climate change is significant, whereas ours is extremely

minimal. Yet, we are paying a heavy price," he said. "We will turn this into an issue of justice in the international arena. We will raise our voices with our heads held high. This is not about asking for aid; it is about the obligation of large nations. We will seriously raise this issue in international forums."

## The Culprits

Khanal said Kathmandu plans to raise the issue of climate change "with absolute firmness and clarity" at international forums. He said the country will also seek compensation from major emitters for climate-related losses suffered by vulnerable countries. "This is a matter of civilisational survival. If our Himalayan glaciers disappear, the water security of over two billion people in South Asia dependent on rivers like the Ganges and the Trishuli will be permanently compromised. We are advocating not just for Nepal, but for the survival of South Asian civilisation," he said. The minister said Nepal's finance ministry has officially dispatched a formal climate compensation claim letter to its international partners. "If our Himalayan glaciers disappear, the water security of over two billion people in South Asia -- dependent on



rivers like the Ganges and the Trishuli -- will be permanently compromised. We are advocating not just for Nepal but for the survival of South Asian civilisation," he added.

## India's Stand

India has repeatedly emphasised climate equity and highlighted its relatively low per capita emissions. New Delhi argues that climate obligations should take into account differences in countries' historical emissions, development needs, and capacities. New Delhi has supported efforts to address loss and damage suffered by vulnerable developing

countries and maintains that Western nations, which industrialised first, occupy the majority of the global carbon budget. It also maintains that developed countries should provide the necessary financial resources to help such nations deal with climate impacts.

## Nepal's Call for Aid

Nepal has formally approached the board of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, seeking urgent financial assistance following the catastrophic flash flood in the Bhotekoshi river basin on August 26, according to The Kathmandu Post report. The mechanism was

established at COP27 in 2022 and operationalised at COP28. A letter jointly signed by Nepal's Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle and Forests and Agriculture Minister Geeta Chaudhary has sought an urgent response to the catastrophic flash flood, which caused widespread loss of life, displacement, and destruction of homes and critical infrastructure. "The full scale of economic and non-economic loss and damage has yet to be determined; however, preliminary information indicates that the consequences are extensive and exceed Nepal's immediate response capacity," the letter said.

## Iran Has "Unforgettable Lessons" For US After Strikes Hit Wedding In Tehran

**Washington:**American forces continued bombing targets in Iran overnight, which the US Central Command (Centcom) claimed came in response to "recent attempted attacks" by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) against commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. At least four people, including a child, have been killed in the US strikes that also left around 50 others injured after an American missile attack shrapnel struck a home where wedding celebrations were taking place in Sirik in southern Iran. Iran retaliated by targeting American interests in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Jordan after vowing "severe punishment" for the US forces, according to local state media. In his first message since direct bombing restarted this week, Supreme Leader Mojatba Khamenei said Iran's armed forces have "unforgettable lessons" in store for Washington. The IRGC spokesman Hossein Mohebi also warned in a post on X that Washington "will regret its new attacks," saying that "severe punishment awaits the aggressors."

## New US Attacks

The latest round of conflict began when Washington hit Iranian targets on Sunday, the first known strikes in several weeks, after which Tehran's forces targeted US troops in Jor-

dan and the United Arab Emirates, and projectiles also struck two oil tankers in unclaimed attacks. More US strikes came on Tuesday, with Iranian state television reporting that explosions were heard in the country's south along the strategic Strait of Hormuz waterway and on an island in the Gulf, and that US forces hit an airport in the southern province of Kerman. Apart from a wedding in Kuhestak city of Sirik, "four projectiles" also hit areas "within the counties of Chabahar and Konarak," Iran's official IRNA news agency reported, without specifying whether there was any damage. The US military, however, denied the reports of targeting civilians. Asked if the US military had received any credible reports of civilian casualties from the recent strikes, US Central Command (CENTCOM) spokesperson Captain Tim Hawkins said, "The US military never targets civilians, unlike the IRGC," referring to Iran's Revolutionary Guards. CENTCOM had earlier said on X that the strikes followed "recent attempted attacks by (the Revolutionary Guards) against commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and against American service members deployed to the region." US President Donald Trump had also warned that "large and



powerful" strikes were "in retaliation for the Iranians' failed attempt at adding sea mines to the Strait." In a post on his Truth Social platform, he also wrote, "If the failed Nation of Iran retaliates for this very justified attack, they will be hit again at a much harder and higher level, but it will not be the biggest attack of them all, that is waiting in the wings and, when it is over, there will be very little left of the Islamic Republic of Iran!"

## Iran's Retaliation

Later, the IRGC said they targeted the US Marine Corps base Camp Titin in Jordan for an "intense ballistic missile attack," according to Iranian news outlet Tasnim. The Jordanian army also said it intercepted at least 10 ballistic missiles fired from Iran and did not confirm any injuries or hits on the US training camp located on the Gulf of

Aqaba, near the borders with Israel and Saudi Arabia. Three other missiles landed in remote areas, it said. Missile and drone attacks were also reported in Kuwait and Bahrain. In Bahrain, the Interior Ministry has issued an alert over a potential threat, urging citizens and residents to remain calm and move to the nearest safe location. In a post on X, the ministry also called on the public to follow updates through official channels to protect public safety. Iran, meanwhile, warned that its attacks on US forces will continue 'until they regret their crimes.' Colonel Ebrahim Zolfaghari, spokesman for Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, in a post on X, said that Tehran's forces have launched missile and drone attacks on US bases in the region that caused heavy damage to

infrastructure, facilities, weapons, and equipment, and that a "significant number" of US commanders and soldiers were killed or wounded. "These offensive operations against the Americans will continue until they regret their crimes," he said. Zolfaghari also warned that any further US attacks would be met with "heavier, broader, and more destructive" responses. He also warned that any country cooperating with the US military must accept the dangerous consequences. The Middle East war began in late February with the US and Israeli attacks on Iran that killed its supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. After six months of war, the foes remain at an impasse, with Iran keeping the Strait of Hormuz closed and the United States persisting with a counter-blockade of Iranian ports.

## US Plans To Ask Parents' Citizenship, Immigration Proof For Their Child's Passport



**Washington:**The Donald Trump administration is planning to ask parents in the United States to prove their own citizenship or immigration status before applying for passports for their children as part of President Donald Trump's latest effort to limit birthright citizenship, according to a Reuters report. The US State Department proposal marks Team Trump's first detailed framework for implementing the Republican president's August 6 executive order targeting what it calls "birth tourism" and broadening historical exceptions to birthright citizenship. "President Trump has been unequivocal that this Administration will protect the meaning and value of American citizenship, full stop, and that includes making sure our passport adjudication process fully reflects that standard," the State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said in a statement to Reuters.

## What's the New Proposal?

The existing US passport rule requires parents, who are applying for passports of their US-born children, to establish their relationship with the minor and provide government-issued photo identification. Even in the current structure, parents are asked to declare their citizenship status on application forms, but they are not routinely required to submit documents proving their immigration status. The State Department's

draft guidance proposed to change this process. Under the new rule, "the Department will require parental information and evidence of parental citizenship or immigration status as part of its determination whether the applicant is subject to EO 14418," the State Department draft guidance read, citing the executive order number. If the new law is implemented, the proposal would require all parents or legal guardians to provide proof of their citizenship, such as a valid US passport or birth certificate, or evidence of their immigration status, such as an I-94 form or a legal permanent residency card, when submitting a passport application for their children. The information would be used by the government to determine if the child qualifies for citizenship under the new order, the State Department proposal said.

## The Goal

According to the Reuters report, the new directive would withhold citizenship from children with a parent who works for a foreign government in the US, is engaged in fraud or a commercial transaction to obtain citizenship, or is classified as an "alien enemy." The proposed passport rules come amid an ongoing legal battle over Trump's efforts to restrict birthright citizenship. Lawyers pursuing class-action lawsuits on behalf of babies who would be deprived of citizenship

under Trump's initial order have asked two different federal judges to prevent his latest order from taking effect. ne of those lawsuits is before US District Judge Deborah Boardman, who was appointed by Democratic President Joe Biden. At a hearing on Friday in Greenbelt, Maryland, Boardman voiced skepticism about what she called Trump's unprecedented order and allowed the plaintiffs to revise their lawsuit so she could consider whether to block it. Justice Department attorneys have argued that a restraining order would be inappropriate and that the legal challenge was premature, as federal agencies had yet to issue public guidance on how the president's directive would be implemented.

## Trump's Citizenship Agenda

Limiting birthright citizenship has been one of Trump's top priorities in his far-reaching crack-down on immigration. The US Supreme Court ruled his previous attempt violated the country's Constitution. Trump's initial executive order would have granted automatic US citizenship at birth only to children with at least one parent who was a US citizen or a lawful permanent resident known as a green card holder. In a 6-3 ruling, the Supreme Court found the order was unlawful, with a majority finding it violated the Citizenship Clause of the Constitution's 14th Amendment.

## 'Safe Days In Russia's Skies Are Over': Zelensky's Warning To Airlines

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned Tuesday that his country's drones would make Russia's airspace "completely unsafe" for the duration of the war, drawing accusations of "state terrorism" from Russian leader Vladimir Putin. Both sides have intensified long-range attacks in recent months and diplomatic ef-

forts led by the United States remain stalled more than four years into Russia's full-scale invasion.

"Today, we want to warn every airline that uses Russian airspace, every insurer and everyone who still uses Russia's key airports: Russian airspace is becoming completely unsafe," Zelensky said in his nightly address.

"Ukraine does not threaten civilian aviation as such -- not a single civilian aircraft. There will simply be drones in Russia's skies on a scale that has to be taken into account," he said.

Air traffic at Russian airports has been repeatedly disrupted by the approach of Ukrainian drones, the number of which has increased in recent months.

"Drone-infested skies are no place for civilian aviation," Zelensky said. "The sky over Russia is currently for drones... as long as the war continues."

Putin responded by branding Zelensky's comments "a declaration of state terrorism".

"They are asking us to resume negotiations... but you don't negotiate with

terrorists," Putin said in a televised news conference.

The hardening stances came after fresh Russian missile and drone strikes killed at least 12 people in Kyiv and the surrounding region. "We in Ukraine do not want innocent lives to be lost. That is why we are warning our partners: the safe days in Russia's skies are over," Zelensky said.

## PVR INOX Buyback: 20% premium to market price? Check Rs 1,450 offer and record date



PVR INOX shares are likely to remain in focus on Thursday, September 3, as it will be the last day for investors to buy the stock and qualify for the company's first-ever share buyback.

PVR INOX has fixed September 4, 2026, as the record date to determine shareholders eligible to participate in the buyback. With the Indian equity market following the T+1 settlement cycle, investors looking to be eligible need to purchase the shares by September 3. The multiplex

operator's board approved the buyback on August 31. Under the proposal, PVR INOX plans to repurchase up to 20.69 lakh fully paid-up equity shares at Rs 1,450 per share, for an aggregate amount of up to Rs 300 crore. The buyback consideration will be paid entirely in cash.

### **PVR INOX buyback details**

The proposed repurchase will be carried out through the tender offer route on a proportionate basis using the stock ex-

change mechanism. The offer will be available to all eligible shareholders, subject to the applicable provisions of the SEBI (Buy-Back of Securities) Regulations, 2018. An important point for investors is that the proposed buyback price is not necessarily final. PVR INOX's Buyback Committee has been authorised to increase the buyback price and proportionately reduce the number of shares being repurchased, while keeping the overall buyback size unchanged at Rs 300 crore. Any such revision can be made up

to one working day before the record date.

### **Promoters to participate in buyback**

PVR INOX has also disclosed that its promoter and members of the promoter group intend to participate in the proposed buyback. The Rs 300 crore buyback represents around 4.1 per cent of the company's paid-up equity capital and free reserves based on its FY26 audited financial statements. The company said the buyback accounts for 4.09 per cent of the aggregate of fully paid-up equity share capital and free reserves under its latest audited standalone financial statements. On a consolidated basis, the figure stands at 4.07 per cent.

### **Who will manage the PVR INOX buyback?**

PVR INOX has appointed Murlee Manohar Jain, company secretary, as the compliance officer for the buyback. DAM Capital Advisors Ltd, a SEBI-registered merchant banker, will act as the

manager to the offer. The company has also constituted a Buyback Committee and delegated the required powers to oversee and execute the transaction. The Rs 300 crore buyback size does not include expenses related to the transaction, such as brokerage, applicable taxes, securities transaction tax, GST, stamp duty, legal and advisory charges, filing fees and other incidental costs.

### **PVR INOX share price performance**

PVR INOX shares ended 1.4 per cent lower at Rs 1,212 apiece on the BSE in the previous session. Despite the recent decline, the stock has gained around 7 per cent in one month, 23 per cent in three months and 19 per cent in six months. Over the past year, PVR INOX shares have risen around 8 per cent. However, the stock has remained in negative territory over the longer term, with a decline of more than 9 per cent over five years.

## Govt proposes common noise limits for electric, battery-operated vehicles



Electric and battery-operated vehicles will soon have to follow noise standards if the proposal aiming at bringing greater uniformity and clarity in the rules for different vehicle categories comes into effect. Under the draft proposal, the lowest noise limit applicable to different vehicle categories and sub-categories will also apply to electric vehicles falling under those categories. The move is expected to have implications for both electric vehicle manufacturers and customers as the government looks to bring more clarity to the noise standards applicable to EVs.

### **Same lower limit for EVs**

The proposed changes mean that EV manufacturers will have to follow the lowest noise limit prescribed for the relevant vehicle category or sub-category. The government believes this will help create a more uniform framework for noise standards across different types of electric and battery-operated vehicles. The proposal is also aimed at removing any uncertainty over which noise limit should apply to EVs where different limits may exist for vehicle categories and sub-categories.

### **Draft proposal open for suggestions**

The proposal has been issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in draft form. The ministry has invited objections and suggestions from stakeholders on the proposed changes. Stakeholders have been given 30 days to submit their views. The final rules will be decided after considering the feedback received during the consultation process. Under the pro-

posed changes, which are likely to come into effect from April 2027, the maximum permissible headlight intensity limit for two-wheeler and four-wheeler will be reduced up to 1 lakh candela, especially in urban areas. Moreover, audio alert will be used to discourage unnecessary use of high beams in cities. High beam headlight is seen as a major cause to blind drivers coming from the opposite directions, making prone to accidents, during night time.

### **Lower Headlight Intensity Proposed**

Under the proposed changes, the maximum permissible headlight intensity for two-wheelers could be reduced to 1 lakh candela from the existing limit of 1.5 lakh candela. For passenger cars, the maximum intensity is proposed to be brought down to 1.5 lakh candela from the current 2.25 lakh candela.

### **Impact on EV makers**

The proposed framework could require EV manufacturers to review the noise levels of their vehicles based on the category and sub-category in which they are classified. For consumers, the proposal is part of the government's wider effort to bring clearer and more consistent standards for electric and battery-operated vehicles. If the proposed changes of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) have come into effect, vehicle owners soon won't be able to use high-beam headlight beyond the prescribed limit. The India government is tightening rules on vehicle headlights with the aim to reduce glare from vehicles coming from the opposite directions and improve road safety.

The proposed changes will cover two-wheelers, cars, buses, and heavy vehicles. The move is aimed at reducing the intensity of light reaching drivers of vehicles travelling in the opposite direction, especially during night-time driving. The government is also considering restricting the colour temperature of vehicle headlights to 6,500 Kelvin.

### **Automatic Headlamps on New Two-Wheelers**

Another proposal relates to automatic headlamp operation in two-wheelers. Under the proposed framework, automatic headlamps fitted on new two-wheelers would be required to operate only on the low-beam setting. Existing two-wheelers would not be brought under this proposed requirement. The measure is aimed at preventing unnecessary use of high beams by two-wheeler riders and reducing glare for other road users.

### **Audio Alert for High-Beam Use**

The government is also considering introducing an audio alert system to discourage unnecessary use of high beams in cities. Under the proposal, vehicles could be equipped with a system that provides an audio warning when high beam is used unnecessarily in urban areas. However, such an audio alert would not be triggered on highways when the vehicle is travelling at speeds above 60 kmph. The proposed distinction takes into account driving conditions on highways, where higher speeds and road visibility requirements may make high-beam usage different from that in urban areas.

## Uber to cut about 10% of workforce amid organisational restructuring

Ride-hailing company Uber Technologies Limited has announced a cut of around 10 per cent of its staff amid the organisational changes across the company. "We are removing layers, simplifying team structures, refining our global location strategy, and focusing our people and investments against the biggest opportunities ahead of us," CEO Dara Khosrowshahi wrote in the note on September 02, 2026. "As a result, we will be reducing the size of our team by about 10%. Everyone whose role has been affected has already been notified, except in countries where we will follow the required local process," he added.

### **Why is it happening now?**

Khosrowshahi explained that the changes they're making today are designed to do two things: make Uber simpler and faster, and create more capacity to invest in our future.

### **Reduce roles to boost coordination**

In the note, CEO explained that in Pulse surveys and conversations, they found that too much work requires coordination across teams, debates take too long and decision-making rights are unclear. To improve this, we have reduced roles primarily focused on coordination, and have clarified the remit of the coordination roles that remain," he added. Khosrowshahi said that

they cut down the number of management layers by broadening manager scopes, particularly where we had "micro-teams" of only 1-2 reports. "In all, we've reduced the number of employees who sit 7+ layers from the CEO by 20% and the number of micro-teams by nearly 50%. The outcome is a simpler org chart geared toward building versus managing," he added.

### **Team Simplification**

CEO said that they brought together teams where fragmentation was creating duplication and slowing decisions. "The most significant example of this is Mac's decision to combine our three current Delivery Ops teams (across Restaurants, Retail, and Direct) into single-threaded teams at the global, regional, and country levels," he added. Bringing the P&Ls together under single owners will reduce overlap, clarify accountability, and allow GMs to allocate capital more efficiently and effectively based on their strategic imperatives, Khosrowshahi said.

### **Concentration of teams**

Uber Technologies reported a strong financial performance for the second quarter ended June 30, 2026, with revenue rising 12 per cent year-on-year to \$14.2 billion. Gross Bookings increased 24 per cent to \$58 billion, or 22 per cent on a constant-currency basis. Trips rose 18 per cent to 3.9 billion, while Monthly Ac-



tive Platform Consumers increased 16 per cent to 208 million. Profitability also improved during the quarter. GAAP income from operations rose 30 per cent to \$1.9 billion, while non-GAAP operating income increased 40 per cent to \$2.1 billion. Adjusted EBITDA stood at \$2.8 billion, up 33 per cent from a year earlier. Non-GAAP net income rose 29 per cent to \$1.7 billion, while non-GAAP EPS increased 35 per cent to \$0.81. Uber's net income attributable to shareholders rose 77 per cent to \$2.4 billion from \$1.4 billion a year earlier. The company said the Q2 2026 figure included a \$1.6 billion pre-tax net benefit from the revaluation of its equity investments. GAAP diluted EPS stood at \$1.17, compared with \$0.63 in the year-ago quarter. Khosrowshahi said that they are establishing clearer principles for where roles and teams should be based, with the goal of concentrating teams in a smaller number of key hubs. Global teams will

be concentrated in our largest global hubs, NY and SF; regional teams in designated regional hubs; local teams in country hubs; and tech teams in tech hubs, he added. "We'll prioritize co-location between managers and their teams wherever possible, particularly for earlier-career employees. We are also asking the vast majority of remote employees to move to an office, and going forward, only ~1% of employees will be remote. We'll also continue to reinforce compliance with our hybrid work policy, which requires three days a week in the office. You can read more about our location strategy here," CEO added in the note.

### **Uber Technologies Q2 Results**

Uber Technologies reported a strong financial performance for the second quarter ended June 30, 2026, with revenue rising 12 per cent year-on-year to

\$14.2 billion. Gross Bookings increased 24 per cent to \$58 billion, or 22 per cent on a constant-currency basis. Trips rose 18 per cent to 3.9 billion, while Monthly Active Platform Consumers increased 16 per cent to 208 million. Profitability also improved during the quarter. GAAP income from operations rose 30 per cent to \$1.9 billion, while non-GAAP operating income increased 40 per cent to \$2.1 billion. Adjusted EBITDA stood at \$2.8 billion, up 33 per cent from a year earlier. Non-GAAP net income rose 29 per cent to \$1.7 billion, while non-GAAP EPS increased 35 per cent to \$0.81. Uber's net income attributable to shareholders rose 77 per cent to \$2.4 billion from \$1.4 billion a year earlier. The company said the Q2 2026 figure included a \$1.6 billion pre-tax net benefit from the revaluation of its equity investments. GAAP diluted EPS stood at \$1.17, compared with \$0.63 in the year-ago quarter.

## Bond Laddering Explained: How to plan corporate bond investments for 1, 3 and 5-year financial goals

Corporate bond laddering can help investors align bond maturities and cash flows with specific financial goals. Experts explain how a 1, 3 and 5-year bond ladder can be structured, what investors should check before buying corporate bonds, and why credit rating, liquidity, coupon and yield to maturity (YTM) matter. Investors looking to plan their fixed-income investments around specific financial goals can consider bond laddering, a strategy that involves buying bonds with different maturity dates and structuring them around expected cash-flow requirements.

For someone with finan-

cial requirements due in one, three and five years, this could mean creating separate corporate bond investment buckets that mature around each goal. The basic idea is to avoid putting the entire investment into bonds maturing at the same time. Instead, investors can stagger maturities so that money becomes available at different points based on their financial requirements. However, experts caution that corporate bonds are not risk-free. Credit risk, liquidity, interest-rate movements, taxation and the specific features of each bond need to be considered before investing.

### **What is bond laddering?**

Bond laddering is a fixed-income strategy in which an investor buys bonds with different maturity periods instead of investing the entire portfolio in bonds that mature at the same time.

### **For example, an investor may have three financial goals:**

1-year goal: An education expense or another planned near-term requirement

3-year goal: A medium-term financial requirement

5-year goal: A longer-term goal or major planned expenditure Instead of choosing one bond for all three requirements, the investor can create a 1-year, 3-year and 5-year bond lad-

der, with each bond broadly matching the time when the money is required. Speaking about the strategy, Abhishek Bisen, Sr Vice President & Fund Manager-Fixed Income, Kotak Mahindra AMC, said investors should first identify their financial objectives and then select bonds according to those timelines. "If you have three buckets of one, three and five years, then you have to buy bonds according to those maturities," Bisen explained, describing this as a ladder structure.

### **Corporate bonds can provide different types of cash flows**

Bond laddering is not

only about maturity dates. Investors can also select bonds based on when they want interest payments.

Bisen explained that different corporate bonds can have different interest-payment frequencies. Depending on the instrument, interest may be paid monthly, semi-annually or annually.

This can allow investors to structure their fixed-income investments around their cash-flow requirements. For example, an investor looking for regular monthly income may select a bond that pays interest monthly, while someone who does not need periodic income may consider a bond with a different payment structure.

## Zerodha gets Category I merchant banking licence: What investors need to know

Online brokerage firm Zerodha is expanding its presence in India's capital markets after its affiliate, Zerodha Corporate Advisors Pvt Ltd, received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to operate as a merchant banker. According to details available on SEBI's website, the regulator granted the registration on September 1. The approval gives Zerodha Corporate a Category I merchant banking licence, allowing it to participate in a wider range of capital market activities.

### **What does the merchant banking licence mean for Zerodha?**

The licence allows Zerodha Corporate to advise and manage public offerings and equity capital market transactions. As a Category I merchant banker, the company can work on transactions such as initial public offerings (IPOs), follow-on public offers and other equity fundraising exercises. Its responsibilities can include managing an issue, carrying out due diligence, helping companies with pricing and documentation, coordinating investor roadshows and working on regulatory fil-

ings, including draft red herring prospectuses. The licence also allows the firm to act as a book-running lead manager for eligible capital market transactions. However, the approval does not mean that Zerodha itself is preparing to launch an IPO. It also does not give Zerodha Corporate an automatic right to underwrite every kind of transaction. The licence permits the company to provide merchant banking and advisory services within the regulatory framework laid down by SEBI.

### **Zerodha enters the IPO and fundraising ecosystem**

The move could put Zerodha closer to companies looking to tap the public markets for the first time. The merchant banking business sits on the other side of the capital market from Zerodha's core broking operation. While its brokerage platform helps investors buy and sell securities, the new business will allow the group to work with companies seeking to raise money from investors. Beyond IPOs, Zerodha Corporate can also provide corporate finance advi-

sory services. These can include mergers and acquisitions, open offers, buybacks and structured capital-raising transactions. This gives the group another potential revenue stream and broadens its role in the capital markets.

### **How big is the merchant banking market?**

According to SEBI's website, India currently has 249 SEBI-registered merchant bankers. Merchant bankers typically earn fees for managing capital market transactions and providing deal-related advisory services. Depending on the size and complexity of a transaction, revenue can come from IPO mandates, fundraising assignments, corporate advisory work and retainers. For Zerodha, the new licence therefore opens up a business that could generate fee income alongside its existing brokerage and financial-services operations. The approval also comes at a time when India's primary market remains an important avenue for companies looking to raise capital, giving Zerodha Corporate an opportunity to build a presence in the IPO and equity capital markets space.

## Jyotiraditya M. Scindia lays foundation stone of India's 7th Postal Training Centre in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh

*Inaugurates modernised Shivpuri Head Post Office as Department of Posts advances modern, technology-enabled and citizen-centric services*



**New Delhi, Sept., 2 (PIB):** Union Minister for Communications and DoNER, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, today laid the foundation stone of the country's 7th Postal Training Centre at Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh marking a significant step towards strengthening the training and capacity-building ecosystem of the Department of Posts, in line with the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for a Viksit Bharat. The new centre will serve as a national-level training facility for postal employees from Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring states, with a focus on equipping the

workforce with modern skills and training in emerging technologies. Union Minister for Communications and DoNER, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, performs Bhoomi Pujan for the country's 7th Postal Training Centre at Kakarvaya, Shivpuri, and addresses the gathering during the programme. Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister for Communications and DoNER, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, said that with the establishment of the new Postal Training Centre, postal employees from Madhya Pradesh will no longer have to travel nearly 600 kilometres for training. Emphasising the

importance of the Guru-Shishya Parampara, he said that the new centre reflects the Department of Posts' commitment to strengthening learning and capacity building. He added that the centre is being developed as a modern training facility that will evolve with changing times and be equipped with new-age technologies, enabling postal employees to acquire the skills required for modern postal operations and service delivery.

The programme was also attended by Shri Pradyuman Singh Tomar, Minister for Energy, Government of Madhya Pradesh and Minister-in-Charge of Shivpuri;

Shri Devendra Jain, MLA, Shivpuri; Shri Mahendra Ramsingh Yadav, MLA, Kolaras; Shri Pritam Singh Lodhi, MLA, Pichhore; Smt. Neha-Amit Yadav, Chairperson, District Panchayat, Shivpuri; Smt. Gayatri Sharma, Chairperson, Municipal Council, Shivpuri; Shri S.F.H. Rizvi, Member, Human Resource Development, Postal Services Board; Shri Vineet Mathur, Chief Postmaster General, Madhya Pradesh Circle and other senior officials of the Department of Posts, public representatives and dignitaries. This new centre will expand the Department of Posts' network of six Postal Training

Centres at Saharanpur, Vadodara, Mysuru, Guwahati, Madurai and Darbhanga, which together train around 2,000 personnel annually. Shivpuri, strategically located in the heart of India in Madhya Pradesh-the second-largest State by area, has been chosen as a national-level training hub owing to its central location and connectivity. The centre will strengthen access to specialised, technology-enabled and new-age training, equipping postal personnel with the skills needed for the evolving demands of modern, citizen-centric postal operations and service delivery.

## Union Minister of Civil Aviation Reviews Measures to Simplify and Automate NOC Process; Directs Time-Bound Action Within 15 Days



**New Delhi, Sept., 2 (PIB):** Union Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu held a meeting with senior officers of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to review measures for promoting Ease of Doing Business in the civil aviation sector, with particular emphasis on simplifying and streamlining the process for issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOCs). During the meeting, Shri Rammohan Naidu emphasized the need to make the NOC process hassle-free, transparent, automated and time-bound, with minimal manual intervention. The proposed reforms are aimed at facilitating members of the general public, societies, builders

and industry while ensuring that the regulatory requirements related to aviation safety continue to be duly addressed.

The Minister also discussed the feasibility of providing the permissible/identified building height to applicants at the initial stage itself, particularly in major metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad. Such an approach would enable applicants and other stakeholders to take informed decisions and plan their building development in accordance with the applicable height restrictions from the outset. The meeting also deliberated upon the process relating to Aeronautical Studies, with emphasis on simplifying and expediting approvals. In particular, the possibility of minimizing the requirement for physical verification at site at the initial stage, as well as rationalizing the requirement for submission of Building Development Plans and other documentation, was discussed.

The existing geographical coverage of the No Objection Certificate Application System (NOCAS) was also reviewed. NOCAS presently covers areas within 20 kms for VFR (Visual Flight Rules) opera-

tions and 56 kms for IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) operations. The meeting considered the feasibility of issuing NOCs at the Urban Local Body (ULB) level, wherever feasible, thereby reducing the need for individuals and industries to approach AAI directly for obtaining NOCs. Rammohan Naidu directed the concerned officers to examine and work out the modalities for simplifying, automating and decentralizing the NOC process, including the above measures, and to take necessary action for their implementation within a timeline of 15 days. The Minister emphasized that the overall objective of these reforms is to ensure expeditious and time-bound clearance of proposals, with relevant data and permissible height information made transparently available in the public domain, including through the website, without in any manner compromising aviation safety. A simpler, predictable and transparent NOC framework will facilitate timely implementation of important infrastructure and development projects, thereby supporting investment, economic activity, employment generation and overall GDP growth.

## Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal Calls Upon Auto Component Industry To Go Global

**New Delhi (PIB):** Addressing the 66th Annual Session of the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) in New Delhi, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry Shri Piyush Goyal today called upon the auto component industry to transform local businesses into global businesses, expand manufacturing footprints across developed countries, strengthen supply-chain resilience and move up the value chain as India seeks to deepen its integration with global markets. Goyal said the industry's international trade was nearly USD 50 billion, evenly divided between imports and exports. He said business prospers when it looks globally and imports can also play an important role in the economic progress of a country, while clarifying that this should not be taken as an encouragement to increase imports. He said there had been a commitment to widen the gap between imports and exports, but this had not yet started, and called for much greater international investment and international business emerging from ACMA and its membership in the years ahead. The Minister said the industry had benefited from collaborations over the years and had established the ability to produce quality goods in India at globally competitive price points. He called upon the industry to now expand its manufacturing footprint across the world and establish a presence in developed countries. Goyal highlighted India's growing market access through nine trade agreements finalised in the last four to five years under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He said these agreements covered 38 developed countries, collectively representing a GDP of USD 60 trillion. He said the Free

Trade Agreements concluded prior to 2014 collectively accounted for a GDP of USD 10 trillion at today's value, while the nine agreements concluded under the present Government in the last four and a half years provide two-way market access to economies representing a USD 60 trillion GDP. He said these agreements covered prosperous countries with high GDPs and high per capita GDPs, offering less competition and greater complementarity with Indian industry. Shri Goyal also acknowledged ACMA's role in India's Free Trade Agreement negotiations, saying that the organisation had consistently sought zero-duty access for the Indian auto component sector while also seeking reciprocal opening of the Indian market. He said the industry was capable of taking on the best in the world and was ready to meet global competition. Referring to the theme of the session, "Beyond Resilience, managing uncertainty to creating new avenues, deeper supply chains", Shri Goyal said it was particularly relevant in a world marked by uncertainties, challenges and considerable churn.

The Minister said that amid global turmoil, India had continued to stay the course and remained the fastest-growing among the large economies of the world. "The naysayers can say what they want, but 7.8% growth is a reality," he said. Highlighting the growth across sectors, Shri Goyal pointed out that ACMA was growing at a scorching double-digit rate and the auto sector was growing at a high double-digit rate. He said five million passenger cars were expected to be sold this year. The Minister said the cars were being bought and were not merely being stocked. He also referred to electric vehicles, noting that some electric ve-

hicles now had a six-month waiting period.

He pointed out that the steel sector was also growing at a scorching pace and India was importing more steel than it exported because domestic demand was so high. He said the auto component industry was contributing significantly to this demand. Goyal highlighted various Government programmes aimed at strengthening industrial capacity and supply-chain resilience. He said the support provided to the auto component industry to achieve scale and to speciality steel manufacturing to produce in India the steels required by the sector directly related to the industry. He also highlighted the relevance of the technical textile PLI for the auto component industry, given its requirement for technical textiles, and said support to the semiconductor industry was intended to bring resilience to auto component supply chains. The Minister said the Government was creating new industrial parks, with 20 smart cities and industrial cities already underway. He invited the industry to participate in these opportunities and also invited countries to consider establishing enclaves in these parks. "Maybe we should have one of these parks dedicated to a US-India partnership. Maybe we can have two or three, five parks, which will be for auto components only. And I can create a plug and play infrastructure to suit you," he said. Goyal said the cycle of reforms and further re-

forms could only move ahead at speed with the support of industry. "We need your ideas. We need your inputs. We need your demands. We need to know what's challenging you, what's troubling you, how we can help you more," he said. "We are a listening government. We want you to be talking," he said, calling for contin-

ued dialogue between industry and Government.

Goyal referred to his recent three-hour engagement with the data centre industry, comprising largely companies from the United States coming into India in a big way. He said India and the United States were trusted partners who could support each other in making everything more competitive. Goyal said India would soon have a GCC and Israel FTA once the situation stabilised there. He said India would also have FTAs with other countries around the world to secure greater access to critical minerals, which are needed for resilient supply chains. He highlighted that the United States and India were working together as partners in a critical mineral partnership. He also referred to the Pax Silica initiative launched by the United States, under which like-minded, democratic, well-meaning and fair-play countries could work together to ensure that no single geography could weaponise trade.

Goyal said these developments would help the auto component industry become a global player as it moved towards its USD 500 billion industry target. Before concluding, Shri Goyal outlined specific priorities for the industry. He called upon the industry to convert local businesses into global businesses and, for products where greater supply-chain resilience was still required, establish an active indigenisation programme to insulate and protect itself from future black swan events. He called upon the industry to move up the value chain and begin delivering integrated, very high-value solutions, including products that are designed, built and supplied to the world at top quality. Goyal also called for greater focus on safety. He said the industry should not leave safety

concerns entirely to the Government.

The Minister said technology needed to play a greater role in the auto component sector, including artificial intelligence for better quality control and better assessment of customer needs. He also referred to customised vehicles, which were gaining increasing traction in the United States and Europe, and called for better safety features. On vehicle scrappage Shri Goyal said that the industry and Government needed to make the scrappage of old vehicles a profitable and valuable proposition for new vehicle buyers. He emphasised that this could only be achieved through a shared effort by the Government and the private sector. The Minister said the Government had attempted to provide value and incentives from its side and called upon industry to come forward and offer fair value when vehicles were scrapped, so that a greater market could be created for new-age vehicles. Addressing the event U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of India H.E. Sergio Gor highlighted the deepening U.S.-India co-operation in the automotive sector and said that the relationship stands at a "historic high point". He said the two countries are "co-designing the future of mobility together" and noted India's auto component industry as a reliable and increasingly sophisticated partner in strengthening supply chain resilience. He said both governments are working towards a fair, reciprocal and mutually beneficial trade relationship and highlighted the progress made, including the trade understanding reached between the two governments. He also said that Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal will travel to the United States at the end of the month as the United States hosts

the G20 talks.

Mr. Gor highlighted co-operation across pharmaceuticals, military sales and exercises, IT, data centres and space, and described the Pax Silica Declaration as a landmark step towards a pro-innovation regulatory framework, noting that India was among the first countries invited to join. He highlighted the presence of U.S. companies in India's automotive ecosystem and Indian companies in the United States, including Bharat Forge, Sundaram Clayton and Mahindra. He invited Indian auto component manufacturers to explore investment in the United States through greenfield assembly, R&D centres and distribution networks, and noted that the U.S. Embassy in India came first among embassies globally, with \$24 billion in new investment into the United States. In his address, Trade Commissioner for South Asia and British Deputy High Commissioner for Western India Harjinder Kang highlighted the strengthening India-UK relationship and said automotive and future mobility are central to the UK's advanced manufacturing capabilities. He highlighted the India-UK Vision 2035, the UK's modern industrial strategy and the India-UK CETA, which came into force on 15 July 2026. He said 99% of UK tariff lines and 90% of Indian tariff lines have been reduced to zero or very low duties, with streamlined customs and border processes to facilitate trade and business. He said CETA will deepen supply chains and enable joint ventures and partnerships, with automotive component manufacturers gaining tariff-free access to each other's markets. He highlighted the UK's strengths in advanced engineering, innovation and zero-emission vehicle technologies, including electric motors, batteries, hydrogen solutions, lightweight composites and software-defined vehicle systems.

## Vice Admiral Dilip Raghavan Appointed DG Hospital Services



**New Delhi, Sept., 2 (PIB):** Surgeon Vice Admiral Dilip Raghavan, VSM assumed the appointment of Director General Hospital Services (Armed Forces). Born and educated in Chennai and Mumbai, Surg Vice Admiral Dilip Raghavan joined the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), Pune in 1985 and completed his MBBS in 1989. He was commissioned into the Indian Navy on December 26, 1989. During his distinguished career, he held several significant appointments including Command Medical Officer, Southern Naval Command, Command Medical Officer, Eastern Naval Command and Commanding Officer, INHS Asvini, Mumbai. During his tenure as Commanding Officer, INHS Asvini was awarded the Raksha Mantri Trophy for the Best Command Hospital. In recognition of his distinguished service, Surgeon Vice Admiral Dilip Raghavan was awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) on January 26, 2026. Vice Admiral Raghavan is married to Dr Michelle Vas, a Paediatrician with subspecialization in Developmental Neurology, an alumnus of Armed Forces Medical College, Pune and an Ex-SSC Officer in the Indian Navy.

# Meet The The New National Star!



Rashmika Mandanna's extraordinary journey from Kannada cinema to the top of a national popularity poll captures the changing face of Indian stardom. The actress has now emerged as the country's favourite leading lady in the latest Mood of the Nation rankings, ending Deepika Padukone's long reign at No. 1. The shift is more than a change in a poll, it reflects how dramatically audience loyalties

have evolved.

Rashmika's national breakthrough came with Pushpa: The Rise, where her portrayal of Srivalli became an important part of the film's enormous cross-country appeal. She followed it with Animal, taking her popularity deeper into the Hindi market, before returning as Srivalli in Pushpa 2: The Rule, one of the biggest Indian blockbusters of recent years. Her filmography increasingly reads

like a map of India's changing cinematic tastes.

The momentum continued with projects such as Chhaava and Kuberaa, demonstrating that her appeal is not dependent on one character, one language or one genre. She has successfully moved between mass entertainers, intense dramas and mainstream Hindi cinema while retaining the audience connection that made her a star in the South.

That is why Rashmika's dethroning of Deepika feels significant. Deepika represented an earlier model of national stardom, built largely through Hindi cinema. Rashmika represents the new model: a star who can travel from the South to Bollywood and, more importantly, carry audiences with her. Her rise is proof that Indian cinema is becoming less about linguistic territories and more about one national audience.

## Irumudi Did 2-3 Times More Than We Expected: Producers



For director Shiva Nirvana, the success of Irumudi is more than another blockbuster milestone in his career. The film starring Mass Maharaja ravi Teja has given him a renewed sense of confidence and creative freedom, encouraging him to explore stories beyond the image associated with his earlier films.

Speaking at the film's Generational Blockbuster celebration, Shiva Nirvana said Irumudi has changed the way he views his creative journey and allowed him to move beyond the perception that he is primarily a filmmaker known for light-hearted and emotional stories.

"When I made films like Ninnu Kori and Majili, there

was an opinion that Shiva Nirvana makes good light-hearted movies. Personally, what Irumudi gave me is the confidence and freedom that a Shiva Nirvana film can be anything. Now, I can explore more," he said.

The director also credited the film's unique combination of devotional, crime and emotional elements for its strong connection with audiences. According to him, the seamless blending of these different layers played a key role in the film's theatrical success.

"The three layers blending together definitely worked. Telugu audiences completely owned the film in theatres," Shiva Nirvana said.

He further explained that the film's social commentary was deliberately woven into

the narrative rather than presented as a separate message. The director wanted to address several issues faced by women while ensuring that the themes remained an organic part of the story.

"When I thought about the different areas where a girl faces problems, I wanted to speak about all those issues in a hard-hitting way. There are poisonous elements in every system, and I wanted to talk about some of those people," he explained.

The producers credited both Ravi Teja and Shiva Nirvana for the film's phenomenal run. They highlighted the film's reach across different sections of the audience, including elderly viewers, while

noting that its box-office performance has far exceeded their initial expectations.

"Even elderly people are coming to theatres and watching the movie. Irumudi has made two to three times more than what we expected. The film is growing day by day. We always felt Ravi Teja was the perfect choice, and it proved right. Irumudi is a very comfortable film made within the time frame and budget," the producers said.

The film has now crossed the 200 crore mark, becoming the first movie in Ravi Teja's career to achieve the milestone. With its strong theatrical run continuing, Irumudi has emerged as a major commercial success for the actor, director and the entire team.

## Will Allari Naresh Find Relief With Ramba Oorvasi Menaka?



There is no denying the fact that Allari Naresh is going through a difficult phase in his career. Once known for delivering back-to-back comedy hits, he has struggled to score a solid success in recent years. After the success of Naandhi, his second innings did not work out as planned. Films like Aa Okkati Adakku, Bachhala Malli, and 12A Railway Colony failed to make an impact at the box office, leaving the actor in desperate need of a hit. Now, all eyes are on Ramba Oorvasi

Menaka, a fantasy comedy directed by Chandra Mohan Chintada. The film marks Naresh's return to the comedy genre that earned him a huge fan following over the years. The trailer has showcased a fun-filled fantasy setup and promises plenty of entertainment. Set for a worldwide release on September 4, the film has already received a U/A certificate and has created a decent buzz.

The makers are also openly saying that it is an entertainment film which has plenty of fun.

For Naresh, this release is more important than a regular film. If the comedy clicks with audiences and positive word of mouth spreads, Ramba Oorvasi Menaka could give him the much-needed box office boost. A successful run may also help him reconnect with family audiences who enjoyed his earlier comedy entertainers. The question now is simple: can Ramba Oorvasi Menaka bring back the vintage Allari Naresh? The answer will be known in just a few days from now.

## Dhanush To Return To His Mass Maari Zone?

Maari is one of the popular film franchises in South Indian cinema. Starring Dhanush in the lead role and directed by Balaji Mohan, the film's first part was released in 2015, and the second part was released in 2018. While the first part is a massive success, the second part did not become a hit. Now, almost 8 years after the second part's release, there are plans to materialize the third part, titled Maari 3.

Interestingly, Dhanush who is going through a dull phase has decided to revive his glory by taking up a mass masala commercial actioner. The icing on the cake is that Dhanush has suggested a storyline to director Balaji Mohan and asked him to develop it further. The script is reportedly in progress and if everything goes well, the film will be materialised next year. While the first part has Anirudh as the music director, the second part has Yuvan Shankar Raja. The first part's audio and score is a big hit and people



groove to the songs even today. Considering the same, the reports say that Anirudh will make a comeback to reunite with Dhanush and Balaji for the third part. The news is not officially confirmed but the scoop is bringing a rejoice to Dhanush's fans. Kajal Aggarwal played the female lead in the first part and Sai

Pallavi was paired with Dhanush in the second one. Dhanush played a don in the film and it will be interesting to see if this third part gets materialised. Less likely do films get expanded into three parts and Maari will be absolutely special for Dhanush as it built a cult fan base to him. More details on the film are awaited.

## Romanchakam: All Eyes On Talented Ananthika

Ananthika Sanilkumar has been steadily making a name for herself in Telugu cinema, but the actress is still waiting for that one big breakthrough that can take her career to the next level.

Ananthika earned appreciation for her performances in MAD and later received even better recognition with 8 Vasanthalu, where her acting skills won praise from audiences and critics alike. Despite the positive feedback, Ananthika is yet to land a film that can establish her among the leading young actresses in Tollywood. That is why all eyes are now on Romanchakam, her new upcoming romantic entertainer presented by Sandeep Reddy Vanga. One of the interesting aspects of Romanchakam is that it gives Ananthika a chance to explore romantic comedy, a space she has not fully tapped into so far. Those close to the project feel that her chemistry with Sumanth Prabhakar and the fun romance could emerge as major



highlights. Going by the promos, Ananthika's role has substantial importance in the story. The actress herself has described her character as bubbly, energetic and relatable, while also revealing that the film has relatable comedy and romance. If the film clicks at the box office, Ananthika could finally get the spotlight she has been waiting for. There is a lot of hope for this film and the makers have opted for early premieres which shows their confidence in the project.