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## Sea Routes Need To Be Secure: PM Modi's Hormuz Reference At BRICS Event



**New Delhi:** Apparently referring to recent attacks on ships linked to India - chiefly in the Strait of Hormuz, a maritime chokepoint that has become a US-Iran battleground - PM Modi linked global trade progress to the security of sea lanes, supply routes, and seafarers. "Global trade progress is possible only when sea lanes are secure, supply routes remain open, and seafarers are safe. That is why India is a staunch supporter of freedom of navigation and the safety of seafarers," he said. PM Modi also dwelled on the grouping's growing economic might, saying the combined GDP of BRICS nations grew twice as fast as the global GDP. "Today, BRICS nations represent 50% of the world's population, 40% of its GDP, and over 25% of global trade. Moreover, while global GDP has grown approximately two-and-a-half-fold over these years, the combined GDP of BRICS nations has expanded nearly four-and-a-half-fold. In other words, the economic strength of BRICS has grown at nearly twice the pace of the rest of the world," he said. He said BRICS nations are also

emerging as key hubs for global innovation and solutions. "New possibilities for innovation, spanning everything from grassroots initiatives to frontier technologies, are taking shape within our countries. The growing scale, speed, and optimism of BRICS are clearly evident among us. This forum, hosted in India, is the largest BRICS Business Forum to date," he added. The Prime Minister also stressed India's commitment to removing trade barriers, saying New Delhi has so far entered into free trade agreements with 40 countries.

"Our approach remains focused on reducing barriers and expanding opportunities for businesses. That is why, under our BRICS presidency, we have established new cooperation

networks in sectors such as agriculture, health, skills, and smart grids. To connect startups and MSMEs with markets and finance, we have launched initiatives like the BRICS Incubator Network, the BRICS MSME Portal, and the BRICS Startup Innovation Fund. You can all leverage these cooperation frameworks to enhance the exchange of investment and talent among our nations," he said. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, whose country has been fighting a protracted war with the United States, emphasised the impact of "geopolitical uncertainty" and "supply chain" disruptions on the global economy. "The world today is going through one of its most complex periods.

## Putin Takes "40%" Dig At G7, Compares It With BRICS' Contribution To World GDP

**New Delhi:** Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday drew a comparison between the BRICS grouping of emerging economies and G7 of developed countries, underlining that BRICS contributes more to the global economy. He was speaking at the BRICS Business Forum in New Delhi, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi later cited the same statistics to stress the importance of the group that has grown to 21 members. Putin said, "Over the last five years, more than 40 per cent of the world GDP (gross domestic product) has been produced by the

BRICS countries, whereas the contribution of the so-called G7, the Group of Seven -- I don't know why they call that the Group of Seven -- stands at only 29 per cent." "The world is always changing, and this is attested to by the objective facts of the last five years," he noted, speaking in Russian accompanied by an official translation. "Right now the world is undergoing structural, deep, profound shifts... The so-called old leaders, which used to be the vanguard of economic growth, are being replaced by new engines of growth," he added.

He also accused the West in general of sabotaging the development of other economic powers. "We have been told for quite some time that competition is sacrosanct... But our Western competitors are doing everything to get back their erstwhile competitive edge, and sometimes this competition is taking some ugly forms. This is something our colleague from Iran has spoken about," he said, not naming but apparently referring to the Strait of Hormuz crisis amid the US war on Iran. "Sometimes, there are measures resorted to of a physical nature,



when pipelines are being destroyed, when attempts are undertaken to block international transport corridors, to seize maritime vessels," he said, and then referred to sanctions imposed on Russia, in the wake of the Ukraine war and other-

wise. "Illegal restrictions are being applied, and there's also the threat of so-called secondary sanctions against those who do not want to follow someone else's interests and rather look after their own," Putin said.

## PM Meets Iran's Pezeshkian, Reiterates Need For Dialogue, Open Sea Routes

**New Delhi:** The Prime Minister thanked Iran for its participation in BRICS-related meetings despite challenging circumstances. During the bilateral meeting with the Iranian president, PM Modi raised the issue of regional stability amid the ongoing Middle East crisis. According to sources, PM Modi emphasised that the safety and security of seafarers will remain India's top priority. For a lasting solution in the Middle East crisis, India has firmly positioned "dialogue and diplomacy" as the definitive way forward. India said that en-

ergy security remains a key concern and that there should be a safe passage for vessels carrying supplies. Pezeshkian's first visit to India as the president comes as tensions in the Middle East have spiked after the US launched Operation Economic Outcast, a maximum-pressure campaign to completely sever the remaining financial and commercial lifelines sustaining the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian leader emphasised that BRICS was needed to focus on boosting its economic resilience. He said that the BRICS

bank was created for the freedom of countries from reliance on the dollar and to stand against US dominance. At the BRICS Business Forum on Friday, Pezeshkian said that the world was going through a complex period, geopolitical uncertainties and said that it was important for the members of the bloc to use national currencies during trade.

He called out US' military aggression and sanctions and said that BRICS must create an environment in which no country can disrupt legitimate



trade of another country through monopolising financial instruments. "India and Iran share civilisational ties, marked by robust cultural and people-to-people bonds. As BRICS partners, the

two countries are working to contribute to shared progress and prosperity," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on social media while welcoming the Iranian leader to India.

## Prepare Welfare Calendar : CM Directs District Collectors



**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, September 11:** The second day of the district collectors' conference, chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, began at the Velagapudi Secretariat on Friday. During the meeting, the Chief Minister made

key remarks on the implementation of welfare schemes and directed district collectors to prepare a welfare calendar. He asked them to clearly specify which welfare schemes would be implemented and on what dates. He also directed officials to conduct awareness programmes among beneficiaries on how to make effective use of the financial assistance being provided under various welfare schemes.

The Chief Minister directed officials to prepare an action plan to ensure value addition to traditional caste-based occupations. He instructed them to develop handloom and handicraft centres as experience

centres. He also suggested organising "welfare festivals" from time to time. Regarding Kapu Corporation loans, Chandrababu said that if funds were lying unused anywhere, they should be utilised immediately. If there were no funds, officials should bring the matter to his notice and he would sanction the required amount immediately, he said. The Chief Minister expressed anger over pensions and houses allegedly being allocated indiscriminately in the name of family mapping. He said this was not correct and stressed that the government's concept was that of a combined family. He directed district collec-

tors to formulate policies that would provide greater benefits to larger families.

Chandrababu said the Waqf Board had a large number of land holdings, but its revenue was very limited. He directed officials to work properly and ensure justice for the minority community. He said the Minority Welfare Department should generate revenue in a manner comparable to the Endowments Department. He recalled that the Venkateswara Swamy temple alone generated 77 crore in revenue in a single day. He said there were substantial assets and officials should explore ways to generate income from them.

## Achieve 100% Results in Schools : Minister Nara Lokesh Directs Collectors

**From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh Education Minister Nara Lokesh directed district collectors to formulate and implement an action plan aimed at achieving 100 per cent results in schools. He asked them to focus particularly on improving pass percentages in board examinations. He called for continuous field-level monitoring to ensure that students in government schools receive quality education. He also stressed the need to focus on improving educational standards as well as developing infrastructure in schools. Minister Lokesh held a meeting with district collectors and issued several key instructions on various education-related is-

ssues. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Lokesh said steps should be taken to ensure that school buildings are structurally strong and that quality standards are strictly followed in all new construction. He said the government was working to link ITIs and polytechnic colleges with various industries and provide youth with the skills required by them. He said skill development was being given priority so that students could find employment opportunities after completing their education. Through the 'Naipunyam' web portal, the government was making job opportunities and necessary skill tools available to youth, he said. The

minister stated that the government aimed to expand employment opportunities by strengthening coordination among educational institutions, industries and youth. Lokesh further said the Education Department was focusing not only on improving literacy in Andhra Pradesh but also on digital and financial literacy. He said necessary measures were being taken to equip students in line with changing technology. Schools were also providing training on precautions and self-protection measures that students should take during natural disasters, he said. The minister stressed the need to update the curriculum in accordance with current requirements. He said a



roadmap had already been prepared for curriculum changes and the government was moving ahead accordingly. Necessary changes were being introduced in the education system to develop future-ready skills among students, Minister Lokesh added.

## Free Electricity for Ganesh Pandals for 9 Days: Minister Gottipati



**Amaravati, September 11:** The Andhra Pradesh government has taken a key decision on the occasion of Vinayaka Chavithi. Minister for Energy Gottipati Ravi Kumar announced that free electricity would be provided to Ganesh pandals for nine days this year as well. He clarified

that free temporary electricity connections would be provided from September 14 to 22. The minister issued a statement to this effect, stating that the facility would be applicable only to authorised Ganesh pandals. The minister said free electricity would be provided up to 3 kW in

rural areas and up to 5 kW in urban areas. He explained that the special facility was being extended this year as well, similar to last year. He advised organisers to submit the required applications to the electricity officials. Minister Gottipati directed organisers to strictly follow electrical safety standards. He advised them to exercise caution with connections and wiring. He also instructed officials to extend their cooperation to ensure that the festivities are conducted peacefully.

## Jagan Yet to Respond to Lokesh's Challenge: MP Kesineni Chinni

**Vijayawada, September 11:** Vijayawada MP Kesineni Chinni said the coalition government had conducted the DSC examination in a completely transparent manner. He advised Pulivendula MLA and YSRCP chief Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to stop spreading false propaganda about the examination. He also announced that Minister Nara Lokesh would conduct three more DSC examinations. Speaking in Vijayawada on Friday, Kesineni Chinni said that despite Minister Nara Lokesh openly challenging Jagan for a debate on the DSC examination, the YSRCP chief had not responded so far. He criticised YSRCP leaders for being unable to accept the fact

that 16,000 people had secured jobs through the DSC. He said people would not believe the lies being spread by YSRCP leaders and that voters would teach them a lesson in the next elections.

He expressed anger over reports published in Sakshi newspaper and content aired on its television channel, alleging that none of them was true. He said YSRCP leaders did not even know that there was no examination under the sports quota. He explained that selections under the sports quota were made directly and that appointments were based on merit quota. He sarcastically remarked that YSRCP chief Y.S. Jagan did not even know the difference between DSC and

APPSC. He alleged that Jagan had a history of spreading false claims, citing the controversy surrounding the attack on his uncle and the subsequent claims of a heart attack. He said Ramesh Krishna, who had been working in a private school, secured a DSC job and alleged that false reports had been published about him in Jagan's newspaper. He said Ramesh Krishna himself was present as living proof of the facts. Kesineni Chinni said everyone had witnessed Jagan's alleged dramas over the Kodi Kathi and axe-attack controversies. He criticised Jagan, saying that not a single job had been provided during the previous five years. He challenged Jagan to prove

that the information provided by government officials was incorrect and dared him to come to the Assembly and debate the is-



sue. He said the coalition government's objective was to bring happiness to every family in the state. He said an inquiry was underway

into irregularities in APPSC and alleged that YSRCP leaders were targeting the DSC examination because a report on the APPSC probe was expected soon.

He further said Jagan would not even become an MLA this time if such false propaganda continued. He said an inquiry into alleged irregularities in Group-I recruitment was being conducted under court orders. Action would be taken after irregularities in APPSC were brought to light, he said. He accused YSRCP leaders of misleading people through what he described as a global propaganda campaign. He said 16,000 candidates selected through the DSC were already working in their jobs.

# EDITORIAL

## How Much Strength Does BRICS Have Amid Complexities?

New Delhi is making elaborate preparations for the 18th BRICS Summit, scheduled to be held on September 12 and 13. The grouping, which began in 2009 with Brazil, Russia, India and China, was joined by South Africa in 2011. At present, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are also part of the grouping. It is noteworthy that nearly half of the world's population is represented by the BRICS countries. Similarly, estimates suggest that the grouping accounts for around 40 per cent of global GDP based on purchasing power parity. Despite possessing such extensive potential, the grouping has not been able to exert a proportionate influence. BRICS is still unable to clearly decide what form it wants to take. Should it become a strong alliance? Should it serve as an instrument for exerting pressure in negotiations? Or should it remain a platform awaiting the emergence of a multipolar world that has yet to materialise? These questions continue to persist. Looking at the timing of the summit, the international environment appears highly complex. It is a fact that some BRICS member countries are facing difficulties due to US President Donald Trump's aggressive approach and unpredictable diplomatic policies. The primary objective behind the formation of BRICS was for several countries to come together and strengthen their collective power through numerical strength against unilateral decisions by Western countries. However, so far, this has remained a major test for the grouping. India, however, views hosting the summit not merely as a responsibility but as a diplomatically significant opportunity. At a time when the international diplomatic situation has become extremely complicated due to the continuing wars in the Middle East and Europe, India began active diplomatic efforts several weeks before the summit. On August 24, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar travelled to the Kremlin to convey Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal message to Russian President Vladimir Putin. The following day, on August 25, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing. On August 31, on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Prime Minister Modi met Russian President Putin. He also held discussions with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. Pezeshkian's participation also indicated, contrary to some claims being made by the United States, that Iran's political leadership system continues to function. India is likely to use the summit to strengthen its relations with countries such as Russia, China and Iran and enhance its diplomatic influence amid the complex international situation. However, these efforts also raise concerns. Since its formation, BRICS has faced several difficulties because of differences among its member countries. The interests of the member states often do not align with one another. India and China have long had competing strategic interests. Some member countries are also concerned about China's economic dominance. A major turning point came in 2022. When Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine, it became clear how heavily BRICS countries depended on a global economic system that was beyond their control. The imposition of sanctions on a rival power highlighted the need to develop alternative trade routes and banking systems outside US control. Nevertheless, BRICS continues to focus more on economic and technological issues than on politics. Even in the future, the grouping is likely to remain primarily focused on trade, economic affairs and sustainable development. Meanwhile, Iran wants BRICS to officially condemn the US military strikes against it. However, there is no consensus among BRICS countries on this demand. It remains to be seen to what extent the member states will agree on the draft declaration calling for a complete cessation of hostilities, resolution of disputes through dialogue and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. The influence of Russia, China and Iran is increasing within BRICS. India, however, continues to maintain relations with Western countries as well as Israel. Therefore, the key challenge is how India balances its position within BRICS, its independent foreign policy and its relations with Western countries. Rather than leaning completely towards the United States or towards China and Russia, India is pursuing strategic autonomy by working with each country on different issues according to its own interests. For BRICS to retain its relevance, India will need to handle the situation with considerable diplomatic skill. How powerful BRICS can truly become in the future will ultimately depend on the approach adopted by its member countries.

# BRICS Has Grown Up. Now It Must Behave Like An Adult



The India-China accommodation will be a key driver of the grouping, but a 'non-Western' agenda will work well only if it focuses on ending global conflict as much as on stabilising the global economy. The BRICS summit that India hosts this year is its fourth, with the fifth opportunity not coming for a decade. That alone should make us pause. This is a grouping that began life in 2001 as a clever acronym coined by a Goldman Sachs economist, Jim O'Neill, to sell emerging markets to investors. The summits followed from 2009. In its eighteenth year, the question worth asking is a simple one: is BRICS ready to grow up? In some ways, it clearly is. What started as an investment thesis is now a premier emerging-market forum with summit-level heft. Like every serious economic gathering in a disorderly world, it has encountered geopolitics, exactly as the G20 did. The proof is in the action. Over 350 meetings in the run-up to the summit, and the outcomes catalogued. The last one in Rio produced a declaration running to 126 paragraphs, sweeping across trade, climate, technology, humanitarian concerns, and global governance. A club that issues a 126-paragraph communique signed off by heads of state and government is no longer a niche investors' huddle.

It has also grown in girth. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE have joined the founding five. Every new member bar Ethiopia is a Muslim-majority country, which could read as a tilt, yet the truth runs the other way. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Ethiopia are, for strategic reasons, in no hurry to pick fights with the West. With them inside the tent, India has more elbow room to keep BRICS from hardening into an anti-Western caucus. A wider

BRICS is, counterintuitively, a more moderate one. None of this means the club is in good working order. Its challenges are real and worth naming plainly: China's weight. With the largest economy in the room, BRICS risks being read as a Beijing-led vehicle, which is why most members resist Sino-centric agendas like a common currency.

The India-China strategic rivalry. The current summit comes at a time of tactical accommodation between the two Asian giants. Much of the BRICS dynamic will depend on how sustained a positive India-China economic relationship can be.

Thin consensus. Eleven members pull in eleven directions, and Rio's 126 paragraphs papered over as much as they settled.

The de-dollarisation mirage. There is no workable common currency and no obvious anchor, only a patchwork of local-currency deals.

The anti-West trap. Pushed too hard against the West,

BRICS forfeits its usefulness and invites retaliation.

No spine. Eighteen years in, it still has no secretariat, no home, and no one in charge between the summits.

Take the fear that most animates Washington: de-dollarisation. It is neither India's agenda nor Brazil's, and it remains a long way off. A common currency is a fantasy, and the yuan is no anchor, which leaves a slow diffusion of trade into local currencies, including the rupee, as the likelier path. As for the anxiety in the US Treasury, a little of it does no harm. It costs nothing and concentrates minds. Here is the real argument. If BRICS is coming of age, it must behave like an adult, and that means building institutions. For eighteen years, it has met, declaimed, and dispersed, with no permanent address, no professional staff, and no one whose full-time job is to turn summit rhetoric into follow-through. It needs a secretariat, a home city, and a secretary-general. Meeting for the

form is easy. Meeting for substantive outcomes requires machinery between the summits, someone to track commitments, nurse the local-currency plumbing along, and prepare the ground so that leaders arrive to decide rather than to discover.

India could lead this. As a founding member, it could offer New Delhi (or Goa!) as the home of BRICS and put forward the first secretary-general. This is a structural role, and India can hold the group's contradictions together in a way no other member can. India chaired the G20 in 2023 and BRICS in 2026, in close succession, sitting precisely at the intersection of the established economies of the G7 and the rising powers of the BRICS core. The G7, for its part, would do well to reinvent itself as a wider club of industrial democracies, with India, Australia, and South Korea at the table. An institution with a spine could do more than draft communiqués. With the Gulf, Iran, and Africa now inside the

tent, a steadier BRICS could lend its weight to quiet peace-making, stepping in where Western forums are stalemated, and give the global economy a stabilising, confidently non-Western voice. None of this is to pretend that BRICS is a model of unity. It will lack unanimity for years. Yet, even a fractious BRICS, enlarged and growing, can both challenge and supplement Western groupings. It reminds the old order that the rest of the world has options, and pushes towards a fairer, more just multipolarity. Eighteen is the age of adulthood in much of the world, when you get the vote, the responsibility, and the expectation that you will stop drifting and start deciding. BRICS has spent its youth gathering members and issuing declarations. With India's steady hand to guide it, the club should now grow into an institution: more active in peace-making, and, with a confident alternative-to-the-West agenda of advancing the global economy.

## How Trump Is Doing More For BRICS Than Its Critics Ever Could

India is chairing the BRICS summit in a most challenging international environment. A lot of burden lies on India's shoulders to ensure the summit's success, just as in the case of the G20 summit earlier presided over by India. If the G20 summit could have been derailed by the confrontation between its western members and Russia over the Ukraine conflict, the BRICS summit has to forge a consensus on the conflict raging in the Gulf, with this time Iran and the UAE pitted against each other.

The BRICS Foreign Ministers meeting failed to issue a joint statement because, despite efforts made by India, Russia, China, and others, the positions of Iran and the UAE could not be reconciled. The stakes this time are much higher for the credibility of BRICS as a group if this summit also fails to issue a joint declaration. Both Iran and the UAE would normally want to avoid being seen as responsible for this failure and should be prepared for a minimally acceptable compromise language. A lot of pressure will be brought upon them by other members to accept a consensus language.

In the SCO summit declaration, Iran received unequivocal support from the members for the war unleashed against it. At the BRICS summit, the text will have to be heavily moderated, keeping in mind the UAE's position. China, which will hold the next summit, would prefer to preside over a BRICS that can show that it can handle its internal divisions through a pragmatic compromise in the larger interest of the group and its rising international role.

### India's Challenge

The consequences of the

conflict in West Asia has most serious international ramifications on several fronts. The opening of the Strait of Hormuz is critical for the Gulf region, including the UAE, and the international community as a whole. India's diverse interests in the region are being especially hit hard. India will no doubt work overtime to have a clean Delhi Declaration with a consensus on all paragraphs and no reservations appended to the text by any member.

President Trump has upended the global order that the West itself created after 1945. The American unilateralism that the world saw after the collapse of the Soviet Union has resurfaced again dramatically. Trump has wrecked the global trading order by using tariffs and US trade legislation as a weapon. He seeks to control the global oil market. Kidnapping a serving head of state, as in Venezuela's case, initiating a war against Iran, and seeking regime change are acts that spurn the UN Charter and international law. He is alienating his closest allies, including Canada, the UK, and the European Union. This indirectly gives more salience to BRICS in the eyes of those who want to hedge against the domineering policies of the US.

### The De-Dollarisation Question

Trump sees BRICS as an anti-US grouping. He has threatened BRICS countries with 100% tariffs if they moved towards de-dollarisation. BRICS has no de-dollarisation agenda as such, but seeks to promote trade in national currencies between member states. The logic is clear - if the US uses the dollar and its control of the global financial system as a weapon to bend other countries to its

will, there will inevitably be moves to reduce dependence on the dollar and build alternative payment systems.

The progress in this direction will be slow, as BRICS countries, barring Russia and Iran, which have little or no trade with the US, the other countries, including India, have close economic investment ties with the US, and in the case of some BRICS members, even security ties. Nevertheless, even those who currently have a close relationship with the US realise the need to develop political ties with BRICS-plus countries, as well as promote alternative financial and payment mechanisms to escape the arbitrary grip of the US-controlled global financial system that allows the US to use sanctions as a coercive tool.

### BRICS Is Ready - Even Now

To assume that to be taken seriously, BRICS should have a readymade, effective answer to the challenges that the non-West faces would be wrong. BRICS is still operating in a largely West-influenced international system. The New Delhi summit will be the 18th one, and while the level of interaction between a whole array of institutions within BRICS countries is impressive, it would be an exaggeration to say that it has bonded the BRICS countries together solidly against western domination. BRICS is a work in progress.

In the absence of any radical success of BRICS in shaping a new, more cooperative and equal world order, its critics dwell on its deficiencies and question its credibility. Pro-US elements, including many in India, want to diminish the importance and relevance of BRICS. They point to its lack of internal cohesion, the in-

creasing Chinese domination of the group, India-China differences that undermine its agenda, India's close ties with the US being at odds with the group's perceived anti-West orientation, etc. That India belongs to this group rules many in the US because a nightmare scenario for them is one of India, Russia, and China coming together to challenge the West. Even when the leaders of these three countries are seen together informally on the margins of an international conference, it creates a stir.

The fact that President Xi Jinping will be attending the summit, which will be his first visit to India after seven years, and this in the background of a border conflict between India and his country, will impart a major international interest to the summit. Bilateral talks between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping in New Delhi should set the pace of improved ties between the two countries. President Putin's participation will strengthen the political messaging emanating from the summit. A trilateral Modi-Putin-Xi interaction, even if informal, will bolster that messaging further. On top of all this, the participation of the Iranian president in New Delhi will have its own meaning.

### To The Naysayers...

It is interesting that those who do not favour India's BRICS membership because it hampers its relationship with the West present a new line of argument, namely, that both Russia and China are seeking accommodation with the US, and a Trump-Putin-Xi trilateral meeting could well happen at the next APEC summit, in which case a G3 could well emerge, and BRICS, with India, will be marginalised. This argument

presumes that both Putin and Xi have great faith in Trump's steadiness and reliability as a partner and would be willing to put their eggs in his basket.

Those who ask what India has gained from BRICS membership are actually questioning the logic of India's strategic autonomy. BRICS gives us more manoeuvrability on the international stage. We can have close ties with the West, but there is a risk in putting all one's eggs in one basket. Moreover, we as part of the Global South have a deep interest in the reform of the international political and financial system, which will not be possible unless pressure for change is built up. India alone cannot do it; it needs a bigger platform of like-minded countries to do so. This does not mean that India's interests are identical with those of other BRICS members, but each member sees virtue in reform of the international system, greater equality between countries, more attention to the priorities and concerns of developing countries in international governance, strengthened multilateralism, multipolarity, etc.

BRICS countries now have tangible opportunities to cooperate with each other as their economies and markets have grown and they seek diversification. They want to build technology partnerships, and the possibilities of establishing new supply chains and promoting new connectivity projects to enhance regional cooperation. India wants to promote, in particular, cooperation in digital public infrastructure. The New Development Bank would need more capitalisation.

The importance of BRICS lies in what it can build over time, as many interests are shared, even if all of them are not.

## Virat Kohli Meets Eknath Shinde In London, Discusses Sports And Maharashtra Development

**London:** Indian cricket star Virat Kohli met Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde in London. During the meeting, the two discussed sports, infrastructure and various welfare schemes run by the Maharashtra government. Speaking to ANI after the meeting, Shinde described Kohli as a "down-to-earth" person. He said he was happy to meet the star batter and discuss Maharashtra's development and plans for the future. Shinde said he spoke to Kohli about major infrastructure projects in the state, including the Atal Setu, Samruddhi Mahamarg, coastal road, metro projects and the proposed 'Third Mumbai' development near the airport. They also discussed initiatives in education and healthcare. The Deputy CM said the two also spoke



about helping young people improve their skills and perform well in competitions. Kohli shared ideas on how to support and develop young talent, which Shinde said could benefit Maharashtra and the country. Kohli has been in good form in ODIs this year. He has scored 384 runs in six innings at an average of 64,

including one century and three fifties. During the ODI series in England in August, he scored 144 runs in three innings, with a best score of 74.

The 37-year-old batter will next be seen in action in the ODI series against the West Indies, starting September 27. He currently has 85 international

centuries and is chasing the 100-century mark, a feat achieved only by Sachin Tendulkar so far. Kohli has scored 14,941 runs in 314 ODIs at an average of 58.59. He has 54 ODI centuries and 79 fifties. He needs just 59 more runs to become only the second batter to score 15,000 runs in ODI cricket.

## Mumbra Woman Under ATS Scanner



**Thane:** The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has launched an investigation into a 19-year-old resident of Mumbra, identified as Namira Tariq Khan, after she allegedly obtained a new passport by concealing critical information about her previous travel document. According to investigative agen-

cies, Namira held an earlier passport issued in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. However, while applying for a fresh passport from Mumbra, she allegedly failed to disclose details of her existing travel document as required by law. Following preliminary findings by the ATS, the Mumbra Police registered a

First Information Report (FIR) against Namira under Section 12(1)(b) of the Passports Act, 1967, along with Sections 318(2), 212, and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The case has taken a significant turn as investigators uncover links to her father, Tariq Khan, an absconding suspect with alleged ties to banned extremist organizations, including the Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and Indian Mujahideen (IM). "The investigation agency is currently scrutinizing both passports, examining her foreign travel history, and attempting to trace potential linkages to her absconding father," stated an ATS

official involved in the probe.

According to ATS records, Tariq Khan has three cases registered against him:

2001: Booked for his alleged association with the banned outfit SIMI.

2006: Charged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) by the Mumbai Crime Branch.

2011: Named in a case involving counterfeit currency, which also invoked stringent UAPA provisions. Authorities allege that Tariq Khan was known for delivering provocative speeches and played a key role in radicalizing and recruiting youth for extremist networks.

## BJP Names Debasish Sharma As Candidate For Nagaon Lok Sabha Bypoll In Assam



**Dispur:** The Bharatiya Janata Party's Central Election Committee on Friday approved Debasish Sharma as its candidate for the upcoming Lok Sabha bypoll in Assam's Nagaon constituency. The Election Commission of India has scheduled the by-election for the Nagaon Lok Sabha seat on October 6, 2026, with counting of votes set for October 9, 2026. Nagaon, Assam: Devashish Sharma, who received the BJP ticket for the Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency by-election, says, "First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Party President Nitin Nabin Ji, Honourable Chief. The BJP announced Sharma's candidature through a press release issued by its central office on Friday. The announcement comes as the party begins preparations for the by-election in the constituency.

Former Nagaon District Commissioner and administrative officer Debasish Sharma, along with journalists Lenin Saurav Bora and Gunjan Kalita, joined the BJP in Assam on Tuesday. The three joined the party at a ceremony held at the BJP Assam Pradesh headquarters at Vajpayee Bhawan in Basistha. The event was attended by Assam BJP president and Darrang-Udalguri MP Dilip

Saikia, along with several senior party leaders.

Ahead of the bypoll, an extended executive meeting of the Assam BJP is being held in Guwahati on Friday. BJP MLA Pulak Gohain said several issues would be discussed at the meeting, including the Seva Sankalp campaign, which will run from September 17 to October 17. He said the programme and its activities would be discussed in de-

tail, along with the upcoming Silchar Municipal Corporation elections and the by-election, ANI reports. Assam Minister Ashok Singhal said the party's attention would be on the by-election in nine villages along with the Silchar Municipal Corporation election. "An executive meeting is being attended by our MLAs and other party members. Several issues will be discussed, including the by-election in nine villages, the Silchar Municipal Corporation election and the month-long service programme. We will discuss plans to conduct these programmes effectively and work towards winning both elections," Singhal said. BJP MLA Pallab Lochan Das said special focus would be given to the Seva Sankalp campaign and related programmes. "This is

an extended executive meeting of the BJP Assam Pradesh, where we will discuss several important issues. The main focus will be our Seva Sankalp campaign, a month-long programme involving various service activities. We will engage with people, understand people's problems and work together to address them," he added. Assam Minister Pijush Hazarika said the meeting would focus on discussing future strategies and party programmes. "We will discuss our strategy and party programmes for the next four to six months. This is not a one-off meeting; the BJP holds a state executive meeting regularly, in line with its organisational rules. Some important decisions and plans for the coming months will be taken," the Minister said

## Former Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna Faces Fresh Jail Trouble As Mobile Phone, Rs.1 Lakh SIM Linked To DJ Halli Riot Convict

**Bengaluru:** Prajwal Revanna, former Hassan MP and grandson of former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, who is serving life sentence in connection with rape case is in trouble again for illegally possessing mobile phone inside the jail. Worst is that the police have traced the origin of the SIM card used by Prajwal to a rioter, who was part of attacking DJ Halli police station in 2020 and serving seven years imprisonment. Last week, the Prisons officials conducted a surprise raid on all the cells at Parappana Agrahara jail in Bengaluru. A mobile phone was found in the barrack of Prajwal Revanna, which had OTT Apps like Netflix and Amazon Prime downloaded. The mobile phone was sent to the forensic laboratory for fur-

ther testing. Though Prajwal Revanna denied possessing or using the mobile phone, the police said that the SIM used by Prajwal was purchased in Punganur, Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh. Police said that Tousif Siddiq, one of the convicts in DJ Halli police station attack had procured the SIM through his relative living in Punganur. When Prajwal was sent to jail in connection with a sexual assault case, Tousif Siddiq, Prathap Roy from West Bengal, Manjunath and others were in the jail. Meanwhile, Tousif Siddiq was admitted to a hospital, where his relative had handed over the SIM to him. Meanwhile, Manjunath had procured a mobile phone through his friend Naveen. The prisons warden Prakash Gavde was aware of the fact that

Manjunath had a mobile, while Tousif Siddiq had a SIM card. Through Prathap Roy, the warden passed on both mobile and SIM to Prajwal, the police said.

According to police, Prajwal had paid ? one lakh for SIM alone and paid separately for the handset. He had also downloaded OTT apps on his mobile phone and used to watch programs. During the FSL investigation, it was revealed that Prajwal had more than 173 videos and most of them were porn videos, which he had deleted after watching them. The police have arrested seven persons with respect to the mobile phone episode, including Prajwal Revanna, warden Prakash Gavde, Tousif Siddiq, Manjunath, Prathap Roy and others.

## Satish Jarkiholi ED Raids: Karnataka Minister Admits Rs.2 Crore Cash Belongs To Family, Denies Overseas Investments

**Bengaluru:** After two days of raids on his house and 18 other premises across Bengaluru, Belagavi and Goa, the Karnataka PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi has admitted that about Rs.2 crore cash seized by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) belonged to him. "The money belongs to our family and we have the account for that money. When the ED officials issue a notice to me for explanations, I will place the relevant documents before them," Jarkiholi told the reporters. When asked about the claim by ED officials on his investments abroad, Jarkiholi calmly said that the investments have not been made. "We have plans

of making some investments abroad, but so far, we haven't made any. I have answered all the questions posed by ED officials and for some of the questions, for which I didn't know the answers, I have told them I don't know. If they need any further clarifications on the seized documents, I will explain to them when they issue me with a notice," Jarkiholi said.

Meanwhile, the ED officials have sent the cash seized from houses belonging to Jarkiholi family members at Gokak and the houses of his associates to a bank in a trunk. The ED officials asked Bank of India officials in Gokak, the home town of Jarkiholi and handed over the cash to bank officials



after getting a receipt for that. According to ED officials, they have seized more than Rs.3 crore in cash and documents pertaining to the in-

vestment made by Satish Jarkiholi's family members abroad, including in mining industries at South Africa and Rwanda.

## 4 Army Personnel Detained In Madras Regiment Arms Theft Case In Hyderabad

**Hyderabad:** The Malkajgiri police have reportedly detained four people, all linked to the Army, in connection with the theft of service weapons from the Madras Regiment premises at Bolarum in Secunderabad. Investigators are believed to have recovered AK-series rifles, INSAS rifles and nearly 1,200 rounds of ammunition from a concealed location in Hyderabad. However, officials have not formally confirmed the recovery, citing technical reasons.

A former officer associated with the Madras Regiment is suspected of having masterminded the theft, according to sources. A senior police officer said investigators had made a breakthrough and detained several suspects, including serving or retired Army personnel and alleged associ-



ates from outside. The officer said the suspects were being questioned to determine the motive and indicated that further arrests could follow based on evidence. The case is being investigated by multiple agencies, including the NIA, Intelligence Bureau, Military

Intelligence, Army authorities and Bolarum police, amid concerns over possible terror, extremist or organised crime links. The theft came to light on August 31 after broken armoury locks were discovered. Five assault rifles, seven pistols, 21 magazines, ammunition and a night-

vision device were initially reported missing. Investigators are also probing security lapses, including the alleged shutdown of CCTV cameras between 10.30 pm and 7 am, while personnel with armoury access are being questioned and their communications analysed.

## Baba Ramdev Makes 'Ayurvedic Hookah', Calls It Beneficial For Health; Netizens React

E-cigarettes, shisha and flavored hookahs have become increasingly visible among younger people. Their sweet flavors and modern presentation can make them appear less harmful than conventional tobacco products. However, health authorities warn that smoking and vaping can expose users to nicotine, toxic chemicals and other substances that may harm the lungs and overall health. Amid these concerns, a video featuring yoga guru Baba Ramdev has attracted attention for its discussion of an "Ayurvedic hookah." In the video, Ramdev describes a traditional-style 'hookah' preparation made with several herbal and household ingredients and says it may offer relief from certain respiratory complaints. However, these claims should not be confused with established medical evidence. There is currently no strong clinical evidence showing that inhaling smoke or vapour from such a preparation is a safe or proven treatment for cough, nasal congestion or other illnesses.

According to the claims made in the video, the preparation involves ingredients such as liquorice, turmeric, mustard, cow ghee, Kakra singi and desi camphor. The method described involves combining some of the ingredients before placing the mixture in a hookah-like setup. Ramdev says that the resulting smoke can be inhaled and may help with complaints such as a blocked nose and cough. He also associates the practice with balancing the Ayurvedic concepts of vata, pitta and kapha. These statements represent the



claims made in the video and should not be taken as medical advice.

**Ingredients mentioned in the preparation**

**The ingredients reportedly mentioned by Ramdev include:**

- A small amount of liquorice
- Turmeric
- Mustard seeds
- Cow ghee
- Kakra singi
- Desi camphor

The video describes lightly crushing the liquorice (Mulethi) and combining it with cow ghee, followed by turmeric and mustard. Camphor is then placed on the hookah plate before the preparation is heated. The original video also refers to Kakra singi, a traditional Ayurvedic ingredient. The term can refer to plant material associated with insect-induced galls, which have historically been used in traditional preparations. Baba Ramdev says the ingredients, when used through this type of hookah, may help clear nasal congestion and provide relief from cough. He also links the practice to the Ayurvedic concept of managing the three doshas. It is important, however, to

distinguish between a traditional-health claim and a treatment that has been scientifically demonstrated to work. Inhaling smoke from burning substances can introduce particulate matter and combustion products into the respiratory system, regardless of whether the material contains tobacco. There is therefore no basis to assume that an "Ayurvedic" label automatically makes inhalation safe. One user commented, "Bus

yahi baki tha. Ramdev can try now ayurvedic alcohol. Check the ingredients from #Jägermeister." Another said, "This is the opposite of healthy and more toxic than smoking a cigarette because eventually you are inhaling carbon monoxide and carcinogens. This also leads to conditions like asthma, bronchitis." Another said, "Baba, burn anything and carbon dioxide gas is definitely produced, which harms the lungs."

## Jaipur Horror: Man Kills Wife, Daughters

**Jaipur:** A shocking murder case has come to light from Rajasthan's Jaipur, where a man allegedly killed his wife and their three daughters by repeatedly striking their heads with a cement block at their home in the Kardhani area early Friday. The accused allegedly fled the house after collecting milk from a deliveryman. According to police, a family dispute is being considered a possible motive behind the killings, although the exact reason behind the murders has not yet been established. The accused has been absconding since the incident, and a search is underway to trace him. Police said the man served tea to his 85-year-old father at around 7 am before leaving the house shortly afterwards. Investigators are examining all possible angles as they continue to piece together the sequence of events leading to the deaths. The deceased have been identified as Geeta Jha and her daughters Nandini, Radhika and Gauri. Their bodies were found at their house in Govind Vatika after police received information around 10 am. The attacker has been identified as Rahul Jha. The daughters are aged around 17-23 years of age. Police said the man served tea to his 85-year-old father at around 7 am before leaving the house shortly afterwards.

## Days After Building Collapse, National Capital To Finally Get Disaster Response Force



Days after the tragic building collapse in South Delhi's Satya Niketan in which seven people lost their lives, the national Capital is finally set to get its own State Disaster Response Force (SDRF). Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has formally initiated the process of setting up a dedicated SDRF for the Capital to strengthen the city's preparedness and response during major emergencies. Till now Delhi has remained dependent on the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Delhi Fire Services and local police for specialised assistance during major disasters and emergencies. The proposed

state-level force is aimed at reducing response times, improving coordination among agencies and strengthening Delhi's capacity to deal with disasters.

### Chief Minister Rekha Gupta at the building collapse site on Sunday

The Chief Minister stated that the formation of an SDRF for Delhi had been long overdue. "Most states in the country have already established an SDRF; having one for a densely populated metropolis like Delhi is the need of the hour. Due to various reasons, this vital system could not materialize during the tenures of previous governments. The

Delhi government will now move forward in this direction to reduce reliance on external aid during disasters and to bolster local capacity for immediate response." Gupta also noted that the objective is not only to respond after a disaster strikes "but also to make Delhi fully prepared and capable of handling such situations proactively". The decision to set up SDRF was taken at a high-level meeting at the Delhi Secretariat, chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. Attendees included Delhi Government Chief Secretary Rajiv Verma, NDRF Director General (DG)

Piyush Anand, Inspector General (IG) Narendra Bundela, and senior officials from various departments. During the meeting, NDRF officials briefed the Chief Minister on various aspects regarding the formation of the SDRF in Delhi. They informed the Chief Minister that an SDRF battalion could be raised in Delhi, comprising up to 1,100 personnel. This battalion would operate under the state government and, upon its orders, would be capable of rapidly reaching disaster sites to carry out effective relief and rescue operations. The decision comes shortly after the Satya Niketan boys' paying guest (PG) building collapse, where rescue and relief operations involved coordinated efforts by multiple agencies and underscored the need for a stronger local disaster-response mechanism. The move assumes particular significance in view of Delhi's vulnerability to earthquakes, as the national Capital falls under high-risk Seismic Zone-IV, as well as the threat of severe flooding and other emergencies requiring immediate and specialised rescue operations.

## "Don't Make This Mistake": Assam Man After Killing Wife, Keeping Head In Fridge

**Guwahati:** A man who killed his wife in a murder so macabre that has left Assam in a deep shock has advice for the public, though he did not follow it himself. Ramanuj Goswami, who killed wife Riya Talukdar, 25, in Guwahati, managed to speak to some reporters while the police were taking him for a medical checkup. "I am accepting my faults. People can say bad things about me. But I request everyone not to make this kind of mistake in their life," Goswami said. The couple got married just a few months ago. The accused's comments were a sudden climbdown from his earlier aggressive remarks about "killing" a "sugar daddy" after coming out of jail, and his statement to reporters that he had "no regrets" and won't apologise. He was arrested on September 4 for killing his wife following an argument. The police said he killed her with a sharp weapon and then severed her head. Not satisfied with that, he tried to



cut up the body and mutilated her face with scissors, investigators have said. He kept the severed head of his wife in a fridge. The police along with a magistrate took him to the crime scene on Tuesday. They have seized the fridge in which he kept his wife's severed head, knife, scissors, clothes and other evidence. Police are questioning him to establish the

motive behind the crime and reconstruct the sequence of events that followed. The identity of the person he referred to as "sugar daddy" and the circumstances behind the remark are part of the investigation now. The case came to light on September 6 after neighbours complained of a foul smell coming from the couple's apartment in Guwahati. Resi-

dents also told police they had not seen the newly married couple for two days and that both their mobile phones were switched off. The police then broke open the lock of the apartment and discovered the woman's body inside. According to investigators, her fingers had been partially chopped, the body had begun decomposing and her head was missing.

## India-Russia "Expand The Dialogue" On 105-Plane Deal Ahead Of BRICS



Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu on Thursday said India and Russia have expanded discussions on manufacturing airplanes in the country, including turboprop IL-114 and Sukhoi Superjet 100 planes. Speaking to reporters ahead of the BRICS Summit, Naidu said discussions were held with the Russian delegation regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Hindustan

Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Russia for aircraft manufacturing in India. He said the aircraft are compatible with India's regional connectivity requirements, especially with several airports being developed across the country. "Regarding the Russian delegation, I would like to update you on the MoU that HAL had with Russia in terms of manufacturing a plane in the country. There are two kinds of planes. One is the

turboprop IL-114, and also the Sukhoi Superjet 100, which is a jet-engine plane. So these two are quite compatible with our regional connectivity scheme," Naidu said. "With a lot of airports coming up, it is very important for us to connect them. And these planes are very efficient for us to connect them. So we have expanded the dialogue on that. And we want to start the process as soon as possible of getting their planes

manufactured in the country. So that has been the crux of the discussion for us," Naidu added. The Minister further said that India-Russia ties continue to grow, with aviation emerging as a key pillar of the strategic partnership. Discussions and proposed deals cover potential deliveries and arrangements for 105 regional turboprop aircraft to Indian operators, including Pinnacle Air, Air Kerala, and Sleek Aviation. Russia displayed its regional SJ-100, MC-21, and IL-114-300 aircraft at the Innoprom event in Delhi to target India's expanding regional connectivity needs. The growing aviation engagement comes as Russia seeks to deepen industrial cooperation with India beyond traditional defence platforms such as the MiG and Sukhoi fighter jets. The proposed aircraft deals indicate a possible expansion of India-Russia aerospace ties into civil aviation, regional connectivity and aircraft manufacturing.

## "Can't Browbeat Child": Top Court On 'Intimidation' Of Protester By Influencer

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Thursday took serious view of allegations of harassment of a minor girl who participated in the Cockroach Janta Party protests in July. The court said nobody can be permitted to browbeat a victim or her family for pursuing criminal proceedings. The counsel appearing for the 14-year-old girl told the court that she was harassed and her house was vandalised after she registered the FIR against right-wing influencer Swatantra Bhardwaj who claimed in a video that he had attacked her father during the CJP's protest. "There cannot be any second opinion about it. Such matters cannot be taken lightly. Nobody should be protected. If violence against a child is involved and persons are roaming free and trying to browbeat the child or the family so that they do not pursue the criminal proceedings, then it's a serious matter," the CJI led bench observed. Earlier, Delhi Police on September 5 had added provisions of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and criminal intimidation to the FIR



against Swatantra Bhardwaj over the alleged assault on the minor activist's father during the CJP-led protests. Bhardwaj was detained in Bulandshahr after the CJP staged a protest outside the Parliament Street police station demanding his arrest over the alleged assault. The action followed outrage over an interview in which Bhardwaj claimed he had "cracked the skull" of the minor activist's father during the July 20 protest and escaped arrest because of his political connections. Without referring to any n

ames, the lawyer said instead of prosecuting those who were accompanying the accused and were allegedly caught on camera, an FIR has been registered against the child. This is also contrary to the Supreme Court's earlier order, the lawyer said, adding that video can be placed on record showing that the girl's residence had been subjected to stone pelting. "The high-powered committee will take time, but if something happens to the child in the meantime, that cannot subsequently be re-

versed or repaired through the committee," the counsel submitted. Responding to the submission, the CJI said, "If there are anti-social elements who indulged in violence against child, and they are roaming free, and are trying to browbeat the child, that may be a serious thing." A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to ensure action on the girl's FIR and sought report from Delhi and Uttar Pradesh governments on the issue.

## Ladakh Set For Article 371 Safeguards, First-Of-Its-Kind Elected Body

**Leh:** Ladakh looks set for the special status that it has been demanding for four years. The central government has agreed to grant Constitutional safeguards under Article 371 to Ladakh. The Union Territory will also have an elected body to govern the Himalayan region in a 'sui-generis' model, the first such experiment in India. In an exclusive interview to NDTV, Ashish Kundra, Chief Secretary of Ladakh, said that Parliament will amend Article 371 to give adequate Constitutional safeguards to Ladakh. He said the Union Ministry Home Affairs has already started the process for grating Constitutional safeguards and an elected body to Ladakh. Article 371 of the Indian Constitution grants temporary, transitional, and special powers to certain states to meet their unique regional and social needs. "It's a unique model we are working on. It's a 'sui generis' model of governance. Ladakh will have an elected body, but it will not be UT with legislature or state with legislature," Kundra told



NDTV. A 'sui generis' model is a standalone legal framework created to govern a unique situation. The Latin phrase sui generis means "of its own kind" or "unique." Kundra is part of central government team holding talks with Ladakhi leaders. On Tuesday, two sides held talks in Delhi. Ladakh was carved out as a separate Union Territory after Centre bifurcated Jammu and Kashmir state and stripped it of its special

status under Article 370. Initially, section of Ladakhis welcomed the Center's decision but eventually launched an agitation against the bureaucratic rule. They have been demanding statehood and Constitutional safeguards under sixth schedule. The sixth schedule provides for setting up local councils with power to make laws on land, forests, water, and agriculture. It gives local communities a direct say in

regional economic development. Last year, four persons were killed and scores were injured during clashes with security forces in Leh. Dozens, including activist Sonam Wangchuk, were arrested after the violence. The government says they have already dropped cases against most of the people arrested then. According to Kundra, Ladakh's Lt Governor will soon take a call on the cases where chargesheet has already been filed.

## Dozens Injured As Beam Launches Used For Bridge Construction Crashes In Bihar



**Patna:** Dozens of workers have been injured after a concrete slab and a beam launcher collapsed during the construction of a six-lane bridge in Bihar's Vaishali district on Thursday. According to the officials, the bridge was being constructed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). "Seven

people were injured, and they were taken to a government hospital for treatment. The victims sustained minor injuries," District Magistrate Varsha Singh told PTI. In a statement, NHAI said the incident happened during the shifting of a launcher while carrying out bridge construction work on NH-139W. "No dam-

age has been caused to the bridge structure in the incident," it said. "The NHAI remains fully committed to maintaining the highest standards of quality, ensuring the safety of workers at the worksite, and completing the construction within the stipulated timeline. To prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the

future, safety standards and protocols are being strictly reassessed," it added. Bihar Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Yadav called out the NDA government for the incident. He claimed that substandard construction materials and irregularities in inspections are the few causes behind the continuous bridge collapses. The project forms part of a nearly 38.8-km road corridor connecting Bakarpur in Saran district with Manikpur in Muzaffarpur district via Lalganj in Vaishali district. Authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the collapse and the safety measures in place at the construction site.

# China Ends Suspense, Xi Jinping To Visit India For BRICS Summit



Chinese President Xi Jinping will be visiting India over this weekend to attend the 18th BRICS summit in New Delhi, the government has confirmed, effectively ending days of heavy diplomatic suspense."At the invitation of Prime Minister of the Republic of India Narendra Modi, President Xi Jinping will attend the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi from September 12 to 13," China's foreign ministry statement read. Earlier in the day, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jia-kun refused

to provide any confirmation on Xi's visit to New Delhi."I have no information to provide regarding the question you raised," Guo Jiakun replied to a question on if the Chinese leader will be travelling to India this weekend to attend the BRICS leaders' meeting. The high-stakes visit marks Xi's first visit to India in seven years, following a chill in bilateral relations after the 2020 Galwan Valley border clashes that killed 20 Indians and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers. The last time Xi visited

India was in 2019 for an informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Mamallapuram near Chennai. Xi had first come to India in September 2014 when it was the first terms of both the leaders in office and had later visited Goa in 2016 to attend the BRICS summit. Bilateral ties between the two nations have improved in recent years, especially since PM Modi visited China last year and as both nations grapple with volatile relationships with the US. New Delhi has since then eased some of the re-

strictions on Chinese investment that it imposed following the 2020 clashes, focusing on electronics, capital goods, and solar cell sectors. China's foreign ministry told Reuters that Xi and PM Modi, who briefly met this month at a regional forum in Kyrgyzstan, think the two countries are "partners, not competitors, and they represent opportunities, not threats, for each other's development". Sources told news agency Reuters that Chinese companies' proposed investments in India are facing more scrutiny from Beijing itself, including in sectors where sophisticated manufacturing and high-end technology may be involved. Despite that, the bilateral trade between the two nations last year rose 12.4 per cent to a record \$155 billion, more than double the \$71.6 billion reported 10 years earlier, according to Chinese customs data. In the first seven months of this year, trade further jumped a 23 per cent compared with the same period a year ago.

# "Surge In Construction" Seen At Iran's Suspected Nuke Site At Pickaxe Mountain: Report



**Washington:**A suspected Iranian nuclear site, deep inside Pickaxe Mountain, has seen a surge of construction this year, even as the war in the Middle East continued, according to a group of analysts who reviewed six years of satellite imagery. Buried deep under granite, the site near the Natanz nuclear complex, roughly 140 miles south of Tehran, has been under the watchful eyes of global intelligence agencies as a likely location for Iran's new and undeclared enrichment facility. Analysts at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington-based think tank, reviewed satellite imagery spanning six years, the latest from August 9, and found "a clear surge in construction activity" this year, with Iran erecting "a security perimeter around the facility." "Multi-source imagery analysis of Pickaxe Mountain and the Natanz Nuclear Facility from 2020

to the present reveals a clear three-phase activity signature across the five key points of interest and the roads connecting them, indicating a site that has shifted from active excavation toward probable internal construction and continued exterior reinforcement," the CSIS analysts wrote in their report. "Together, these images reveal more road activity at Pickaxe Mountain in 2026 than at any point in the site's history. There is a clear surge in construction activity in 2026 that corresponds to the raising and hardening of the portal accesses, paving of the internal road network, reinforcement around access areas, and the flattening and removal of excavation spoil," they added. However, the analysts added that they could not refute or substantiate a reported Israeli intelligence claim that Iran has moved uranium centrifuges and centrifuge parts into

Pickaxe Mountain last fall. **What New Activity Could Mean** Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in September said the satellite imagery of the site was insufficient to determine what was happening at Pickaxe Mountain and called for the UN's nuclear watchdog on the ground to verify the site's purpose. However, Tehran never facilitated the move. Analysts at CSIS noted that the surge in activity at the site could indicate Tehran may be building a centrifuge assembly facility, as indicated in 2020 by then head of Iran's nuclear program, Ali Akbar Salehi, who announced an underground centrifuge assembly facility near Natanz. Iran could also be expanding activities at Pickaxe Mountain to house a uranium enrichment facility, with the hopes that this facility could enrich Iran's existing stockpile of around 440 kilograms of 60 per cent enriched uranium to weap-

ons-grade material, they said. "Iran could be moving additional research and activities related to nuclear weapons into the underground facility, such as the metallurgy and chemical conversion facilities that the United States and Israel destroyed in Isfahan during Operation Midnight Hammer, the limited strikes against Iran's nuclear program in June 2025," they added. **Trump's Threats** The report about the surge in activity at Pickaxe Mountain came despite US President Donald Trump's repeated threats to strike the site. "We may hit Pickaxe very soon," Trump told reporters last week, adding that "we know everybody that's moving" at the site. **About the Nuke Site** Pickaxe Mountain, or Kule Kolang Gaz Lai in Farsi, is a large underground tunnel complex 2 kilometers south of the Natanz uranium enrichment facility in Iran. It is a deeply buried granite fortification, and analysts noted that it will be difficult to destroy the facility even with the heaviest non-nuclear US munitions, such as the GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a UN nuclear watchdog, has requested Tehran to provide information about Pickaxe Mountain and access to the facility. However, Iran has reportedly never responded to the IAEA requests.

# Anthropic Whistleblower Explains Why AI Is Bigger Threat Than Nukes

**Washington:**Does artificial superintelligence really pose a greater risk to humanity than nuclear weapons? The answer is yes, if you ask former Anthropic researcher Jacob Coxon, who recently posted a series of warnings claiming that "AI could kill all humans." "We know how to control nuclear weapons...We don't yet know how to control AI," Coxon said while talking to Fox News. The researcher, who says he spent three years conducting research at Anthropic and OpenAI, labelled AI "possibly the most dangerous technology that humanity has ever created."

"It's basically out of science fiction. I think we have no other choice but to cooperate internationally because an arms race would be disastrous in a way that no other human activity has been in the past," he said. **The Warning** Coxon on Tuesday took to social media and said the two biggest AI companies are more focused on beating each other to build the most advanced AI models than they are on safety. "Neither company is acting responsibly. They are racing straight to self-improving superintelligence and gambling with our lives," the

27-year-old said. "The people building AI earnestly believe that it could kill us all by the end of the decade. This is not a marketing stunt," he added. Superintelligence is the theoretical point when AI's capabilities exceed human intelligence. **Anthropic backs Coxon** Anthropic safety executive Evan Hubinger backed up Coxon on X. "We really do earnestly believe AI could kill all humans!" he said, adding that he estimated that risk at more than 10 percent over the next decade. Hubinger said Anthropic is "trying its best", but does not yet have a plan to ensure an AI sys-

tem that surpasses human capabilities would obey its creators. He said there was a "low" risk of that happening with current models. **The Lapses** Coxon considers Anthropic's efforts genuine but said he believes no company can responsibly develop an AI that surpasses humans without government intervention or a coordinated slowdown. "At Anthropic, the stakes are well-understood, but they are locked in a race to get there first -- they believe no one else will act responsibly, so they must do it themselves, despite the risk," he said.

# "Get Off Our Roads": Team Trump's Racist 'Mr Singh' Poster In US



**Washington:**The Donald Trump administration in the United States has once again stirred controversy with a racist remark against Indians on its latest immigration enforcement advertisement. The poster, a parody of the movie 'Transformers', shows a robot confronting a brown man in a bandana, referring to him as "Mr Singh". Posted on the US Department of Homeland Security's X account, the digital advertisement features Optimus Prime, the main protagonist in the Transformers franchise, with a DHS arm patch, confronting the brown-bearded man with the message, "Get off our roads, you don't know how to drive, Mr Singh." It is part of Trump administration's wider campaign encouraging illegal immigrants to voluntarily leave the United States. DHS has promoted the campaign using the slogan "Self-deport or find out." DHS also posted a short AI-generated video, showing Megatron, the main antagonist character in the Transformers franchise, negotiating the release of "aliens" -- a term used to describe foreign nationals by the US administration. Megatron is shown seeking the release of truck drivers Harjinder Singh, Rajinder Kumar, Bekzhan

Beishekeev, Akhror Bozorov, and Jasveer Singh, who were involved in road accidents and other crimes. "If you approach this nation with hostile intent, know this. We will defend ourselves. We will defend Americanism. We will defend our home," the DHS said in a post on X. **The 'Singh' Reference** The surname 'Singh' is shared by a large population who practice Hinduism and Sikhism -- a cohort that also forms a major chunk of the American trucking workforce. But the line used on the poster appeared to target all people of Indian origin in the US, not just those who are in the US illegally. Incidentally, the robot featured on the poster, meant to signify the US, is a character from Trans-

former lore, which is literally an alien. **The Backlash** The reference to "Mr Singh" in the advertisement was criticised by advocacy groups, including the Hindu American Foundation and Sikh Coalition. "'Singhs' are Hindu, they are Sikhs, they are American, and they drive. Racist, un-American, anti-Indian profiling/trolling by @DHSgov should shock our nation's collective conscience," the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) said in a post on X. "This is a discriminatory post by a federal agency that is far beyond political messaging, and we welcome an investigation," the HAF said, tagging Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K Dhillon and FBI

Director Kash Patel. "Twenty-five years after 9/11, Sikhs are \*still\* being targeted and profiled for how we look," the Sikh Coalition said in a post on X. "Millions of Sikhs in the United States have the last name Singh, which means lion. We remain fearless in identifying as Sikhs -- even when our government portrays us as enemies," the Sikh Coalition said. The row comes amid a DHS campaign to promote its CBP Home programme, which allows eligible undocumented migrants to register their intention to leave the United States voluntarily. Those registering for self-deportation can receive travel assistance and an exit bonus of USD 2,600, according to the DHS.

# Several US Warplanes Damaged In Iranian Strike On Jordan: Report



**Tehran:**Several US military aircraft have suffered damage in an overnight Iranian attack at an American air base in Jordan, according to a CBS report. One A-10 Thunderbolt, known as the Warthog, was struck and left with a missing wing, while roughly eight F-15s sustained light damage and were placed back into service during the Iranian strike at Muwaffaq Salti Air Base, CBS reporter Jennifer Jacobs said in a post on X. "American forces in Jordan launched more than 30 Patriot missiles defending against the Iranian strikes. The overnight damage came after the US attacked five Iranian tankers in retaliation for Iran targeting a US Navy warship. In response, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps claimed they launched attacks at eight tankers and two warships, including the base in Jordan," she wrote. The US has dozens of warplanes operating from the Muwaffaq Salti Air Base, which acts as a key airpower hub for operations against Iran. The attack came after the US sank five Iranian tankers earlier this week, and Iran retaliated by bombarding scores of American bases and allies in the re-

gion. In an official statement reported by the state-backed IRNA news agency, Iran's Revolutionary Guards announced that they "struck the American Al-Azraq base in Jordan with heavy missile strikes" as part of a designated "punitive operation." Tehran also said it attacked more than a dozen vessels trying to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, as it announced an expansion of a no-go zone outside the strategic waterway it has blockaded for months. Shortly after the barrage, the Jordanian military announced that its air defence network intercepted and neutralised the incoming projectiles. According to an official army statement, Jordan's defence

systems detected 20 incoming ballistic missiles, successfully destroying 18 of them, while two impacted unpopulated terrain. **Iran Offers an End to War** Iran's Guards, the ideological arm of the military, said the war could be brought to an end if Washington met its conditions, which included demands on the wars in Lebanon and Yemen. "It must... refrain from renewed threats, withdraw the Israeli regime's army from Lebanon, end the blockade of Yemen, release \$24 billion in Iran's frozen assets and refrain from any interference in the country's nuclear and missile capabilities," Mohebi said, according to Fars news agency.

US President Donald Trump, eager to end an unpopular war, asserted on Wednesday the conflict will conclude right after the midterm US elections in November. Polls show his Republican Party could face a drubbing and lose control of one or both houses of Congress. "I think the war will end immediately after the election" because Iran "can't hold out any longer," Trump told journalists, accusing Tehran of being "desperate to try and affect" the vote. However, the Wall Street Journal quoted US officials saying that Trump's top advisers are privately warning that the war could drag on through the remaining two years of his term.

# Trump Promises \$5,000 To Every Adult American If Republicans Retain Congress

**Washington:**US President Donald Trump has capped opening night of the unusual Republican midterm convention by making the extraordinary pledge to pay every adult American \$5,000 if his party retains its control of both chambers of Congress after November. The billionaire leader coupled his claim with a plea for his supporters to "pretend" he was on the ballot. "If the Republicans win, you win with us and you get \$5,000. It will be called the Trump dividend," he told the convention in Dallas, as the party struggles in polls against the Democrats.

The proposal, which could cost at least \$1 trillion, is seen financially and politically implausible. The president did not specify where the money would come from, citing only that "our country is making so much money." **Trump's Optimism** Trump also doubled down on his bet that he can help Republicans to defy opinion polls and retain both houses of Congress on November 3 and said, "I'm asking you to pretend that I'm on the ballot." "I'm on the ballot, I'm on the ballot -- just one more time," he told the crowd. Recent opinion polls have shown

that Trump's approval ratings are in the low 30s, with voters increasingly angry about high prices and the war he launched against Iran. Decision Desk HQ projects Democrats to win the House 230-205 and the Senate to finish 51-49 in their favor in November. **Trump Defends Iran War** During his speech, Trump frequently mentioned the unpopular war in Iran, even seeming to acknowledge that it had hurt the US economy. "We were doing great," he said before he approached his economic advisers to say, "I hate to do this to you," explaining that

he needed to start the conflict because Iran was perhaps "two, maybe three weeks away from having a nuclear weapon." He also suggested the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz should be renamed after him, predicting victory and linking it directly to lower oil prices. "Food prices and almost every other item are rapidly going down. And by the way, oil will be going down as soon as we win the war with Iran, which is taking place right now," he added. He also defended imposing sweeping tariffs on US trade partners, insisting that the economic turmoil would be worth it.

# E-commerce Rules: Fake discounts, dark patterns to face tighter norms from January 1, 2027; know what changes

Online shopping in India is set for tighter consumer protection rules from January 1, 2027, with the government introducing changes aimed at making e-commerce platforms more transparent and fair for consumers. The new rules will cover the way online platforms display discounts, search results and sponsored listings, while also tightening requirements around dark patterns, consumer complaints, data usage, additional fees and information about products.

The move comes as e-commerce-related complaints continue to form a significant share of grievances received by the National Consumer Helpline (NCH). According to the government, the NCH received 17.71 lakh complaints in 2025, with around 29% linked to e-commerce.

Here are the key changes consumers should know about from January 1, 2027.

## What changes for online shoppers from January 1, 2027?

The new requirements are aimed at giving consumers clearer information before they make an online purchase. E-commerce companies will have to make changes to areas including pricing, search rankings, sponsored products, consumer complaints, data use and website or app design.

The government has said the changes are intended to strengthen consumer protection while maintaining a balance with ease of doing business.

## Fake discounts will face tighter scrutiny

One of the biggest changes concerns the way discounts are displayed on e-commerce platforms.

When a product is offered at a discount, platforms will have to show both the reduced price and the prior price.

The prior price will refer to the lowest price at which the product was offered during the previous 30 days. This is intended to prevent misleading discount claims where a product's price is increased shortly before a sale and then shown with a large percentage discount.

For consumers, this should make it easier to assess whether an advertised discount represents a genuine reduction.

## Search result manipulation will not be allowed

E-commerce platforms will also face restrictions on manipulating search results in ways that could mislead consumers.

Search rankings should not be manipulated to unfairly influence a consumer's purchasing decision. This is particularly relevant where platforms

promote their own products, preferred sellers or particular listings.

Paid placements will also need to be clearly and prominently identified as sponsored listings.

This will help consumers distinguish between ordinary search results and products that have been promoted through paid placement.

## Dark patterns will face stricter compliance rules

The government is also tightening the framework around dark patterns, which are deceptive design practices that can influence consumers into making choices they may not otherwise have made. Examples include adding unwanted products or services to a shopping basket, creating false urgency and making it difficult for consumers to reject an additional purchase. India's existing Dark Patterns Guidelines, 2023 prohibit specified deceptive practices, including false urgency and basket sneaking. Under the new framework, e-commerce companies will have to conduct a self-audit once a year and prominently display a dark-pattern compliance certificate. The Central Consumer Protection Authority had already advised e-commerce platforms in 2025 to conduct self-audits to identify dark patterns on their

platforms.

Important product information must be clearly displayed.

Online marketplaces will also have to provide important information about products and transactions in a clear manner.

## This includes details such as:

Best Before or Use Before information, where applicable

Return and refund terms

Warranty information

Delivery details

Payment-related information

The aim is to ensure that consumers can access important information before completing a purchase rather than having to search through multiple pages or terms and conditions.

Unrelated bundled fees will face restrictions

The new rules will also address additional charges imposed during online purchases. E-commerce platforms will not be allowed to impose unrelated bundled fees. However, specified exceptions will apply to loyalty or membership programmes. The provision is aimed at making the final amount payable by consumers more transparent and preventing unrelated charges from being added to transactions.

## Consumer data will require clear consent

Consumer data is another area covered by the new requirements. E-commerce platforms will need express and affirmative consent for the relevant use of consumer data. Consent cannot simply be assumed through a pre-selected option.

The existing e-commerce rules already require consumer consent for purchases to be based on an explicit and affirmative action and prohibit automatic consent through pre-ticked boxes. For consumers, the requirement is intended to provide greater control over how their information is used.

## Imported products must show country and importer details

Consumers purchasing imported products online will also get clearer information about their origin and the entity responsible for importing them. Platforms will need to provide details including the Country of Origin and information about the importer. This can help consumers identify where a product has come from and the relevant importer in India.

## E-commerce companies will have to connect with NCH

Another important change is the requirement for e-commerce companies to become part of the convergence process of the



National Consumer Helpline.

The NCH is the government's central grievance redressal mechanism. It allows consumers to register complaints through multiple channels and provides a docket number for registered grievances.

If a consumer raises a complaint with an e-commerce platform, the Grievance Officer will have to provide the consumer with a copy of the complaint.

This will give consumers a formal record of their complaint and could make it easier to follow up on unresolved issues.

## Companies get time to prepare for the new rules

The new requirements will come into effect from January 1, 2027, giving e-commerce companies time

to make the necessary changes to their platforms, software, algorithms and seller policies.

The changes are part of a broader push to improve transparency and fair business practices in India's rapidly expanding digital marketplace.

## What the new rules mean for consumers

For online shoppers, some of the most visible changes could relate to discounts, sponsored products and the information displayed before checkout.

Consumers should be able to see the prior price used for a discount, identify sponsored search results, understand applicable charges and access important information about returns, refunds, warranties and delivery. The tighter rules around dark patterns

are also aimed at reducing deceptive website and app designs that can influence purchasing decisions.

## What consumers should know

From January 1, 2027, e-commerce platforms will face tighter requirements covering price transparency, search results, sponsored listings, dark patterns, additional fees, product information, imported goods, consumer data and grievance redressal. For shoppers, the most important change may be greater transparency around online discounts. Showing the reduced price alongside the prior price, combined with restrictions on misleading search practices and dark patterns, is intended to help consumers make more informed purchasing decisions.

## Packaged food red warning labels: High sugar, salt or saturated fat could trigger health alert; what Supreme Court said



Packaged food products high in sugar, salt or saturated fat could soon face prominent red warning labels on the front of their packs, following the latest developments in the Supreme Court. The Centre has indicated that it is open to a stricter approach to front-of-pack warning labels proposed by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The development could affect a wide range of packaged products, including biscuits, savoury snacks, sauces and other processed foods. However, the final rules and their implementation timeline have not yet been notified.

## What has FSSAI proposed?

FSSAI has proposed a red hexagonal warning label on the front of packaged food products that are high in specified nutrients of concern. Under the regulator's original phased approach, the warning would initially apply when a product exceeds the prescribed limits for two or more of the specified nutrients — sugar, salt and saturated fat. The proposed system is intended to make nutrition-related health warnings more prominent and easier for consumers to understand when making purchasing decisions.

## Supreme Court pushes for stricter warning labels

During Thursday's hearing, the Supreme Court questioned the rationale behind the proposed phased implementation. The Centre indicated that it

could consider implementing both phases together.

This could mean that a product exceeding the prescribed limit for even one of the specified nutrients may eventually have to carry a red warning label, rather than waiting until two nutrients cross the thresholds.

The Supreme Court has also expressed concern about the impact of unhealthy packaged foods on public health, particularly among children. However, this should not be interpreted as a final notification of the stricter rule. The court's formal order and subsequent regulatory action will determine how the system is ultimately implemented.

## Food industry's concerns over the proposed labels

The packaged food industry has raised concerns about the proposed nutrient thresholds and the way they would be calculated. The All India Food Processors' Association (AIFPA) has argued that the warning thresholds should be assessed on a per-serving basis, rather than per 100 grams or 100 ml. The industry body says serving-based information could better reflect how consumers actually consume packaged products.

The industry has also sought further scientific examination of the proposed thresholds, arguing that Indian dietary habits and consumption patterns should be taken into account.

## What could change for consumers?

If stricter front-of-pack

warnings are introduced, shoppers could see a much more prominent health alert before buying packaged food.

Instead of relying only on the detailed nutrition table at the back of a packet,

consumers could potentially identify products high in sugar, salt or saturated fat more easily from the front of the pack.

This could be particularly relevant for products such as biscuits, savoury snacks, sauces, instant foods and other processed items where high levels of certain nutrients may not be immediately obvious from the packaging.

## What could change for food companies?

Food manufacturers may need to review their packaging and labelling strategies if the stricter system is adopted. Products that currently avoid a warning because only one nutrient exceeds the proposed threshold could poten-

tially fall within the warning-label system if the government moves directly to the stricter phase.

Companies may also face pressure to reformulate products to reduce levels of sugar, salt or saturated fat and avoid triggering prominent warnings.

## What happens next?

The Supreme Court is expected to issue its written order shortly. The matter is scheduled to come up again on 28 September.

Until the court's order and any subsequent regulatory notification are issued, consumers should not assume that every packaged food product exceeding a particular nutrient limit will immediately carry a red warning.

# HAL-Russia talks expand on making IL-114, Sukhoi Superjet 100 planes in India



Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu said on Thursday that India and Russia have widened talks on manufacturing aircraft in India, including the turboprop IL-114 and the Sukhoi Superjet 100. Speaking ahead of the BRICS Summit, Naidu said the discussions with the Russian delegation focused on the existing Memorandum of Understanding between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited

(HAL) and Russia for local aircraft production. He added that both aircraft are well suited to India's regional connectivity needs, particularly as the country continues to expand its airport network.

Speaking to the reporters, Naidu said, "Regarding the Russian delegation, I would like to update you on the MoU that HAL had with Russia in terms of manufacturing a plane in the country. There

are two kinds of planes. One is the turboprop IL-114, and also the Sukhoi Superjet 100, which is a jet-engine plane. So these two are quite compatible with our regional connectivity scheme. With a lot of airports coming up, it is very important for us to connect them. And these planes are very efficient for us to connect them. So we have expanded the dialogue on that. And we want to start the

process as soon as possible of getting their planes manufactured in the country. So that has been the crux of the discussion for us." Naidu said India has taken necessary steps to ensure an impactful BRICS session, with delegations from different sectors and countries participating in the event.

He further said the Russian delegation had appreciated India's transformation over the years and its growing role as a partner for countries across the world.

"BRICS is one of the most important events India is hosting, and we have been a very important partner in this also. I feel right now the countries that are there in BRICS and also the world in general are looking up to India for what India is planning, what India is doing, and how India is thinking. So it be-

comes very important for us to engage properly and engage in the right manner so that the impact that it creates in the world is very, very positive. We have taken all the necessary steps so that we have a very impactful session in BRICS. Many different delegations from different sectors and different countries are coming here together, and there is a lot of excitement that we see from the delegations," he said.

Naidu also said arrangements were being made across Delhi and other parts of the country for the summit, with focus on welcoming visiting delegations.

"I've met the Russian delegation, and they have talked about how India was 20 years ago and how they see a huge change in the approach of India today, and how it has become

a very strong partner for many countries across the world... India has to capitalize on that. And BRICS is an important platform for that. Other than that, regarding the preparations you have seen, not only in Delhi but across the country, all the arrangements are being made. Right from the airports to the venues, we are taking absolutely full care of the people because 'Atithi Devo Bhava' is the mantra we have... I would call upon each and every one involved in this so that anyone who is coming outside of India feels the warmth that India has to show them," he further said.

India will host the BRICS Summit in New Delhi from September 12-13, with proceedings guided by the official theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability".

# BEE Showcases Commercial Electric Cooking Solutions to Accelerate India's Transition from LPG to Electricity



Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power, Government of India, organized the “Commercial Induction Cooking Showcase & Chef Challenge” in New Delhi, under the theme “Accelerating India’s Electric Cooking Ambition: From Technology Demonstration to Real-World Adoption.” The event brought together policymakers, public sector enterprises, manufacturers, technology providers, chefs, hoteliers, and commercial kitchen operators on a common platform to advance the adoption of energy-efficient electric

cooking in India’s commercial and institutional kitchens. Shri Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Power, was the Chief Guest. He inaugurated an exhibition featuring commercial e-cooking appliances and technologies from seven leading manufacturers. Shri Krushna Chandra Panigrahy, Director General, BEE, delivered the keynote address, and Ms. Neha Dhingra, Director, CLASP, delivered the welcome address.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Pankaj Agarwal noted that energy security

is the real driver behind India’s shift to electric cooking. Due to the ongoing global conflict and rising price of LPG, transitioning to e-cooking is not only a strategic shift but also an operational choice. He stated that the enabling base for this transition already exists, citing schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA) and PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, which provide a strong foundation for promoting e-cooking appliances in the residential sector. At the same time, he ac-

knowledgeed that the barriers to wider adoption have been behavioural and infrastructural, ranging from chef and consumer comfort with the taste of food cooked on induction to gaps in local distribution capacity. Looking ahead, he identified awareness creation as the fastest lever to drive demand and accelerate the mainstreaming of electric cooking across the country. In his keynote address, Shri Krushna Chandra Panigrahy, Director General, BEE, welcomed representatives from the Ministry of Power, CLASP, industry, hospitality, PSUs, manufacturers, and chefs, and thanked them for their role in advancing India’s e-cooking ecosystem. He said India’s energy transition isn’t just about cleaner energy sources; it is also about using energy more efficiently, and electric cooking brings together efficiency, energy security, convenience, and sustainability in one shift. He announced that BEE is inviting manufacturers, dis-

tributors, system integrators, and solution providers to register for the Go Electric Commercial Electric Cooking Vendor Directory, a public platform that will help hotels, restaurants, canteens, hospitals, and institutions find credible providers. He also shared that BEE is working with the Bureau of Indian Standards to develop a Standards & Labeling framework for commercial induction hobs. Shri. Panigrahy informed that BEE’s objective is to move beyond individual demonstration projects towards a mature commercial e-cooking ecosystem, “where users have confidence in the technology, manufacturers understand market requirements, and policymakers have the evidence needed to support its scale-up.” The inaugural session was followed by a Commercial Induction Chef Challenge, where three chefs prepared dishes using induction cooktops. The demonstration enabled participants to observe the cooking performance, ease



of use, heat control, and cooking time of induction technology.

The event concluded with closing remarks from BEE, reiterating the Bureau’s commitment to working with the Ministry of Power, CLASP, manufacturers, industry associations, public sector enterprises and commercial kitchen operators to accelerate the adoption of energy-efficient electric cooking across India. The event reaffirmed the shared responsibility

of the Government, industry and hospitality sector to move India’s commercial kitchens from technology demonstration to real-world adoption, in line with the vision of a Viksit and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

**About BEE**  
The Government of India set up the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) on 1st March, 2002 under the provisions of the Energy Conservation Act, 2001. The mission of the Bureau of Energy

Efficiency is to assist in developing policies and strategies with a thrust on self-regulation and market principles. A key objective is reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy. BEE coordinates with designated consumers, designated agencies and other organizations. It recognises, identifies and utilises the existing resources and infrastructure, in performing the functions assigned to it under the Act. The Act also provides for regulatory and promotional functions.

## India Charts Course to Become Global Hub for Ship Ownership, Leasing and Maritime Finance: Sarbananda Sonowal



Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, was the Chief Guest at the India Ship Leasing and Financing Summit, organised by the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), at the GIFT City Club, Gandhinagar, today. The summit brought together policymakers, ship owners, lessors, charterers, financiers and maritime stakeholders to deliberate on India’s push to build a comprehensive ship ownership, leasing and financing ecosystem, with GIFT City positioned as the platform enabling this ambition.

Addressing the gathering, Sonowal invoked

India’s maritime legacy, tracing it to the Indus Valley Civilization and the ancient port of Lothal in Gujarat. “This gathering marks a significant milestone in our collective journey to position India, and particularly GIFT City, as a global maritime hub for a comprehensive maritime value chain ecosystem, encompassing ship leasing, owning, financing, insurance, brokering and other ancillary services,” Sonowal said.

The Minister pointed to India’s growing fleet footprint, with 38 ship lessors now registered and collectively leasing 43 vessels, taking total leasing capacity past 2.99 million DWT, of which 24 vessels now fly the Indian flag. He added

that 41 domestic and international banks have set up in the IFSC, extending close to USD 60.1 million in funding to ship leasing entities, with DGMA’s first regional office opening in GIFT City set to further strengthen this ecosystem for ship-owners and operators.

Sonowal outlined key reforms enabling Indian shipping to compete globally, including exemption from licensing requirements under the Coastal Shipping Act, 2025, for foreign vessels on charter, and permission for GIFT IFSC-based shipping companies to own foreign-flag vessels. On the latter, Sonowal said, “More fundamentally, it marks a shift in how we count our fleet, from tonnage that flies our flag to tonnage that we

own and control. PM Narendra Modi ji’s dynamic leadership has carried GIFT City from thought to fruition, and it is now poised to be the launchpad for India’s next wave of maritime growth.”

The Union Minister further cited Modi government’s financial commitments to the sector, including the ₹25,000 crore Maritime Development Fund expected to catalyse investments of up to ₹1.5 lakh crore by 2030, and the Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Scheme (SBFAS) 2.0, with a revised outlay of ₹24,736 crore extended to 2036, both aimed at strengthening Indian shipyards and vessel ownership.

The Union Minister at-

tributed this momentum to the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, referencing the Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision (MAKV) 2047 as roadmaps to expand India’s fleet, boost port capacity and coastal shipping, and place India among the top five global shipbuilding nations. He also cited India’s emergence as the world’s largest ship recycling nation, its share of global tonnage rising from 30.1% in 2024 to 35.4% in 2025.

Vijay Kumar, Secretary, MoPSW; K. Rajaraman, Chairperson, IFSCA; and Hareet Shukla, Principal Secretary, Ports & Transport, Government of Gujarat, were also present.

**Over 1.44 crore Scheduled Caste students supported with scholarships amounting to Rs 12,773 crore**

The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, has undertaken transformative reforms and significantly expanded the reach of its scholarship and educational support schemes. These initiatives are aimed at strengthening access to education for students from Scheduled Castes (SCs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Economically Backward Classes (EBCs), while making programme implementation more timely, transparent and accountable. More than 1.44 crore SC students have benefited under the Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes. The Scholarships amounting to Rs 12,773 crore have been disbursed to support their educational advancement and help them pursue learning opportunities without financial barriers. Similarly, more than 1.01 crore students belonging to OBC and EBC communities have received support under the Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship Schemes, with assistance amounting to Rs 2,445.05 crore. This extensive outreach reflects the Government’s commitment to promoting inclusive education and equal opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

## From Alcohol Dependence to Renewed Stability: Kavi's Journey towards Recovery, Responsibility and Hope

Alcohol dependence can gradually affect an individual’s physical health, emotional well-being, family relationships and ability to maintain a stable livelihood. Timely counselling, structured rehabilitation and sustained family support can help individuals overcome dependency and rebuild their lives with confidence and dignity.

Demonstrating the impact of support under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR), Kavi (name changed), a 31-year-old resident of Erode district in Tamil Nadu, has overcome nearly six years of alcohol dependence and is now leading a healthier and more stable life. His journey reflects the role of counselling, rehabilitation and continuous follow-up in enabling lasting recovery.

Kavi, who belongs to the General category, studied up to high school and works as a full-time employee. What began as occasional drinking gradually developed into dependency as he attempted to cope with emotional stress, family pressure and personal disappointments. Over time, alcohol dependence adversely affected his physical health, emotional well-being, relationships and ability to manage daily responsibilities. He experienced emotional instability, disturbed sleep, reduced motivation and loss of self-confidence, leaving him increasingly isolated and uncertain about his future.

His family became deeply concerned as they witnessed his emotional outbursts and withdrawal from social interactions. Alcohol dependence also affected his attendance and performance at work, making it difficult for him to maintain a stable income and manage his finances. This added to the emotional and economic strain experienced by the family.

Despite these challenges, Kavi remained determined to change his life. On 7 October 2025, he received support from the Centre for Action and Rural Education, an Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCA) in Erode district, Tamil Nadu.

Under a structured recovery plan, Kavi received individual counselling, emotional and psychological support, family counselling, motivational and behavioural guidance, relapse-prevention education and regular follow-up monitoring. The programme also focused on emotional regulation, healthy coping strategies, group therapy, family involvement and lifestyle modification. Kavi actively participated in the rehabilitation programme and demonstrated a strong commitment to recovery and personal growth. Continuous counselling helped him understand the impact of alcohol dependence, manage stress more effectively and adopt healthier ways of responding to emotional challenges. With sustained guidance and family support, he gradually regained confidence and emotional stability. He rebuilt healthy relationships with his family members and became more responsible in managing his daily routine and professional commitments.

The recovery process also brought positive changes to his employment and financial condition. Improved attendance, work performance and financial management strengthened his earning capacity and contributed to greater economic stability for his family. At present, Kavi is maintaining sobriety and leading a healthier, more stable and productive life. He continues to attend follow-up counselling sessions and remains committed to sustaining his recovery. His transformation has also become a source of encouragement for others facing similar challenges. Kavi’s journey demonstrates that alcohol dependence can be overcome through determination, appropriate treatment, family participation and sustained institutional support.

## From Financial Challenges to Academic Confidence: Babli's Journey under NFSC

Determination, timely support and access to opportunity can enable scholars to pursue their academic ambitions with confidence. For researchers from lower-middle-income families, fellowship assistance can provide the financial stability required to remain focused on doctoral studies and meaningful research. Demonstrating the positive impact of the National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste Students (NFSC) Students Scheme, Babli, a 32-year-old scholar from South East Delhi, has continued working towards her aspiration of building an academic career and producing valuable research outcomes. The fellowship has strengthened her confidence and supported her pursuit of higher education.

Before receiving assistance under the NFSC Scheme, Babli faced financial constraints that

affected her ability to pursue her academic goals. Coming from a lower-middle-income family, she had to navigate economic limitations while working towards a career in academics and research. These financial difficulties also contributed to wider educational and social barriers. The need for sustained financial resources made it challenging for her to pursue doctoral research with stability and concentrate fully on producing meaningful academic outcomes.

Despite these challenges, Babli remained committed to her academic aspirations. She aimed to establish a career in academics and contribute through research, reflecting her determination to progress through higher education.

In January 2021, Babli began receiving assistance under the NFSC

**SUCCESS STORY**

NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP FOR SCHEDULED CASTE STUDENTS (NFSC)

**FROM FINANCIAL CHALLENGES TO ACADEMIC CONFIDENCE**

**BABLI**

32 YEARS | SOUTH EAST DELHI

**NFSC SUPPORT**

- Assistance began: January 2021
- Fellowship: ₹8.8 lakh and Contingency
- Appar: ₹25 lakh support

“ NFSC support provided financial relief and empowered Babli to pursue her academic ambitions with confidence. ”

**OPPORTUNITY. | CONFIDENCE. | PROGRESS.**

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
Government of India

**CHALLENGE**  
Financial constraints affected her doctoral journey.

**FELLOWSHIP SUPPORT**  
Financial stability strengthened her confidence.

**PROGRESS**  
Continued pursuing her Ph.D. and research goals.

**ASPIRATION**  
An academic career and meaningful research outcomes.

Scheme. She availed fellowship, House Rent Allowance and contingency support amounting to approximately Rs. 25 lakh. The assistance addressed her financial challenges and provided the stability needed to pursue her Ph.D. and academic goals.

The fellowship brought significant financial relief and helped ease the broader social challenges associated

with economic hardship. The support strengthened her confidence and enabled her to continue her academic journey with greater security and focus. With support under the NFSC Scheme, Babli has been able to move forward towards her academic and research aspirations. The financial stability provided through the Scheme has helped her remain focused on her long-term

objectives while strengthening her professional confidence.

At present, Babli is employed full-time. Her journey highlights how timely support under the NFSC Scheme can help Scheduled Caste scholars overcome financial barriers, pursue advanced education and work towards meaningful academic and professional goals with confidence.

# Why Did Mahesh Babu And Rajamouli Get SIR Notices?

The Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls resulted in many of them losing their votes. This includes popular film celebrities, entrepreneurs and sportspersons. In Hyderabad, many VVIPs have reportedly received notices from the Election Commission due to SIR. Superstar Mahesh Babu, ace filmmaker SS Rajamouli, sportspersons Pullela Gopichand, Saina Nehwal, VVS Laxman, and Mithali Raj, prominent business personalities Divi's Murali Krishna Prasad and Apollo's Upasana Konidela were among them who received the EC's notices as part of the SIR. Several other leading names from sports, films and business also figure in the list.

The names of several prominent personalities have appeared in the Election Commission's "List of Persons to Whom Notices Have Been Issued (After Draft Roll Published on 17-08-2026)". The list includes many from the film industry such as actors Mahesh Babu and his wife Namrata Shirodkar, SS Rajamouli, Venkatesh Daggubati and his two daughters, Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Vijay Deverakonda and his brother Anand Deverakonda, among others, are also named. The notices have been issued for different reasons. These include name mismatch, being "unmapped with last SIR" and parent-name mismatch. In some cases, the



column mentioning the reason for the discrepancy has been left blank. The EC's exercise is aimed at checking and updating voter details as part of the revision of electoral rolls.

"There is an option, especially in the case of VIPs, to authorise someone to appear for the hearing if they are unavailable. There is still time, and many well-known people are

yet to appear for hearings," said RV Karnan, district election officer, Hyderabad. Officials pointed out that celebrities are also among the lakhs of voters whose details may have discrepancies in the electoral rolls. However, the inclusion of several high-profile names has also raised concerns among social activists. They said that if celebrities face

notices and questions over their voter details, what about the situation of ordinary voters who may not have the awareness or the same resources to respond to such notices. The hearings are still underway, and voters who have received notices have time to clarify their details and provide the required information to the election authorities.

# No Trailer for Nani's Paradise?

Nani's The Paradise is one of the most awaited movies. The film garnered significant buzz, thanks to Nani's never-seen-before portrayal in ultra mass character combined with Anirudh's mass compositions like Aaya Sher and Yesha Nagula Kattameedha, the film has been trending. While the film's extensive scale and huge canvas caused the film delay owing to a couple of postponements, the makers this time are in no mood to postpone the film any longer. As The Paradise is all set to hit the screens on September 24, the makers are leaving no stone unturned to make it big.



Inside sources reveal that the film may release in theatres di-

rectly without any trailer. Releasing a film without trailer

launch isn't new. A few films in the past have tried this strategy and they also worked in some of them's favour. While the Paradise teaser has been slightly disappointing, releasing the film without a trailer is certainly a very risky bet. However, it is too early to come to any conclusion as the makers are yet to decide on the film's trailer release. As of now, they are only considering to skip the trailer launch. It needs to be seen how The Paradise would deal with its massive expectations. Not just Nani's fans, the whole trade is eagerly looking forward to the film's release.

# Mirzapur Hits Rs.200 Crore, More Series To Follow?

The success of Mirzapur on the big screen could open a new door for popular web series. Before its theatrical release, there were plenty of doubts about whether a series that already had a strong OTT following could attract audiences to cinemas. However, the response has shocked one and all as Mirzapur is now emerging as a blockbuster theatrical success and has crossed the Rs.200 crore mark. The strong box-office performance has proved that a popular streaming franchise can create enough excitement to bring its audience back to theatres. Until now, most of these franchises were designed primarily for streaming, with theatrical releases considered risky. Mirzapur has challenged that thinking. The success of Mirzapur could now make producers and OTT platforms think differently.

Several successful



web series like Scam 1992, The Family Man, and Delhi Crime have already built loyal fan bases over the years. The big question now is whether these successful web series will follow the same route. However, not every popular series can automatically become a box-office hit. The theatrical version needs to offer something bigger and more cinematic than what audiences get on OTT. The timing, scale, story, and promotional strategy will also play a major role. For now, Mirzapur has shown that the experiment can work. If the momentum continues, more popular web series could soon get a shot at the big screen. Let's see what happens.

# Irumudi Eyes One Last Big Boundary!

Ravi Teja's Irumudi has emerged as the biggest blockbuster of this year. Released with decent expectations, the action family drama turned out to be the highest grossing film in Ravi Teja's career.

Irumudi released on Aug 21 and is still holding strong in theatres. Huge positive word of mouth and family audiences thronging to theatres and some even repeat audiences have worked big time for the film. This weekend seems to be another advantage for Irumudi. Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday being Ganesh Chaturthi seems to be a big plus for the film's box-office run. As this week's new releases (Epic and Mahendragiri Varahi) seem to be making Moderate impact, trade experts believe that another good weekend for Irumudi could be possible. One last boundary from Irumudi could certainly make the film's theatrical run even bigger and better.

The Irumudi team has also not slowed down the film's promotions. They are timely promoting the film and it is also



showing its impact on the numbers. The other day, the Irumudi team celebrated Generational Blockbuster celebrations and the whole team attended and heaped praises on one another. While Ravi Teja gave Irumudi's success credit to director Shiva Nirvana. Now, one last ex-

tended weekend could be the last boundary for Irumudi to create history. The film earned huge profits to all its distributors and even exhibitors are quite happy with this film's success. That is the true impact of a blockbuster, thus bringing joy to everyone involved.

# Samyuktha Enters The World Of Ram's #RAPO23

Samyuktha has officially entered the world of #RAPO23. On the occasion of her birthday, the makers of Energetic Star Ram Pothineni's most ambitious film revealed a special poster featuring birthday wishes for the actress, while also confirming her presence in the project. The announcement instantly adds more interest to the film, which promises to be a different cinematic experience. #RAPO23 is being developed as a neo-noir psychological action thriller, and Samyuktha's inclusion further strengthens the film's promising cast. The project is particularly special for Ram Pothineni as he is making his directorial debut with the movie. Besides wielding the megaphone, Ram



is also headlining the film and is personally involved in shaping its creative world. Produced by Krishna Pothineni through Rapo Cinematics,

#RAPO23 is being mounted with ambitious production values. The team is currently shooting in Hyderabad at a brisk pace.

# Dulquer To Find Success In Tollywood Again?



Malayalam Star Dulquer Salmaan has built a strong fan base in Telugu cinema, but his box-office journey has been quite interesting. The actor has gone through a cycle of successes and setbacks, and his upcoming Telugu film Sri Sri will once again put the spotlight on his box-office standing. If you observe closely, Dulquer struggled with a few flops and average outings in recent times until Sita Ramam changed everything. The film became a massive success and established him as a bankable name among Telugu audiences. His performance as Ram also earned him considerable appreciation and helped him connect strongly with the youth. However, after that film, the success did not continue consistently. Dulquer later delivered a few films that failed to create a major impact. He bounced back in a big way with Lucky Baskhar, which emerged as a blockbuster and once again proved his ability to pull off a Telugu success. Now, the actor appears to be facing another challenging phase. His recent films Kaantha and I'm Game have received a bad response, and neither managed to repeat the impact of his previous blockbusters. His next Telugu release, Sri Sri, is reportedly scheduled to arrive in December. Naturally, there is curiosity around whether Dulquer can once again break the pattern and deliver a solid success in Tollywood. The film has Pooja Hegde as the female lead, and her chemistry with Dulquer looks top-notch. For an actor who has already tasted two major Telugu successes, Sri Sri could be another important opportunity. All eyes will be on Dulquer to see if he can make another successful comeback in Telugu cinema.