

Telugu States Bake As Piduguralla Hits 47.6°C Amid Intensifying Heatwave

Hyderabad: A severe and punishing heatwave has gripped the Telugu states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, sending temperatures soaring to dangerous levels. Mercury levels have breached the 45°C mark across multiple districts, prompting disaster management authorities to issue caution. The onslaught of summer has pushed temperatures past 46°C in 19 districts of Telangana, while 11 districts in Andhra Pradesh saw temperatures climb above 45°C. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 According to weather officials, Piduguralla in Andhra Pradesh emerged as the hottest location, recording a blistering maximum temperature of 47.6°C. Other areas in



AP also witnessed extreme heat, with Kankipadu in Krishna district and Nandanama rella near Markapuram registering 46.1°C, followed closely by Tanuku at 46°C. In Telangana, Nirmal district recorded the state's highest temperature at 46.5°C. Severe heatwave conditions also prevailed in

Hanumakonda (46.4°C), Jagtial (46.3°C), and Adilabad (46.2°C). Also Read - Street Vending Zones Fail To Take Off in Hyderabad Residents are unlikely to get a respite anytime soon. The Andhra Pradesh Disaster Management Zones Fail To Take Off in Hyderabad

that the heatwave's intensity is projected to escalate further over the next four days. Authorities have advised people to take necessary precautions, avoid stepping out during peak afternoon hours, and stay adequately hydrated as the region braces for an harsher week ahead.

Street Vending Zones Fail To Take Off in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Civic bodies have failed to create and operationalise exclusive street vending zones in Hyderabad, resulting in the encroachment of footpaths. In places where designated vending zones were created, they remain unused. The area near Shilparamam has vacant stalls, while facilities such as the Begum Bazaar Fish Market and a fish market in LB Nagar are non-operational. Vendors have instead set up stalls outside these premises, occupying roads and footpaths, with vehicles parked in front adding to congestion. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Despite the completion of construction in some cases, markets have not been made operational due to factors including court cases. According to vendors, poor site selection for vending zones has prevented them from shifting to designated locations. In the erstwhile GHMC limits, 127 vending zones were



identified, but most were not located on busy stretches, and the initiative did not progress. Objections were raised by corporators, and approached the Praja Vani programme opposing the identified sites. On busy stretches such as Ameerpet, Koti, Hitec City near the Metro station, and Durgam Cheruvu, vendor stalls continue to occupy footpaths and roads. Though GHMC and traffic police have conducted clearance drives, encroachments have

returned within hours. Engagements in Hyderabad on Thursday, May 21, 2026 Efforts to relocate vendors near the Charminar have also been unsuccessful. A proposed 100-metre buffer zone around the monument is now occupied by stalls, and the yellow demarcation marking has faded. "While the footpaths are occupied by vendors, the road adjacent to it is used for parked vehicles and the pedestrians are forced to walk on the portion of the road

where vehicles move fast," said Ratnesh Babu, a van driver. Vendors, however, said enforcement drives hood. According to GHMC officials, over 1,000 encroachments were recently cleared from footpaths. They added that vendors with pushcarts returned after the drives, while those operating from permanent encroachments such as tin sheds and shops did not return, indicating a limited and temporary impact of enforcement.

Telangana chemists join nationwide strike against online pharmacies

Hyderabad: As part of a one-day nationwide strike call given by the All India Organization of Chemists and Druggists against online pharmacies, medical shops in Telangana downed their shutters on Wednesday. While those affiliated to Telangana Chemists and Druggists Association (TTCA) and Hyderabad Chemists and Druggists Association (HCDA) participated in the strike, pharmacy chains like Apollo, MedPlus and their online operations functioned normally. Medical shops attached to hospitals and Jan Aushadhi Kendras, also remained operational. The associations claimed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, regulations to sell medi-



cines were relaxed for online pharmacies have continued even now. There is no physical verification during the sale of medicines by online pharmacies and corporate companies with deep pockets are disrupting the market by offer-

ing deep discounts on medicines, they alleged. To ensure there is no disruption in the availability of life-saving drugs during the strike, the Telangana Drug Control Administrations were relaxed for online pharmacies have continued

even now. There is no physical verification during the sale of medicines by online pharmacies and corporate companies with deep pockets are disrupting the market by offer- (TGDC) held a meeting with the AIOCD

Hyderabad Emerges as Hub for Aviation, Deep-Tech Growth: Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad: Southwest Airlines, one of the largest airlines in the United States, has launched its first India Global Innovation Centre in Hyderabad through its wholly owned subsidiary, Southwest Airlines India Private Limited. Minister for Information Technology, Electronics, Communications, Duddilla Sridhar Babu on Wednesday inaugurated the new office. Notably, the Hyderabad facility marks Southwest Airlines' first-ever Global Innovation Centre outside the United States, highlighting the company's long-term commitment to Hyderabad and Telangana's growing

prominence as a global innovation destination. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The Southwest Airlines Global Innovation Centre in Hyderabad will serve as a strategic hub within the company's global network, supporting technology, engineering, and enterprise capabilities that enable secure, scalable, and future-ready aviation operations. The Hyderabad Global Innovation Centre will scale to a headcount of over 1,000 high-skilled engineers and technology professionals, driving capabilities across deeptech, AI/ML, data science, data analytics,



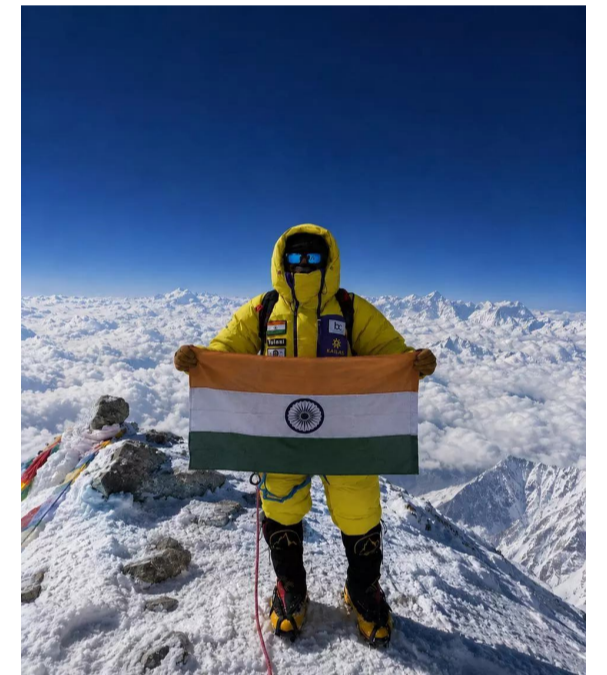
digital engineering, cybersecurity, enterprise platforms, digital operations, and next-generation prothe coming years. Also Read - Street Vending Zones Fail To Take Off in Hyderabad Sridhar Babu said, "More than 25 years ago, Hyderabad laid the foundation for India's modern aviation ecosystem with one of the country's first private

airport initiatives under the PPP model. Since then, the city has evolved into one of India's leading aviation, aerospace, and space-tech hubs. Alongside prestigious institutions such as DRDO, RCI, and DMRL, Hyderabad is steadily emerging as a strategic centre where aviation, space-tech, defence, and deep-tech are converging at scale."

Hyderabad's Tulasi Reddy Completes Mount Everest Summit Mission

Hyderabad: In a proud moment for Telangana, Tulasi Reddy Palpunoori from Bowrampet village, Quthbullapur Mandal, Hyderabad, has successfully summited Mount Everest — the world's highest peak — after years of unwavering discipline, endurance training, and preparation. Tulasi's achievement stands out not only for reaching the summit of Everest but for the inspiring journey that led him there. What began as a personal effort to become fitter gradually evolved into a passion for endurance sports, adventure, and mountaineering. Once an ordinary fitness enthusiast and self-confessed foodie, Tulasi transformed his lifestyle through consistent training, eventually progressing to long-distance events, high-altitude expeditions, and some of the world's toughest mountain climbs. "Summitting Everest is the result of years of discipline, sac-

rifice, and consistent preparation. The mountain tests you physically and mentally at every stage. This achievement belongs to everyone who supported me throughout the journey — my family, friends, guides, and mentors who believed in me." Tulasi acknowledged the support extended by his family, expedition team, Sherpas, and guides Bharath Thammineni and Romil Barthwal from Boots and Crampons, who played an important role during the journey. Also Read - Fitness Certificates Must For School Buses Before Reopening Expressing pride in his accomplishment, Tulasi's family shared: "Today is one of the proudest moments for our family. Years of sacrifice, courage, and determination have finally led Tulasi to stand on top of the world. His journey proves that ordinary beginnings can lead to extraordinary achievements." Beyond being a



mountaineering milestone, Tulasi's story reflects the growing culture of endurance sports and adventure pursuits emerging from Telangana. His journey serves as an inspiration for young people, fitness enthusiasts, and aspiring adventurers, demonstrating how consistency,

preparation, and determination can turn ambitious dreams into reality. With his successful Everest summit, Tulasi joins the select group of Indians who have conquered the Everest summit, Tulasi e world's highest mountain, bringing pride to Hyderabad and Telangana.

Telangana scorches as summer temperatures hit 46.5 degrees Celsius, shows TSDPS data

Hyderabad: Telangana on Wednesday could well have endured its worst day of this summer as mercury levels surged past 46 degrees Celsius in some places, according to data from Telangana Development Planning Society (TSDPS) and independent weather trackers.

The worst affected were the northern and eastern districts and this data indicated that Dilawarpur in Nirmal district registered 46.5 degree Celsius followed by Dharmasagar (), (Karimnagar), and Odela (Peddapalli) recording 46.4 degrees Celsius. yst Grade-II posts Independent weather observers, including Hyderabad Rains and Telangana Weatherman, indicated a heatwave over central and peninsular India pushing local temperatures up. Local weather enthusiasts pointed out that while data from India



Meteorological Data (IMD) can sometimes vary slightly due to different station equipment, reality is that the northern and eastern districts in Telangana bore maximum brunt of the heatwave. The IMD, Hyderabad indicated heatwave conditions with northern and eastern districts likely to witness above 44 degrees Celsius temperatures and the other districts

recording between 41 and 44 degree Celsius. TSDPS data: Telangana recorded 46.5 degrees Celsius for the first time this summer season, marking its highest temperature yet. in Telangana bore maximum brunt of the heatwave. The IMD, Hyderabad indicated heatwave conditions with northern and eastern districts likely to witness above 44 degrees

Celsius temperatures and the other districts degrees Celsius) Diin Telangana bore maximum brunt of the heatwave temperatures and the other districts lawarpur (Nirmal): 46.5 Dharmasagar (Hanmakonda) 46.4 (Karimnagar) 46.4 Odela (Peddapalli) 46.4 Raikal (Jagtial) 46.3 Wadlakonda (Jangaon) - (Khammam) 46.3 Koheda (Siddipet) 46.2

Ensure Uninterrupted Supply Of Fertilizers To Tamil Nadu: CM Vijay To PM Modi

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to ensure the uninterrupted supply of fertilizers—specifically Urea and DAP—required for the 2026 Kharif season in Tamil Nadu.

In his letter, he noted: "More than 40 percent of the population in Tamil Nadu relies on agriculture for their livelihood. In Tamil Nadu, net cultivation is undertaken across approximately 48.27 lakh hectares, while gross cultivation covers 62.25 lakh hectares." Furthermore, about 92 percent of the total farmers in Tamil Nadu are small and marginal farmers. The state possesses only 3 percent of the country's total water resources. A diverse range of crops—including paddy, millets, oilseeds, cotton, sugarcane, vegetables, flowers, fruits, medicinal and aromatic



crops, spices, and plantation crops—are cultivated in Tamil Nadu," Viay said. Additionally, he stated that since assuming office as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on May 10, 2026, he has been conducting department-wise reviews of the operations across various sectors. During his review of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, he

observed that—against the fertilizer requirements projected for the months of April and May 2026—fertilizer manufacturers had failed to supply 39,001 metric tonnes of Urea, 28,607 metric tonnes of DAP, and 24,235 metric tonnes of Potash to Tamil Nadu. He has also enclosed the specific details regarding this shortfall along with the

letter. "Across the state, cultivation activities for crops such as paddy, black gram, green gram, groundnut, sesame, and various horticultural crops are currently underway in full swing," he added. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast that the Southwest Monsoon is set to commence during the third week of May. Currently, widespread rainfall is being experienced across various parts of

the state. "Consequently, as farmers demonstrate a keen interest in undertaking crop cultivation across a maximum acreage during the Kharif season, the demand for Urea and DAP fertilizers is likely to rise. At this critical juncture, should a shortage of fertilizers occur, it poses a potential threat to the state's food security," Vijay said. He added, "The State Government is firm-

ly committed to ensuring the availability of necessary fertilizers to facilitate the cultivation of various crops across 2.5 million hectares—accounting for 40 percent of the total cultivable area—during the current Kharif season. Given the progress observed in crop cultivation during the current Kharif season—driven by various favorable factors—the demand for primary fertilizers such as Urea and DAP is expected to rise significantly in the coming days."

"To meet this demand, I request that appropriate officials be issued the necessary directives to immediately allocate and supply 383,000 metric tonnes of Urea, 105,000 metric tonnes of DAP, and 83,000 metric tonnes of Potash to Tamil Nadu, thereby ensuring the timely availability of these fertilizers," he said.

West Asia Conflict: Govt Announces Credit Line Guarantee Scheme For Airlines, MSMEs

New Delhi: The government on Tuesday announced an Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) with an outlay of Rs 18,100 crore to provide relief for MSMEs and airlines impacted by the West Asia conflict. The scheme -- expected to help in providing additional credit flow of Rs 2.55 lakh crore, including Rs 5,000 crore for airlines -- was approved by the Union Cabinet on Tuesday. Briefing the media on the Cabinet decisions, Information and Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the ECLGS 5.0, having an outlay of Rs 18,100 crore, would help airlines as well as MSMEs impacted by the West Asia crisis. "The scheme has been brought to address the stress in MSME and airline sectors due to the West Asia conflict," he said. According to the minister, passenger airlines would be eligible for up to 100 per cent of peak credit up to Rs 1,500 crore while institutions can access up to 20 per cent of fund-based working capital up to Rs 100 crore.



The scheme aims to enable businesses to tide over the challenges arising from the West Asia conflict. "Additionally, this is expected to help businesses maintain their operations, protect jobs, and sustain supply chains. The proposed credit guarantee scheme is a major step to help businesses, particularly MSMEs and airline sector, to ensure their additional working capital needs are catered by the banks short-term liquidity mismatches in view of West Asia crisis," the release said. There will be conditions for availing the loans. The tenor for the airline sector would be seven years from the date of first disbursement, including a moratorium of two years, and for MSMEs, it would be five years from the date of first disbursement, including one year of moratorium.

The scheme would be applicable to all loans sanctioned during the period from the date of issue of these guidelines by NCGTCLGS was a very imperative initiative, especially for the aviation sector, enabling airlines to navigate short-term liquidity challenges and maintain seamless operations amid global disruptions.

"It will provide strong financial backing to safeguard jobs, sustain connectivity, and ensure resilience across the aviation ecosystem, while also supporting MSMEs," he said in a post on X. MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) as well as airlines have been facing substantial financial headwinds due to the West Asia conflict that started in February. ECLGS was first launched in May 2020 to mitigate economic distress during the coronavirus pandemic.

SC: Not Expected From Authorities To Support Any Party To A Case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the duty of the state and its officials, while arguing a case and filing a counter-affidavit before a court, is to provide real assistance. The apex court stressed that authorities are not expected to support any party contrary to the law or file an affidavit that does not disclose facts in conformity with the law.

The observations came from a bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and A S Chandurkar while dismissing an appeal. The bench said it was its duty to observe the conduct of the officers of the state of Uttar Pradesh and the contentions raised by them to vociferously support the stand of the appellant. The bench said it suffices to state that the chief secretary of Uttar Pradesh may look into the conduct of the officers who filed the affidavit, taking such an unlawful stand before the high court and this



court. The bench, such a stand, is completely impermissible under the law and contrary to the finding of the high court. "It is necessary to observe that the duty of the State and its officials, while filing their counter-affidavit and arguing the case before the Court, is to provide real assistance. Such assistance ought to be based on the facts, and by applying the law applicable to the case at hand," said the bench.

"It is not expected from the authorities to support any party contrary to the

law or by filing an affidavit which does not disclose the facts in conformity with the law. Since the concerned officers are not a party to this case, therefore, we are not inclined to issue any adverse direction; however, we leave it open to the State of Uttar Pradesh to look into the above observations and take recourse in accordance with the law, if necessary," said the apex court. The top court delivered its verdict on an appeal challenging a May 2025 order of the Allahabad High Court in a

matter relating to the appointment of a college principal. The bench said it was clear that after the commencement of the Uttar Pradesh Education Service Selection Commission Act, 2023, on August 21, 2023, the authorities were not open to act in terms of the list prepared under the Uttar Pradesh Higher Education Services Commission Act, 1980, which was repealed. The bench said that after the new Act commenced, the validity of the list or the panel under the old law stood that the appellant before it had filed for the posts of principal in PG and UG colleges was issued by the Uttar Pradesh Higher Education Service Selection Commission in 2019. A final list of 290 candidates, along with 73 wait-listed candidates, was published in October 2021. In August 2022, the appellant's name was recommended for the principal's

post in a college at Ballia, but he did not take charge there due to his family circumstances.

He requested an appointment as a principal for vacant posts in some other college, which included a college in Meerut. In January 2024, a consequential order was issued to the director for a change in the appellant's place of posting to a college in Meerut in exceptional circumstances and in the interest of higher education. Thereafter, the then officiating principal of the Meerut college filed a petition before the high court, contending that once a waitlisted candidate was issued a direction for appointment at one place, the scheme of the old Act does not allow any change to the same. The high court allowed his petition and quashed the order for a change in the place of posting of the appellant to a college in Meerut.

In an official release, the government said

Andhra Pradesh Launches Year-Long Tourism Campaign



Vijayawada: The Andhra Pradesh government on Wednesday launched an ambitious year-long tourism promotion campaign titled "Holiday in Andhra Pradesh" with the aim of positioning the State as a premier tourism destination in the country. Launching the campaign poster during a virtual review meeting at the Secretariat in Amravati, Tourism minister Kan dula Durgesh called upon tourism stakeholders to work collectively for the development of the sector and help place Andhra Pradesh at the forefront of tourism in India. Also Read - AP Signs MoU to Strengthen FPOs, Boost Agri Marketing The minister said the State government, under the guidance of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to strengthen domestic sectors amid prevailing global uncertainties, was taking several initiatives to accelerate tourism growth. Durgesh said the gov-

ernment was focusing on holiday tourism, temple tourism and destination weddings as part of its broader tourism strategy. He noted that encouraging weddings within India would help conserve foreign exchange while boosting the local economy. Also Read - AP: Patients Wait in Heat as KGH OP Services Hit By Server Glitch Highlighting Andhra Pradesh's tourism potential, the minister said destinations such as Gandikota, Araku Valley, Visa-khapatnam and Konaseema had the potential to attract tourists from across the country and abroad. He said the campaign aims to create awareness and promote tourism-driven economic activity, generating employment opportunities for local youth while benefiting hotels, homestays, transport operators and allied sectors. Revives Welfare Schemes For Construction Workers The minister further said the government was taking steps to provide hassle-free

travel experiences through airport-to-airport tourism packages and improved infrastructure at tourist destinations. Durgesh also announced that Andhra Pradesh would receive the "Tourism Promotion City" award on June 4, describing it as a matter of pride for the State and recognition of its growing tourism prominence. Special chief secretary Ajay Jain, APTDC in-charge managing director Pad abroad. He said the campaign aims to create awareness and promote tourism-driven economic activity, generating employment opportunities for local youth while benefiting hotels, homestays, transport operators and allied sectors. Revives Welfare Schemes For Construction Workers The minister further said the government was taking steps to provide hassle-free

Amid Ethanol Push, BIS Notifies E22-E30 Fuel Standards

New Delhi: India has taken another step towards cleaner mobility, with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on Tuesday notifying fuel standards for E22, E25, E27 and E30 petrol-ethanol blends, paving the way for higher blending of anhydrous ethanol with petrol for positive ignition engine vehicles. The newly notified BIS standards lay down the technical specifications for these higher ethanol blends, though they do not mandate the immediate nationwide rollout of E30 fuel.

Welcoming the move, the All India Distillers' Association (AIDA) described the notification as a major milestone in India's ethanol blending roadmap and the country's transition towards cleaner and more sustainable mobility solutions. The industry body said the introduction of E25 fuel standards would help



absorb surplus ethanol production and strengthen the ethanol economy. It further noted that India's long-term focus should now shift towards the adoption of E85 and E100 fuels, along with the development of flex-fuel vehicles, to support future

growth in the sector. India has been steadily increasing ethanol blending in petrol as part of its strategy to reduce crude oil imports, cut emissions and promote renewable energy alternatives. The National Policy on Biofuels, amended in

2022, had advanced the 20% target from 2030 to ESY 2025-26. Public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) are driving the effort under the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme. To ensure feedstock supply, the government has

expanded raw material sources, approved 52 lakh metric tonnes of surplus FCI rice for ethanol production for both ESY 2024-25 and ESY 2025-26, allowed diversion of 40 LMT of sugar, and is promoting maize clusters ethanol plants.

Air India London Flight Issue: DGCA Directs 787 Plane's Fuel Switch Inspection In Presence Of Its Officers

New Delhi: Aviation watchdog DGCA has directed the inspection of an Air India Dreamliner aircraft's fuel control switch, which possibly had issues as reported by a pilot in February, at the original equipment manufacturer's facility in the presence of the regulator's officers.



On February 2, an Air India pilot reported a defect with the fuel control switch of the Boeing 787-8 plane VT-ANX after operating the AI132 flight. The plane faced a fuel control switch issue during engine start in London on February 1. Later, Air India carried out a precautionary re-inspections of the fuel control switch across all its operational Boeing 787 aircraft and no issues were identified during these checks. "The DGCA India, as part of continued airwor-

thiness of the involved Fuel Control Switch, has directed for their inspection at OEM facility in presence of DGCA officers," the civil aviation ministry said in a late evening statement on Tuesday. Earlier, sources said the detailed examination of the particular switch module will be carried out at Boeing's facility in the US. Based on recommendations received from Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), Air India had carried out

inspection and functional testing of the Fuel Control Switches (FCS) in accordance with OEM-prescribed procedures in the presence of DGCA officers, the statement said. Upon review of the inspection results and evidence provided, the statement said the OEM concluded that the FCS was mechanically functioning as designed and considered the unit serviceable. The aircraft was grounded on February 2 based upon an entry

made in the Pilot Defect Report stating that the left FCS slips from 'RUN' to 'CUTOFF' when pushed slightly and does not lock positively in its selected position. In response to a query about the particular fuel control switch, an Air India spokesperson on Tuesday said the fuel switch module had already been confirmed as fully functional by both the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and the DGCA. "The decision to proceed with further review and testing is understood to be intended to ensure a thorough and conclusive evaluation of the component, as a measure of abundant caution. This additional step involves examination in a controlled laboratory environment to definitively confirm its performance and integrity. We fully support the process," the spokesperson said in a

NIA Chargesheets Doctor, 2 Others In ISIS-Linked Bioterror Plot To Carry Out Mass Poisoning

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against three people, including a doctor, for their alleged involvement in an ISIS-linked conspiracy to carry out mass poisoning in public spaces using a biological toxin, an official statement said. The accused -- Hyderabad-based Dr Syed Ahmed Mohiuddin and co-accused Azad and Mohammad Suhel from Uttar Pradesh -- have been chargesheeted before a special NIA court in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, the statement, issued on Tuesday, said. Working under the guidance of their respective Islamic State-linked foreign-based handlers, the accused had operated in a coordinated manner to recruit vulnerable youth radicalised by the handlers to support jihad and spread terror through prohibited weapons and bioterrorism, said the NIA statement. They had planned to use ricin, a highly toxic substance derived from castor seeds and classified under Schedule I of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to carry out the "nefarious agenda of ISIS", it said. The case was originally registered by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) following



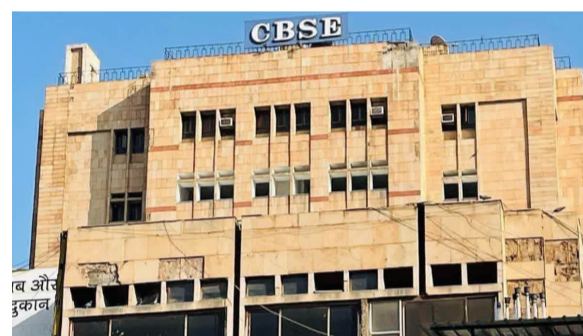
the arrest of Dr Mohiuddin, an MBBS from China, after he was caught at a toll plaza carrying illegal weapons, a bottle containing four litres of castor oil, and other incriminatory articles in his car in November 2025. Investigation by the ATS had led to the arrest of the otmonitoring in the area due to its proximity to the Army c. Amritsar her two accused the same day. Azad and Suhel were found to have earlier picked up parcels of money and prohibited weapons from a dead-

drop site in Hanumangarh, Rajasthan, and dropped them at a location in Chhatral, Gujarat, for Moinuddin to pick up, the probe agency said. After taking over the investigation in January 2026, the NIA found that Moinuddin had been promised the position of ISIS "Amir" of South Asia by his handler. He monitored in the area due to its proximity to the Army c. Amritsar handler and other co-accused for recruitment, coordination, and handling of funds and weapons consignments. He also conducted reconnaissance, recorded Bay'ah (oath of allegiance) videos, and prepared ISIS flags, it said.

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CBSE Extends Class 12 Scanned Answer Book Application Date To May 23

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has extended the last date for obtaining scanned copies of evaluated answer books for Class 12 board examinations by a day following technical issues on its website. According to a CBSE circular issued on Tuesday, the deadline has been extended from May 22 to May 23. "It is hereby informed to all stakeholders that due to a technical problem encountered on the CBSE website for Post-Verification Facilities and to ensure sufficient time to the students, the last date for obtaining scanned copies of evaluated answer books has



been extended," the circular said. Candidates have been advised to utilise the extended timeline and apply accordingly, while all other terms and conditions remain unchanged. The extension comes amid complaints from students over technical glitches on the CBSE

website for post-verification facilities. Several students had flagged issues related to login, payment and non-functional application links on social media after the process began. The CBSE had opened the window for obtainevaluated Class 12 answer books from May

19 to May 22. The Board had earlier begun the process for re-evaluation and verification of answer sheets following concerns raised by some students and parents over the On-Screen Marking system. Students who apply for scanned copies will be able to access them between May 26 and May 29. The CBSE has also revised the fee structure this year. Students can obtain scanned copies of answer books by paying Rs 100 instead of Rs 700 earlier. The fee for verification of the answer sheet has been reduced to Rs 100 from Rs 500, while re-evaluation will cost Rs 25 per question.

New Permanent Members In Reformed UNSC Should Have Same Responsibilities, Obligations As Current Ones: G4

United Nations: Offering a "realistic" way forward on UN Security Council reforms, the G4 nations of India, Brazil, Germany and Japan have proposed that new permanent members in an expanded Council would not exercise veto pending decision during a review. "The world has waited far too long for real reform of the UNSC, and we witness the consequences thereof," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni said, as he delivered a statement on behalf of the G4 nations Tuesday on the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) meeting on Security Council. He highlighted that the discussion is a good platform for a comprehensive stock-taking of the IGN process, including an objective assessment of progress achieved, if any, and charting a realistic way forward to implement meaningful reforms of the UN Security Council. Reiterating the G4's flexibility with regard to the Question of Veto, he said the grouping "emphasizes that there cannot be a sub-category within the permanent category." "For this reason, G4 takes the position that two permanent members should, as a principle, have the same responsibilities and obligations as current ones," Parvathaneni said. He emphasised that in order to show "openness and flexibility" on this issue to foster constructive negotiations, "the G4 proposes that new permanent members would not exercise veto until a decision on the



matter is reached during a 15-year review." India has maintained that the existing UNSC architecture hails from a different era and does not reflect current geopolitics. The broad consensus of the G4 model for UNSC reform proposed increasing the Security Council membership from the current 15 to 25 or 26, with a reformed Council comprising 11 permanent members and 14 or 15 non-permanent. Currently, the powerful UN organ consists of five veto-wielding permanent members -- China, France, Russia, the UK and the US. The remaining 10 members are elected to sit at the horseshoe table for two-year terms as non-permanent members. India last sat in the Council as a non-permanent member in 2021-22. Parvathaneni further said that the G4 has "clearly articulated" that a consolidated model must lead to text-based negotiations on UNSC reforms. "Such a model must be drawn up in an objective manner and solely in accordance with the views expressed by various groups and member states in IGN

discussions. A consolidated model is a starting point for discussion, not an end point designed for consensus or the lowest common denominator," he said. The G4 strongly emphasised that the IGN runs the "obvious risk" of not achieving any real progress till the commencement of text-based negotiations. "As a reform-centric group, G4 once again underscores that the IGN must start negotiations on the basis of a text without any further delay," he said. The grouping underscored the imperativeness of the horseshoe table for two-year terms to avoid procedural hurdles, saying Parvathaneni further said that the G4 has "clearly articulated" that a consolidated model must lead to text-based negotiations on UNSC reforms. "Such a model must be drawn up in an objective manner and solely in accordance with the views expressed by various groups and member states in IGN

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Iran Army Warns Will 'Open New Fronts' Against US If Attacks Resume

Tehran: Iran's army warned on Tuesday it would "open new fronts" against the United States if it resumes attacks, after President Donald Trump said he had held off launching a new offensive in hopes of striking a deal. "If the enemy is foolish enough to fall into the Zionist trap again and launches new aggression against our beloved Iran, we will open new fronts against it, with new equipment and new methods," said army spokesman Mohammad Akraminia, according to Iran's ISNA news agency. Washington and Tehran have been swapping proposals in an effort to end the Middle East war, which broke out on February 28. The two sides have held a single round of talks so far amid a fragile ceasefire in place since April 8. In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said the leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had asked him "to hold off on our planned Military attack of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was scheduled for tomorrow, in that serious negotiations are now taking place." But Trump added he had instructed the US military to be



"prepared to go forward with a full, large scale assault of Iran, on a moment's notice, in the event that an acceptable Deal is not reached." On Tuesday, Iranian army spokesman Akraminia said his country had used the ceasefire as an opportunity "to strengthen its combat capabilities", without elaborating. According to ISNA, he also reiterated that Iran maintains control over the strategic Strait of Hormuz, which it has closed and wants to a five-point On Monday, Iran said it list, which included a demand for Iran to keep only one nuclear site in operation and transfer its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to the United States. The US had

refused to release "even 25 percent" of Iran's assets frozen abroad or pay any reparations for war damage, Fars added. The report said the US had also made clear it would only cease hostilities when Tehran engages in formal peace o charge ships to traverse. "The only way for the enemy is to respect the Iranian nation and observe the legitimate rights of the Islamic republic," he said. On Monday, Iran said it had responded to a new US proposal, adding that diplomatic exchanges were continuing despite Iranian media reports describing Washington's demands as On Monday, Iran said it excessive. The day before, Iran's Fars news agency said

Washington had presented a five-point list, which included a demand for Iran to keep only one nuclear site in operation and transfer its stockpile of highly enriched uranium to the United States. The US had refused to release "even 25 percent" of Iran's assets frozen abroad or pay any reparations for war damage, Fars added. The report said the US had also made clear it would only cease hostilities when Tehran engages in formal peace negotiations. Iran however has said it insists on its own demands, including the release of the frozen assets, the lifting of long-standing sanctions on the country and war reparations.

UAE Says Drones That Targeted Barakah Nuclear Power Plant Came From Iraqi Territory

Dubai: The drones that targeted the United Arab Emirates' Barakah nuclear power plant all came from Iraq, the country's Defense Ministry said Tuesday, likely signaling that Iranian-backed Shiite militias launched the assault. Such militias launched repeated drone attacks targeting Gulf Arab states after Israel and the United States began their war against Iran back on Feb. 28. Militias in the past have provided Iran a means by which to deflect blame over such attacks. There were no reported injuries or radiological release at Barakah after the attack, which Emirati officials said hit a generator on the facility's perimeter. The UAE, which has hosted air defenses and personnel from Israel, recently accused Iran of launching drone and missile attacks even after its ceasefire with the U.S. began April 8. Tensions have risen over the Strait of Hormuz, a vital energy waterway gripped by Iran while its ports remain under a U.S. naval blockade. A maritime data firm reported Tuesday that ship traffic through the strait more than doubled last week, but still remains a fraction of its pre-war levels. Iraqi government condemns strikes on UAE. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack on the UAE nuclear plant, though Iran and its proxies had been suspected. Iraqi government spokesman Bassem al-Awadi, without address-

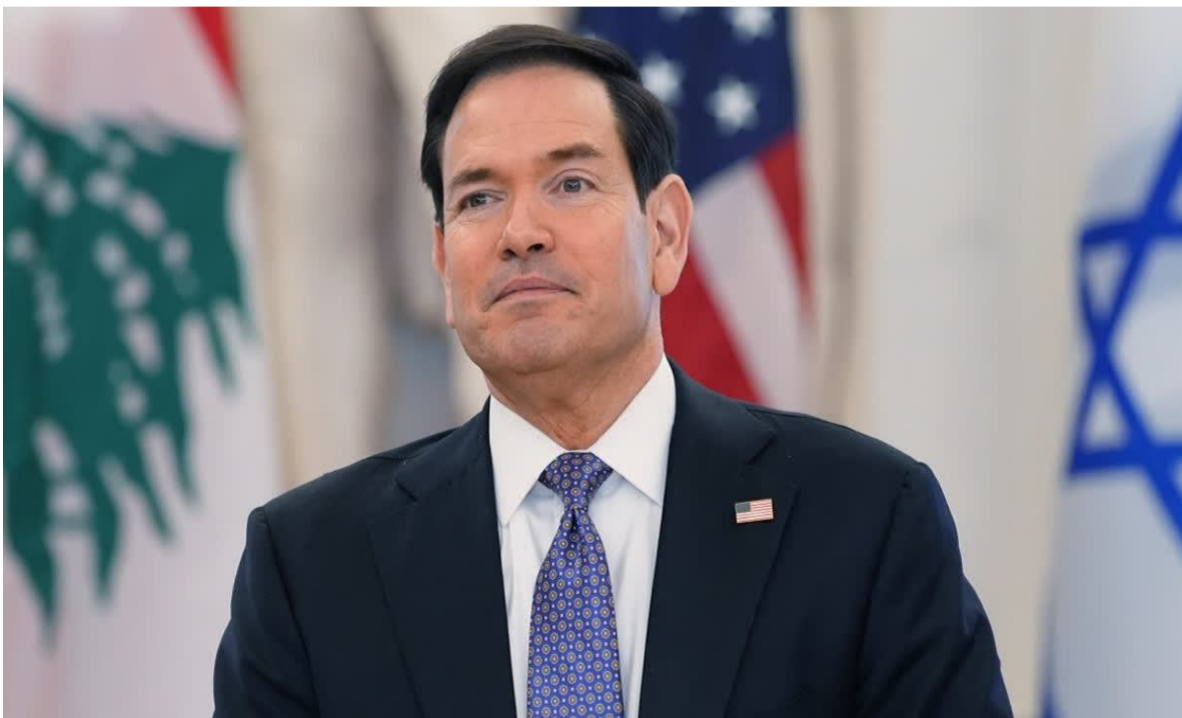


ing the Emirati Defense Ministry's report, issued a statement saying that Baghdad "expresses its strong condemnation of the recent drone attacks targeting the UAE." "We also emphasize the importance of effective regional and international cooperation to prevent any escalation or harm to the stability of the region, or any targeting of the security and sovereignty of sisterly and friendly nations," al-Awadi added. There were three other drones that targeted the country over the last two days, the Emirati Defense Ministry added, without elaborating on their targets. Saudi Arabia, which had also condemned the nuclear plant attack, later said it had intercepted three drones that entered from Iraqi airspace. The \$20 billion Barakah nuclear power plant was built by the UAE with the help of South Korea and went online in 2020. It is the only nuclear power plant in the Arab world and can provide a quarter of

the energy needs in the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms that is home to Dubai. Earlier Tuesday, a prominent Emirati diplomat elliptically criticized regional countries over the attacks the country has faced. "The confusion of roles during this treacherous Iranian aggression is baffling, encompassing the Gulf Arab region's surrounding states," Anwer Gargash wrote on X. "The victim's role has merged with that of the mediator, and vice versa, while the friend has turned into a mediator instead of being a steadfast ally and supporter." Firm says ship traffic increased last week through the strait into a mediator rait of Hormuz. According to the Lloyd's List Intelligence maritime data firm, a total of 54 ships transited the strait the week of May 11, more than double the 25 vessels returned into a mediator sels counted the week before. Traffic through the strait remains a trickle com-

pared to before the war, when 130 or more vessels passed it each day. Last week's traffic included 10 China-owned ships after Tehran said it would permit some Chinese vessels to transit, Lloyd's said Tuesday on X. Two were carrying cooking gas headed for India. Iran has imposed a murky vetting scheme for vessels trying to leave the Persian Gulf, which in some cases has included demanding payment and excludes US and Israeli vessels. The departure of the Chinese ships came as U.S. President Donald Trump visited China last week in an attempt to pressure Beijing with regard to Iran. Iran depends on China as the sole remaining major customer for its heavily sanctioned oil. India, which is suffering a politically sensitive shortage of cooking gas supplies from the Gulf, has secured passage for some of its vessels through diplomatic intervention with Iran.

US Secretary Of State Marco Rubio To Visit India From May 23-26



Washington: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will undertake a four-day visit to India beginning May 23 to further cooperation in the fields of trade, defence and energy. This will be his first visit to India. The Department of State announced the visit that would take Rubio to Kolkata, Agra, Jaipur and New Delhi. "Secretary Rubio will travel to India from May 23-26, where he will visit Kolkata, Agra, Jaipur, and New Delhi," State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said. The Secretary will discuss energy, security, trade,

and defence cooperation during meetings with senior Indian officials, Pigott said. Rubio will travel to India from Sweden, where he will attend the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting on May 22. Meanwhile, the US embassy in New Delhi said that India will host a meeting of the "Quad" group, which includes Australia, Japan and the United States. The embassy said Secretary of State Marco Rubio would attend the meeting and that it looked forward to welcoming him "for his first visit to India, ministerial Quad meetings, high level

engagements, and celebrating 250 years of America". India is set to host a meeting of Quad foreign ministers next week that is expected to deliberate on pressing global challenges, including the fallout of the West Asia crisis. The New Delhi meeting is planned for May 26, and it is scheduled to be attended by Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu, with Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar presiding over it.

Iran Could Trigger 'Nuclear Arms Race' In Gulf: Vance

Washington: US Vice President J D Vance has said Iran having an atomic weapon would trigger a "nuclear arms race" worldwide and asserted that the US was "locked and loaded" to restart military operations if Tehran failed to reach a peace deal. Vance's remarks at a press conference at the White House on Tuesday came a day after President Donald Trump put off the decision to resume strikes on Iran at the request of Arab nations, including Qatar and the UAE, who said that Tehran was being "reasonable" in peace talks. "We think the Iranians want to make a deal. The president of the United States has asked us to negotiate in good faith. And that's exactly what we've done," the vice president said. But Vance warned that diplomacy will not come at the cost of Trump's key demand that Iran never obtain a nuclear weapon. "So as the president just told me, we're locked and loaded," Vance said, adding that he had a meeting with Trump before coming to the press briefing. "We don't want to go down that pathway. But the presi-



dent is willing and able to go down that pathway if we have to," the vice president said. Vance said the US has a "simple proposition" and there are "two paths to go down." "Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon," he said, adding that if Tehran acquired one, it would send other nations "scrambling" to get their own, setting off a "nuclear arms race." "Iran would really be the first domino in what would set off a nuclear arms race all over the world," he said. "If the Iranians did get a nuclear weapon, we know that a lot of nations all across the Gulf would then want

their own nuclear weapon, and then a lot of nations all across the world," Vance said. "As the father of three young kids, I don't want them to inherit a world where 20 additional regimes—half of them very dangerous and very sympathetic to terrorists—have nuclear weapons," Vance said. "We want to keep the number of countries that have nuclear weapons small, and that's why Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. On top of all the other things that we might be worried about, that they themselves could use it, that they could use it as

leverage in economic control or economic negotiations. We just don't want them to have a nuclear weapon," Vance said. "There's an option B, and the option B is that we could restart the military campaign to continue to prosecute the case, to continue to try to achieve America's objectives," Vance said. "But that's not what the president wants. And I don't think it's what the Iranians want either," he said. He says there's an opportunity to reset the Washington-Tehran relationship, "but it takes two to tango".

Pakistan's Manufactured Global Importance And The Deepening Military Grip

Pakistan: global diplomatic projection masks a deepening economic crisis and tightening military control over state institutions. Behind this narrative of rising importance, democratic space and civil liberties continue to erode rapidly. Pakistan's internal situation is deteriorating rapidly, with the country on the verge of economic collapse. Inflation is rising, fuel prices are soaring, and ordinary people are struggling to survive. Instead of addressing these real challenges, the state is busy projecting a different image abroad, that of Pakistan as an important player at the centre of global diplomacy. This narrative is being pushed hard, especially through claims of mediation between the United



States and Iran. But this projection is profoundly misleading. It creates the impression that Pakistan's economic and political crises will somehow disappear simply because it's engaging in high-level diplomacy. The truth is, this so-called global importance is being used as a cover. Power Centralisation Under Asif Munir. At the core of this strategy is the military leadership under Asif

Munir, which is using this narrative to further tighten its grip on Pakistan. What little democracy existed in the country has now been systematically dismantled. Almost all the key institutions – the judiciary, the media, the political structures – are now effectively under military control. Judges are being shifted, and the Judicial Commission's recommendations to transfer Justice Mohsin

Akhtar Kayani, Justice Babar Sattar and Justice Saman Rafat Imitiaz of the Islamabad High Court, which were approved in April 2026, have been widely criticised for lack of transparency. Broader constitutional changes have altered the structure of the judiciary itself. Military courts are overriding civilian authority, and changes such as the 27th Amendment have further power.

India's Approach To Migration Grounded In Dignity, Respect For Rights: MoS Kirti

United Nations: India's approach to migration remains people-centric and grounded in dignity, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said, underlining that mobility will remain an integral feature of a dynamic global economy. "India's approach to migration governance is holistic and pragmatic. It is driven by coordinated institutional efforts and broad societal engagement," Singh said here Tuesday. He emphasised that "welfare and protection of our people" remains central to India's approach. "We have strengthened mechanisms to support migrants, particularly those in vulnerable situations, through initiatives such as the Indian Community Welfare Fund and the MADAD portal," he said. "Our responsive consular services also provide timely assis-

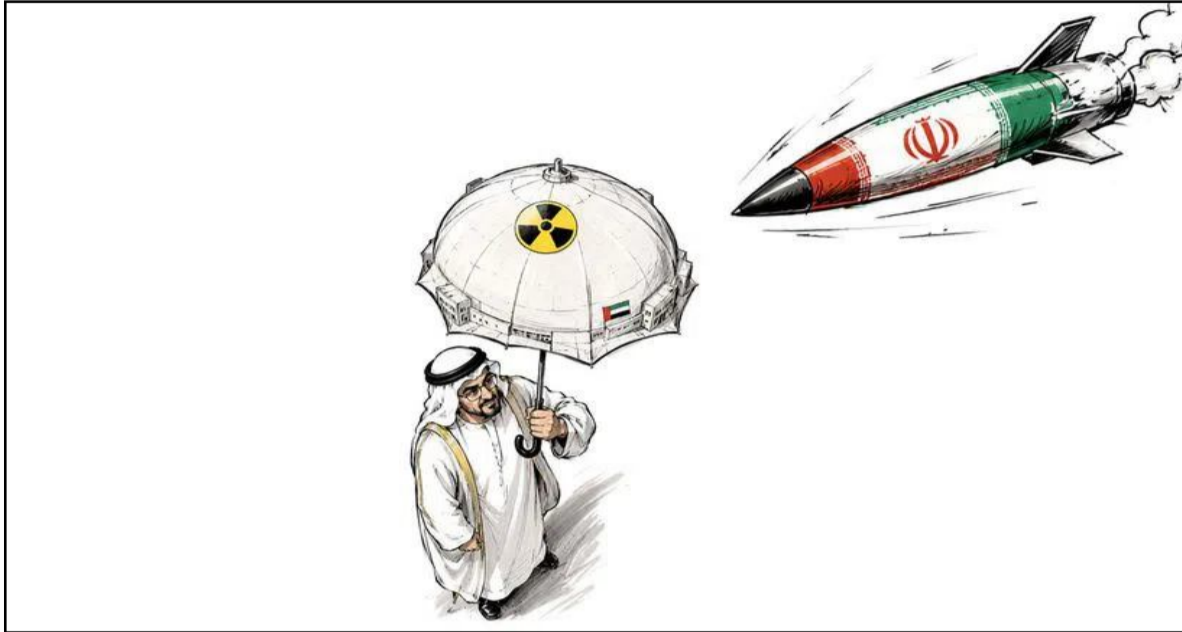


tance, legal, financial, and insurance coverage to our nationals overseas," he said. Singh, who arrived here Sunday, is leading the Indian delegation for the Second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), being held under the auspices of the UN General Assembly from May 4-8. He addressed a round table at the UN headquarters on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In a post on X, Singh said that at the round table, he outlined measures taken by India

to facilitate safe and regular migration through leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure, strengthening consular services, concluding migration and mobility agreements, while upskilling, training and providing pre-departure training of the country's skilled labour. "Highlighted that our approach to migration remains people-centric - grounded in dignity, inclusion, and respect for rights," he said. India's experience underscores the importance of leveraging technology, strengthening

partnerships, and adopting a holistic lifecycle approach to migration governance, Singh said in his remarks. "We are also aware that challenges remain, especially when it comes to strengthening social protection, addressing vulnerabilities, and improving data systems," he said. Singh stressed that India recognises that mobility will be an increasingly interconnected and dynamic global economy. India's policies remain closely aligned with the objectives and principles envisaged in the Global Compact, while evolving in response to emerging global dynamics. "With the objective that migration should be a choice, supported by opportunity and dignity, we have invested in inclusive growth, livelihood and financial inclusion," he said.

Barakah drone strike — UAE in Iran's strategic crosshairs



The recent drone strike near the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has once again exposed the fragile security architecture of West Asia. Although the drone reportedly struck an electrical generator outside the inner perimeter of the plant and did not damage the reactor itself, the incident has revived concerns over the growing shadow conflict between Iran and the UAE. More importantly, it underlines how critical infrastructure, ports and energy facilities are increasingly becoming instruments of geopolitical signalling in the Gulf.

Reading Iran-US-Israel escalation through India's lens Opinion: Forty days of war — Iran endures, US limits exposed Within the context of recent regional tensions, Iran's increasingly confrontational posture towards the UAE is difficult to ignore. Tehran appears to view pressure on Abu Dhabi as a way of indirectly challenging both the United States and Israel without inviting a direct conventional conflict. Iran's Regional Posture In recent months, Iran has repeatedly demonstrated that it prefers calibrated retaliation to outright escalation. The objective appears to be to impose strategic costs while avoiding a war that could destabilise the Iranian regime itself.

The tensions also reveal the limited success of recent American pressure tactics against Iran. Washington's attempts to weaken Tehran economically through sanctions and maritime restrictions have undoubtedly strained the Iranian economy, forcing reductions in oil production and increasing dependence on floating storage tankers. However, these measures have not fundamentally altered Iran's regional posture or nuclear ambitions. Instead, Tehran has adapted while simultaneously expanding its strategy of asymmetric retaliation through missiles, drones and proxy networks spread across the region.

The missile and drone strikes on Fujairah earlier this month were particularly significant. Fujairah is strategically important because it serves as the UAE's

principal oil export outlet outside the Strait of Hormuz. Any disruption there carries implications not merely for the UAE but also for global energy markets. By demonstrating its ability to threaten such infrastructure, Iran seeks to convey that instability in the Gulf can carry economic costs far beyond the region itself. Tehran understands that energy insecurity instantly attracts international attention and places pressure on Western governments dependent on stable oil supplies.

Since signing the Abraham Accords in 2020, Abu Dhabi has expanded security, diplomatic and economic cooperation with Tel Aviv far more openly than most Arab states.

UAE's Growing Vulnerability A major reason for the UAE's growing vulnerability lies in its steadily deepening relationship with Israel. Since signing the Abraham Accords in 2020, Abu Dhabi has expanded security, diplomatic and economic cooperation with Tel Aviv far more openly than most Arab states. While several Gulf countries maintain discreet engagement with Israel, the UAE has chosen visible strategic alignment. Reports of advanced Israeli defence systems, intelligence cooperation and cybersecurity partnerships have only reinforced Iranian perceptions that the UAE has become part of a broader anti-Iran security framework.

From Tehran's perspective, therefore, the UAE represents more than a neighbouring Gulf monarchy. It is increasingly viewed as a regional platform through which Israeli influence can project itself deeper into the Gulf. This perception has acquired greater significance after the Gaza conflict, which has sharply polarised public opinion across the Arab world. While many Arab governments maintained caution in public, the UAE's continued engagement with Israel drew criticism from sections of the region that viewed normalisation as politically premature.

GCC At the same time, important differences are emerging within the Gulf Cooperation Council. Saudi Arabia and the UAE continue to cooperate closely, but

their strategic priorities are no longer identical. Divergences over Yemen, Sudan and oil production policy have become more visible in recent years. Abu Dhabi's desire to maximise oil production and pursue a principal oil export outlet outside the Strait of Hormuz. Any disruption there carries implications not merely for the UAE but also for global energy markets. By demonstrating its ability to threaten such infrastructure, Iran seeks to convey that instability in the Gulf can carry economic costs far beyond the region itself. Tehran understands that energy insecurity instantly attracts international attention and places pressure on Western governments dependent on stable oil supplies.

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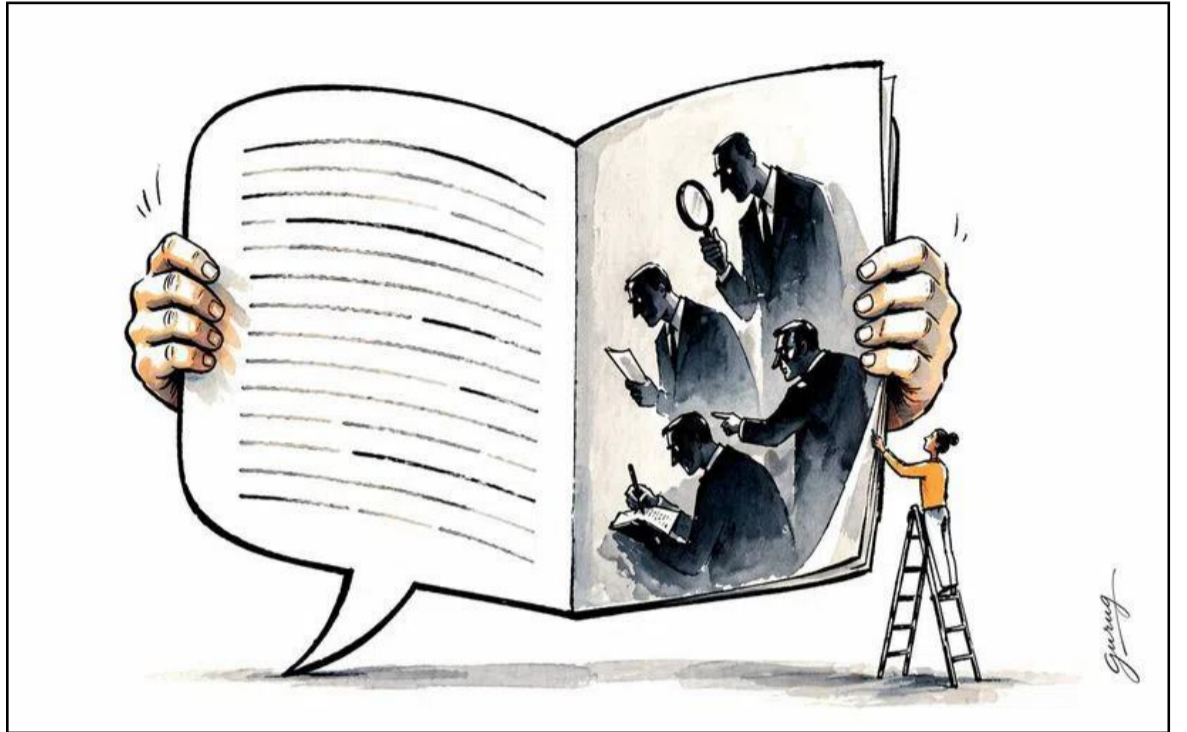
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The 2026 IT rules quietly threaten India's democratic voice



At a time when democracies across the world are grappling with misinformation, artificial intelligence, and the rapid evolution of digital ecosystems, India stands at a critical crossroads. The proposed amendments to the Information Technology Rules, 2026, are being framed as a necessary response to emerging technological threats. But beneath the language of regulation and responsibility lies a deeper, more troubling shift — one that could fundamentally alter the relationship between the state, the press, and the citizen.

Opinion: The vulnerability and necessity of Free Speech

Opinion: Free(ing) Thought This is no longer just about governing digital platforms. It is about redefining the boundaries of speech itself. The government argues that the new rules are essential to curb misinformation, deepfakes, and harmful online content. On the surface, this objective appears both reasonable and necessary. The digital age has indeed complicated the idea of truth, and the proliferation of synthetic media poses genuine risks. However, the tools proposed to address these challenges risk creating a system in which the cure may prove more damaging than the disease.

Coercive Compliance One of the most concerning provisions is the imposition of an extremely narrow compliance window—reportedly as short as three hours—for content takedown. Such a mandate transforms platforms from neutral intermediaries into anxious enforcers. Faced with the threat of legal liability, they are unlikely to deliberate or verify. Instead, they will remove content first and ask questions later. This is not regulation. It is coercive compliance.

In such an environment, the logic of survival will inevitably override the principles of free expression. Platforms will err on the side of caution, leading to widespread over-censorship. Content that is critical, investigative, or even mildly controversial may be taken down—not because it is unlawful, but because it is risky. For independent journalism, this shift is

particularly alarming.

Invading Editorial Domain The proposed rules blur the distinction between professional news organisations and independent digital creators. By expanding the definition of "publishers" and bringing a wide range of content creators under regulatory scrutiny, the state effectively extends its influence into the editorial domain. This raises a fundamental question: who gets to decide what qualifies as news? When journalists begin to self-censor, editors hesitate before publishing, and citizens weigh the risks of expressing dissent, freedom of speech doesn't vanish dramatically. It erodes quietly.

Once that power begins to rest, directly or indirectly, with the government, the implications are profound. The authority to define news inevitably becomes the authority to define truth. And when the state assumes that role, dissenting narratives are no longer merely contested—they are delegitimised.

Equally troubling is the architecture of traceability and metadata requirements embedded in the proposed amendments. While presented as mechanisms to ensure accountability, these measures risk undermining one of the most vital pillars of journalism: source protection. Investigative reporting often depends on anonymity and confidentiality. If digital communication becomes traceable by design, sources will think twice before speaking, and journalists will think twice before pursuing sensitive stories. The result is not overt censorship; it is a pressure that will tilt heavily towards executive control, with limited safeguards against misuse.

The absence of robust judicial oversight in content regulation is particularly concerning. Decisions that affect fundamental rights should not rest solely within executive mechanisms or be delegated to

The question, therefore, is not just about individual provisions. It is about the kind of digital democracy India seeks to build. A democratic society cannot function on conditional speech. Freedom of expression is not merely a legal sorcery, but something more insidious—a chilling effect. When journalists begin to self-censor, when editors hesitate before publishing, when citizens weigh the risks of expressing dissent, freedom of speech does not disappear dramatically. It erodes quietly.

This is the true danger of the 2026 IT Rules. They do not silence voices directly; they create conditions in which silence becomes the safer choice. Unaccountable censorship is the outsourcing of regulatory enforcement to algorithms.

Automated systems, designed to detect and flag problematic content, are inherently ill-equipped to interpret nuance, satire, or context. In a high-pressure compliance environment, these systems will default to caution, disproportionately targeting content that falls into grey areas.

This leads to a new form of censorship—one that is invisible, unaccountable, and difficult to challenge. Content may vanish without explanation. Appeals may be delayed or ineffective. The process becomes opaque, leaving both creators and audiences in the dark. Such a system fundamentally alters the public sphere. It replaces deliberation with discretion, and accountability with opacity. Supporters of the amendments may argue that all rights are subject to reasonable restrictions. This is true. But the principle of reasonableness demands proportionality, transparency, and oversight. The current framework, however, appears to tilt heavily towards executive control, with limited safeguards against misuse.

The absence of robust judicial oversight in content regulation is particularly concerning. Decisions that affect fundamental rights should not rest solely within executive mechanisms or be delegated to

private platforms under pressure. Without independent checks and balances, the potential for arbitrary action increases significantly.

It is also important to situate these developments within a broader trajectory. Over the past decade, there has been a gradual but discernible expansion of state influence over digital spaces. From intermediary guidelines to data governance frameworks, the direction has consistently pointed towards greater control. The 2026 amendments appear to be another step along this path.

Digital Democracy The question, therefore, is not just about individual provisions. It is about the kind of digital democracy India seeks to build. A democratic society cannot function on conditional speech. Freedom of expression is not merely a legal guarantee; it is the foundation upon which public discourse rests. It enables citizens to question authority, journalists to hold power accountable, and societies to evolve through debate.

Yes, misinformation must be addressed. Yes, technological harms must be mitigated. But these objectives must be pursued without compromising the core values that define a democracy.

The challenge lies in striking a balance—one that protects both truth and freedom. This requires a regulatory framework that is transparent, proportionate, and subject to independent oversight. It requires trust in citizens, not suspicion of them. Most importantly, it requires a recognition that dissent is not a threat to democracy—it is its lifeblood.

If the proposed IT Rules are implemented without significant safeguards, India risks creating a digital ecosystem where speech is constantly monitored, journalism is perpetually constrained, and citizens are subtly discouraged from speaking freely. That is not regulation. That is restraint.

And history has shown, time and again, that when speech is placed under watch, democracy itself begins to fade from view.

BBL On Course To Host Season Opener In Chennai As Cricket Australia Recives Positive Feedback

The Indian spectators might see the season opener of the Big Bash League at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. The process is on track to host the opening game of the upcoming BBL season in Chennai in December. Cricket Australia had identified Chepauk as the potential venue in February to tap into the vast market India has for cricket. According to a report by ESPNcricinfo, CA has received positive feedback from the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association as well as the BCCI to host the fixture in Chennai.



A five-member delegation meets TNCA and BCCO on Monday, a five-member committee from CA attended CSK's final home game of the season against Sunrisers Hyderabad. They are also working closely with the Australian government. Notably, the BCCI president Mithun Manhas also attended

the fixture between Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Monday. Some final level discussions still remain after which the match will be locked in.

Idea inspired by NRL The idea is inspired by the National Rugby League (NRL) in Australia, which takes its matches to Las Vegas. The report also adds that

Melbourne clubs, Stars and Renegades, are open to Chennai, amongst others. Renegades are considering the hybrid model as their agreement with Marvel Stadium (Docklands) ended earlier this year. The team is considering playing at multiple venues, including GMHBA Stadium in Geelong, the MCG and the Junction Oval. Floodlights are being installed at Junction Oval during the off-season.

There are still some concerns regarding the fixture. December comes within Chennai's peak monsoon window, and

India Squad For Afghanistan Series: Jasprit Bumrah Rested, Four Players Earn Maiden Call-Up

India have announced their squad for one Test and three ODIs against Afghanistan for the series starting from June 6. Shubman Gill to continue leading the side while the team include a few notable changes. The squad include four maiden call-ups, while a few senior players are being rested.

Four maiden call-ups Manav Suthar has earned a maiden call-up in Test cricket, while Prince Yadav has been handed his maiden call-up in ODIs, thanks to a remarkable performance in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) season. The team includes four maiden call-ups. Apart from Suthar and Prince, Gurnoor Brar and Harsh Dubey have also received maiden call-ups in Test cricket. Notably, Rishabh Pant's vice-captaincy has been changed to KL Rahul. Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya's participation is subject to fitness.

Manav Suthar, from Rajasthan, is a left-arm



spinner who made his first-class debut in 2022. He has taken 129 wickets from 52 first-class innings and has played four matches for the Gujarat Titans. Gurnoor Brar is a pacer from Punjab who made his first-class debut in 2022 and made his IPL debut for Punjab Kings in 2023. 2024-25 domestic season turned out to be decisive in his career, where he finished as the leading wicket-taker in the Ranji Trophy, picking 26 wickets in seven matches. Prince Yadav, who hails from Delhi, currently plays for Lucknow Super Giants

in the IPL. The right-arm pacer has taken 16 wickets from 12 IPL matches with an economy of 8.70 and a strike rate of 16.87. Harsh Dubey comes from Vidarbha, and the left-arm spinner is playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL, taking 13 wickets for the team so far. He has also taken 133 first-class wickets and 31 List A wickets. Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja rested Two senior players in the Indian team - Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja have been rested for the series. The decision is taken as the selectors

want to manage the workload of both players. Also, they want to explore new options in the team combination.

Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli return for ODIs The audience will see two senior players, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, back in action in the 50-over format. Kohli has been scoring consistently in the ongoing season of the Indian Premier League (IPL). However, Rohit's participation is subject to fitness and he will be included depending on his fitness status. Aquib Nabi not included in the squad. Aquib Nabi, who had a breakthrough season for the last two years, has not been included in the squad. Nabi took 60 wickets from 17 innings in the 2025/26 season and was the leading wicket-taker in the season. He played a key role in Jammu and Kashmir winning their first-ever title. Also, he was talked about by many senior players but has not been included in the squad.

USISPF Welcomes Settlement Of Adani Cases; Will Boost Indo US Business Ties

Volatility has shot up in the financial markets due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, but the Indian bourses have the capacity to "absorb different types of shocks", SEBI Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Monday. When there is a crisis in one part of the world, it also impacts the rest of the globe, Pandey told reporters here on the sidelines of the Regional Investors Seminar for Awareness. "Due to the prevailing conflict in West Asia, the oil supply chain and its prices were affected in the rest of the world. All the economies have been affected by this and obviously, there are inflationary risks. Besides, the spillover effect and second-order effect will also come in," he said. "However, the advantages of a resilient Indian market are that it is able to absorb different types of shocks, and when these end, the market again resumes its normal trajectory," Pandey said. He also admitted that there have been some foreign portfolio investment outflows since September 2024, but domestic investors have "retained their confidence." Asked how SEBI is addressing



threats from AI tools, Pandey said, "Most of the recent concerns around such tools are related to cybersecurity. As you know, markets rely heavily on software systems, and if cybersecurity is threatened or vulnerabilities are found in the software, there is a risk of attacks. If such attacks are successful, they can pose a serious threat to market integrity." "Therefore, we have to proactively ensure that all the software we deploy, including that provided by third-party vendors, is well protected. There has to be aggressive patch man-

agement and extensive use of conventional tools to identify vulnerabilities," the SEBI chief said. SEBI is using a mechanism to ensure that the market, market ecosystem, and intermediaries are protected from any cyber risk, he asserted. Pandey also said that 'influencers', who give financial and stock-related advice, must first register themselves with SEBI. The market regulator has already removed 1.4 lakh such content from various social media platforms, he said. "For creating awareness among people, SEBI has

launched the project 'Jagrak'. Under this, we are going to make our engagement and investor awareness a 360-degree, multilingual, multi-agency and multimedia," Pandey said. Addressing investors at the event, he said municipal bonds have been the cornerstone of city-level development, enabling urban raise long-term funds for essential projects such as water supply, sanitation, transport and waste management. municipal bonds immediately," he stated. Pandey also said that SEBI will open its office in Bhubaneswar soon.

Stock Markets End Lower On Fag-End Selling In Blue-Chips



Stock market benchmark indices ended lower on Tuesday due to fag-end selling in blue-chip stocks. HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries, as concerns rose over the rupee hitting a new record low. Elevated global crude prices amid geopolitical uncertainties also impacted market sentiment. Markets pared all intraday gains and ended lower, with the 30-share BSE Sensex declining 114.19 points, or 0.15 per cent, to settle at 75,200.85. Stock Market The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 114.19 points while the 50-share NSE Nifty dipped. During the day, it surged 431.23 points, or 0.57 per cent, to 75,746.27 after US President Donald Trump said he had halted fresh strikes on Iran at the request of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, asserting that serious discussions were underway with Tehran that could lead to an acceptable deal. Stock Market The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 31.95 points, or 0.14 per cent, to end at 23,618. From the Sensex firms, Kotak Mahindra Bank, UltraTech Cement,

Titan, Adani Ports, Bharti Airtel and Sun Pharma were among the biggest laggards. Infosys, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra, Eternal and Tata Consultancy Services were among the major winners. The rupee slipped to a record low of 96.60 against the US dollar before settling at 96.52 (provisional) on Tuesday. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 1.80 per cent lower at USD 110 per barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 2,813.69 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. The majority of Adani group stocks ended higher after the US Department of Justice permanently dropped all criminal charges against business tycoon Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar, bringing a high-profile securities and wire fraud case in New York to a complete close after prosecutors concluded they could not sustain the allegations. Domestic equity indices pared early gains to close in the red, despite an initial upswing fuelled by optimism surrounding a

temporary halt in US military operations against Iran. "IT stocks stood as a notable exception, registering robust advances on the back of anticipated tailwinds from an accelerating rupee depreciation and compelling valuations," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi and Japan's Nikkei 225 index ended lower, while Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled higher. Markets in Europe were trading in positive territory. "Despite a powerful rally in IT stocks and supportive global cues during the first half, benchmark indices failed to sustain higher levels as rising currency concerns, elevated crude oil prices, and aggressive derivative unwinding dragged the market lower into the close," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Livelong Wealth, said. The biggest pressure point remained the continued collapse in the Indian rupee alongside persistently elevated

crude oil prices, he added. US markets ended on a mixed note on Monday. Trump had made the announcement on Truth Social on Monday late afternoon. "I have been asked by the Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, and the President of the United Arab Emirates, Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to hold off on our planned Military attack of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was scheduled for tomorrow (Tuesday)," Trump said. "We were getting ready to do a very major attack tomorrow. I've put it off for a little while, hopefully, maybe forever, but while, because we've had very big discussions with Iran and we'll see what they amount to," Trump told reporters at the White House. In the previous session on Monday, the BSE benchmark increased by 77.05 points, or 0.10 per cent, to settle at 75,315.04. The Nifty edged higher by 6.45 points, or 0.03 per cent, to end at 23,649.95.

India's young boxers shine at Asian U15 & U17 championships with multiple wins

Hyderabad: India's young boxers delivered another day of impressive performances at the Asian Boxing U15 & U17 Championships 2026, registering multiple victories across the Under-15 and Under-17 categories in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

In the Under-15 boys' competition, Nong poknganba Meitei Oina (46kg) secured a convincing 5:0 victory over Kazakhstan's Abdurakhman Vushanov, while Parshant (49kg) mirrored the result with a dominant 5:0 win against Bakdaulet Akhmet. Mohd Yasser (58kg) stood out with a commanding performance, sealing his bout via RSC (Referee Stopped Contest) in the first round against Kyrgyzstan's Akbarzhan Nabidzhanov. Nivesh Pal (54kg) also impressed with a 5:0 victory over Kazakhstan's Adilet Galiyev, while Ranveer (66kg) pro-



gressed after a walkover against Chinese Taipei's Ying-Chieh Chen. In other Under-15 bouts, Lilmani Singh Lukram (61kg) lost via RSC in the third round to Uzbekistan's Azizbek Egamberganov, and Mehul Rana (70kg) suffered a first-round RSC defeat against Bauyrzhan. In the Under-17 boys' evening session, Nivesh Pal (54kg) continued his

strong form with another 5:0 victory over Adilet Galiyev of Kazakhstan. Ranveer (66kg) registered a win by ABD (Abandonment) against Chinese Taipei's Ying-Chieh Chen. Lakshay Phogat (75kg) delivered a dominant performance, clinching a first-round RSC victory against Sri Lanka's Ranc higo dagama Arachchila. However, Pradeep (63kg) and Hanjra

Jaideep Singh (80kg) faced tough opponents and lost 0:5 against Uzbekistan's Rushen Saydullaev and Kazakhstan's Alibek Alpamys, respectively. With a mix of dominant wins and hard-fought bouts, the Indian contingent continues to showcase strong depth and promising talent across age groups as the championships progress in Tashkent.

Riteish Deshmukh Starrer Logs Highest Marathi First Beats Sairat, Ved

Riteish Deshmukh's historical drama Raja Shivaji is off to a powerful start at the box office. After a strong opening weekend, the film has now set a new benchmark by recording the highest-ever first Monday collections for a Marathi film, beating records set by Sairat and VedRaja Shivaji Box Office Collection Day 4. Directed by and starring Riteish Deshmukh, Raja Shivaji earned Rs 5.60 crore net on its first Monday (Day 4), as per data shared by industry tracker Sacnilk. This is now the highest Monday collection ever for a Marathi film in India. With this, the film's total domestic net collection has reached Rs 39.50 crore in just four days, while the gross stands at Rs 46.95 crore. The film is now inching closer to the Rs 50 crore mark, which is a big achievement for a Marathi release. Raja Shivaji Becomes Second-Highest-Grossing Marathi Film in just four days, Raja Shivaji has already become the second-highest-grossing Marathi film in India. It has crossed the lifetime collection of Natsamrat, which had earned Rs 46.12 crore net. Now, the film is only behind Sairat, which still holds the top spot with Rs 110 crore lifetime collection. Occupancy Rates Over the opening weekend, it recorded 32.3% occupancy across more than 6,000 shows. On Monday, the occupancy dropped to around 21.5% with over 5,000 shows, which is still a good sign for a weekday. However, the Hindi version has not performed as strongly, with occupancy around 11%,



showing that most of the film's success is coming from the Marathi audience. Clash With Ek Din Doesn't Affect Performance Raja Shivaji released alongside Ek Din, but the clash has not impacted its box office run. The film continues to attract audiences, especially in Maharashtra. About Raja

ShivajiThe film is based on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, one of India's greatest warriors and the founder of the Maratha Empire. It focuses on his early years and his fight to establish Swarajya Shivaji Maharaj, one of (self-rule) against powerful enemies. Apart from

Riteish Deshmukh, the film also features Abhishek Bachchan, Genelia Deshmukh, Sanjay Dutt, Mahesh Manjrekar and Sachin Khedekar. The film features a special cameo by Salman Khan. Interestingly, Riteish and Genelia's son Rahl has made his acting debut with this film.

Amitabh Bachchan Praises Ramoji Film City, Calls It A 'World-Class' Filmmaking Destination



Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan has showered praise on Ramoji Film City, calling it one of the finest filmmaking destinations in the world. The veteran actor took to his Instagram handle to share his experiences of shooting at the film city, which has been home to several blockbuster movies over the years. Known as the world's largest film city, Ramoji Film City has remained one of the biggest attractions for filmmakers and tourists. Spread across more than 2,000 acres in Hyderabad, the massive studio complex is famous for its grand film sets, live shows, and cinematic atmosphere.



From palace-style locations and city streets to railway stations and airport sets, the place offers almost every kind of backdrop required for filmmaking. Sharing his thoughts about the film city, Amitabh Bachchan wrote, "My every shoot at Ramoji Film City has been a comfortable and memorable experience. Its world-class infrastructure, integrated production facilities, and professional environment make filmmaking smooth and enjoyable. Over the years, it has grown into one of the finest filmmaking destinations globally. My best wishes to the entire team for supporting

Indian cinema with passion and commitment." The actor has shot several films at the location during his long career. One of them was Sooryavansham, which was filmed extensively at Ramoji Film City. The movie featured grand palace sets and Mughal-style gardens that became a major visual highlight of the film. Even the song Peepal Ke Patwa showcased the vast beauty of the film city. More recently, Kalki 2898 AD, directed by Nag Ashwin, was also shot at the studio complex using specially built large-scale sets. The film turned out to be one of the blockbusters.

Apart from its filmmaking facilities, Ramoji Film City is also a major tourist destination that attracts visitors from across the country. The venue offers studio tours, stunt performances, cultural shows, adventure activities, butterfly parks, and themed attractions throughout the year. Amitabh Bachchan is currently gearing up for his next big release, Section 84, directed by Ribhu Dasgupta. The courtroom drama is expected to release in theatres on November 19, 2026. The actor also has highly anticipated projects like Kalki 2 and Brahmastra Part 2: Dev in the pipeline.

Ram Charan Battles Inequality While Mastering 3 Sports In Buchi Babu Sana's Film



The much-awaited trailer of Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor-starrer Peddi is finally out, and it promises a powerful mix of sports, action, emotions and village drama. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, the film's trailer was launched at Jio World Drive in Mumbai on Monday, May 18, in the presence of the cast and makers. What has caught everyone's attention is Ram Charan's intense transformation and the fact that his character is shown playing not one or two, but three different sports in the film. The three-minute trailer introduces viewers to Peddi, a fearless and energetic young man from Vijayanagar in Andhra Pradesh. In the village, Peddi is known as a star athlete who can

play almost every sport. From cricket to kushti (traditional wrestling) and running, the trailer shows Ram Charan performing in multiple sports with full intensity. The trailer hints that Peddi is not just fighting opponents on the field, but also battling social inequality and difficult life situations. His journey appears to be emotional, inspirational and packed with mass moments. Ram Charan's rugged look, strong screen presence and high-energy action scenes stand out throughout the trailer. Janhvi Kapoor plays Achiyamma, Peddi's love interest in the film. Though her screen time in the trailer is limited, her chemistry with Ram Charan has already grabbed attention online.

The film also stars Shiva Rajkumar as Gourinaidu, Divyendu as Rambujji and Jagapathi Babu in an important role. Peddi has been in the making for nearly two years. The film is produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru under Vriddhi Cinemas and presented by Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings. One of the biggest highlights of the project is that music legend A. R. Rahman has composed the soundtrack. Director Buchi Babu Sana, who previously made Uppena, has described Peddi as a "rural, emotional and rustic journey." The trailer clearly reflects that vision with its earthy visuals, emotional dialogues and sports-based backdrop.

The film's shoot officially began in late 2024 and was wrapped up in April 2026. During the final schedule, Ram Charan reportedly suffered an injury above his eye and needed stitches. However, the actor continued shooting without taking a break. Interestingly, Peddi has already faced multiple release delays. The film was initially scheduled to release in March, then shifted to April before finally locking June 4 as its release date earlier this month. The movie is also very important for Ram Charan's career after the disappointing performance of his previous film, Game Changer. Fans are now hoping that Peddi will mark a strong comeback for the actor.

Arvind Kejriwal Lifted Raghav Chadha On Shoulders At His Wedding With Parineeti Chopra



Actor Parineeti Chopra and politician Raghav Chadha kept their 2023 wedding private, but new details from the grand celebration are now grabbing attention online. Singer and Vedic priest Ankit Batra, who conducted the couple's wedding rituals, opened up about what happened behind closed doors during the lavish ceremony in Udaipur. Sharing memories from the wedding on his YouTube channel, Ankit said the event looked royal from the outside, but inside, privacy rules were extremely strict. According to him, security arrangements at The Leela Palace Udaipur were so tight that guests were not allowed to keep any personal photos or videos from the ceremony. Talking about the atmosphere, he said, "The wedding day at the Leela Palace, Udaipur. The security was

insane." He further revealed that even family members had to follow the no-photo rule. One incident that surprised many involved Madhu Chopra, the mother of actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas. Ankit claimed she was requested to remove pictures clicked on her phone during the wedding functions. "It was majestic, but inside it was a fortress. No photos, no videos. Even Priyanka Chopra's mom was asked to delete photos she had taken on her phone," he recalled, adding that the families wanted the ceremony to remain completely personal and sacred. The priest also remembered how emotional the wedding rituals were for the bride and groom. He said the pheras lasted around one hour and twenty minutes and felt more meaningful than formal. "It wasn't just chanting, it was a con-

versation," he shared. Another moment that stayed with Ankit was seeing political leaders enjoying the wedding like close friends rather than guests. He spoke about former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann celebrating enthusiastically with the groom's side. "I looked out and saw Bhagwant Mann ji and Arvind Kejriwal ji. They weren't just guests, they were like family, dancing and carrying Raghav ji on their shoulders," he said. Ankit also revealed that Parineeti planned a heartfelt surprise for her husband. The actor reportedly recorded a special song for Raghav, which played as she made her bridal entry. "It was a surprise for him too," the priest added. Parineeti and Raghav married in September 2023 after dat-