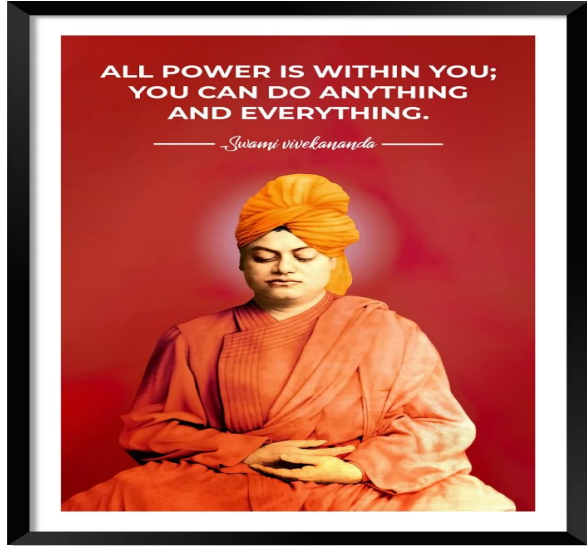
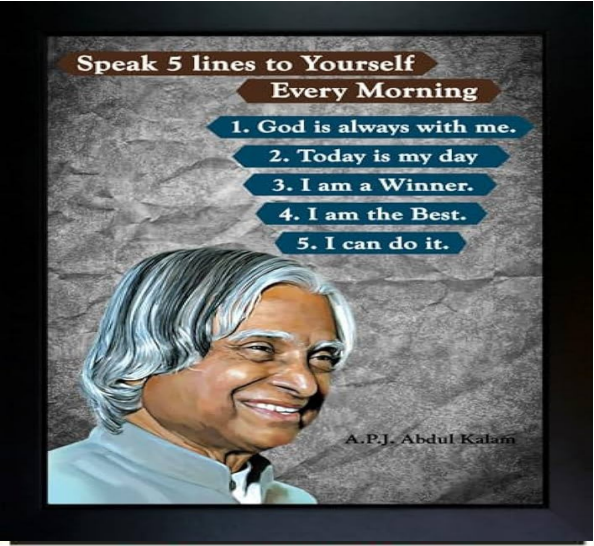




Sanjay Jaju Stresses Preparedness to Tackle El Niño Impact Across Sectors



Hyderabad: Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju participated in a workshop organised by the Agriculture department at Rajendranagar here on Friday on advance preparedness and coordinated action to address the potential impact of El Niño across various sectors. Agriculture Minister Tummala Nag eswara Rao, Panchayat Raj Minister D. Seethakka and Animal Husbandry Minister Vakiti Srihari, along with senior officials and agriculture scientists from Agriculture, Panchay

at Raj, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Departments, participated in the workshop. The Secretary emphasised coordinated, sector-specific preparedness and proactive measures to effectively address the challenges arising from El Niño.

Centre Denies Permission for US Visit, Revanth to Return to Hyderabad

Hyderabad: Following denial of permission by the Union Government to visit the USA, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will return from London to Hyderabad on August 23 instead of leaving for Boston, NY. He was denied permission by the External Affairs Ministry, saying "...clearance from political angle is denied". The CM has instructed officials to proceed with the US tour and to sign MoUs with top educational institutions Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Northeastern University and Virginia



Tech. Also Read - Centre Denies Approval to Revanth Reddy for US Trip Citing Non-conformity of Norms Revanth Reddy will proceed with scheduled meetings in

London. He will meet top Oxbridge (Oxford, Cambridge) and other top British Schools academics in London and sports institutions over the next two days. The state govern-

ment had sought the Central Government's permission for the trip to the UK and USA, as per policy and protocol, but only the UK trip was approved. "The only purpose of the visit was to bring the world's best institutions to India, to Telangana, to Hyderabad, as part of the New Education Policy of the Centre. They would have been an answer to our youth's aspirations to get education, skills, and training from the best Ivy Leagues and top global institutions," the Chief Minister said in response to the developments. Also Read - Greyhounds, OCTOPUS Personnel Join Civil Supplies to Crack Whip on Rice Millers "I have always believed we should all think beyond politics and elections when it comes to nation building and the future of the youth" he said. While being shocked by the "political denial" for a visit to further Telangana Rising, and contribute to Viksit Bharat, CM Revanth Reddy has decided to comply with the Central decision and return to India from London, taking a flight back to Hyderabad and instead of proceeding to Boston, USA.

Jannaram Panchayat Secretary Held in Rs.13,000 Bribe Case



Hyderabad: The sleuths of Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Friday arrested J. Varalaxmi, Panchayat Secretary of Lingayipalli village in Jannaram mandal in Mancherla district, when she demanded and accepted illegal gratification of Rs.13,000 from the complainant for doing an official favour. She demanded the bribe to accord permission for construction of a house

and for allotment of house number to the newly constructed house at Lingayipalli village. Initially, she demanded Rs.20,000 from the complainant. Subsequently, after negotiation, she agreed to accept Rs.13,000 as illegal gratification. Also Read - Centre Denies Approval to Revanth Reddy for US Trip Citing Non-conformity of Norms During

the trap, she did not accept the bribe amount in cash and instead instructed the complainant to transfer the agreed amount of Rs.13,000 through PhonePe. She provided the PhonePe number of another Panchayat Secretary, Lavanya, and accordingly, the complainant transferred Rs.13,000 to the said PhonePe account, thereby completing the acceptance of illegal gratification.

Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy inaugurated the Annaprasadam and Laddu Pottu Bhavans at Sri Kanaka Durga Temple in Vijayawada. Andhra Pradesh Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy inaugurated the Annaprasadam and Laddu Pottu Bhavans at Sri Kanaka Durga Temple atop the Indra keeladri hill in Vijayawada on Friday. Built at a cost of ₹52.50 crore, the complex features a dining hall that can accommodate 800 people at a time, along with a modernised kitchen



capable of preparing and serving food to up to 10,000 people. Also Read

- Body Of Panchayat Raj AE's Daughter Recovered From Godavari River

Speaking on the occasion, Anam Ramanarayana Reddy said, "For devotees

and volunteers, 800 people can have food at a time in this building. There are mechanised kitchens, which can prepare and serve food for 10,000 people at a time. "TDP MP Kesineni Sivanath said, "With the blessings of Kanaka Durga Ammavaru, we are here inaugurating two buildings. One is the Annaprasada building, and the other is the Laddu Poodu building. Both buildings are for pilgrims. Around Rs 50 crore has been spent on the construction of these buildings."

MLAs, MLCs Seek Konda Surekha's Suspension over Anti-Party Activities



Hyderabad: Around 20 Congress MLAs and MLCs demanded suspension of End wments and Environment Minister Konda Surekha in connection with her alleged anti-party activities. The demand for Surekha's suspension was raised following remarks made by her daughter Sushmita. The MLAs strongly condemned Sushmita's recent comments on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. Addressing a press conference, they appealed to the high command to take action against those who speak in a way that harms the party. "It is not right for Surekha to say

that she has nothing to do with Sushmita's comments. If she has nothing to do with her comments, then Surekha should condemn them," she said. Also Read - Centre Denies Approval to Revanth Reddy for US Trip Citing Non-conformity of Norms The language of the Konda family has always been a headache for the party. The Congress government is going to have to pay the price for her comments. The AICC should take action against those who speak like this. "Revanth Reddy and his brothers worked hard to bring the Congress to paction against those over. It they said. Sushmita's comments will give strength to the opposition, they observed.

is not right to speak openly about the CM and the party like this. If there is anything, it should be spoken in the CLP and PCC meeting. We demand strict action against whoever makes false allegations, been a headache for the party. The Congress government is going to have to pay the price for her comments. The AICC should take action against those who speak like this. "Revanth Reddy and his brothers worked hard to bring the Congress to paction against those over. It they said. Sushmita's comments will give strength to the opposition, they observed.

Modi Urges Space Startups To Expand Into Agriculture, Environment

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday assured full support of the government to young space entrepreneurs and urged them to explore how space technology can be used in agriculture, livestock management, dairy, environment and other areas that affect people's lives. Interacting with CEOs and founders of 20 space startups here, Modi also hailed them for showing remarkable courage by entering a new and demanding domain of space startups as they have taken risks, trusted the reform process and remained consistent in their efforts. Also Read - BJP-JDS Demand Minister N a g e n d r a ' s Resignation He assured them of the government's full support and called for greater collaboration between space companies and organisations in other sectors to expand the use of their technologies. "I assured the space startups that government of India will continue to stand with them as they build India's capabilities for the future. India can offer the



world a strong, innovative and commercially viable model in the space sector," he said. Also Read - Maharashtra: Parents Die After Falling During Suicide Attempt Of Son Modi also urged the startups to explore how space technology could contribute to "agriculture, livestock management, dairy, environment and many other areas that touch everyday lives". The prime minister suggested, "Companies working on space debris could work with environmental organisations to scale up their technologies. Space technology companies working with the agriculture sector could collaborate with agricultural universities and departments to help farmers make better informed decisions and max-

imise their output." Also Read - Odisha to Host All India PR Conference for First Time, AI, Ethics to be Focus The prime minister said the startups made insightful presentations on their work and appreciated the government's space reforms and the opportunities they had created for the industry to grow. "It was wonderful to meet the Yuva Urja of India's space sector...young entrepreneurs and innovators who have shown remarkable courage by entering a new and demanding domain. They have taken risks, trusted the reform process and remained consistent in their efforts. Due to this, India has achieved a lot in the space sector in the last few years," he said.

New Criminal Laws Will End 'Syndicate, Cut-Money Regime'



New Delhi: Launching a fresh salvo at the erstwhile Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government in West Bengal, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday accused the previous dispensation of not notifying the new criminal laws passed by Parliament, alleging that it wanted to protect the "syndicate, cut-money and extortion regime

e". Addressing a gathering at the Kawahali Maidan in Siliguri where he inaugurated an exhibition on the three new criminal laws -- the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam -- Shah asserted that the laws, now implemented by the Suvendu Adhikari-led BJP government, have taken a

decisive step to replace the prevailing environment of fear (bhoi) with that of trust (bharosa). Chief Concerned Over Low Number Of Cases Filed in Appellate Tribunal "While the entire country had begun implementing the new criminal laws, Banerjee never notified them. She knew that the laws would sound the death knell for her syndicate, cut-money and extortion regime," Shah said. Asserting that the BJP government has imposed the rule of law in the state, Shah said the new criminal laws will fast-track justice delivery mechanism and allow zero FIRs to be lodged at any police station.

BRS hits back at CM Revanth over 24-hour power claim

The passing of legendary actress and Padma Shri awardee Sowcar Janaki garu marks the end of an extraordinary chapter in Indian cinema. For nearly seven decades, she graced the screen with her remarkable talent, dignity, strength, and versatility, leaving an indelible impression on Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada cinema. Born into an era when opportunities for women in the film industry were limited, Shavukaru Janaki carved out a distinctive identity through sheer talent and determination. Her cinematic journey began with the iconic film Shavukaru, which not only launched her career but also gave her the name by which generations of audiences would remember her. Over the years, she acted



in around 400 films, effortlessly moving between leading roles and powerful character parts. Also Read - Veteran Actress Sowcar Janaki Passes Away, Telugu Producers Pay Tributes Her contribution to cinema was not measured merely by the number of films she

appeared in, but by the unforgettable characters she brought to life. With grace, emotional depth, and a commanding screen presence, she continued to remain relevant across generations. For the Nandamuri family, however, her passing carried an especially personal significance. Nandamuri Balakrishna recalled the special bond she shared with the family. Shavukaru was his father N.T. Rama Rao's first film as a hero, making Janaki garu his first heroine and giving her the iconic name

“Shavukaru Janaki.” She went on to act alongside NTR in several films and later played an important role in Pichchi Pullayya, the first production under the N.A.T. banner. Also Read - TN CM Vijay Condoloes Veteran Actress Sowcar Janaki's Demise Balakrishna also remembered his own association with her. After making his debut in Tatamma Kala, he had the opportunity to act with Shavukaru Janaki in Ram-Rahim and Vemula wada Bheemakavi. For him, her passing was not simply the loss of a great artist, but a deeply personal and irreparable loss. The affection and admiration she commanded across the industry were reflected in the tributes that followed her demise.

Greyhounds, OCTOPUS Personnel Join Civil Supplies to Crack Whip on Rice Millers

Hyderabad: In a decisive move to protect the state's supply chain, the Telangana State Civil Supplies department here on Friday inducted around 28 highly trained police personnel from the elite Greyhounds and OCTOPUS units into its Enforcement and Vigilance wing to crack down on defaulting rice millers. Commissioner of Civil Supplies M. Stephen Raveendra chaired a high-level briefing at Civil Supplies Bhavan this morning to formally welcome the newly inducted commanders and outline their strategic mandate. Also Read - 2 More Held over Money Rain Ritual in Latur; 15 in Custody So Far Recognizing that public distribution is a new operational domain for these tactical units, he noted they have already completed a specialized three-day training program tailored to departmental protocols. The personnel were imparted training at the Telangana Police Academy in various



legal aspects pertaining to essential commodities. During the briefing, the Commissioner highlighted the scale of the department's operations, focusing extensively on the historic, record-breaking paddy procurement targets achieved during the KMS 2025-2026 season where the state successfully procured an 154 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) of paddy. Also Read - Jannaram Panchayat Secretary Held in Rs.13,000 Bribe Case The state government spent around Rs.40,000 crore during the last procurement cycle to sup-

port the farming community. Leveraging their specialized training in tactical operations and surprise inspections, these deputed personnel will function as special task teams under the Enforcement and Vigilance wing. They are slated for immediate dispatch across the state to conduct intensive field inspections of defaulting millers. The Commissioner issued a stern warning that the department will enforce an absolute zero-tolerance policy against any misappropriation or operational defaults. Authorities will immedi-

ately register criminal cases and execute stringent legal actions against any miller found violating government regulations. The state government spent around Rs.40,000 crore during the last procurement cycle to support the farming community. Leveraging their specialized training in tactical operations and surprise inspections, these deputed personnel will function as special task teams under the Enforcement and Vigilance wing. They are slated for immediate dispatch across the state to conduct intensive field inspections of defaulting millers. The Commissioner issued a stern warning that the department will enforce an absolute zero-tolerance policy against any misappropriation or operational defaults. Authorities will immedi-

Committee Formed To Probe Incident

Visakhapatnam: TDP state president Palla Srinivasa Rao on Thursday termed the alleged death of a five-year-old UKG student after being slapped by a teacher at a private school in Visakhapatnam as “unfortunate” and said that Education Minister Nara Lokesh had already formed a committee to inquire into the incident. “Based on the committee report, strict action will be taken. If anyone is found guilty, the culprits will not be spared,” Palla said. He said the Education Minister would visit Visakhapatnam on Friday and discuss the matter further. Also Read - Annprasadam, Laddu Pottu Bhavan Inaugurated At Kanaka Durga Temple Palla offered condolences to the child's family and assured that the government would extend necessary support to the parents. He also advised schools to give greater

attention to students' health and safety. “At times, a small incident can lead to a major problem. Schools should conduct holistic health check-ups, especially for young children. This should be made mandatory,” he said. Palla added that the government would bring reforms in school education and review procedures being followed in private schools to prevent such incidents. Visakhapatnam: TDP state president Palla Srinivasa Rao on Thursday termed the alleged death of a five-year-old UKG student after being slapped by a teacher at a private school in Visakhapatnam as “unfortunate” and said that Education Minister Nara Lokesh had already formed a committee to inquire into the incident. “Based on the commit-



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Adilabad: Five held for duping man of Rs 3.78 lakh in fake fertiliser franchise scam

Adilabad: Police busted an inter-state cybercrime racket from Bihar involved in duping people under the guise of providing franchise of the National Fertilizers Private Limited by arresting five members. They seized 10 mobile phones, cash Rs 70,000 and froze stock market shares worth Rs 8 lakh. Briefing the details of the arrest to media persons here on Friday, SP Akhil Mahajan said that Abhishek Kumar alais Saurabh, Ashuthosh Kumar, Rithesh Kumar, and Abhinash Kumar, all from Bahari-Bishu in Nawada district and Nishu Kumar of Nalanda district in Bihar were apprehended for duping a man from Boraj mandal of Rs 3.78 lakh. On being interrogated, the five



reportedly confessed to committing the offence under the pretext of the franchise belonging to NFPL. Police said that the five had been involved in 500 crimes across the country and extracted Rs 3.50 crore from the victims. They stated that the five were suspected to have

indulged in 90 offenses reported in Telangana alone. The SP stated that the fraudsters would lead simple lives in their villages, but lure people by promising to provide the franchise by creating a fake website. He noted that the five collect various charges from those who were interested to

buy the franchise. He advised the public not to fall prey to cyber fraudsters and to report offences on the toll free number 1930 without delay. Adilabad DSP L Jeevan Reddy, Jainath Inspector Shravan, Sis Peer Singh, Gowtham and staffers of the were present.

TTD to Deploy Robotic Dog for Wildlife Monitoring in Woods around Tirupati Temple

Tirupati: TTD, the official custodian of Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple, is eyeing the deployment of an advanced robotic dog to strengthen real-time monitoring of wildlife movement to enhance devotees' safety in the woods surrounding Tirumala. TTD additional executive officer Ch Venkaiah Chowdary and other temple officials reviewed the performance of a quadruped robot (Robotic Dog) at Sri Padmavathi Guest House in Tirumala. Also Read - Annprasadam, Laddu Pottu Bhavan Inaugurated At Kanaka Durga Temple “To strengthen real-time monitoring of wildlife movement and enhance devotee safety in forest areas around Tirumala, TTD is evaluating the use of advanced robotic technology,” an official release said. The robotic dog is equipped with optical and thermal imaging



cameras, including a 360-degree LiDAR, multiple sensors and artificial intelligence. These features enable detection and tracking of wildlife under low visibility conditions such as darkness or fog, the release said. Also Read - Six-Year-Old Boy Helps Police Trace Father's Hidden Bike in Nellore The AI system can clas-

sify large animals, humans, vehicles and domestic animals and on detecting wildlife movement, it can send geo-tagged alerts and stream live video and thermal feeds to the control room and patrolling staff for immediate response. "Priority areas include the forest stretches adjoining the Alipiri Tirumala footpath, where early detection of leopards and other wildlife will help warn devotees and enable rapid deployment of forest, vigilance and security teams," the release said. Also Read - Vizag UKG Student Case: Committee Formed To Probe Incident The feasibility of using the robot's sound and light units to

non-physically deter animals away from pilgrim areas was also examined to avoid direct human-wildlife confrontation, it said. Further, the temple body views that the robot would complement but not replace the existing camera traps, foot patrols and forest surveillance. It can serve as a mobile monitoring asset that can be rapidly deployed to locations with high wildlife activity as required. Also Read - ASR District: Villagers Build Road Themselves Over Lack of Government Action Analysis of video, thermal imagery and movement data collected by the robot is expected to improve understanding of wildlife patterns and inform better patrol scheduling and surveillance deployment in critical zones, the release added. TTD considering robotic tech to monitor wildlife assumes significance as there were instances of leopards attacking devotees earli-

Tunnel reportedly found near Qutb Shahi tombs in Golconda

Hyderabad: An underground tunnel was reportedly discovered near the historic Qutb Shahi tombs at Golconda on Thursday. The structure was reportedly found during excavation work at the Athara Seedi (18 Seedi) area, close to a playground adjoining the 400-year-old Qutb Shahi tombs. It has rekindled the centuries-old mystery surrounding alleged secret passages linking Golconda Fort with other parts of the city. The excavation activity has also raised concerns over alleged unauthorised digging at the heritage site. Karwan LA Kausar Mohiuddin alerted the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) after the tunnel was discovered and sought an inspection of the site. The ASI officials are expected to examine the location and assess whether any protected structure or archaeological remains have been affected.



A police picket is also likely to be deployed in the area. However, the allegations of illegal excavation have not yet been established. The ASI survey is expected to determine the structure's age, purpose and extent, besides establishing whether it is a genuine historic passage or a more recent excavation. Such passages are believed to have been used as secret escape routes during times of conflict. However, the existence of a long-distance tunnel between Golconda Fort and Chhbeen conclusively estabmarinar has never been conclusively established. Similar structures found in and around Golconda in the past have often been identified as drainage channels, cellars or other buried architectural

excavation. Such passages are believed to have been used as secret escape routes during times of conflict. However, the existence of a long-distance tunnel between Golconda Fort and Chhbeen conclusively estabmarinar has never been conclusively established. Similar structures found in and around Golconda in the past have often been identified as drainage channels, cellars or other buried architectural

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CCPA Fines Amazon For Selling Sweets As Ram Mandir Ayodhya Prasad

New Delhi: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a Rs 1 lakh penalty on Amazon Seller Services, the marketplace arm of e-commerce major Amazon, for hosting misleading listings that sold ordinary sweets as "Shri Ram Mandir Ayodhya Prasad". A two-member bench of the central consumer regulator found that Amazon, on its e-commerce platform, was allowing ordinary sweets to be sold as "Shri Ram Mandir Ayodhya Prasad" without any authorisation from the Ram Mandir Trust. "The CCPA hereby imposes a penalty of Rs 1,00,000/- on the opposite party (Amazon Seller) for publication of misleading advertisements on its platform," in violation of rules of the E-Commerce Rules, 2020, said the order passed by the CCPA on August 4, 2026. It had directed the Amazon Seller Services to ensure that "no product falsely claiming to be 'prasad', 'prasadam', 'mahaprasad', 'bhog' or any similar religious offering" associated with any religious institutions and shrines named in of this order "is listed, hosted, advertised, exhib-



ited, or offered for sale on its platform without verifiable documentary proof of authorization from the concerned institution". Amazon has submitted a framework of ten major religious institutions and shrines including Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Shri Jagannath Temple, Shri Kedarnath Temple, Shri Badrinath Temple, Shri Somnath Temple, Shri Dwarkadhish Temple and Shri Mahakaleshwar Temple. CCPA in its 19-page order observed that the phrase "Shri Ram Mandir

Ayodhya Prasad" carries a specific and well-understood meaning for Hindu devotees where it denotes sacred food offered to and blessed by the deity at the Ram Mandir, Ayodhya. "The commercial appropriation of this phrase for ordinary confectionery products, without any authorisation from the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, constitutes not just a misleading trade practice under the CP Act but an affront to the religious sentiments of crores of consumers," it said. Amazon's e-com platform, by reason of its scale and reach, lent an inherent imprimatur of legitimacy

to such listings in the eyes of an average consumer, amplifying the harm caused manifold. The CCPA's direction came over a complaint filed by the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) on January 19, 2024. The body alleged that four sweet products were being sold on Amazon.in as "Shri Ram Mandir Ayodhya Prasad", priced between Rs 299 and Rs 385. The CCPA issued a Show Cause Notice to Amazon the same day, just three days before the historic Pran ceremony of the Ram Mandir on January 22, 2024, citing violations of the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. Amazon took down the listings only after receiving the notice and argued it was merely an intermediary entitled to safe harbour protection under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, citing the Supreme Court's ruling in Shreya Singhal v Union of India.

The Authority rejected this defence, holding that the E-Commerce Rules and the IT Act "operate on distinct legal planes" and that Amazon's statutory consumer protection obligations — including seller disclosure and due diligence — could not be discharged through its intermediary status or delegated to third-party sellers via contractual agreements. A detailed investigation by the Director General (Investigation), the CCPA found that Amazon had not adequately displayed seller details on its platform as mandated under the E-Commerce Rules, and that its grievance redressal mechanism required mandatory login, falling short of the requirement for clear and accessible disclosure. The impugned listings generated intermediary entitled to safe harbour protection under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, citing the Supreme Court's ruling in Shreya ed Gross Merchandise Sales of Rs 25,26,309, with actual revenue from the four products at Rs 39,802.29, of which Amazon earned Rs 15,165.90 as service fee, the order noted.

NTA Says Answer Key Challenge Designed To Be Fair To All Students, Rejects 'Expensive' Charge



New Delhi: Amid concerns over 'answer key challenge' process being "too expensive", the National Testing Agency (NTA) has defended its system, saying the process is designed to be fair to all students. Taking to X, NTA has explained how its answer key challenge mechanism works and said a valid challenge raised by even one candidate can benefit every student who appeared for the examination. "On the concern being raised that answer key challenges are 'too expensive': a quick clarification for candidates.

The answer key challenge system is designed to be fair to every student, not just the one who challenges," NTA said in a post on X on Thursday night. "One challenge, everyone benefits. If even a single candidate challenges a question, and the subject experts accept the challenge, the revised answer key applies to every candidate who wrote the exam," the agency said. The NTA further explained that a fee is charged for challenging an answer to discourage frivolous challenges, and it is

refunded if the challenge turns out to be right. "The Rs 200/question is refunded to the candidate whose challenge is upheld. The fee exists to discourage frivolous challenges, not to profit from genuine ones," NTA said. "So if you have identified a genuine error and raised it, if found correct will not only be refunded, but one accurate challenge from any candidate can correct the record for lakhs of others," it added. An NTA answer key challenge is an online process where candidates who take an exam (like JEE Main, NEET, or UGC NET) can object to errors in the provisional answer key. The NTA has been under fire lately over issues ranging from NEET-UG paper leak to errors in the UGC-NET examinations.

Indigo Delhi-Mangaluru Flight Delayed By 3 Hours Due To Technical Snag

Mumbai: A Mangaluru-bound IndiGo flight from the Delhi airport was delayed by almost three hours on Thursday after the pilot detected a technical snag in the Airbus A320 aircraft during the taxiing phase and decided to take the plane to the bay, a passenger on board said. Flight 6E-6456, which was scheduled to depart at 5.30 pm from the Indira Gandhi International Airport, left at 8.28 pm for its destination with a new aircraft, as per the live flight tracking website flightradar24.com. The flight was already delayed by some 20 minutes, and when it departed, within 8-10 minutes of slow taxiing, it stopped and then



returned to the bay, the source said. "We are flying from Delhi to Mangalore. It was a 5.30 (pm) flight,

and they said it was delayed by 20 minutes. Then they moved the aircraft after 5.50 pm, but it

stopped after 8-10 minutes of slow taxiing," the passenger said. After 5 minutes, the pilot announced that the aircraft was returning to the bay because of a technical issue, he said. "At the bay, they opened the door, some engineers came, and checked the aircraft for 5-10 minutes. The crew then told us to get off the aircraft and said that we are arranging an alternative aircraft for you," the source said. An IndiGo spokesperson said in a statement, "A technical snag was detected during taxiing on the aircraft operating

IndiGo flight 6E6456 from Delhi to Mangaluru on 20 August 2026. Following standard operating procedure and in the interest of safety, the pilots returned the aircraft to the bay and the relevant authorities were informed." "The aircraft will undergo necessary checks and maintenance before resuming operations," the airline said and added that "in the meantime, an alternative aircraft has been arranged for the customers to complete the journey". Last week, a Kolkata-Chennai flight reportedly had to make an emergency landing at Chennai airport after the aircraft suffered an engine failure.



Pune: India's attention towards Pakistan was driven largely by the continuing threat of terrorism, but China is going to be New Delhi's main competitor across multiple domains in the long-term, asserted former Army chief General Manoj Naravane on Thursday. While refraining from using the term "enemy" in context of China, he stressed the need for a strong military deterrence while resolving long-standing differences with Beijing through dialogue. Speaking about security challenges New Delhi faces from its neighbours, Naravane noted Pakistan and China were in a different category though India had fought wars with both countries and had unsettled borders with them. He was speaking at the launch of his new book 'The Curious and the Classified: Unearthing Military Myths and Mysteries', published by Rupa Publications. "Pakistan and China are a totally different ballgame. We have fought wars with both of them. We have unsettled borders. So they will always remain on our radar as a threat, as a challenge," he noted. Naravane, however, drew a distinction between the two countries, saying India's immediate attention towards Pakistan was driven largely by the contin-

uing threat of terrorism, while China was likely to emerge as India's principal competitor over the longer term. "We have fought major wars with Pakistan, and because of their continued support to terrorism, our attention is towards our western borders. But I think we are very clear that in the long term and in the years to come, China is going to be our main competitor. And I purposely use the word competitor and not enemy," Naravane said. China, he said, would compete with India across multiple domains, including politics, economy, and security. "They are going to be our main competitor in all fields. Political, economic, trade, and of course military also. And wherever there is competition, there is always a little bit of conflict," insisted Naravane, who was the Army chief from December 31, 2019 to April 30, 2022. He emphasised that India should seek to manage such differences through dialogue and diplomatic mechanisms rather than resorting to force. "It is up to us to try to resolve those conflicts, those differences, through the mechanisms of talks, dialogues. And taking recourse to the use of force should always be the last priority," the former Army chief maintained. At the same time, he said India must main-

tain credible military preparedness to deter any potential misadventure. "There comes a moment when you realise that this is not going to happen. And therefore, you have to have a strong deterrence," Naravane said, adding the Indian armed forces must remain prepared at all times.

"That is why the armed forces have to be ready at all times. You have to have a strong deterrence to stop anybody from taking recourse to the use of force or any misadventure," he said. On India's wider neighbourhood, Naravane said New Delhi should work towards ensuring stability in neighbouring countries, including Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar your neighbours, in real life also, and in geopolitics also. Naravane stressed, was essential for India's own peace and development. Instability in neighbouring countries could also lead to refugee flows, smuggling, drug trafficking and illegal arms movement. "If your neighbouring country is burning, that should not make you happy," he said, citing the refugee influx into India from Myanmar as an example. The former Army chief stated that instability along borders ultimately had a direct impact on India, including through the movement of narcotics and other illegal goods. "Therefore, we need to help out these countries to be stable," Naravane said. Stressing the importance of maintaining peace, he called for ensuring India's armed forces had sufficient deterrence capability. "If you want peace, prepare for war," Naravane added.

Students Protest Against Move To Merge Polytechnic With Skills University, State Labour Min Allays Fears

Hyderabad: Polytechnic students held protests here and in other places in Telangana on Thursday against the state government's move to merge polytechnics with its Young India Skills University. The students were supported by BRSV, the students' wing of BRS. Demanding the withdrawal of a Government Order (GO) over the merger, the protesting students expressed fears that they would not get lateral entry into the second year of engineering after completing polytechnic (diploma in engineering). Holding placards that read 'stop merger of polytechnic colleges in SHAKTI department', they raised slogans like 'say no to SHAKTI'.



"Polytechnic students have been joining B Tech second year through lateral entry for a long time. But now, we don't have entry into BTech with this GO. We have to study Plus Two and then appear for B Tech entrance. We are

going to lose several years," a protesting student told media persons. State Labour Minister G Vivek Venkatswamy clarified that polytechnic students would continue to have lateral entry into engineering second year. He appealed to the students not to have any apprehension on the matter. The GO issued earlier by the state government renamed the existing Labour, Employment, Training and Factories

Department as the Department of Skill Human Capital and Knowledge Training Initiatives (SHAKTI). According to the GO, the subject matter of the Young India Skills University (YISU) is transferred state would be integrated under the direct institutional umbrella of the Young India Skills University (YISU). The GO further said all Polytechnic Colleges shall be brought under the Young India Skills University framework and ecosystem. The GO issued earlier by the state government renamed the existing Labour, Employment, Training and Factories Department as the Department of Skill

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Charges Against Justice Varma 'Are Proved': LS Probe Panel On Cash Discovery

New Delhi: A panel set up by Lok Sabha Speaker to probe allegations of discovery of cash at the official premises of Justice Yashwant Varma has concluded that the charges of unexplained cash, disturbing evidence and evasive explanation against him "are proved". In its report submitted in both houses Parliament Wednesday, the three-member committee constituted under the Judges (Inquiry) Act said Justice Varma failed to furnish satisfactory explanation on the presence, source or ownership of cash found in the store room of his official residence. The panel also said that material evidence was

not secured or preserved and the evidentiary condition of the storeroom was disturbed before the lawful sealing and inspection. It also found that the explanation by Justice Varma did not exhibit candour, transparency and institutional responsibility expected in the circumstances. "It remained evasive and unsatisfactory when tested against the evidence of independent official witnesses and corroborative material," the panel said in its final report. "The Committee therefore records its final findings that Articles of charges I, II and III are proved," the probe panel said in its consolidated findings on the articles



of charge against Justice Varma in the report submitted to Parliament. The report is in two volumes along with oral and documentary evidence recorded during the course of the investigation. The three-member probe panel had submitted its findings to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in May. As nearly

200 MPs pressed for his removal by Parliament, Justice Varma has since resigned. His resignation has so far not yet been notified by the law ministry. A fire broke out in the official residence of Justice Varma on the night of March 14, 2025. Firefighters called to put out the blaze allegedly discovered massive

'Starlink Would Help The Least Served': Elon Musk Pitches Satellite Internet Service For Rural India

Hyderabad: As Elon Musk's satellite internet service Starlink continues to face regulatory hurdles in India, he is now pitching it to the "least served" communities in the country, especially in rural areas that may not have proper connectivity.

Resharing a post by DogeDesigner, which claimed that many villages in India still did not have proper 4G connectivity, Musk said, "Starlink would help the least served in India, especially in rural areas."

his comes after a report claimed that Starlink has reapplied for Starlink network approval in India with direct-to-device tech. According to ET, Starlink has resubmitted an application to the space regulator seeking approval for a Gen 2 constellation, as part of its renewed efforts to offer satellite communication services in India. Starlink's Gen 2 constellation is armed with newer technologies and includes direct-to-device (D2D) connectivity. Notably, the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) had earlier rejected an application by Starlink a few years ago due to non-conformity of certain features and spectrum bands.

Back in June 2026, Starlink Business Operations Vice President Lauren Dreyer



confirmed that the company is in active talks with the Indian government to launch its commercial satellite internet services. The clarification came after media reports claimed that India had frozen the approval process over geopolitical and security concerns. "Starlink remains in active and productive discussions with the Government of India, contrary to misleading stories based upon unsubstantiated claims from anonymous sources," she said, reacting to the report.

"We have worked with the Government through all of the required regulatory and compliance processes in a transparent and responsible manner. To align with India's sovereign technology, regulatory, and security requirements, Starlink has set up a bespoke deployment model for India that further demonstrates our com-

mitment to working within India's strategic framework," Dreyer added. Starlink's pitch for satellite internet in IndiaThe post shared by Elon Musk claimed that over 11,000 of India's listed villages still had no 4G coverage as of May 2026. Additionally, while the country had over 1.093 billion internet subscriptions in March 2026, only 440.87 million were rural. "Rural subscription density was 48.31 per 100 people, compared with 126.80 in urban India," the post claimed.

It further said that while BharatNet laid more than 850,000 route-km of fibre and made about 2.21 lakh Gram Panchayats service-ready, its Points of Presence (PoP) were reported operational at only 80,472 Gram Panchayats as of June 2026.

Th figures in the post,

including internet subscription totals, rural/urban split, and density figures, match TRAI's Q1 2026 report, whereas Gram Panchayat figures align with government statements to Parliament.

As far as 4G connectivity in villages is concerned, the only clearly dated official number we could find is 11,515 villages as of February 2026, which suggests that 11,256 villages quoted by DogeDesigner as of May 2026 may not be a far-fetched figure. Presenting arguments in favour of Starlink's need in India, the post says, "The government itself says the remaining mobile gaps are caused by difficult terrain, low commercial viability, and infrastructure constraints. This is exactly where Starlink can help by reaching remote villages, mountains, islands, and disaster-hit areas. Direct-to-device

ED Raids Telangana, AP In Money Laundering Probe Linked To Ex-Minister Vivekananda Reddy Murder

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at six locations across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in connection with a money laundering probe linked to former Andhra Pradesh minister and MP YS Vivekananda Reddy murder case, officials said. The search operation started early Friday and continued, covering the residence of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) MP YS Avinash Reddy, among other locations. The searches are being carried out under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The ED action part of its probe to find out alleged financial transactions and movement of funds associated with the murder case. The agency is examining the financial trail and transactions connected with individuals and entities allegedly linked to the case. Avinash Reddy was arrested by the Central Bureau of



Investigation in June 2023 in connection with the murder of his uncle and former Minister Vivekananda Reddy, but he was immediately released as the Telangana High Court had granted him anticipatory bail. Vivekananda Reddy, a former minister and Parliamentarian, was found dead at his residence in Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh in March 2019. His murder triggered a major political and legal controversy in the state. The CBI had subse-

quently taken over the investigation into the murder. The case has also seen allegations and counter-allegations involving several political figures and their associates. The ED's latest searches are part of its broader investigation into the murder of his uncle and former Minister Vivekananda Reddy, but he was immediately released as the Telangana High Court had granted him anticipatory bail. Vivekananda Reddy, a former minister and

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Leading With Compassion: Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin On Four Decades Of Military Healthcare

New Delhi: From serving as a military surgeon to becoming the first woman Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS), Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin represents a remarkable journey of leadership and medical excellence. Recently honoured with the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, she has played a key role in advancing healthcare for soldiers and veterans and their families while shaping the future of military medicine through compassion and innovation. In an interview with ETV Bharat, Sarin reflects on her inspiring career in the Armed Forces Medical Services and her vision for the future of healthcare in uniform. Leading With Compassion: Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin On Four Decades Of Military Healthcare Excerpts from the : ETV Bharat: Recently, President Droupadi Murmu conferred upon you the Param Vishisht Seva Medal. What was your first reaction to it?



Arti Sarin: I was delighted to hear the news. I accept this on behalf of my entire team across all three services, who have worked diligently to provide the highest levels of medical care to our service members, their dependents, and . Surgen Vice Admiral Arti Sarin On Four Decades Of Military President Droupadi Murmu conferring upon Arti Sarin the Param Vishisht Seva Medal. (Special Arrangement) ETB: You are also leading the Armed Forces Medical Services as its first woman Director General. Had you imagined that this was going to be the path to take and that you were going to achieve this? Arti Sarin: No! When I

entered college, I certainly didn't think this would be the path I would take. I simply enjoyed what I did and kept moving forward in my career. When I became the Commandant of the Armed Forces Medical College, someone shared a nice poem noting that while the girls' hostel is very close to the Commandant's office, it took her 38 years to get there. Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin On Four Decades Of Military Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin (right) during the early years of her career. (Special Arrangement) ETB: As the first woman to serve as DG, AFMS, your appointment is

widely seen as a milestone. It is often said that women make excellent managers and leaders. What, in your view, took the Armed Forces so long to appoint its first woman DG?

Arti Sarin: The AFMS has had women since the 1950s. Our first female Major General was Major General Nirmala Hooja in 1987, who commanded the 900-bed Command Hospital in Lucknow. Then, in 2004, came the first three-star officer, Surgeon Vice Admiral Punita Arora. She became the Commandant of AFMC as well as the Director General Medical Services (Navy). Soon after that, we had Air Marshal Padma Bandopadhyay, another three-star officer, who became the Director General Medical Services (Air). Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin On Four Decades Of Military Helthcare Leading With Compassion: Surgeon Vice Admiral Arti Sarin On Four Decades Of

Six Indians Among 10 Crew Aboard Hijacked Cargo Ship Carrying Turkish Weapons Off Somalia Coast



New Delhi: At least six Indians were among the 10 crew members aboard a cargo ship, carrying Turkish weapons, that was hijacked by pirates off Somalia's Puntland coast earlier this week, a Somali official said on Thursday. The Cameroon-flagged M/V LUTUF was seized on Monday about 3.5 nautical miles off Marraya in Puntland's Eyl district, the official said. The ship was carrying Turkish weapons and other equipment when it was hijacked, Associated Press (AP) reported, citing the . The 10-member crew includes six Indians, one Turkish national, one Georgian national and two Serbian security guards, according to the Reports said the ship, owned by Polar Movement Shipping, was carrying weapons

meant for a Turkish military training facility in Mogadishu, along with communications and satellite equipment. There was no immediate comment from Turkish . Around eight pirates reportedly took the ship towards the coast near Garmaal in Puntland's Dangoroyo district. The group is believed to have links to pirates who were previously involved in the hijacking of the M/V Sward on April 26, the official said. Two Turkish-owned vessels later approached the hijacked ship, while Turkish helicopters and drones monitored the On Tuesday, a small boat carrying two men approached the ship and delivered khat, a stimulant commonly chewed in Somalia, according to the official. An airstrike was reported after the boat returned to the shore, killing four persons and injuring two. However, the circumstances of the airstrike, including who carried it

out and whether those killed were involved in the hijacking, could not be independently verified by AP. The current status of the LUTUF, its crew, including the six Indians, and its cargo remains unclear. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has not issued any information in this regard as .lant commonly chewed in Somalia, according to the official. An airstrike was reported after the boat returned to the shore, killing four persons and injuring two. However, the circumstances of the airstrike, including who carried it

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FBI Places Indian National Kamal On 'Most Wanted List' Over Alleged Lawrence Bishnoi Gang Links

Washington: The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on Thursday placed Indian national Kamal on its Most Wanted list over his alleged involvement in a transnational criminal organisation known as the Lawrence Bishnoi Organised Crime Group, the agency said.

According to the FBI, the group allegedly engaged in a conspiracy to interfere with commerce by extortion and operated in the Central District of California and elsewhere. The FBI said on its official website that Kamal is wanted for his alleged involvement in the criminal organisation.

"No Name Given Kamal is wanted for his alleged involvement in a transnational criminal organization engaged in conspiracy to interfere with commerce by extortion. This organization, The Lawrence Bishnoi Organized Crime Group, originated in the Punjab state of India and operated in the Central District of California and elsewhere," the notification



read.

A federal arrest warrant was issued for Kamal on July 1, 2026, in the United States District Court for the Central District of California in Los Angeles after he was charged with conspiracy to interfere with commerce by extortion.

No Name Given Kamal is #wanted by the #FBI for his alleged involvement in a transnational criminal organization known as The Lawrence Bishnoi Organized Crime Group. The group allegedly engaged in conspiracy to interfere with commerce by extortion, and operated in the Central...

pic.twitter.com/fC58IUeufq

— FBI Most Wanted (@FBIMostWanted) August 20, 2026

The latest action comes amid an intensified US crackdown on India-linked transnational organised crime groups under Operation Hard Ball. Earlier, the FBI had placed Indian nationals Major Singh and Nitish Kaushal on its Most Wanted list over their alleged links to the Jaggu Bhagwanpuria Organised Crime Group.

According to the FBI, the Bhagwanpuria group originated in Punjab, India, and operated in

the Central District of California and elsewhere. The agency has alleged that the group was involved in murder, kidnapping, drug trafficking, extortion, weapons trafficking, money laundering and human smuggling. On July 30, the FBI also placed Indian national Amritpal Singh on its Most Wanted list over his alleged involvement in the Ravinder Dhandha Organised Crime Group, a transnational network based in Vancouver, Canada.

The FBI alleged that the Dhandha group trafficked substantial quantities of cocaine and methamphetamine for drug traf-

Iran Offers \$30,000 Bounty For Killing, Capturing US Soldiers

Tehran: Iran's military announced on Sunday that it was offering a bounty equivalent to \$30,000 for killing or capturing US soldiers, with the reward doubled if carried out by a woman. Army chief Amir Hatami said the plan had been drawn up following a "large number of requests" to participate, according to the IRNA state news agency. There has been no known deployment of US ground forces in Iran during the Middle East war, with the exception of a rescue mission in April for a downed American airman. Hatami did not provide any details on where or when the killing or capturing of US soldiers was expected to take place. "Anyone who kills or captures and hands over an invading American military personnel will receive a reward equivalent to \$30,000 or 5 billion toman from the Islamic Republic of Iran's Army," Hatami said, using an informal unit equivalent to 10,000 Iranian rials. "Courageous Iranian women who carry out such an action will receive double the reward," he added.



Hatami repeated Iran's call for the US to leave the Middle East, and said "they no longer have permission to enter the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman or the Strait of Hormuz". The war between Tehran and Washington began on February 28 when the United States and Israel attacked Iran. Just over a month into the war, the US launched a massive rescue operation to retrieve the weapon systems officer of an F-15 jet, involving around 200 US troops and more than 170 aircraft racing to find the airman ahead

of Iranian forces. During the rescue, Iranian troops damaged an A-10 ground attack aircraft which was ditched over friendly territory. The US also reportedly abandoned and destroyed aircraft used during the mission including a C-130 transport plane. Days before, the pilot of the F-15 was rescued by a helicopter crew in a smaller operation. The war was later paused by an April ceasefire after nearly 40 days of fighting, followed by a June framework for peace talks that later collapsed. Iran and the United States have

since traded fire sporadically, with fighting mainly centred in southern Iran and around the Strait of Hormuz. Indirect contact between the two sides via mediators has continued with little sign of any diplomatic breakthrough. Iran has also set out a list of demands for reopening the strait, including war damages. The number of US military personnel killed since the start of the war stands at 17, with the most recent deaths in July. They have all been killed outside of Iran, in countries including Jordan and Iraq.

Newly Released Emails Show A Quiet Channel Between ICE And Iran Shaped Deportation Flights



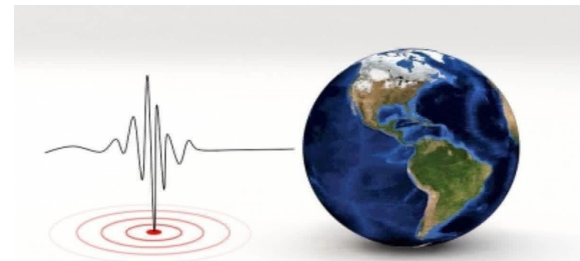
Los Angeles: U.S. immigration officials worked with Iran to deport Iranians in 2025, newly released emails show, revealing a working relationship between the U.S. and Iranian governments despite tensions mounting between the countries. Hundreds of emails exchanged between U.S. immigration officials, which were obtained by the National Iranian American Council and made public on Tuesday, offer the most transparent play-by-play yet of how the two countries worked together to arrange for more than 100 Iranians to be flown back to Iran on three separate immigration flights in September and December 2025 and January 2026. The emails were first reported by The Intercept. The emails show that Iranian officials had some influence over which Iranian immigrants in the U.S. were sent back to their home country, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials apparently heeded some last-minute changes to deportation lists at the request of Iran. "Per request from the Iran Embassy I added a few cases," one unnamed ICE official wrote in late August, a month before the first deportation flight in September. Just over a week later, someone with the same job title moved to make another, unspecified change to the deportation list after they said they met with the "Director at the Iranian Embassy." "Iran has requested that I amend the previous manifest and

expedite the removal process," the official wrote. In a Sept. 26 email, just three days before the deportation flight left U.S. soil, an ICE official said in an email that the Iranian Embassy was still making requests for three additional Iranians on the flight. It's not clear who ended up on the flight, which ended up being much smaller than initially planned. Iranian officials were still making requests the day the flight departed, although one official wrote that those requests were denied. Coordination of the flights remained a high priority even as the Iran amid the deadly 12-day war with the U.S. and Israel in June 2025, emails show. The flights departed just months after the U.S. and Israel agreed to a ceasefire with Iran. The new emails highlight a clear departure from a decades-long practice by the U.S. of welcoming Iranian dissidents, exiles and others since the 1979 Islamic Revolution forced a large number of Iranians to flee. The deportation of Iranians to a country whose government has a pattern of violent persecution against women, religious minorities and political dissidents has drawn significant criticism from human rights activists. A spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security said in an email Thursday evening, "The Trump Administration is utilizing all lawful options to carry out the largest deportation operation in history, just as President Trump

promised," and the people deported included "terrorists, human smugglers, and suspected foreign agents." The deportees were handpicked by Iranian officials, emails show. Iranian officials acknowledged in September 2025 that as many as 400 Iranians could be returned under an agreement with the Trump administration. They said most of the Iranians had crossed into the U.S. from Mexico illegally, while some faced other immigration issues. It is not clear from the emails how frequently U.S. immigration officials had direct contact with the Iranian government. Sometimes messages were conveyed through Qatari officials, who helped charter the deportation flights through Doha, but other times officials reference regular meetings with the "Iranian delegation," the "Director at the Iranian Embassy" and other unnamed Iranian officials. It is not clear whether the people Iran put on the list had volunteered to repatriate or if they were forced. Previous reporting from The New York Times revealed that asylum-seekers were among those deported to Iran, while others said they were deported against their will. At least one person was deported who wasn't supposed to be, emails showed. "An Iranian not included on the final manifest we sent to the Qatari MOI was boarded on the flight," an unnamed U.S. official wrote. In response, another unnamed U.S. official wrote, "I have no idea how the case/person got through on the plane."

A Magnitude 6.7 Earthquake Shakes Peru's Southern Andes, Injuring At Least 2 And Damaging Homes

Lima: A magnitude 6.7 earthquake shook Peru's southern Andes Mountains on Thursday, injuring at least two people and damaging homes, health centres and schools, authorities said. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the quake occurred at 1 p.m. local time (18:00 GMT) and was centred 38 kilometres (24 miles) northwest of the city of Upahuacho, in the Parinacochas province of the Ayacucho region. It had a depth of 66 kilometres (41 miles). The earthquake was felt in



several regions of southern Peru, including Ica, Arequipa, Huancavelica, Apurimac and Cusco, as well as in the capital, Lima. Luis Vásquez, head of Civil Defence, told reporters that two people were injured

while evacuating their homes during the earthquake in Coracora, the capital of Parinacochas province. Authorities also reported damage to 22 homes, six health centres and a school across several districts in

Ayacucho and Cusco, including the towns of Puquio, Pullo, Coracora, Upahuacho, San Pedro and Pichari. Vásquez said rockfalls were reported on hillsides near Coracora. The Peruvian Navy ruled out a tsunami threat.

Earthquakes are frequent in Peru, which is part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an area of frequent seismic activity. In 2007, a magnitude 7.9 earthquake in a province of the Ica region left nearly 600 people dead.

Indian National Declared Bankrupt In Singapore Over Unpaid Wages To Migrant Workers



Singapore: An Indian national, who was a director of several companies owing wages to more than 400 migrant workers, has been declared bankrupt in Singapore, according to a media report. A bankruptcy order was made against Ramu Palani Velu on August 13, The Straits Times reported on Thursday. He is a Singapore permanent resident.

Ramu is a director of seven local companies providing air-conditioning, plumbing and building services, including KPA Engineering, SK Industries and VVR

Plant Engineering. A total of 407 workers, including Indian nationals, have lodged claims for unpaid wages, with some allegedly not receiving their salaries for more than two months.

Signs of trouble emerged in 2025 when five workers from KPA Engineering separately approached the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management over unpaid wages. The cases were resolved within a week, with the workers receiving payment from their employer. However, in May and June, four other KPA

Engineering workers filed claims for unpaid salaries.

The cases were still being processed when more than 100 workers turned up at the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) office in Bendemeer on June 22 seeking help. By then, MOM was already aware of unpaid wage claims after speaking to KPA Engineering employees affected by a dormitory eviction notice issued on June 8.

Authorities had been trying to contact the company's directors even before the workers even approached MOM en

masse on June 22. As the unpaid wages case made headlines, it emerged that Ramu had been out of the country. He returned on June 26 and has been assisting MOM with its investigations.

According to records from the Ministry of Law's Insolvency Office, Ramu applied for bankruptcy on July 9. Employers who fail to pay salaries may face fines of between USD 3,000 and USD 15,000 per charge, as well as imprisonment of up to six months, the report said.

A new burden-sharing compact for NATO



The latest NATO summit underscored a strategic reality that the Alliance can no longer afford to ignore: European security cannot continue to rest disproportionately on American military power. For decades, successive US administrations have argued that many European allies benefited from Washington's security umbrella while devoting relatively greater resources to domestic welfare than to defence.

President Donald Trump's longstanding insistence that Europe shoulder a larger share of collective defence has accelerated a debate that Russia's invasion of Ukraine had already made unavoidable. The commitments adopted at the 2025 Hague Summit, including raising core defence spending to 3.5 per cent of GDP along with an additional 1.5 per cent for defence and security-related investments, marked a watershed in NATO's long-running burden-sharing debate. Together, they signal the Alliance's gradual shift towards a more balanced distribution of responsibilities, even though translating these commitments into military capability will remain politically and economically demanding.

Defence Expenditure
The decision to raise defence expenditure reflects far more than American pressure. Russia's war in Ukraine has fundamentally altered threat perceptions across Europe, exposing critical deficiencies in ammunition stocks, missile defence, logistics, industrial capacity and military readiness.

European governments increasingly recognise that credible deterrence cannot be sustained without long-term investment in modern military capabilities, including drones, long-range missiles, cyber defence, intelligence assets and integrated air defence systems. Equally important is the political objective of reassuring Washington that Europe is prepared to assume greater responsibility for its own security, thereby preserving transatlantic cohesion at a time of heightened geopolitical uncertainty.

The evolving debate within NATO reinforces an enduring strategic lesson: lasting security ultimately rests on sustained national investment rather than permanent reliance on external partners.

Yet strategic consensus does not automatically translate into political consensus. The greatest obstacle to higher defence spending is likely to be domestic politics rather than strategic necessity. Increasing military expenditure inevitably revives the classic dilemma of "guns versus butter". Higher defence budgets require difficult fiscal choices, such as increased taxation, additional public borrowing, or reductions in spending on healthcare, pensions, and welfare programmes.

Social Priorities
Public demonstrations in countries such as Italy illustrate the political sensitivity of shifting resources from social priorities to defence. Major economies, including Britain and France, continue to face fiscal constraints, while Spain and Portugal remain cautious about substantially increasing military expenditure. The challenge for European governments will therefore be to convince their electorates that long-term security is itself a prerequisite for sustained prosperity and social stability. Without credible defence, both economic resilience and welfare become increasingly vulnerable.

Threat perceptions, however, remain far from uniform across Europe. Geography continues to shape strategic priorities. Frontline states such as Poland, Finland and the Baltic republics view Russian military power not as a distant geopolitical concern but as an immediate national security challenge. Consequently, they have demonstrated greater willingness to increase taxes, rationalise public expenditure and accelerate military modernisation. Lithuania has introduced additional security-related taxation, while several northern European countries are expanding investments in air defence, ammunition production and force readiness. In these countries, public opinion broadly accepts that

higher defence spending is the price of national survival. By contrast, countries farther from Russia's borders generally perceive lower levels of immediate risk, making it politically more difficult to prioritise defence over welfare. The divergence illustrates that NATO's burden-sharing debate is shaped as much by differing threat perceptions as by economic constraints.

US Role
The evolving role of NATO's leadership has also been significant. Secretary General Mark Rutte's public engagement with President Trump has attracted criticism in some quarters for appearing unusually accommodating. Yet it can equally be viewed as pragmatic diplomacy aimed at preserving American commitment while Europe rebuilds its military capabilities. At a time when uncertainty surrounds Washington's long-term security guarantees, maintaining Alliance cohesion has become a strategic imperative rather than a matter of diplomatic convenience.

Equally important has been Ukraine's continued resistance against Russian forces. By absorbing the principal military pressure from Russia, Ukraine has effectively bought valuable time for European countries to replenish ammunition stocks, expand defence production, procure advanced weapon systems and strengthen military readiness. Kyiv's battlefield resilience has therefore become an important enabling factor in Europe's broader rearmament effort, allowing European governments to undertake structural reforms in defence planning that would have been considerably more difficult under conditions of direct military pressure. Taken together, these developments suggest that NATO is entering a new phase in which European members are expected to assume substantially greater responsibility for their own defence, while the United States increasingly functions as a strategic enabler rather than the Alliance's unquestioned security provider. Washington will remain indispensable in areas such as intel-

ligence, strategic lift and nuclear deterrence.

Nevertheless, Europe's growing investments seek to reduce long-term dependence on American military capabilities and foster a more balanced transatlantic partnership. Whether this transition succeeds will depend less on summit declarations than on sustained political commitment, industrial capacity and financial investment over the coming decade.

For India, the significance of these developments extends well beyond Europe. The evolving debate within NATO reinforces a lasting security lesson: lasting security ultimately rests on sustained national investment rather than permanent reliance on external partners.

As geopolitical competition intensifies across the Indo-Pacific, India must continue strengthening indigenous defence production, modernising its armed forces and investing in emerging technologies while preserving strategic autonomy in its external partnerships. Diversified defence capabilities, resilient supply chains and sustained military preparedness are not merely instruments of deterrence; they are essential pillars of national resilience.

Europe's experience also offers a timely reminder that credible defence have been considerably more difficult under conditions of direct military pressure.

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Mental health in the age of Algorithm



While companies highlight AI's advantages: greater efficiency, fewer errors and data-driven precision, there is a vital and usually overlooked expense: the effect of AI implementation on workers' mental well-being. An increasingly large body of scholarship is starting to uncover the layers of life and work under algorithmic rule. Among the strongest additions to this discussion is a 2024 paper by Byung-Jik Kim and Julak Lee, in Humanities and Social Sciences Communications. Based on a survey of 418 South Korean professionals, one of the country's most technologically advanced populations, the research examines the impact of AI adoption in the workplace on worker stress, burnout, and psychological well-being.

Invisible Weight of Algorithms
The study reveals a psychological domino effect: AI adoption does not necessarily lead to burnout, but it drastically increases job stress, which becomes a significant predictor of burnout. It's a subtle move with far-reaching implications. Workers are not necessarily angry about the existence of AI itself. Instead, it's the pressure AI imposes upon them—the rate of change, the ongoing requirement to learn, the threat of obsolescence—that stokes this growing worry. AI fosters an environment of technological change. Low self-efficacy results in helplessness, anxiety, and burnout. In this context, self-efficacy represents a new form of workplace armour. It does not merely enable employees to excel; it equips them to cope emotionally in AI-powered work environments.

New Face of Burnout
Historically, burnout has been linked to long working hours, poor management, unrealistic expectations, and emotionally demanding jobs. However, in the algorithmic era, burnout is taking on a new and more invisible form, one rooted not only in overwork, but also in disconnection, disempowerment, and constant digital overload. This shift has contributed to rising feelings of emotional

exhaustion, disengagement, and helplessness, a pattern reflected across industries ranging from finance and education to healthcare.

Psychological Theories Kim and Lee base their conclusions on three dominant psychological paradigms: The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model: Proposes that burnout occurs when job demands (such as AI upskilling) exceed available resources (eg, training, assistance, or affective resilience). The Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory: People attempt to preserve their physical, emotional, and psychological resources. As AI compromises these resources, eg, by making employees feel irrelevant or incompetent, people suffer from stress and burnout. The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TMSC): If AI is seen as a threat instead of an opportunity, and if coping skills are poor or lack support, then the outcome is psychological strain. Simply put, it isn't AI alone that hurts employees; it's how AI is deployed, governed, and understood as part of an organisational environment.

Digital Self-Efficacy
Another influential finding is AI learning self-efficacy, or in simple terms, an individual's confidence in their ability to master and utilise AI. Such employees feel less stressed and more resilient when encountering technological change. Low self-efficacy results in helplessness, anxiety, and burnout. In this context, self-efficacy represents a new form of workplace armour. It does not merely enable employees to excel; it equips them to cope emotionally in AI-powered work environments.

What Can Be Done
Normalise psychological support in AI transitions: Organisations need to realise that implementing AI is not merely a technical change but a psychological one. That requires providing mental health support, check-ins, and safe

spaces for employees to vent anxiety or confusion. And efficient. At the Foster digital self-efficacy across the board: Continuous training, mentoring, and peer support initiatives to develop digital confidence are a must. The objective is not technical competence alone but emotional resilience. Redesign AI with empathy in mind: AI systems must be constructed with user agency at their centre. Workers need to know how algorithms work, what data is being drawn upon, and where human input is placed in the decision-making pipeline. Transparency and inclusion lower fear and resistance. Reframe measures of success: Human feedback, teamwork, and imagination need to be preserved in performance measurement. Create ethical principles around mental health and AI: Mental health needs to be an integral part of ethical AI, no less than privacy, bias, or transparency. Re-Entering the Human

One of the most significant contributions of Kim and Lee's research is that the real cost of AI isn't simply in terms of job loss or data risk, but in the emotional lives of actual human beings. AI isn't neutral. AI alters how people feel about their work, their worth, and their future. If we forget the mental health consequences of AI adoption, we risk creating an efficient but inhuman workplace, optimised but emotionally unsustainable. The algorithm age is upon us. The instances, result in depression or leaving the workforce altogether.

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Dronacharya Awardee Chhote Lal's Mission For Olympic Gold For India



Dronacharya Award winner Chhote Lal Yadav of Varanasi, who is recognised as a boxing legend in India, feels that the award has further increased his responsibility. Talking to ETV Bharat, he said, "Determination is the most essential part of sports. India has been winning bronze medals in the Olympics, but I want to change that colour. I want to bring home a gold medal in the Olympics."

Yadav has played alongside and coached players who brought laurels to the country at the recent Commonwealth Games. After his name was announced as a Dronacharya Awardee, he said, "I am very happy. I would like to give credit for the award to the Indian Army, the children and the government for their excellent

work. If the central government hadn't supported us, we wouldn't have been able to achieve anything." He said that the support coming from various quarters has led to good performance by Indian boxers over the last few years.

Training Mary Kom And Beyond: Dronacharya Awardee Chhote Lal's Mission For Olympic Gold For India Chhote Lal Yadav (ETV Bharat) A resident of Pahadi village near the Banaras Locomotive Workshop (BLW) in Varanasi, Yadav has dedicated the award to the Indian Army, the Government of India, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and his guru. He disclosed that his father used to work at the BLW and his sporting journey started from the local Sriga Stadium.

He said that he was also a swimmer initially, but his enrollment with the Army Boys programme in Pune in 1999 turned his interest to boxing. He disclosed that many of his female trainees are doing very well and have been winning gold medals in boxing in various competitions.

Besides Mary Kom, who performed exceptionally well, winning six gold medals, Yadav has also trained other women boxers who came up with a historic campaign at the recent Commonwealth Games. Yadav said he has earned a reputation in boxing since the age of 12. In 1999, SAI Pune selected 200 players, including Chhote Lal. He related that since his father Radhakrishna Yadav was employed with the Railways, the decision to travel away from

home for training was difficult. But he decided to go to the Sports Centre in Pune.

He said that his initial selection took place at the Sriga Stadium. "I started my sports career with swimming. After seeing my physique, my coach said that I am fit for boxing. Then I learned boxing in the Army Boys programme, and from there I became a champion in boxing. Then I joined the Army, where I was recruited by Colonel Manoj," said Yadav, who is a Subedar in the Army.

"I have achieved this position in my life with the support of many people," he said while adding that in 2017-18 he was selected to coach the Indian women's boxing team. He had started training the contingent for the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

Global Tax Reform Talks At UN: India Pushes For Stronger Taxing Rights

United Nations member states have begun a crucial round of talks in New York to create a fairer global tax system that works for all countries, especially developing nations. The negotiations focus on a proposed UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation and two related protocols covering cross-border services and tax disputes.

The Fifth session, which is underway till August 13, is the first time countries are discussing concrete draft texts for all three agreements. The decisions could affect how countries collect taxes, settle tax disputes and also share taxing rights, with major implications for development funding. This process is supported by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs' Financing for Sustainable Development Office.

This process is led by an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) with a dedicated workstream advancing each of the three instruments (on the Framework and the two protocols). Working within a tight timeline of nine sessions across



three years, the INC aims to deliver final texts to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) by 2027. Since the fourth session concluded in New York on 13 February 2026, the negotiators have been preparing the zero drafts that will anchor the next round of talks. As the member states are for the first time expected to engage with a concrete draft text across all three workstreams, ETV Bharat spoke to experts to know its impact on India. Indian tax experts see the proposed UN global tax convention as a major opportunity to strengthen India's taxing rights over multinational companies and curb profit shifting.

They opined that international tax rules must evolve with modern business models. They also stressed the need for greater information sharing and stronger checks against tax avoidance and evasion. The ongoing UN talks could reshape how countries tax cross-border business and settle disputes, particularly in developing economies.

Tax expert and Chartered accountant Gauri Chadha stated that the UN global tax convention could bring a significant change in how multinational companies are taxed globally. "The existing international tax system was designed when businesses had a more physical presence. Today, compa-

nies can have customers, employees and profits spread across countries without having a traditional physical presence, she said. The focus, she added, should increasingly be on where the actual business activity, customers and economic value are. Chadha further said, "For India, this could strengthen our ability to tax MNCs earning significant income from the Indian market and make artificial profit shifting and use of tax havens more difficult. However, it is equally important to avoid double taxation and excessive disputes." "The biggest challenge will be balancing the interests of developed and developing countries. For India, a suc-

Fitch Retains India's BBB- Rating On Robust Growth Outlook, Flags Fiscal Risks From Youth Protests



Fitch Ratings on Tuesday retained India's sovereign credit rating at 'BBB-' for the 20th year in a row, but flagged risks of pressure on fiscal spending amid youth protest over jobs. Fitch said despite headwinds from the energy shock due to the West Asia conflict, India's economy remains strong with robust growth = and solid external finance. The ratings agency forecast a 6.4 per cent GDP growth in the current fiscal year. The growth is, however, slower than the average 7.4 per cent growth clocked over the past three years. "Fitch Ratings has affirmed India's Long-Term Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs) at BBB- with a stable outlook," Fitch said in its rating action. India's rating has remained unchanged at 'BBB-', the lowest investment grade, since 2006. Fitch said the gains of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in state-level elections would support implementation of policy pri-

orities at the Centre. Fitch, however, cautioned that the recent youth protests could put pressure on the government to hike spending on education-related measures, generation of jobs, including skill development. Recent protests, stemming from leaked medical exams, may point to rising concerns among youth over employment opportunities, risking fiscal spending pressures over time," Fitch said. Last month, students had staged a massive protest in the capital over paper leak in medical entrance exam NEET and demanded transparency in competitive exams. The protests and the subsequent police action on students have been raised by the Opposition in Parliament, disrupting its proceedings in the ongoing monsoon session. Fitch said India's economy has been resilient to shocks in recent years, a trend it expects to continue. "There are residual risks from uncertainty related

to the US-Iran conflict, given India's position as large net energy importer position, but we do not expect a durable risk to growth prospects," Fitch said. India imports 87 per cent of its crude requirement, of which 46 per cent transits through or near the Strait of Hormuz, which is blocked on account of the US-Iran war which began on February 28. Fitch said India's rating reflects its robust growth outlook and solid external finance fundamentals. A strengthening record of delivering macroeconomic stability and improving policy credibility should underpin continued robust growth and enhance economic resilience, despite near-term macroeconomic headwinds from the energy shock. High growth should also support a sustained improvement in structural credit metrics and increase the likelihood that government debt will trend down, Fitch said. In the FY27

Budget, the government estimated the debt-to-GDP ratio at 55.6 per cent of GDP, lower than 56.1 per cent of GDP in FY26. The government has set a target to bring down its debt-to-GDP ratio to 50 per cent by March 2031. Fitch estimates India's medium potential GDP growth of 6.4 per cent, led by public capex, a private investment pick-up and favourable demographics. It said India's external finances remain solid, with a low current account deficit (CAD), net external creditor position and still high forex reserves. Fitch forecast a slight widening of CAD to 1.4 per cent of GDP in FY27 from 0.6 per cent in FY26, from the energy shock. Forecast reserves of USD 733 billion (7.4 months of external payments) by FY27 end. Capital outflows picked up in the June quarter of FY27, amid already subdued FDI and portfolio flows, but have reversed following the recent RBI and measures.

England Dominates Pakistan On Day 1 Of First Test As Robinson Makes History In 5-Wicket Haul



Leeds: England's post-Bazball era got off to an encouraging start Wednesday on a dominant Day 1 of the first test against Pakistan, with pacers Ollie Robinson and Josh Tongue each taking five wickets to rip through the tourists' batting lineup at Headingley. After Pakistan collapsed from 117-3 to 171 all out, England made inroads in the evening session to reach the close on 112-2 and was trailing by just 59 runs. It could hard have gone any better for Joe Root, who was beginning his second stint as captain following the retirement of Ben Stokes and was there at stumps on 37 not out alongside Jordan Cox (23 not out) after winning the toss under an overcast sky.

Off the first ball of the three-match series, Robinson pinned Azan Awaiz with a delivery that nipped back from around the wicket. In his third over, Robinson went over the wicket and trapped Shan Masood (5) trying to drive and Pakistan was 6-2. Following a two-hour rain delay and a 91-run partnership for the third wicket between Imam-ul-Haq (42) and Abdullah Shafique (61), Robinson and Tongue ran through the Pakistan batters and had figures of 5-51 and 5-46, respectively. Asked which of the bowlers was keeping the match ball, Tongue revealed after the close of play that it was being shared — literally. "The groundsman has kindly split the ball in half so I'm sure I'll be

able to get that mounted somewhere at home," said Tongue, who claimed his fourth five-wicket haul in his 13th test. "It's crazy — it's the first time I've seen that happen." For Robinson, it was another dramatic return. He was playing his first test since June at Lord's, where he took a match-winning 7-77 against New Zealand in his first test in two years. A knee injury and doubts about his fitness prevented his return in that series that England lost 2-1, leading to the retirement of Stokes and the firing of Brendon McCullum as test coach. Pakistan, with just two wins in its last seven tests and missing captain Babar Azam (finger injury), provided ideal opponents for the start of England's latest reset

and lost its last five wickets for 21 runs in 22 balls. "They bowled very well, we have to give credit to the England bowlers. They were decent with their length and they were hitting the right spots," Imam said. "Obviously we have to work hard now but I always believe that it's a long game ... things change very quickly. Get two wickets and the game's going to change." In England's reply, Mohammad Abbas trapped Ben Duckett for 15 and Emilio Gay departed for 33, nicking Mohammad Ali to second slip, but Root and Cox settled the home side. Root, in particular, looked in prime form and has already hit six fours in his 53-ball knock early in his chase for a 42nd test century.



Bhumi Pednekar Faces Backlash For Asking Protesters To Avoid Abusive Language, Netizens Ask 'What About



: Actor Bhumi Pednekar has faced criticism on social media after speaking about the language used by some protesters during the ongoing NEET-UG 2026 protests. The actor recently shared a video on Instagram in which she asked young protesters to express their anger without using abusive or insulting language. She said that such behaviour does not represent the values and culture of the country. However, her comments quickly divided social media users.

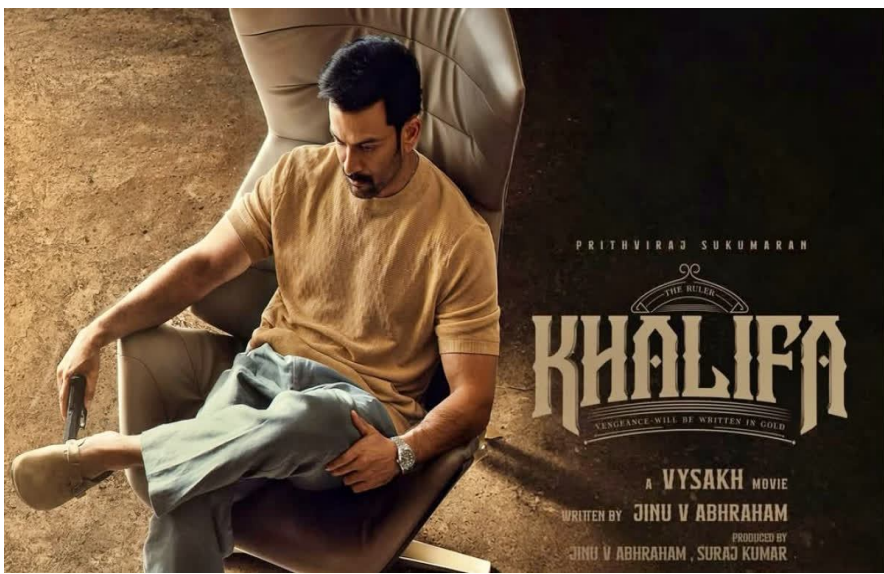
Many people questioned why she chose to speak about the language used by protesters but did not address the alleged police action against students during the protests. Bhumi said she had been watching several videos from the demonstrations and was concerned about the way some young people were speaking, particularly the abusive language directed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi. She pointed out that Modi holds the highest constitutional office in the

country and asked whether people would speak in the same way to elders in their own families. "Would we ever speak like this to the elders in our own homes?" she asked, while making her appeal for more respectful public discussion. The actor also spoke about India's culture and said that people should be able to express disagreement without resorting to abusive language. According to her, moving away from these values could make meaningful conversa-

tions and progress more difficult. Bhumi ended her message by calling for unity. She also referred to issues such as gender-based violence and education, saying that these matters need to be addressed in a productive and effective manner. Her message, however, did not receive the response she may have expected. Several social media users criticised the actor for what they described as a selective response to the protests. They argued that while abusive language can be questioned, the alleged use of force against students should also be discussed. One user questioned whether people should be more concerned about a protester using a swear word or the alleged use of serious force against demonstrators. Another user said that respect cannot simply be demanded and has to be earned. Some others asked Bhumi to also speak when politicians use offensive or abusive language. A few comments accused her of judging the protesters without addressing the reasons that brought students onto the streets. The criticism comes against the backdrop of the NEET-UG 2026 protests, which have attracted attention over concerns surrounding education, student welfare and demands for reforms. The demonstrations in Delhi became particularly tense on July 20, when protesters attempted to march towards Parliament. Videos circulating online showed clashes between protesters and police.

Prithviraj-Mohanlal Starrer Shows Decent Start With Over Rs 2 Cr

Prithviraj Sukumaran and Mohanlal's *Khalifa: The Ruler* has opened in theatres with a decent start. The Malayalam action thriller, which released on Thursday, August 20, had already sold around 2 lakh tickets in advance before its theatrical release. According to the latest live figures, the film has collected Rs 2.59 crore net in India on Day 1 so far. *Khalifa* Box Office Collection Day 1 As per the latest figures, *Khalifa* has earned Rs 2.59 crore net in India on its opening day so far. Its India gross collection currently stands at Rs 3.06 crore. The Day 1 collection is not final yet, as the figures from the remaining evening and night shows are still being added. Hence, the film's final opening-day collection is expected to be higher. *Khalifa* is currently running across 1,628 shows in India and has recorded an overall occupancy of around 41% so far on Thursday. The film has been released in Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu. Its strong advance booking had created interest among moviegoers ahead of its release, especially due to the presence of Prithviraj and Mohanlal. What Is *Khalifa* About? Directed by Vysakh, *Khalifa: The Ruler* is an action thriller based on money, power and gold



smuggling. The story moves between Kerala and other countries and also has elements of crime and family drama. The film follows Aamir Ali, who finds himself caught in a difficult situation involving powerful people, old conflicts and hidden secrets. As the story moves forward, Aamir faces betrayal, revenge and changing relationships. *Khalifa* is planned as a two-part film. The first part, which has been released, is titled *Sanju Sivaram*.

Khalifa: The Ruler has a runtime of 2 hours and 39 minutes. The film has received a UA16+ rating and has been released in Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu.

The story centres on a powerful gold smuggling kingpin whose criminal empire spreads from the Middle East to India. Prithviraj Sukumaran's Next Film Prithviraj Sukumaran will next be seen in SS Rajamouli's *Varanasi*. The Today, sets up the main story and introduces the characters and conflicts that are expected to continue in the second part. *Khalifa* Cast And Runtime Along with Prithviraj Sukumaran and Mohanlal, the film stars Tovino Thomas, Neil Nitin Mukesh, Krithi Shetty, Malavika Sharma, Indrans, Shammi Thilakan, Sathyaraj, Kayadu Lohar, Kajal Aggarwal

and Sanju Sivaram.

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After Dhurandhar's Blockbuster Run, Ranveer Singh Begins Pralay, His First Film As Producer

After Dhurandhar's success, Ranveer Singh is stepping into a very different kind of world with *Pralay*. The actor has begun shooting for the end-of-the-world action thriller in Mumbai, and the project marks an important new chapter for him as he also takes on production duties. Directed by Jai Mehta, *Pralay* is being produced by Ananya Birla's Birla Studios, Hansal Mehta and Sahil Saigal's True Story Films, along with Ranveer's Maa Kasam Films. The film has been in technical pre-production for several months before going on floors. While the makers are keeping the plot closely guarded, *Pralay* is built around a simple but intense idea that what happens when the world people know begins to collapse? The story is set against Mumbai, with the team shooting at live locations across the city and its surrounding areas. That choice could give the film a different texture from a typical large-scale action movie. Instead of creating an entirely fictional world, *Pralay* appears to be placing its survival story in a city that audiences already know. That makes Mumbai more than just a backdrop. Its crowded streets, buildings, public spaces and familiar surroundings could become part of the film's tension as the characters try to survive a catastrophe. Ranveer will headline the film and play a physically demanding role. His decision to produce

the project also makes *Pralay* significant

Harshad Mehta Story with Hansal Mehta and

they aim for a large-scale cinematic experi-

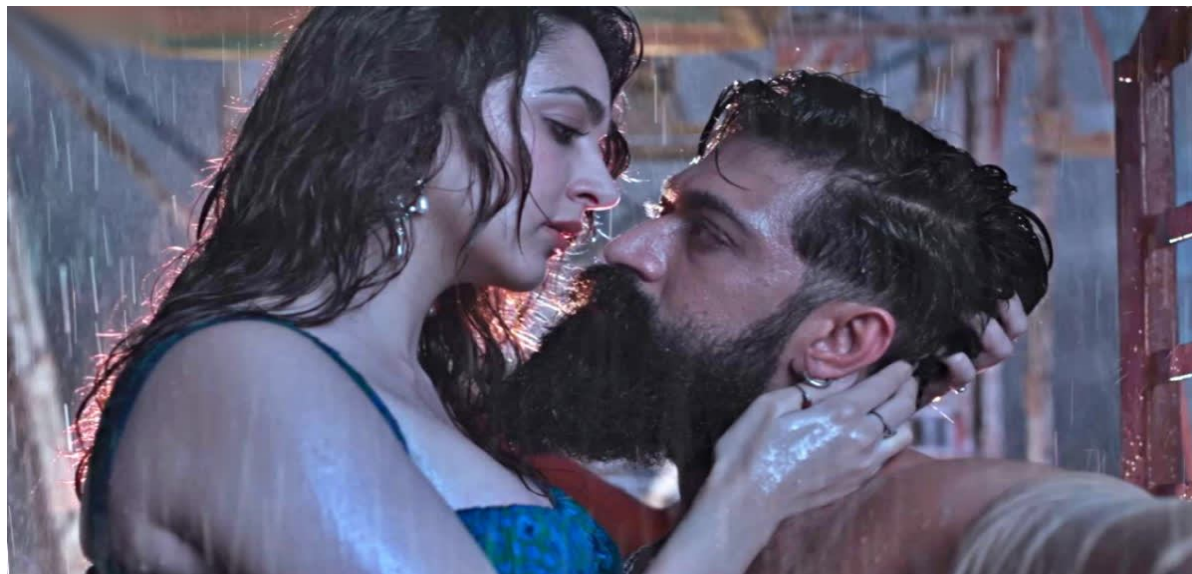


beyond being his next acting assignment. It gives him a chance to have a creative stake in a film that is being positioned as an ambitious theatrical action thriller. The film also brings Ranveer together with Kalyani Priyadarshan, who has emerged as one of the newer names to watch after the success of *Lokah Chapter One: Chandra*. She plays a pivotal role in *Pralay*, although details about her character are being kept under wraps. For Jai Mehta, the project is another move into large-scale storytelling after work across both film and streaming. He co-directed *Scam 1992: The*

later directed the series *Lootere*. *Pralay* is also an interesting choice for Ranveer after the Dhurandhar films. The two-part franchise put him at the centre of a gritty action world and became a major theatrical success. *Pralay* continues his association with big-screen action, but its survival-focused story gives him a new space to explore. The film is described as an original story centred on survival, courage and the instinct to protect what matters when everything familiar starts falling apart. The makers have also assembled a crew from India and abroad as

ence. Hansal Mehta had earlier teased the ambition behind the project while speaking about the True Story Films slate, calling it the kind of film India had not made or revival, courage and the instinct to protect what matters when everything familiar starts falling apart. The makers have also assembled a crew from India and abroad as

12 Lesser-Known Facts About Yash's Film, From His Clean-Shaven Look To The Number 8 Connection



Yash is all set to return to the big screen after more than four years with *Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups*. The actor last appeared in *KGF: Chapter 2*, which released in April 2022. Since then, fans have been waiting for his next film. Directed by Geetu Mohandas, *Toxic* is scheduled to release worldwide on August 26, 2026. While the film has already created huge buzz, there are several lesser-known facts about the project that make it even more interesting. Yash Returns After Over Four Years Yash's last release was *KGF: Chapter 2* on April 14, 2022. The film became a major success and took his popularity to another level. Since then, the actor has not appeared in another film. It took more than four years for his next project to reach theatres. Yash has also taken on several responsibilities in *Toxic*. Apart from playing the lead role,

he has produced the film and has also been involved in its writing. The film is therefore an important project for him both as an actor and as a producer. Yash To Appear In Multiple Avatars For The First Time One of the biggest highlights of *Toxic* is that Yash will be seen in two roles, appearing in multiple distinct looks and shades across different time periods. He will play both father and son, Raya and Rumi. This is the first time in his career that he is appearing in multiple avatars. Yash Plays Dual Role (Photo: Screengrab from the film's trailer) The film is said to move between different time periods and will also explore a father-son relationship. Yash will therefore be seen in different looks and avatars in the film. Yash Goes Clean-Shaven After Nine Years Yash has also undergone a major look change

for *Toxic*. The actor shaved his beard for his role as Rumi. This marks his first clean-shaven appearance on screen in nearly nine years. The makers have already shared a making video showing glimpses of Yash's transformation. Yash deserves credit for bringing one of Sandalwood's first pan-India films at a time when the concept was not as popular as it is today. In an interview, director Prashanth Neel revealed that after *KGF* was edited, Yash suggested releasing it on a pan-India level. However, the team initially did not have the confidence to take that step. They even stopped speaking to Yash for some time. But Yash remained determined and worked hard to prepare the film for a pan-India release. He travelled to several places and worked on the requirements needed to take the film to audiences across the country. Neel said that