

EYE SECRETS

Spy in every blink

English Daily

Rangareddy Vol No. 1 Issue 59

Date:Thursday, 9-7-2026

Price:2/-

Pages: 8

Modi to visit state on July 17 to inaugurate revamped railway stations

New Delhi, July 8

Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu said here on Wednesday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would visit Punjab on July 17 for the inauguration of revamped railway stations, including the Rs 100-crore Jalandhar Cantt railway station.

He said films such as "Satluj" must not be allowed to stoke divisions in the state and people should see what its makers were trying to do.

Bittu said as long as people like him were around, Diljit Dosanjh, singer and lead actor of "Satluj", would not be allowed to "sully the atmosphere" of the state.

"Diljit's money is involved in the film; that is why this propaganda is being carried out," he said, adding that the Centre had no role in getting the film banned.

Bittu lauded former Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi for "standing his ground" and said it was amusing to see Congress leaders fight among themselves.



He said, "We're pleased to see what Channi saheb is doing."

The Congress is doing exactly what was expected of it. It won't be able to do anything for the state. None of its leaders and MLAs want to stand with Warring today..."

Responding to rumours of Channi joining another party, Bittu said, "Channi will stay in the Congress, but the tussle in the party will continue."

5th Telangana Police Games begin in Hyderabad



"Hyderabad, July 8: The fifth edition of the Telangana Police Games and Sports Meet-2026 began at the Saroonagar Indoor Stadium in LB Nagar on Wednesday, with Director General of Police C.V. Anand inaugurating the two-day event.

"Organised by the Malkajgiri Police Commissionerate, the State-level meet has brought together police personnel from all Commissionerates, district police units, armed battalions and specialised wings across Telangana." "The DGP unveiled the official mascot, 'Suraksha', inspired by the State bird, the Indian Roller (Palapitta), symbolising the police force's commitment to

public safety and service.

"Addressing the gathering, Mr. Anand said sports play an important role in improving physical fitness, mental resilience, discipline, teamwork and leadership among police personnel. Referring to the event's theme, "Play with Passion - Serve with Pride," he said the Games would strengthen the spirit of service and professionalism within the force."

"The meet features competitions in athletics and indoor and outdoor sporting disciplines, with participants competing for State-level honours." "The inaugural ceremony was attended by senior IPS officers, Police Commissioners, actor Naveen Polishetty, and other dignitaries. A ceremonial march-past, athletes' oath and the unveiling of the mascot marked the opening event.

Godrej Agrovet to set up Rs 300 cr oil palm complex in Telangana



HYDERABAD, July 8

Godrej Agrovet is set to operationalise Telangana's first integrated oil palm processing unit in Khammam district. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will inaugurate the facility shortly.

On Wednesday, Rakesh Swami, president (corporate affairs) of Godrej Industries Group, and Sougata Niyogi, CEO of Godrej Agrovet's Oil Palm Business, met the Chief Minister at MCRHRDI. They briefed him on the company's expansion plans and submitted a report on oil palm cultivation in Khammam district.

The project is coming up at Gubbagurthi village in Konijerla mandal with an investment of ₹300 crore. The unit will provide employment to over 700 locals.

The state government has allotted 113.5 acres for the factory, nursery, R&D centre and seed garden. The

company has requested an additional 35-40 acres for the seed garden.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister directed officials to widen the roads leading to the unit under the supervision of TGILC.

The factory will have the capacity to crush 15 tonnes of fresh fruit bunches per hour. It is expected to generate direct employment for 150 people and indirect jobs for around 700 others. The project will benefit oil palm farmers in Khammam and Bhadradi Kothagudem districts by improving processing infrastructure and reducing transport costs.

Telangana already has three oil palm factories, but the Khammam unit will be the first integrated complex with a processing plant, seed garden and refinery.

Dr. Srirangam Sathyam Leads Grand Tribute to YSR, Says His Legacy of Welfare and Development Will Inspire Generations

Pays Floral Homage to Former Chief Minister Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy on His 77th Birth Anniversary

"Warangal, July 8: PCC Member and TPCC Official Spokesperson Dr. Srirangam Sathyam paid rich tributes to former Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh, the late Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy (YSR), on the occasion of his 77th birth anniversary, describing him as a visionary leader whose people-centric governance transformed the lives of millions.

"The birth anniversary celebrations were organized in a grand manner under the leadership of Balaji Nagar Division President Rajesh Goud and former Division President Krishna Rajput. Dr. Srirangam Sathyam attended the event as the Chief Guest and, along with local Congress leaders, offered floral tributes to YSR's statue. He later participated in a cake-cutting ceremony to commemorate the occasion

"Addressing the gathering, Dr. Srirangam Sathyam said that YSR's administration remains a shining example of governance that successfully balanced rapid development with inclusive welfare. He stated that landmark initiatives such as Aarogyasri, the 108 Emergency Ambulance Service, and the ?2 Rice Scheme were not merely government programmes but enduring symbols of a compassionate leader's commitment to the poor and vulnerable." "He remarked that YSR's leadership reflected the true spirit of public service and that his welfare-oriented governance embodied the ideals of the Congress Party by taking the vision of "Indiramma Rajyam" to the doorsteps of the poorest sections of society.

"Dr. Srirangam Sathyam further noted that YSR dedicated his entire political life to the welfare of farmers, students, women, and economically weaker sections through a series of transformative welfare initiatives. He emphasized that although YSR is no longer among us, his ideals and pioneering schemes continue to guide governments and inspire public representatives across generations." "Calling upon elected representatives to emulate YSR's commitment to selfless public service, Dr. Srirangam Sathyam urged them to remain connected with the people and work tirelessly for their welfare, just as YSR did throughout his public life." "Among those present were senior Congress leaders and former Constituency President Sheri Satish Reddy, Gottimukkula Deshal, M.D. Moiz, Sadhu Pratap Reddy, Division Presidents Kalikota



Dr. Srirangam Sathyam further noted that YSR dedicated his entire political life to the welfare of farmers, students, women, and economically weaker sections through a series of transformative welfare initiatives.

Shankar, Dendi Aravind Reddy, Swaroop Goud, Gudepu Nagaraju, Women's Division President Maruthi, along with Jahangir, Bandi Sudha, Pawan, Jibin, Aditya, Anji Reddy, party leaders, public representatives, party workers, and a large number of supporters.

TTD Suspends VIP Darshans On Key Festival Days From July 14 To Sept. 23

Andhra Pradesh Avinash P. Subramanyam 9 July 2026 1:20 AM TTD said recommendation letters would not be accepted on the previous day of these events, except from protocol dignitaries, and advised devotees to plan their pilgrimage accordingly. The facility will remain unavailable on July 14 for Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam, July 17 for Anivara Asthanam, July 19 for Pedda Maryada to the Swamiji of Sri Andavan Ashramam and July 29 for the Chaturmasya Sankalpam of the Tirumala Jeeyar Swamijis.— DC Image Select Deccan Chronicle Now

TIRUPATI: The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has cancelled VIP break darshans on select days between July and September due to important rituals and festivals at the Srivari temple, including the annual Brahmotsavams. The facility will remain unavailable on July 14 for Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam, July 17 for Anivara Asthanam, July 19 for Pedda Maryada to the Swamiji of Sri Andavan Ashramam and July 29 for the Chaturmasya Sankalpam of the Tirumala Jeeyar Swamijis.

20-year-old beaten to death in Ghaziabad after bike grazes realtor’s car



In a chilling incident of road rage near the national capital, a 20-year-old man was beaten to death in Ghaziabad's Loni area on Monday after his motorcycle brushed against a car, the police said. Police said the accused, a real estate businessman Rahul, took the biker, Mohammad Zaid, to his office and brutally assaulted him with his friend. Zaid died of the injuries.

According to the police, Zaid and his two minor

friends were going towards a swimming pool near Loni's Behta Hajipur underpass at 3 pm on Monday on their motorcycle. On the way, their bike brushed against Rahul's hatchback."Following the collision, an argument broke out between the two parties, the occupants of the car allegedly assaulted Zaid. He was taken to a hospital by his companions, where doctors declared him dead," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rural) Surendra Nath Tiwari.According to police officers, Rahul (26), a property dealer, pushed Zaid into his car and took him to his office. There, Rahul and his friend thrashed Zaid, leading to his death. "His friends, aged around 15 and 16 years, followed the car and found Zaid. They took him to his home and then to a hospital on the bike. He was declared dead. His brother has now filed a complaint," a police officer said.According to officers, road construction work is underway in the area, and traffic is moving on only one side. This is where Zaid's bike brushed against Rahul's car. Police said a case of murder and assault has been registered at the Loni Border police station. "One accused has been arrested. Teams have been formed to catch the other," a police officer said.

Government official clicked ‘Book Now’, landed in scam: Inside Char Dham helicopter racket

Agovernment official found what appeared to be an authorised booking website, completed the payment in minutes and received confirmation and two tickets on WhatsApp and Gmail.But when his family reached the Phata helipad, they were in for a shock — the tickets were fake.Investigators said the website was part of a wider cyber fraud operation that allegedly targeted pilgrims across India. Three arrests have been made.According to police, the government official clicked on a Google link — ‘irctc-heliyatra.com’.The portal carried the tagline, ‘Divine journey to four sacred Himalayan abodes’, along with a package advertising ‘4 Dhams, 5N/6D from Rs 89,999’ and photographs of the four pilgrimage sites.The official clicked ‘Book Now’ and was redirected to another page titled ‘Trans Bharat Aviation Kedarnath Helicopter Ticket Booking by 2026’, with a helicopter image and a mobile number.He clicked on the number and a WhatsApp chat opened, where he immediately received details of helicopter fares: Dehradun to Kedarnath (Rs 23,000), Sirsi to Kedarnath (Rs 6,390), Phata to Kedarnath (Rs 10,164) and Guptkashi to Kedarnath (Rs 12,762).Police said the official called the number, and the person on the other end asked him which package he wanted to book. The official chose the Phata-Kedarnath helicopter service for two family members. The caller assured him that a booking link would be sent shortly.The payment was made and he received two e-tickets worth Rs 20,328 via Gmail and WhatsApp.Satisfied that everything was in order, the family set off from Delhi. At the Phata helipad, security personnel of Trans Bharat Aviation informed them that the tickets were fake.Trans Bharat Aviation, one of India’s oldest non-scheduled helicopter operators, offers helicopter charter services for elections, VIP movement, heli-pilgrimages, joy rides and aerial surveys. Its official website clearly states that it does not accept direct bookings and that http://www.heliyatra.irctc.co.in is the only authorised platform for reservations.A police officer said the victim had booked the tickets through ‘irctc-heliyatra.com’, a domain designed to closely resemble the actual website.“From Phata, the government official filed a complaint on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP), following which it was transferred to the Cyber Police Station of South Delhi,” the officer said.Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Anant Mittal said a dedicated team led by Inspector Hansraj Swami, SHO of Cyber Police Station, South District, under the supervision of Additional DCP (Operations) Arvind Kumar, was constituted. After a preliminary inquiry, an FIR was registered.Police soon realised the case was much larger than a single incident.'What initially appeared to be a single case of online cheating turned out to be a larger cyber fraud operation spanning multiple states,” said Mittal.Through detailed analysis of bank accounts, the money trail, domain registrations, Gmail records, IP logs and technical evidence, police identified the accused and arrested two men, Omprakash Kumar and Rohit Kumar, from Nalanda in Bihar on June 2.During questioning, police said they disclosed the role of a third accused, Shreyansh Tiwari alias Shivam, a BTech student from Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh. He was later arrested from Noida.

Investigators said Omprakash came in contact with Shreyansh through Telegram after learning that the latter could develop websites, and allegedly offered him Rs 40,000 to create the fake booking portal.Police described



Shreyansh as the technical mastermind behind the operation. He allegedly developed and maintained the fake websites, while Rohit handled customer calls, communicated with prospective victims over WhatsApp and managed financial transactions by routing payments through multiple bank accounts.They said the syndicate cloned official-looking websites, promoted them through paid advertisements on Meta platforms and directed victims to WhatsApp conversations. Once trust was established by sharing fare charts, package details and booking links, victims were persuaded to transfer money.Their investigation so far has revealed that the gang is linked to nearly 30 complaints registered on the NCRP from different states and Union Territories, involving cheated amounts estimated at Rs 10 lakh.Investigators suspect the actual number of victims may be significantly higher, as many pilgrims either fail to report cyber fraud or realise they have been cheated only after reaching the helicopter boarding point.Police said Omprakash was previously booked in a cyber job fraud case in 2022 at the Cyber Police Station in Northwest Delhi and spent a few months in jail before securing bail and returning to Nalanda.

The other two accused have no criminal record and were allegedly acting on Omprakash's instructions.Police recovered eight mobile phones, two laptops, a 10th-generation iPad, multiple ATM and debit cards, and froze Rs 20,328 in a bank account through a lien.Investigators are now examining whether the syndicate operated similar fake portals for other religious destinations, tourism services or seasonal events and if they are linked to larger cyber fraud networks operating across states.They are also trying to contact other victims who are believed to have been duped through the fake websites.Police said the case highlights how cyber criminals are increasingly exploiting the rush for pilgrimage bookings by cloning official-looking websites and promoting them through targeted social media advertisements to deceive devotees.Officers said fraudsters are taking advantage of the high demand for limited helicopter seats during the Char Dham season, when pilgrims often make bookings in haste and are less likely to verify website addresses.A police officer advised people not to trust the first website that appears in Google search results. “Always verify that you are using the official website before making any payment, especially for pilgrimage bookings,” the officer said.Police also urged pilgrims to cross-check URLs carefully, avoid completing bookings through links shared over messaging apps, and report suspected fraud immediately through the NCRP or by dialling the cybercrime helpline 1930, as early reporting improves the chances of freezing stolen funds.

Ahead of Bengaluru Safe Footpath drive, street vendors allege eviction threats



Street vendors in Bengaluru have expressed concerns over possible evictions ahead of the Greater Bengaluru Authority's (GBA) 'Safe Footpath' drive, alleging that civic officials are using Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda's remarks on clearing encroachments to threaten them.

Street vendors in Bengaluru have expressed concerns over possible evictions ahead of the Greater Bengaluru Authority's (GBA) 'Safe Footpath' drive, alleging that civic officials are using Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda's remarks on clearing encroachments to threaten them.

They have also urged the minister to meet with their representatives before commencing the campaign.As part of the 'Safe Footpath' drive set to begin on Wednesday, Gowda had stated last week that if encroachments continue beyond June 30, the corporation will remove them

and impose heavy penalties.While welcoming the minister's statement on proper use of footpaths, the Karnataka Pragathi Para Beedi Vyaparigala Sangha, an AICCTU-affiliated union representing the street vendors of Bengaluru, stated, "Even before any official order is issued, the municipal corporations under the GBA are misusing the minister's statement and threatening to evict street vendors. This has created anxiety among street vendors across the city."

In a statement issued on June 29, the union also noted that vendors were legitimate users of public spaces under the Street Vendors (Protection and Regulation of Livelihoods) Act, 2014, with many of them having been surveyed by authorities and having availed loans under the PM SVANidhi scheme while being members of registered trade unions.The Sangha highlighted that under the Street Vendors Act, a 30-day notice should be served before eviction.The union members said that the municipal corporations should have surveyed all street vendors, formed a town trading committee, and created vending zones where street vendors could trade. "But the authorities have not done these things. Instead, they are targeting us as squatters. According to Section 3(3) of the Street Vendors Act, no one can be evicted without a survey and registration of all the street vendors."Advocate Vinay Sreenivasan, an office-bearer of the union, noted, "They have come to different areas (such as Hebbal and Vijayanagar) and said that they will start evictions from July 1".The Sangha has called for wider footpaths to accommodate both vendors and pedestrians, while taking action against illegal parkers and encroachments by shop premises.

Advocate sends Rs 10 crore defamation notice to Siya’s brother



Siya Goyal Advocate Aashuutosh Srivastava Advocate Aashuutosh Srivastava (right), who claims to represent Siya Goyal (left) in the Ketan Agarwal murder case, has accused her brother Sahil of making false and defamatory statements that damaged his professional standing as a practising advocate. A day after the family of Siya Goyal, a co-accused in the Ketan Agarwal murder, denied appointing him as her defence counsel, advocate Aashuutosh Srivastava on Tuesday issued a defamation notice to her brother Sahil Goyal, seeking Rs 10 crore in damages over his remarks to the media.

The notice comes after Sahil spoke to reporters ahead of Monday's hearing at the Vadgaon Maval court, where he denied that the Goyals had engaged Srivastava's services. "We have never engaged him, and he is not someone appointed by us. Whatever he is claiming, I have no knowledge of it," Sahil told the media. Siya also informed the court that advocate Vipul Dushing was her chosen counsel.Srivastava, who claims to represent Siya in the case, has now accused Sahil of making false and defamatory statements that damaged his professional

standing as a practising advocate. In his legal notice, he asserted that he had built his reputation appearing in criminal and civil matters before various courts and authorities over the years, and that any public statement falsely implying he lacked authorisation to represent an accused person was inherently "defamatory and caused direct professional injury".Srivastava further stated in the notice that Siya had personally executed and signed a vakalatnama in his favour, authorising him to handle her legal defence. He maintained that this was not an oral claim or a media-driven assertion but a formal legal authorisation voluntarily granted by an adult accused.In the notice, Srivastava expressed objection to Sahil's conduct, stating that he found it "appalling, distressing and shocking" that Sahil made the public statement without first verifying the authenticity of the vakalatnama already on court record, and without reaching out to him or his office for clarification. He alleged that the statement was issued "blatantly, irresponsibly, maliciously and fraudulently", suggesting he had not been appointed or authorised by the family.'Damaged professional goodwill'The notice claims that Sahil's statement to the media has resulted in both quantified and unquantified losses for Srivastava, including damage to his professional goodwill, mental trauma, reputational injury, erosion of confidence among existing and prospective clients, and heightened personal risk arising from the hostile atmosphere created by the media coverage.Citing the scale and nature of the publication, Srivastava's notice pegs the bare minimum damages at Rs 10 crore, without prejudice to enhancement upon further discovery of circulation, republication, comments, views, shares and consequential loss.Ketan Agarwal was allegedly pushed off a cliff at Lohagar Fort by Siya, his fiancée, and her lover, Chetan Chaudhary.

Centre grants 6-month extension to Haryana Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi

The Centre on Tuesday granted a six-month extension in the service of Haryana Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi on the recommendation of the state government. Rastogi, the 1990-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, will continue to hold the charge of chief secretary till December 31, 2026.Notably, this is the second extension for the officer. His previous extension was to end on June 30. Last year too, the Centre had granted a year's extension of service to Rastogi, who was due to retire on June 30, 2025.

As per a communication from Union Ministry of Personnel: "On the proposal of the Haryana government dated June 8, 2026 regarding extension of service of Rastogi, the Centre has approved it for a period of six months from July 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026 in relaxation of Rule 16 (1) of AIS (DCRB) Rules, 1958 by invoking Rule 3 of AIS (CS-RM) Rules, 1960".The extension has dealt a major setback to the prospects of two senior IAS officers — Sumita Mishra and Sudhir Rajpal, both from the 1990 batch, who were considered leading contenders for the chief secretary's post. Rajpal is scheduled to retire on November 30, 2026, while Mishra will retire on January 31, 2027.Apart from them, 1992-batch IAS officer Arun Kumar Gupta, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, was also regarded as a strong contender for the post.

According to top officials, the government wanted to retain Rastogi to ensure the "administrative continuity" as the biggest factor. "Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini's government is currently in a crucial phase of its tenure, with several major digital, financial, and administrative reform initiatives underway. These include paperless registry system; e-governance projects; schemes linked to the Family Identity Card (Parivar Pehchan Patra); investment and industrial projects; and centrally sponsored development schemes. Government believes that chang-



ing the administrative leadership at this stage could affect the pace and monitoring of these initiatives," a senior official said.Within the bureaucracy, it is widely acknowledged that Rastogi is among Saini's most trusted officers. The government is also believed to value the strong coordination between the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) and the Chief Secretary's Office. Notably, even when Rastogi underwent bypass surgery, his additional charge was not assigned to any other officer.Rastogi has held several key financial and administrative positions over the years. The state government believes that his experience in economic management and policy implementation continues to be valuable at this stage.Extension to Rastogi is also likely to halt the ongoing selection process for the post of Chief Commissioner of the Haryana Right to Service Commission (HRSC). The position is currently being held by Rastogi as an additional charge. Only an officer of the rank of Chief Secretary is eligible to become the Commission's Chief Commissioner. Had Rastogi not received another extension, he was widely expected to be appointed to the post.

Bombay HC seeks details of alleged gaps in BMC’s de-concretisation drive



The Bombay High Court on Tuesday asked the petitioners and intervenors in a public interest litigation (PIL) on tree falls to share their findings and suggestions with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), after an intervenor disputed the civic body's claims regarding tree de-concretisation across the city.

The HC was hearing an intervention application filed by social activist Sagar Ugale in a PIL by activist Rohit Manohar Joshi and others seeking de-concretisation around the bases of trees in Mumbai and Thane, while raising concerns over deaths and injuries caused by falling trees.The PIL has sought directions to the civic au-

thorities to formulate a disaster management plan with provisions for compensation and compassionate employment for the families of those killed or injured in incidents involving tree collapses.The HC had earlier noted that the Maharashtra (Urban Areas) Protection and Preservation of Trees Act, 1975 provides for the constitution of a Tree Authority in every urban local body for the protection and preservation of trees.

Earlier this month, the BMC had submitted that the petitioners and intervenors could accompany officials of the Garden Department and point out locations where de-concretisation work had not been carried out.On Tuesday, Ugale disputed the BMC's claim that only about five per cent of the de-concretisation work remained. He submitted that site inspections found concrete, asphalt, paver blocks, road construction material, and debris still surrounding several trees across the city.According to the intervention application, inspections of 832 trees across more than 35 roads in seven civic wards, including Malad, Fort, Santacruz and Dahisar, found that 321 trees had inadequate open soil space or improperly constructed tree basins, while 471 trees required further scientific de-concretisation.A bench led by Justice A.S. Gadkari asked the petitioners and the intervenor to share their findings, grievances, and suggestions with the BMC and posted the matter for further hearing after four weeks.

Wanted in 26 cases, Pandav Sena leader Sanjay Singh arrested in Patna

The Special Task Force (STF) of the Bihar Police Tuesday arrested Sanjay Singh, an alleged gangster and the leader of the outlawed Pandav Sena, a former upper-caste militia, during an operation at Patna Railway Station.Confirming the arrest, Bihar STF Director General Kundan Krishnan told, "Sanjay Singh is one of Bihar's most wanted interstate criminals. His arrest is a major blow to organised crime syndicates, land mafias and illegal sand mining networks operating in Bihar and neighbouring states. Our team tracked him down and arrested him before he could flee."While we have documented 26 major cases across Bihar and Jharkhand, the investigation is far from over. We are coordinating with

the police in neighbouring states to establish the full extent of his criminal network," Krishnan added.A resident of Nima village under the Masaurhi police station limits in Patna district, Singh has been on the radar of law enforcement agencies for nearly three decades.According to the police, he is accused in 26 criminal cases registered in Bihar and Jharkhand between 1996 and 2025, including murder, contract killing, extortion, kidnapping for ransom, illegal sand mining, land grabbing, and offences under the Arms Act.The police said Singh was also wanted in connection with a 2025 case registered at Bihta Police Station involving the recovery of an AK-47 assault rifle.

EYE SECRETS
Editorial

VB-GRAM G —
burdening States in
the garb of reforms

In the name of overhauling the national rural employment guarantee scheme, the NDA government has created more confusion and imposed an additional burden of responsibility on the States. The Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G), replacing the two-decade-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), has been rolled out without adequate consultation and without addressing the concerns of stakeholders. Passed in December 2025, the VB-GRAMG Act came into effect from July 1 this year. The initial feedback from the States is discouraging, to say the least. It is seen as weakening the scheme through a new delivery architecture, particularly the shift away from demand-based allocation of labour budgets to ‘normative’ allocations by the Centre to State governments, along with a higher requirement for State contributions of up to 40% of the budget. While MGNREGA, formulated by the UPA government, was a rights-based law that legally entitled rural households to demand work, VB-G RAM G shifts towards a centrally designed mission emphasising asset creation, digital monitoring, and administrative performance. There is no doubt that the welfare scheme required reform, but the question being asked now is whether the reform in the present form has strengthened the rural safety net or weakened its very foundation. Despite certain flaws in implementation, the earlier scheme had served as a beacon of hope for the rural poor, but the revamped one has raised legitimate concerns over the future of the rights-based guarantee law. The most important fallout is that the States would be burdened more. HistoryThe government argues that the new scheme will improve efficiency and productivity, but critics point out that a legally enforceable guarantee is gradually being replaced by a programme whose success depends increasingly on administrative discretion. Instead of building upon the legal strengths while fixing operational weaknesses of the earlier scheme, the Centre has chosen an entirely new architecture whose long-term effectiveness remains untested. The financial restructuring is equally contentious. Although the Centre has announced an overall package exceeding Rs 1.25 lakh crore, the new scheme transfers substantially greater financial responsibility to State governments through a 60:40 Centre-State funding pattern.

US charges gangster Lawrence
Bishnoi, Goldy Brar over
Nijjar’s killing in Canada

New Delhi, July 8

The US has, for the first time in a federal indictment, alleged that jailed Indian gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and his close aide Satinderjeet Singh, alias Goldy Brar, ordered the June 2023 assassination of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada.

The allegation figures in one of three indictments unsealed under Operation Hard Ball, a coordinated crackdown by law enforcement agencies from the US, Canada and Europe against India-based transnational organised crime syndicates, in which 24 persons have been arrested.

According to the US Department of Justice, Bishnoi and Brar directed the killing of Nijjar -- identified in court documents as “HSN” -- who was shot dead by two gunmen outside a gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, on June 18, 2023.

Significantly, a senior Canadian police official on Wednesday contradicted former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s 2023 remarks alleging a “potential link” between agents of the Indian government and the killing of Nijjar, saying there was “no evidence” to support such a claim.

Trudeau’s remarks had triggered a sharp deterioration in India-Canada relations, including reciprocal expulsions of diplomats, disruption of visa services and a prolonged freeze in bilateral engagement. Canadian Police Deputy Commissioner Lisa Moreland’s remarks are being seen as a diplomatic apology that could finally put the matter to rest and help both countries move forward.

The US has also indicated that it may seek Bishnoi’s extradition from India. Essayli said authorities intended to pursue the extradition of those charged, including Bishnoi and jailed gangster Jaggu Bhagwanpuria, alleging that both continued to run criminal enterprises despite being imprisoned in India.

“When they come to a federal prison in the US, I guarantee you they won’t be extorting any more victims once they’re in our custody,” Essayli said, alleging that Indian prisons had failed to prevent the gang leaders from directing criminal operations.

US officials stopped short of indicating when a formal extradition request would be initiated, knowing fully well that any such move would have to be processed under the India-US extradition treaty.

Neither the US indictment nor officials associated with Operation Hard Ball alleged any involvement of the Indian government in Nijjar’s killing.

Assigned Land or Political Narrative?

2022 Revenue Order Rekindles Debate Over Munaganur Land Dispute
A Joint Collector's ruling issued during the previous BRS regime has emerged as the focal point in the controversy, raising questions over the legal status of the land and the politics surrounding it

“Ibrahimpattam, July 8: A long-running land dispute in Munaganur village of Abdullapurmet mandal, Ranga Reddy district, has resurfaced at the centre of a political storm, with rival parties offering sharply divergent narratives over the ownership and legal status of nearly 40 acres in Survey No. 44. While the Bharath Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has alleged that government-assigned land is being illegally transferred to private individuals, official revenue records and a detailed order issued by the previous Joint Collector in 2022 present a contrasting legal position.”“Far from being a fresh controversy, the dispute has its roots in decisions taken decades ago. The latest political claims have brought renewed attention to an order passed during the previous BRS government’s tenure, in which the revenue authority held that the land in question was not governed by the Telangana Assigned Lands (Prohibition of Transfers) Act, 1977.”“Political allegations revive an old dispute:The issue gained momentum after former Ibrahimpattam MLA and BRS district president Manchireddy Kishan Reddy accused the State government of allowing the illegal transfer of government-assigned land in Munaganur. He alleged that nearly 40 acres in Survey No. 44 had been encroached upon and claimed that Congress leaders were facilitating the alleged occupation.”“Mr. Kishan Reddy maintained that the land had remained under government protection during his tenure as an MLA. He said a board identifying it as government land had been installed and added that the site had also been proposed for the construction of a mini stadium to serve local residents.”“His allegations have once again placed the spotlight on the legal history of the property.”

“A dispute dating back to 1956:Official revenue records indicate that the controversy centres on 12.01 acres located in Survey Nos. 44/2 and 44/4. The land was originally granted in the year of 1956 to Paranda Achayya under the Special Laoni Rules, a policy that governed land assignments prior to the introduction of later restrictions.”“The property subsequently changed hands through registered transactions, with Kambalapalli Chandraiah acquiring ownership. Following his death in 1994, the land devolved upon his wife, Lakshamma, and later passed to their legal heirs through succession. During the course of subsequent disputes, members of the family also executed a General Power of Attorney in favour of Merugu Gopal Yadav.”

“The dispute took a significant turn in 2007 when the then Tahsildar resumed 5.20 acres of the land in favour of the government. The Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) upheld the decision in 2008. The landholders challenged both orders before the High Court, contending that the authorities had failed to verify the original assignment records before passing their decisions.”“High Court intervention leads to fresh scrutiny:”“Acting on directions from the High Court, the then Joint Collector undertook a



comprehensive examination of the case. The inquiry involved scrutiny of the original assignment files, revenue records and the legal framework governing Laoni grants.”“The findings fundamentally altered the course of the dispute:”“The Joint Collector observed that the land had been assigned in 1956—well before July 25, 1958, when the government introduced non-alienation conditions through G.O. Ms. No. 1406. Consequently, the assignment was governed exclusively by the Special Laoni Rules, under which such grants were legally transferable and heritable.”“The order further held that the Telangana Assigned Lands (Prohibition of Transfers) Act, 1977, did not apply to assignments made under the 1956 Special Laoni Rules.”“Revenue authorities faulted:”“In a detailed analysis, the Joint Collector found that the Tahsildar and the RDO had failed to examine the original assignment records before passing the resumption orders.

The order noted procedural lapses, including reliance on incomplete records and failure to consider the legal character of the original grant.”“Holding that the earlier decisions were legally unsustainable, the Joint Collector set aside both the 2007 Tahsildar’s order and the 2008 RDO’s order, allowing the revision petition filed by the landholders.”“Legal findings versus political

claims:”

The 2022 order has now become the central document in the renewed political controversy. Those supporting the landholders argue that the legal status of the property had already been conclusively determined by the revenue authority during the previous BRS government’s tenure itself.”“They contend that describing the land as “assigned land” overlooks the distinction between pre-1958 Special Laoni grants and assignments covered under the 1977 Assigned Lands Act. According to them, the official records leave little ambiguity regarding the nature of the grant.”“On the other hand, the BRS has continued to question the handling of the land, maintaining that government property is being alienated in violation of law.”“The larger question:”“Beyond the political rhetoric, the Munaganur dispute underscores the significance of historical land records and the legal framework governing pre-1958 assignments. As competing political narratives continue to dominate public discourse, the 2022 Joint Collector’s order has emerged as the principal legal reference point, raising a broader question: whether the controversy is fundamentally about the ownership of land or about competing interpretations of revenue records in the political arena.

Historic Boost for Telangana:
Centre Allocates Tadicherla-II Coal Block to Singareni,
Promising Rs 64,000 Crore Revenue and 1,200 Jobs



“Hyderabad: Senior BJP leader and National Media Executive Suresh Perika has welcomed the Central Government’s decision to allocate the Tadicherla-II Coal Block to Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), describing it as a landmark step for Telangana’s economic growth and industrial development.”“Expressing gratitude on behalf of the people of Telangana, Suresh Perika thanked Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Union Minister Shri G. Kishan Reddy for facilitating the allocation of the coal block.”

“According to him, the Tadicherla-II Coal Block, which contains an estimated 182 million tonnes of coal reserves, will significantly strengthen Singareni’s operational capacity and contribute to the long-term energy security of

the region.”“He noted that the project is expected to generate over ₹64,000 crore in revenue for Singareni while creating around 1,200 new employment opportunities for the youth of Telangana.”

“Suresh Perika said the allocation reflects the Central Government’s unwavering commitment to the development of Telangana and the welfare of its people. He added that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Centre continues to take transformative decisions that promote industrial growth, employment generation, and sustainable economic progress across the state.”“He described the allocation of the Tadicherla-II Coal Block as a significant milestone that will not only accelerate the growth of Singareni but also strengthen Telangana’s economic future.

BJP SUCCEEDED IN GETTING NEW COAL
ALLOCATION TO SCCL: NRR

“Hyderabad, July 8 : BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao today alleged that the previous BRS and current Congress governments completely neglected the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) and pushed it into losses.” Addressing a press conference at state office here, Rao expressed his and on behalf of the state people heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy for the central government’s allocation of the ‘Tadicherla-II’ coal block to Singareni which would further strengthen the SCCL and future of Telangana.”

He said that there are currently 39 working mines under SCCL supporting the livelihoods of 31,000 contract workers and 41,000 permanent employees. He revealed that new coal block, which contains around 182 million tonnes of coal reserves, will generate revenue of over Rs 64,000 crore for Singareni and create new employment opportunities for nearly 1,200 unemployed youth. He praised the central government, stating that with this block allocation, it has not only developed Singareni but also further strengthened the future of Telangana.”

Rao alleged that the Congress is playing “credit politics” and lashed out the Congress government’s claim that the ‘Tadicherla-II’ coal block was secured due to their efforts is completely false. He questioned the state Congress leaders why they failed to allocate this coal block to Singareni when the Manmohan Singh government was in power.” BJP chief pooh poohed Congress claims and clarified that this block allocation

was made possible only due to the collective efforts of BJP MPs, MLAs, and district leaders and with the special initiative taken by Union Minister G Kishan Reddy.

“Rao alleged that while the previous BRS government used Singareni for its own benefits, now Congress government is weakening the institution by diverting Singareni funds to other activities like football matches.”

He recalled that during Manmohan Singh’s tenure, a massive ‘Coal Scam’ came to light in coal allocations across the country, but under the leadership of PM Modi, revolutionary reforms and transparency have been prioritized in the coal sector. As a result, coal production through Coal India has increased by about 70 percent thereby generating nearly Rs 2.5 lakh crore in revenue for the country from the coal sector, he explained.

Answering a query Rao demanded the scope of SIT which is currently probing Dharmi portal should be expanded to conduct a thorough investigation into the rampant irregularities currently taking place in “Bhu-Bharati” set up by the Congress government. It was reported that about 2000 fake accounts have come to light within just two and half year of Congress rule. He said strict action should be taken against the politicians and officials involved in the Bhu Bharati corruption. He slammed both the Congress and BRS parties, alleging that they are playing dramas together out of fear that the scams in the Dharani and Bhu-Bharati portals will be exposed.”

He criticized the Congress government for repeatedly bringing up the Kannepally and Medigadda issues of the Kaleshwaram project to stage dramas effec-



tively turning Kaleshwaram into “Drameshwaram” { an act of drama} solely to divert public attention as land-related irregularities come to light. “

Rao reminded that it was the BJP that first demanded an inquiry into the Kaleshwaram project by the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA). “ He advised both the Congress and BRS parties to set aside their political interests and demanded that the Kaleshwaram project, built with lakhs of crores of public money, be repaired and made useful to provide irrigation water to farmers. Rao sternly warned the state government not to play cheap politics with the lives of farmers, stating that injustice to the “Annadata” (providers of food) will not be tolerated.

Mexico’s Quiñones: Faced racism, nearly joined guerrillas but now national hero



The delirious Azteca crowd chanted “Quiñones, Quiñones...” They showered beer and flung cardboard sombreros at their newfound object of affection, Julian Quiñones. The forward, drenching in the adulation after putting Mexico in front before setting up the second in the Ecuador rout, asked them to amplify the volume. The chant must have been music to his ears, for two years ago, the Mexican city of Guadalajara had shouted his name too, but with racial slurs prefixed.He is a Colombian by birth, his parents of Afro-Colombian ancestry. He became a naturalised Mexican citizen in 2023. But the past clung on like an invisible sword. He knows he has to prove that he is Mexican every time he steps onto the field; he knows he will be judged by his race and origins when he fails. So, he simply ensures that he gives little chance for them to dig up his past. He scored the first goal of the World Cup, a devilish strike against South Africa; in the round-of-16 encounter against the sturdily defending Ecuadorians, he pinched a goal that blended blinding pace, technical purity and savage beauty.

He was strolling on the left, when Jesus Gallardo snatched the ball from Ecuador. Quiñones, sensing a pass, set off, ensured that he beat the off-side trap, gathered the ball, cut inside into the box, dummied the right-back Alan Franco and threw the proverbial kitchen sink at the ball. He intentionally did not impart any spin, lest the revolutions would take the ball over the crossbar. He chose pure power and precision. Straightaway, he kissed the badge, displaying to the world how much he loves it. “Representing my country is the most important thing, and I give everything in training to make that happen,” he had once said.The slicker piece of work had to wait. Ten minutes on, Raul Jimenez latched onto Joel Ordóñez’s scuffed clearance and passed to Quiñones. Franco again converged onto him. He paused, let him snap his leg and nonchalantly bunted the ball to Jimenez’s path. The striker

did not falter, and immediately after the celebrations, rose from the ground and kissed the assist provider. At 29, an obscure Colombia-born forward was fuelling Mexico’s dreams. Not only does he contribute with goals but also brings fight and energy. Goals to him are secondary, winning the ball is primary, he said after the South Africa game.Mexico’s Julian Quinones (16) scores their first goal against Ecuador in Mexico City. Mexico’s Julian Quinones (16) scores their first goal against Ecuador in Mexico City. (

The Saudi-league tragic, though, wouldn’t be totally shocking. Last season, playing for Al Qadsiah. He stumped Cristiano Ronaldo and Ivan Toney to helm the goalscoring charts (33 goals, besides four assists). His first season had earned him 25 goals as well. But he would humbly tell a Saudi League interviewer: “I am nobody to compete with him. Just tell me how many fans I have?”The World Cup performance would swell his fanbase. Childhood coach Cesar Valencia is already one. “Knowing where he comes from and how far he’s come isn’t easy. It’s not easy. The number of obstacles he’s faced, the number of problems he’s had. And he always held his head high, always gave 120%,” he told ESPN Mexico.He was raised in Magui Payan, a town located in southern Colombia within the notorious Telembí Triangle — a region battered by violence and armed conflict. A guerrilla group nearly forced him to join them. His father left the family when he was a toddler. Football was his escape. His mother who worked in a store couldn’t afford a pair of football boots. So he spent most of his childhood playing football barefoot. “It helped him because he developed incredibly strong ankles. It gave him balance and power in his movements,” Valencia reflected. Finally, Valencia dug into his own savings and brought him a pair of shoes.In 2014, he attended a trial for Fútbol Paz, an academy scouting for talented players from across Colombia. He cleared it, and two years later, he caught the eyes of Mexican club Tigres UANL, and shifted to Mexico, where he consistently hit double digits in scoring charts. But he couldn’t hide the colour of skin in a country that proclaims it has no race, that it welcomes all races. He chose to suffer in silence; he locked himself out of social media and quietly slipped into the moneyed shores of Saudi. But his allegiance to Mexico never wavered, and when manager Javier “El Vasco” Aguirre summoned him to the national team, he had no second thoughts.Valencia calls him lion, “because he always attacked the goal”, though his teammates called him panther. At Azteca, he roared like a lion, and kept proving his loyalty to his adopted country with deeds. And how musical it would have been for him to hear the spectators chant his name, through a night of celebrations with fireworks and palomas without racial prefixes.

Ecuador’s Hincapié red-carded for covering mouth before World Cup exit in Mexico



Ecuador left-back Piero Hincapié became the first player to be red-carded for covering his mouth in a FIFA World Cup knockout match, moments before his side crashed out of the tournament in a 0-2 defeat to Mexico in the Round of 32 match in Mexico City.When Ecuador’s substitute Páez was booked with a yellow card for a rash swipe in stoppage time, Hincapié was seen having a go at Mexico’s Santiago Giménez with his mouth covered. After Giménez appealed to the referee, a VAR decision deemed Hincapié to have violated the newly introduced rule at the World Cup.The new rule empowers referees to eject players who hide their mouths during run-ins with opponents. The International Football Association Board’s (IFAB) Law 12 stipulates a straight red card for players “using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s)”. Referees rely on what they hear, their

assistants and the video assistant referee’s (VAR) inputs, as well as players’ reactions and the context of the incident.

During the World Cup group stages, Paraguay’s Miguel Almirón had become the first casualty of FIFA’s new rule when he was sent off by the referee during the Turkey vs Paraguay match for covering his mouth during a verbal exchange with a Turkish player.With the new rule, the referee will have more discretion in trying to ascertain the nature of conversation between opposing players. Banter is not a problem, but if the official sees a player covering their mouth with a hand, arm or shirt in a confrontation, a send-off is prescribed.Mexico continues record runMeanwhile, co-hosts Mexico continued their spotless run in the tournament, setting a Round of 16 date with the winner of the England-Congo DR match to be played later tonight.Goals from Julian Quinones and Raul Jimenez meant that the Mexicans were up by multiple goals in the first half of a World Cup match for the first time ever across 64 games. Their win streak has extended to four successive games, making them the first time in 36 years since Italy in 1990 to begin a World Cup with such a triumphant streak.Ecuador will be smarting from the abrupt end to their tournament, given that they have been the second-most successful South American side through the qualifiers leading up to the showpiece quadrennial event this time. Mexico’s win also marked their first win over a South American side other than Colombia in the World Cup across 15 matches.

Most goals in FIFA World Cup 2026: Mbappe pips Messi, breaks knockout record in R32



FIFA World Cup 2026 Leading Goal-scorers: Kylian Mbappe continued his sensational World Cup goal-scoring form as France routed Sweden 3-0 in the Round of 32 match on Tuesday night.Mbappe secured a brace as France proceeded to the Round of 16, where they will face Paraguay on July 5. The French captain, who is featuring in his third World Cup, shattered the all-time knockout goals record, securing nine goals in as many appearances at the World Cup. Mbappe is also breathing down Argentina superstar Lionel Messi’s neck on the all-time World Cup goal-scoring charts as he stormed to his 18th goal in as many appearances in the tournament, only one behind Messi’s tally of 19 across six editions.“I’m very aware of who I am, how I play, what I shall do, but it’s not just about me,” Mbappé said through a translator. “The entire team is aware of what should be done. It is a new competition that has started today. We did play well, but we were timid. We could have done better at the beginning.”Mbappe leads the Golden Boot race ahead of Messi with an additional assist to his name, besides six goals. Meanwhile, Norway heavyweight Erling Haaland is also in the thick of things after netting a 86th-minute

winner over Ivory Coast, taking his tally to five goals in his maiden World Cup appearance. France forward Ousmane Dembele and Brazil spearhead Vinicius Junior also remain firmly in the race, with four goals apiece.

Iga Swiatek survives first-round scare to advance at Wimbledon 2026

London: Defending champion Iga Swiatek survived a huge scare before winning her opening match against the world No.79 Taylor Townsend in three sets at the 2026 Wimbledon at the All-England Club in London on Tuesday, joining last year’s finalist Amanda Anisimova and Karolina Pliskova in the second round.The Polish star won her last 20 games here last year to lift her sixth Grand Slam title, and the world No.3 continued in the same vein as she raced to the first set on her return to Centre Court in only 31 minutes.But cheered on by her friends Naomi Osaka and Katerina Siniakova, the American left-hander Townsend fought back to level the match and force a deciding set.However, Swiatek held her nerve to win 6-1, 2-6, 6-3 in two hours and two minutes.There are still only two defending Wimbledon ladies’ champions who have lost in the first round – Steffi Graf in 1994 and Marketa Vondrousova in 2024. Siwatek avoided that fate on Tuesday but will have to be careful in her upcoming matches.Earlier in the day, Anisimova and Pliskova made confident starts to their campaigns, producing straight-set victories to advance to the second round.

A hug, a tear, a statement: France honour Deschamps with Sweden win



A banner with flowers embroidered on its side greeted France manager Didier Deschamps, returning from his mother’s death, into the Metlife Arena. The message was simple but touching: “Didier, we are with you.” The emcee stopped the hip-hop music. The players performed their warm-up drills with an unusual sombreness. After the national anthem was rendered, the French fans chorused: “C’est vous, Didi!” You are the man.The understated French manager would be the man of the evening, although Kylian Mbappe nailed two goals of artful precision, Bradley Barcola exhibited his velvet feet with a goal cut from silk, and his flying Les Bleu eviscerated Sweden’s iron-willed defence, winning the Round of 32 match 3-0. The signs are ominous for teams destined to stumble into them, shepherded by a manager that walks without aura or vanity.

The arena was so emotionally charged that Deschamps eventually broke down. He shed a tear when he staggered to the tunnel. Mbappe, putting France ahead, turned back and ran towards his manager, yelling and pointing his index finger towards, “C’est pour vous.” It is for you. Sweating profusely in New Jersey, he tightly hugged Deschamps, who whispered a thanks in his ears and clung onto him. The French players joined them, and embraced their manager. He turned back, and the cameras soaked his eyes that had turned red.Mbappe considers him as a father figure, an unwavering pillar of support during his lean days. He handed him the leap of faith debut in the tournament against Argentina in 2018; he spent months consoling him after the heartbreak of Qatar in 2022 and the European Championship in between; he defended him when rumours of rift swirled in the dressing room.“Kilian—whether you like him or not—the youngsters love him. You have the image of a selfish, individualistic guy, and of course, a striker must also be selfish, but I can assure you that in the French national team, he acts like a captain,” he defended him last year. Most of all, no manager has harnessed his gifts as much as Deschamps has.

Mbappe loves him back too. “He is my comfort zone. He brings a lot of calm into the dressing, never loses his cool, and gives us the liberty to play in our way. It’s a misconception that he is a defensive coach,” he said during the Nations League in February.That label no longer fits. Deschamps has pragmatic traits, a spillage of virtues from his days as a grim defensive midfielder. The condescending nickname still lingers: the water carrier. But a number from the 1998 World Cup is often forgotten: That no one made as many touches as Deschamps in the en-

Late Erling Haaland winner takes Norway past Ivory Coast and into last 16



It had been 28 years since Norway last played a FIFA World Cup knockout game, but it was well worth the wait for the Nordic country when they beat a valiant Ivory Coast 2-1 with a late goal from, who else, Erling Haaland.The match seemed to be progressing towards extra time when the Manchester City phenom found the net with a rather fortuitous finish past goalkeeper Yahia Fofana after a square pass from Patrick Berg.The Scandinavians were set on their way by Antonio Nusa with a sumptuous curling strike in the first half, before Amad Diallo put the cat among the pigeons with an equally eye-catching equaliser with a little over a quarter of an hour of normal time left.Tranquility reigned supreme in Dallas for 37 minutes. Perhaps unexpectedly so, given Norway’s reputation as one of the tournament’s most prolific attacking forces. Ståle Solbakken’s side had plundered 37 goals in eight qualifying matches before adding another eight in the group stage. Leading the line for the team was Haaland, who had scored 20 of those 45 goals, and required only 43 minutes to become his nation’s leading goal-scorer at the World Cup.

What was overlooked in the build-up to the Round of 32 game, however, was Ivory Coast’s defensive prowess. Emerse Faé’s side had not conceded a goal across 10 qualifying matches and showed little inclination to surrender that record here. The plan seemed to be working. Haaland had only one touch in the first 20 minutes, and Norway had only a tame half-attempt in the first 37.Norway’s Erling Haaland (9) poses after the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between Ivory Coast and Norway in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas, Tuesday, June 30, 2026. (AP Photo/Jessica Tobias) Norway’s Erling Haaland (9) poses after the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between Ivory Coast and Norway in Arlington, Texas, near Dallas, Tuesday, June 30, 2026. (AP Photo/Jessica Tobias)

That was until Nusa took matters into his own hands. Three orange shirts marked the winger when he received a pass from captain Martin Odegaard down the right flank. The goal arrived exactly three seconds later, following a sequence of events: sending Nicolas Pepe the wrong way with a magician’s deception, opening his body with a gymnast’s flexibility, and curling a shot between Franck

tire tournament. He was the team’s backbone, if Zinedine Zidane was its brain. He never won his dues as a player; as a manager it’s time he should. He is a World Cup winner (as player and coach), a finalist in another World Cup and European Championship. Yet, he goes uncelebrated. Maybe, it is the way he wants to, existing in the shadows.

Even his 2026 batch, the most attractive French iteration of this century, is viewed as a happenstance of dizzying attacking talents rather than the manager harnessing the individual potential to an awesome collection of artistes. He has found a way to combine both, Mbappe and Dembele, and let Michael Olisse blossom into his team’s creative thrust’. He has enabled Desire Doue and Bradley Barcola to flourish.

The results are bewildering. France has shipped in only two goals and netted 10. His group has the keys to unlock any defences. For 30 minutes, Sweden did all they could to block them. Four-men defence became five, five became six, then they dug a trench. Yet, France harassed them in a variety of ways. First with long rangers, then with clever runs through the channels, then with fast transitions, with Olise and Barcola switching roles. It was simply maddening for the Swedes. Twice the post denied them. One was a jaw-dropping overhead kick by Olise. The other was Mbappe’s low curler with a millimetre more whip than he would have desired for.Goals were but a certainty. So they came. Mbappe’s first came after Olise and Dembele exchanged a one-two from a short corner. Dembele preened to his right, and dropped the ball to the left. Mbappe travelled diagonally and picked the ball. He dropped the shoulder, feigned a step-over and viciously veered to the right, wedged through two Swedish shirts, the first layer of firewall, before threading his shot through the narrow alley between the second line of defence. His second strike was ruthlessly efficient, with a curling finish.Barcola, who started the game instead of Doue for his diligence in running behind the three forwards, scored a delicious goal. He controlled the ball flying away from him with the outside of his right boot and whipped the ball home. Olise was the silent conductor, stamping his intuitive passing in each of the three goals France scored.The evening ended with the usual frolics. Mbappe and Co engaged with the crowd, dancing on the ground and blowing kisses towards the fans. They patiently waited for Deschamps to return after his media commitments, so that they could tell him once more that they are with him in his grief. The evening his troops strung a nerveless exhibition of attacking, artistic football, Deschamps was the man.

Kessie and Fofana with an archer’s accuracy.With their fort breached, Ivory Coast had only one option in the second half — to throw the kitchen sink. They did so, and then threw some more. Nine attempts in the second half, as opposed to five in the first. Eventually, in the 74th minute, their persistence was rewarded.Diallo glided beyond David Møller Wolfe and Sander Berge as though neither existed before steering an immaculate finish beyond Ørjan Nyland. At 1-1, momentum had swung decisively in favour of the African side.The game seemed destined for extra time, when Ivory Coast learned why Haaland is inexorable. Oscar Bobb sliced through Faé’s prized defence with a perfectly weighted pass into Berg. The midfielder’s task was simple: return the ball into the danger area with complete faith that Haaland would occupy the space. He did, as he so often does.The chaos engineered by Nusa and Haaland had broken through the proud defensive wall of the Ivorians, not once but twice.When asked why he loves chaos, Nusa once replied: “Because my idol Neymar creates chaos on the pitch with his dribbling, just like me.” Haaland has offered his own variation on the theme: “I enjoy the chaos around me.”

Debutant Suryansh Shedge says wearing India jersey is a dream come true

Hyderabad: Suryansh Shedge, who made his debut for India in the T20 internationals against Ireland last week, said that the first time he really cried watching cricket was when India won the 2011 World Cup. “That night, watching the Indian team lift the trophy, something changed inside me. I knew that this is what I want to do, represent my country on the biggest stage. From that day, I started working towards that dream,” Suryansh said on the JioStar TV show. “I knew it wouldn’t be easy, but I was ready to give it everything. When I received the Indian jersey and wore it for the first time, I can’t describe that feeling. All those early mornings, the hard work, the sacrifices, it all felt worth it. I have worked for this since childhood. Wearing that jersey is not just a dream come true; it’s the start of a new journey,” he said. On Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Suryansh said: “His mentality is incredible. He genuinely enjoys batting and never overcomplicates things. He has such a strong belief in his ability that even if he gets out for a duck, he doesn’t let it affect him. He backs himself to score a hundred off 30 balls in the next game.” “That kind of self-belief is rare. He doesn’t carry any baggage from the previous ball or the previous match. He lives in the moment and plays with complete freedom. That is what makes him so dangerous. He is the perfect example of being instinctive and playing without fear,” the India all-rounder said

Sudha Kongara moves Madras HC against Parasakthi makers over Rs 8.39 cr unpaid dues



After being mired in a censorship hurdle ahead of its January 2026 release, the Tamil period political action drama Parasakthi has once again found itself embroiled in controversy, with its director, Sudha Kongara, moving the Madras High Court against its producers over unpaid remuneration. Sudha reportedly claimed in her petition that she has yet to receive about Rs 8.39 crore from Dawn Pictures, which bankrolled Parasakthi, for her work on the film.Sudha Kongara demands stay on Idhayam MuraliMeanwhile, Sudha has also sought a stay on the release of director Aakash Baskaran's Idhayam Murali, also produced by Dawn Pictures. Idhayam Murali is scheduled to hit the screens on Friday, July 10, with its promotions progressing in full swing. The film features Atharvaa, Kayadur Lohar, Fahadh Faasil, Preity Mukundhan, and S Thaman in key roles.

Must Read | Anirudh Ravichander to marry SRH owner Kavya Maran, says uncle: 'It's a sure thing'In her petition, Sudha reportedly claimed that despite invoices

Ram Kapoor misbehaves with Lock Upp host Farah Khan: 'Nikal do, I am not going to change'



One of the biggest names on Lock Upp: Sach Ya Sazaa is actor Ram Kapoor, and he has been grabbing attention for all the wrong reasons. From the show's first day, Ram has been honest about himself; however, he has also said some inappropriate things. Earlier this week, the Bade Achhe Lagte Hai actor defended infidelity, and in the latest episode, Ram misbehaved with the show's host, Farah Khan. After Farah asked him to improve his game and be proactive, the actor didn't take her feedback quite seriously and kept answering back, leaving Farah irritated.

Ram Kapoor vs Farah KhanOn the latest episode of the show, Farah Khan filed 'chargesheets' against 5 contestants who stand to be evicted from the show. The filmmaker also gave feedback to Madhuri Grover, Shivangi Joshi, Dheeraj Dhoopar, Riyaz Aly, and Ram Kapoor. While others took note, Ram Kapoor chose to disregard her opinions and kept answering back. Farah Khan said, "Ram, every show you do, you are playing the lead, and here you have become a background actor. It is not funny; you are one of the biggest names in this show." Reacting to this, Ram said, "I am the way I am. It's funny for me,

Choreographer Bosco Martis hospitalised after chest discomfort

Choreographer Bosco MartisChoreographer Bosco Martis is currently under medical observation, with initial reports said to be normal.Popular Bollywood choreographer Bosco Leslie Martis has been admitted to Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital after experiencing chest congestion and discomfort. According to reports, Bosco sought medical advice after feeling uneasy, following which doctors recommended hospitalisation as a precaution for further evaluation and necessary medical procedures.According to a report by India Today, Bosco Martis was admitted to the hospital on June 27 and has remained under medical observation since then. He has undergone multiple tests and scans.The report also shared that his initial test results are normal, but doctors are continuing to monitor his condition and conduct additional examinations before deciding on his discharge.News of Bosco Martis' hospitalisation surfaced after photos from his hospital room went viral online, showing the ace choreographer in a patient gown beside a pulse monitoring device. The images quickly sparked concern among fans and members of the film fraternity.

However, an official medical update from the doctors or a statement from Bosco or his team on his condition is still awaited.Widely regarded as one of Bollywood's most celebrated choreographers, Bosco, best known for his long-running collaboration with Caesar Gonsalves as the duo Bosco-Caesar, has choreographed numerous hit songs and worked on over 75 films throughout his career.The duo Bosco-Caesar got their major breakthrough with Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai (2000), where their dance choreography earned widespread recognition. Since then, they have delivered several blockbuster tracks, including Tauba Tauba (Bad Newz), Señorita (Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara), Jhoomo Jo Pathaan (Pathaan), Ghungroo and Jai Jai Shivshankar (War), Laila Main Laila (Raees), and Gallan Goodiyaan (Dil Dhadakne Do),

being raised after she had fulfilled her duties, Dawn Pictures had yet to pay her a substantial portion of her remuneration.Informing the court that the production company was supposed to pay her a total of Rs 17.70 crore as remuneration, including Rs 2.70 crore GST, as per the agreement between them, the plaintiff stated that she has received only Rs 9.31 crore thus far.Pointing out that the producers had declared Parasakthi a success, claiming it earned Rs 100 crore, Sudha's counsel stated that she has still not been paid in full for her work. The counsel also apprised the court that, amid this, Dawn Pictures was proceeding with the release of Idhayam Murali while claiming an inability to clear Sudha's dues.Barring the satellite release of Parasakthi until July 8, Justice Kumaresh Babu of the Madras High Court directed the respondent to file its counter against Sudha's plea to stop Idhayam Murali's release by July 7. The matter will be heard again on Wednesday, July 8.From censorship hurdles to box office underperformanceOne of the biggest Tamil films of the year, Parasakthi, starring Sivakarthikeyan, Ravi Mohan, Atharvaa, and Sreeleela in the lead roles, hit the screens on January 10, coinciding with this year's Pongal season. However, the movie's release was uncertain until the last minute due to the non-receipt of a Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) nod. Nevertheless, the film received a UA 16+ certificate on January 9, just a day ahead of its scheduled release.Although Parasakthi was slated to lock horns at the box office with director H Vinodh's Jana Nayagan, which was supposed to be Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay's swansong before his full-fledged political entry, the latter's release was indefinitely postponed, also owing to censorship controversy.However, Parasakthi failed to capitalise on this and underperformed at the box office, grossing just Rs 85.10 crore worldwide, as per industry tracker Sacnilk, against a reported budget of Rs 150 crore. Nonetheless, Sudha's counsel has reportedly informed the court that Parasakthi was a success according to Dawn Pictures, and earned Rs 100 crore.

problem hai toh nikal do (evict me if you have a problem), I am not going to change."Farah further argued, "What are you doing? Lecturing people, you are not like this. You know what happens to people who don't change? They become dinosaurs." Ram replied, "Then I will become a dinosaur." Farah added, "Not only as a host but as your friend and a well-wisher, I am telling you this..." Ram quickly snapped and added, "I am me. I am this. That's it." Eventually, an irritated Farah Khan said, "His charges should have been different, should have been called stubborn a**." Reacting to this, Ram loudly yelled, "Yeah".

Earlier to this, Ram Kapoor also kissed a fellow contestant on the lip. While they were joking about something, Ram mentioned to Sunita Ahuja, "I got married at 30, became a father at 33 and 36..." Varun Yadav quickly added, "And then you cheated at 40..." while Ram took the joke, he later caught hold of Varun and kissed him on the lips. The social media influencer didn't object to this action.

Shivangi Joshi reveals being engaged

Yeh Rishita Kya Kehlata Hai actress Shivangi Joshi was also told to stick to her stand. While Shivangi kept overthinking about Farah Khan's feedback, during a conversation with Shreya Kalra, she mentioned that something had happened in her personal life two years back, and that changed her. When Shreya asked Shivangi what she liked, the actress said, "I don't know, nothing anymore. There was a phase in my life until 2 years back when I enjoyed everything. But then something happened, and things changed. You can understand what I am talking about. The things that I used to like and love were gone. I have changed as a person."Discussing the breakup further, Shreya asked Shivangi if she didn't try to move on. The actress added, "Of course, I have moved on, but I've changed as a person. I want to get married, so I will get married straight away. I am engaged by the way."While many assumed this to be a dig from Shivangi over her fake engagement reports, the actress didn't reveal more details on the same



Popular Bollywood choreographer Bosco Leslie Martis has been admitted to Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital after experiencing chest congestion and discomfort. According to reports, Bosco sought medical advice after feeling uneasy, following which doctors recommended hospitalisation as a precaution for further evaluation and necessary medical procedures.

among many others.Over the years, Bosco has worked with some of Indian cinema's biggest stars, including Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Hrithik Roshan, Ranbir Kapoor, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt. His next project is Alpha, starring Alia Bhatt.

Why Ishan Shukla felt the need to trace Amarendra Baahubali's afterlife in The Eternal War



The primary star cast of SS Rajamouli's blockbuster Telugu action epic fantasy franchise Baahubali may have teased an upcoming threequel, but much before that would come Baahubali: The Eternal War, a two-part animated spin-off on Amarendra Baahubali, played by Prabhas in the live-action films. Last week, it was featured in the work-in-progress section at the Annecy Animation Film Festival, the most prestigious animation festival of the world, in France. In an exclusive interview with SCREEN, Baahubali: The Eternal War director Ishan Shukla discusses the genesis and scope of the project, Rajamouli's involvement, and blending mythology with animation.Baahubali: The Eternal War is in the work-in-progress section at Annecy Animation Film Festival. What is the work in progress at this point?

We've finished pre-production. We've been in production for the past six months, but animation takes a very long time. We're aiming for a 2027 release.

Can you take us back to the genesis of this project?

Back in 2024, I was travelling to festivals with my film Schirkoa: In Lies We Trust. It was very well received and generated a bit of buzz. Sobhu Yarlagaadda, head of Arka Media Works, who produced the Baahubali films, watched the film, reached out to me, and said we should do something together since the synergies are matching. At that time, he mentioned they were planning to take Baahubali into the animated space. That was also on my mind, to create an alternate Baahubali animated universe like Sony Pictures did with Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse. I thought about it for a long time, wrote a story, and pitched him the concept art about what happens to Amarendra Baahubali after his death. He liked the idea, took us to Rajamouli, and then it started developing there.

But how did you zero in on this idea of Amarendra Baahubali's afterlife?

I'm a huge fan of Amar Chitra Katha, and have been reading it since forever. I thought if the story happens only on Earth or Bhu Loka, as we call it, I would get really grounded by the physicality of it. If you think of any of our scriptures, the spectrum is pretty wide. It's not just about a single planet or star system, but covers multiple dimensions and galaxies. We're so used to it that we don't even think about whether there's a Swarga Loka or a Pataal Lok. So, I wanted to take Amarendra Baahubali into a completely different realm altogether.Prabhas as Amarendra Baahubali in Baahubali The Beginning. Prabhas as Amarendra Baahubali in Baahubali The Beginning.

Did you feel there was some unfinished business with Amarendra Baahubali's arc in Baahubali: The Beginning?

I do think so. Although there's a good payoff at the end (of Baahubali 2: The Conclusion) when his son avenges everything. But for me, he's slightly more of a favourite for me than his son because of the choices he made and what he used to stand for. He stood by his mother even when she was doing something wrong. I think it was like the Rama character, too pure. When something tragic happens to this person, you feel that there should've been more. We're primarily trying to explore what he's thinking now that he's dead and what are the choices he's going to make now in the afterlife.

Does he know the answer to the question that haunted us for a year: why did Katappa kill Baahubali?

No, and that's the most tragic. Philosophically speaking, it's tragic because Amarendra Baahubali would never know what he would've been had he not been killed. There are so many stories of Medieval India where these people die when they're supposed to become kings, and they never even get to know why. That limited information is even tragic.Baahubali: The Beginning ended with Katappa killing Amarendra Baahubali. Baahubali: The Beginning ended with Katappa Killing Amarendra Baahubali.

Did Rajamouli also feel Amarendra Baahubali deserved more screentime?

He didn't mention that specifically, but what he really liked that the expansion is very natural. It doesn't feel forced because when he dies, obviously, he's going into going into some loka. And I got to know he also loves Amar Chitra Katha, anime, and gaming. I thought there would be a gap, but we could brainstorm very freely. It was so much fun! The coolest thing was he makes you locate the core issue around which everything will go around. He also suggested that since the scope is very big, it'd be better to break it into movies. Then we decided what would be the breaking up point. It was very encouraging for me.

So, are you working on part 2 simultaneously?

Yes, it's basically one big story split into two films. We're not working on the production of part 2 yet, but yes, some pre-production work is going on simultaneously.Since Rajamouli is primarily busy with Varanasi, how involved has he been in this project? Because while you're an expert in animation, he's the master of scale. How much is he contributing on that front?

I've done Star Wars: Visions before this. So, that gave him the confidence that I can handle this. But this is too big. What's great about Rajamouli sir and Sobhu is that they check on you only during the milestones. So, they read the script, gave it a go ahead, and provided suggestions. He's very busy with Varanasi right now, so the last proper meeting we had was last year. Basically, his primary sign-off is on the script. We're free to do our own thing, but we just do these quarterly check-ins. Right now, he's super busy, so that's not possible as frequently.

How important was to have the original voices of Prabhas as Amarendra Baahubali and Ramya Krishnan as Sivagami in animation?

It's actually important to have them. It's primarily Sivagami's story. So as soon as you hear a different voice, it becomes jarring for the fans. They're used to that per-

sona and voice. In animation, the voices drive everything. We record the voices first and then create the performances. Prabhas loves the idea and the visuals, and he's contributing his voice even in other languages.So, Sharad Kelkar wouldn't dub for Prabhas in Hindi this time?Yes, that's the plan.

Do you think this blend of mythology and animation will emerge as India's USP in the global animation market?

I'm very optimistic about it. As a filmmaker, I do feel that if you want to tell something larger than life, animation is the perfect medium. We're at a conversion point where things are working for India in animation. We've gained momentum in the past two-three years. We had such conversion points in the past as well, but they didn't materialize into anything bigger. We just ended up becoming a service industry. Now, I feel the next five years are going to be a game-changer. I'm saying this based on the reception for the teaser. There were people not from India, who didn't even know it's an Indian movie, getting curious to know more about devas and asuras. Someone asked me what's the dance Baahubali is doing, and I told them it's tandav.Now that a two-part live-action adaptation of the Ramayana is in the works, it's being compared to Yugo Sako's 1993 anime adaptation, Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama, since it's considered the gold standard till date. Do you think animation has an edge over live action when it comes to mythology?That's precisely what I'm saying. There are some stories which can be told only in animation. If you try to realise them in live action, they start to look weird and gimmicky, especially when it comes to gods. We're used to imagining them or seeing their paintings. As soon as you put a face to them, we can't relate to them. There are a lot of things that can happen. Ramayana and Mahabharata adaptations can co-exist in both live action and animation. It's nice because then more people would get to know about them. I know people who can't watch too much animation or too much live action. So, it's also about who we're making it for. I'm making it for myself. I enjoy this kind of animation, and slowly, people are also enjoying it.Ranbir Kapoor as Rama in the live-action adaptation of the Ramayana. Ranbir Kapoor as Rama in the live-action adaptation of the Ramayana.What do you think has caused this shift towards animation in India?During Covid, a lot of people began watching a lot of anime. Not that they weren't before that, but almost every person I know was watching some anime or other. A lot of them started playing video games because they couldn't go out. So, once they got exposed to it, there was a thirst for local storytelling. Pre-Covid, if you had any Indian animation project, people weren't used to watching it. It was a bit jarring for them.

Baahubali set such high standards that the Netflix India prequel series on Sivagami was cancelled even after it was shot. Do you feel the pressure of taking on the legacy of Baahubali?

There's definitely pressure from fans. I really want to make sure we get it right. I've actually moved from Delhi to Hyderabad with my family because it's a long gestation period. I know the love for Baahubali so much that I sense it all the time. But once the teaser was released, the pressure was eased. The film is very stylized in the way it looks, and the idea of afterlife is very out there. There was definitely some skepticism about whether people would take it, but now that they've accepted it, I feel a little less stressed.

What are some animated movies that have influenced the style of Baahubali: The Eternal War?

There are too many North Stars to name, actually. The animation style is the painterly CGI animation, which has become mainstream in the past six years. From sweet-looking, photorealistic Disney Pixar films, we see a little more of a hand-painted touch to the movies. It started with video games in 2010-11, and then moved to films. When Spider-Verse came out, it showed the world animation can look like concept art. Dishonored (2012), a video game which came out a long time ago, and Arcane (2021, Netflix) were also interpretations of the same style. Animation style has become more artist-driven now instead of everyone wrapping it in photorealistic, plastic-y forms, which is very refreshing and liberating.Also Read — Salman Khan to leave Galaxy after 52 years, gets approval for new 6-storey home: reportFinally, how much Artificial Intelligence are you using in this project?I dabble a little in AI because I feel it's going to become very big in the near future. It's intoxicating a lot of things, but I feel once you start feeding it your own creative style, it does better, but still not up to the mark. So, my use of AI is limited to the very early stages of pre-production, when there are no artists attached, to inform my writing. Using it in production is still a few years away. I'm an artist myself, so I want every step of the process to be touched by an artist, unless AI has a very good backpacking. It makes a mundane part of my filmmaking easier, which is more about the backend and not what artists are touching.

'Irumudi Kattu' from Ravi Teja's 'Irumudi' unveiled by makers

Hyderabad: The makers of director Shiva Nirvana's upcoming film, 'Irumudi', featuring actors Ravi Teja and Priya Bhavani Shankar in the lead, on Monday released the first single from the film, 'Irumudi Kattu', much to the delight of fans and film buffs.

Taking to his X timeline to share the video of the first single, actor Ravi Teja wrote, "SWAMIYE SARANAM AYYAPPA. Bringing you all our first single #IrumudiKattu from #Irumudi in Telugu & Tamil. In cinemas from August 21st!"The song is a devotional number that Ayyappa devotees are shown singing in the film. Set to tune by G V Prakash, the number has lyrics by Shiva Nirvana and Kalyan Chakravarthy. It has been rendered by Ananthu.The film has been garnering attention ever since the makers released a glimpse video.The glimpse video released shows Ravi Teja lovingly taking care of his daughter in the film. The child, it is evident, is in a very happy space with her father. However, the glimpse video hints at something tragic happening. As a result, we see Ravi Teja turn violent. He also takes to drinking. When his daughter urges him to quit alcohol, we see him become an Ayyappa devotee and wear the sacred mala to take back control of his life and kick the dreaded habit.