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Vinesh Makes India Proud

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday allowed wrestler Vinesh Phogat to participate in the selection trials for the 2026 Asian Games, while expressing concern over allegations related to a missed doping test and stressing the importance of maintaining sporting integrity. A Bench comprising Justice P.S. Narasimha and Justice Alok Aradhe was hearing a petition concerning Vinesh Phogat's eligibility for the Asian Games selection process. During the proceedings, the Court observed that the case involved balancing an athlete's right to compete with the need to uphold anti-doping regulations and fair selection standards. The Bench pointed to records indicating that Vinesh had allegedly missed a doping test, describing it as a "serious lapse" that required a satisfactory explanation. Justice Narasimha remarked that the issue raised two disturbing aspects and emphasized that compliance with anti-doping requirements could not be treated lightly.



Voluntary Sex Work Legal

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has issued comprehensive guidelines to strengthen the identification, rescue, protection and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. The court emphasized a victim-centric approach that safeguards dignity, confidentiality and informed consent. A key aspect of the ruling is the distinction between human trafficking and voluntary adult sex work. The court observed that prostitution and trafficking cannot be treated as the same and directed authorities to determine whether an adult sex worker is acting voluntarily or is a victim of coercion or exploitation. The apex court also directed better coordination among law enforcement agencies, welfare departments and rehabilitation institutions to ensure effective support for trafficking survivors. The matter will be reviewed after 3 months to assess compliance with the guidelines.



Don't Fail Young Aspirants

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Centre to submit a detailed plan on strengthening the National Testing Agency (NTA) and making the NEET examination system fool-proof. The court emphasized the need to prevent a repeat of the controversies and alleged irregularities that affected the medical entrance exam in recent years. A bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe observed that examination lapses can cause immense stress and uncertainty for students. "It is actually very traumatic if something like this happens. We should not disappoint our youngsters," the bench remarked. The court asked the Centre to explain how the NTA would build institutional expertise, deploy specialized personnel, and improve its overall functioning. It also warned that accountability must be fixed if such incidents occur again. Representing the Centre, Solicitor General informed the court that the government is taking the issue seriously.

Selling Access to God?

All Devotees Are Equal Before God.. Madras HC Questions VIP Darshan System

Chennai: In a significant observation that has reignited the debate over special privileges in temples, the Madras High Court remarked that all devotees are equal before God and questioned the very need for VIP and paid darshan systems that often result in long waiting hours for ordinary devotees. Hearing a petition challenging special darshan arrangements in temples, a division bench comprising Justices G.R. Swaminathan and V. Lakshminarayanan made strong oral observations against preferential treatment in places of worship. "Even the President would be the same before God. Why do we need VIP darshan? If I pay extra money, can I go and hug the deity?" the judges remarked, underscoring the principle that faith should not be influenced by social status or financial capacity. The petition was filed by P. Chockalingam, president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), who sought the abolition of VIP darshan, break



darshan and special paid ticket systems in temples administered by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department. He argued that while privileged devotees receive quicker access, common pilgrims are often forced to wait for several hours to have a glimpse of the deity. The petitioner, however, clarified that special arrangements for senior

citizens, differently-abled persons, pregnant women, newly married couples and devotees participating in religious rituals should continue in the interest of convenience and welfare. He also requested the court to direct temples to provide wheelchairs for elderly devotees. Responding to the petition, Additional Advocate General P.V. Balasubramanian submitted that payment for special darshan is not compulsory and that the fee-based system is primarily intended to regulate crowd management and reduce congestion inside temple premises. He sought additional time to file a detailed counter-affidavit on behalf of the government. Accepting the request, the High Court adjourned the matter for six weeks. The court's observations have sparked fresh discussion on whether temples should continue to offer paid and VIP access. Critics argue that such systems create inequality in places meant to promote spiritual equality.

Deadline for Justice

New Delhi: In a landmark move aimed at tackling judicial delays, the Supreme Court has invoked Article 142 of the Constitution to issue binding directions to all High Courts for the timely delivery of judgments. The ruling underscores scores that justice delayed is justice denied and seeks to restore public confidence in the judicial system. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant directed that all reserved judgments must be pronounced within three months. Court also laid down strict timelines for bail matters, stating that bail orders should be delivered on the same day or, if reserved, on the following day. Further, once regular bail is granted, the order must be immediately communicated to the trial court, ensuring that undertrial prisoners are released without unnecessary delay after completing formalities. The apex court also mandated that all judgments be uploaded on High Court websites within 24 hours of pronouncement. Importantly, it clarified that the date on which the operative

portion of a judgment is pronounced will be treated as the official date of the judgment itself. The ruling came while hearing a case involving prolonged delays in pronouncing and uploading judgments, particularly in the Jharkhand High Court. The Supreme Court emphasized that High Courts serve as the first major forum where citizens seek justice and that timely decisions are essential for maintaining the credibility of democratic institutions. While issuing the directions, the Court clarified that its intention was not to criticize any particular judge or institution. Instead, the guidelines are meant to strengthen judicial efficiency and ensure that litigants are not left waiting indefinitely for verdicts that directly affect their lives and liberties. The decision is significant because Article 142 empowers the Supreme Court to pass orders necessary for "complete justice." By using this constitutional authority, the Court has effectively created a nationwide framework to reduce delays.

12 Dead in Pune Hooch Tragedy

Pune: At least 12 people died and three others were hospitalised after consuming suspected methanol-laced liquor in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad. Police arrested eight persons, including a key bootlegger, as investigations intensified. Seven deaths were reported from Phugewadi in Pimpri Chinchwad and five from Hadapsar in Pune. Authorities are awaiting forensic and postmortem reports to confirm the exact cause of death. State Excise officials said a suspect involved in supplying the toxic liquor to both areas has been detained. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis described the incident as "very serious" and said the entire illegal liquor supply network had been identified, with more arrests expected. Meanwhile, opposition leaders criticised the government over the tragedy, alleging failure to curb illegal liquor operations despite repeated warnings.



At least six people are feared dead after an under-construction bridge collapsed in India's Uttar Pradesh state.

Telangana Govt Clears ₹2,000 Crore Employee Dues



Hyderabad, May 29: In a major relief to government employees and pensioners, the Telangana government has released ₹2,000 crore towards long-pending employee dues as part of its commitment to clear arrears worth ₹6,000 crore within 100 days. The first installment covers General Provident Fund (GPF) dues of retired employees and commutation dues pending up to May 2025. Orders for the release were issued by Finance Special Chief Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultania. The move follows assurances given by Chief Minister A Revanthy Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister

Bhatti Vikramarka to the Employees' Joint Action Committee regarding the settlement of long-pending financial claims. Government officials stated that the remaining ₹4,000 crore will be released within the promised timeline. The decision is expected to benefit thousands of serving and retired employees who have been awaiting settlement of their dues for several months. The release of funds is being seen as a significant step toward improving employee welfare and restoring confidence among government staff, while also fulfilling a key commitment made by the State government.

BRS Opposes Rythu DISCOM

Hyderabad, May 29: The BRS has opposed the Telangana government's proposal to create a separate "Rythu DISCOM" for agricultural power supply, alleging it is a step towards ending free electricity for farmers and privatising the power sector. At a public hearing before the Telangana Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC), former ministers Jagadish Reddy and Niranjan Reddy urged the Commission to reject the proposal. They argued that the existing 24-hour free power supply system has functioned effectively and warned that a separate DISCOM could weaken services to farmers. The leaders also questioned the government's announcement of launching the new DISCOM from June 2 before receiving ERC approval. Farmers' organisations echoed concerns, demanding that the existing DISCOMs be strengthened instead of creating a new entity.

Telangana Govt Clears 1 Lakh Affordable Homes

Hyderabad, May 29: The Telangana government has granted in-principle approval for the construction of one lakh affordable housing flats aimed at low- and middle-income families across urban areas of the State. The ambitious project will be implemented in Core Urban Region Economy (CURE) areas and municipal corporations under the guidelines of PMAY-Urban 2.0. According to Government Order (G.O. Ms. No. 23) issued by the Housing Department, the project will comprise 70,000 Low Income Group flats and 30,000 Middle Income Group flats. As a first step, the government has approved a pilot project involving 12,000 housing units to be developed by the Telangana Housing Board. To make housing more accessible, LIG beneficiaries will receive a subsidy of ₹5 lakh per flat. In addition, the cost of land will not be charged to beneficiaries and

will instead be treated as government or Housing Board equity. The flats, along with an undivided share of land, will be registered in the names of eligible beneficiaries. The government has directed officials to identify suitable government land after verifying ownership, land-use compliance and infrastructure feasibility. Authorities have also been instructed to prepare demand surveys, issue notifications and frame operational guidelines for smooth implementation of the scheme. Notably, the project will be executed without direct budgetary support from the government. The Telangana Housing Board will utilize its own resources and adopt special tendering procedures similar to those followed for the successful 2BHK housing scheme. Officials believe the initiative will significantly boost affordable housing availability in urban Telangana.

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EDITORIAL

Cities on the Boil

India's cities are entering a dangerous new era where extreme heat and water scarcity are no longer seasonal inconveniences but permanent urban threats. Every summer now arrives with record-breaking temperatures, shrinking reservoirs, water tankers crowding streets, and hospitals reporting rising cases of dehydration and heatstroke. Yet, despite repeated warnings from scientists and environmental experts, urban India remains shockingly unprepared. The crisis is not merely climatic; it is administrative. Rapid urbanisation has transformed cities into concrete islands that trap heat instead of absorbing it. Lakes, wetlands, and open spaces that once regulated local temperatures have disappeared under malls, gated communities, and flyovers. Trees are sacrificed for widening roads, while rivers are reduced to sewage channels. As a result, cities that once sustained life are now turning hostile to it. The poor suffer the most. For millions living in slums and informal settlements, surviving summer means standing in long queues for water under unbearable heat. Daily wage workers, street vendors, sanitation workers, and delivery personnel are forced to continue working despite temperatures crossing safe human limits. Heatwaves expose India's deep inequality: the rich escape into air-conditioned homes while the poor battle thirst and exhaustion in cramped shelters.

Water scarcity is worsening this injustice. Many Indian cities depend excessively on groundwater, extracting far more than nature can replenish. Lakes and reservoirs are drying up earlier each year due to weak monsoons and rising temperatures. Instead of long-term planning, authorities often rely on temporary tanker supplies and emergency announcements. This reactive governance reflects a dangerous lack of vision. Urban planning in India has failed to treat climate resilience as a necessity. Most cities still expand without considering heat management, water conservation, or ecological balance. Buildings are constructed with heat-trapping materials, drainage systems remain poor, and rainwater harvesting laws are weakly enforced. Even basic heat action plans are absent in several cities despite repeated climate disasters. Climate change has intensified these problems. Heatwaves are becoming longer, more frequent, and more severe. Scientists warn that parts of India could soon face temperatures that challenge human survival. If cities continue expanding without environmental safeguards, urban life itself may become unsustainable.

The solution requires urgent political and civic commitment. Cities must restore lakes, protect wetlands, and increase urban green cover. Rainwater harvesting and wastewater recycling should become mandatory, not symbolic policies. Public transport and climate-sensitive housing must replace reckless urban sprawl. Governments also need early-warning systems, cooling shelters, and labour protections during extreme heat.

The Statesman Shaping Telangana's Future

In politics, power may bring visibility. But only character earns enduring respect. Among the contemporary leaders of Telangana, few have built a political journey as balanced, credible, and people-centric as Duddilla Sridhar Babu - a leader admired not merely for electoral success, but for his integrity, administrative depth, and unwavering connection with ordinary people. Born in the rural heartland of Dhanwada village in Kataram mandal, Sridhar Babu emerged from humble beginnings to become one of Telangana's most influential political figures. Deeply rooted in the values of public service inherited from his father, former Assembly Speaker Duddilla Sripada Rao, he transformed personal tragedy into political purpose and evolved into a visionary administrator shaping Telangana's future on both national and global platforms. Today, as Telangana's Minister for IT, Industries and Legislative Affairs, Sridhar Babu stands at the intersection of governance, development, technology, and public trust. As he enters his 58th year, his political life reflects not only longevity, but relevance, resilience, and remarkable evolution.

A Legacy of Values, Not Just Politics

Born on May 30, 1969, Sridhar Babu inherited far more than a political surname. He inherited discipline, humility, constitutional values, and a deep respect for democratic institutions. His father, Duddilla Sripada Rao, served as Speaker of the united Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly and earned immense respect for his fairness and integrity. That legacy profoundly shaped Sridhar Babu's worldview. Academically accomplished, he pursued Law at the University of Delhi and later completed a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Hyderabad. Even during his student years, he was recognised for intellectual sharpness, calm leadership, and analytical thinking. He began his professional career as a lawyer in the High Court in 1998. But history intervened cruelly. The assassination of his father by Naxalites in April 1999 shook the entire state. At an age when many retreat into grief, Sridhar Babu stepped into public life with determination, choosing service over sorrow. At just 29 years of age, Sridhar Babu contested the 1999 Assembly elections from Manthani and won decisively. That victory marked the beginning of an extraordinary political relationship between a leader and his people. Over the years, he went on to win repeatedly in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2018, and 2023, becoming a five-time MLA from Manthani - a remarkable achievement in Telangana politics. For the people of Manthani, Sridhar Babu is not merely a politician. He is a dependable presence during crises, a leader accessible to the poor, and a representative who understands rural aspirations. His politics has always been grounded in human connection rather than spectacle.

Surpassing a Historic Political Benchmark

Manthani carries enormous political significance in Telangana's history. Former Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao represented the constituency four consecutive times between 1957



and 1972. By winning five terms from the same constituency, Sridhar Babu surpassed even that historic milestone, cementing his place among the most successful leaders in the political history of undivided Karimnagar district. Yet, unlike many career politicians, his public image remains remarkably untouched by arrogance or controversy. Sridhar Babu's political growth accelerated during the era of former Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy. As Karimnagar District Congress Committee President, he strengthened the Congress party at the grassroots level and played a key role in organisational mobilisation during YSR's mass outreach programmes and historic padayatra. Even today, Sridhar Babu openly acknowledges YSR as his political mentor - a leader who shaped his understanding of welfare politics and public engagement. Over the years, Sridhar Babu has held several critical responsibilities - Government Whip, Minister for Higher Education, Civil Supplies, NRI Affairs, and Legislative Affairs.



In every role, he earned a reputation for calm decision-making, administrative transparency, and issue-based governance. One of the defining moments of his political career came during the Telangana statehood movement, when he played a significant role as Legislative Affairs Minister in introducing the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Bill in the Assembly - a historic and emotionally charged chapter in the formation of Telangana. Unlike leaders driven by political theatrics, Sridhar Babu built his identity through consistency, preparation, and institutional understanding. The 2023 Telangana Assembly elections marked a turning point in state politics - and Sridhar Babu played a central role in that transformation. As Chairman of the Congress Manifesto Committee, he travelled extensively across Telangana, interacting with farmers, women, youth, intellectuals, employees, and grassroots workers. The Congress manifesto reflected those consultations. Welfare guarantees, farmer-centric promises, youth em-



- Gottimukkula Brahmachary, Senior Journalist

ployment initiatives, and social justice commitments resonated strongly with voters and became one of the key reasons behind the party's return to power. Political observers widely regard Sridhar Babu as one of the principal strategists behind the Congress victory. In the Revanth Reddy government, Sridhar Babu has emerged as one of the most visible and influential ministers. As Minister for IT and Industries, he has positioned Telangana aggressively on the global investment map. From Davos to the United States, Japan, and South Korea, he has led investment delegations with clarity and confidence, projecting Hyderabad as a future-ready innovation hub. Under his leadership, Telangana is increasingly viewed as a destination for Artificial Intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, data centres, electronics, and advanced technology industries. His approach combines economic ambition with employment generation - ensuring that investment translates into opportunities for Telangana's youth. Sridhar Babu strongly believes that Telangana's greatest asset is its youth population. That belief is reflected in the proposed Young India Skills University at Meer Khanpet in Rangareddy district - a visionary initiative aimed at preparing globally competitive manpower. By focusing on sectors such as IT, aviation, logistics, pharma, retail, and advanced manufacturing, the initiative seeks to bridge the gap between education and employment.

At a time when unemployment remains one of India's biggest challenges, Sridhar Babu's emphasis on skill-based growth carries long-term significance. Despite handling major portfolios and global responsibilities, Sridhar Babu has remained firmly connected to his constituency. Under his leadership, Manthani has witnessed substantial improvements in education, healthcare, roads, irrigation, drinking water supply, and rural infrastructure. The establishment of educational institutions including JNTU College expanded access to quality higher education in the region. Farmer welfare, land distribution, and irriga-

tion development also received sustained attention. His larger vision is to transform Manthani into a constituency known not only for political history, but for intellectual and economic progress. Sridhar Babu also played a major role in organising the 2025 Saraswati Pushkaralu on a grand scale. Significant infrastructure works were undertaken around Kaleshwaram, including temple development, roads, accommodation facilities, and civic amenities. Nearly ₹200 crore was mobilised for the development of the Kaleshwara Mukteshwara Swamy Temple and surrounding areas. For Sridhar Babu, development is not limited to economics alone; it also includes preserving Telangana's spiritual and cultural identity.

His organisational abilities were recognised beyond Telangana as well. Between July 2022 and August 2024, Sridhar Babu served as AICC Secretary and Congress in-charge for Karnataka's Kalyana Karnataka region. He played a strategic role in strengthening the Congress party and contributed significantly to the political groundwork and manifesto strategy that eventually helped the Congress secure victory in Karnataka. His ability to combine political strategy with administrative understanding has made him one of the most respected leaders within the Congress party. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Sridhar Babu's personality is his accessibility. Despite occupying high office, he remains approachable to party workers, farmers, employees, intellectuals, and ordinary citizens alike. He frequently tours villages, listens patiently to grievances, and focuses on practical solutions rather than political optics. In an era dominated by aggressive rhetoric and image-driven politics, Sridhar Babu represents a quieter, more grounded style of leadership - one built on credibility rather than confrontation. Political positions are temporary. Public trust is permanent.

Duddilla Sridhar Babu's journey - from lawyer to legislator, from constituency leader to global investment ambassador - reflects discipline, resilience, intellect, and public commitment. He is not merely a successful politician. He has evolved into a political institution defined by trust, development, and administrative maturity. As Telangana continues its journey toward becoming a globally competitive state, leaders like Sridhar Babu represent the bridge between grassroots realities and futuristic governance. That is why, today, Duddilla Sridhar Babu is not just seen as a minister or MLA. He is regarded as a symbol of dependable leadership - a dynamic visionary admired by time itself.

Gill's Masterclass Sends Titans Into Final



Gujarat Titans stormed into the IPL 2026 final with a commanding seven-wicket victory over Rajasthan Royals in Qualifier 2, thanks to a magnificent century from captain Shubman Gill and a record-breaking opening partnership with Sai Sudharsan. Chasing a daunting target of 215 at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium, Gujarat Titans produced their highest successful run chase in IPL history, reaching 219/3 in just 18.4 overs. The victory sets up a blockbuster title clash against defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in Ahmedabad. The star of the night was undoubtedly Shubman Gill, who deliv-

ered a captain's knock of 104 off just 53 balls. His innings, studded with 15 boundaries and three sixes, combined elegance with aggression as he dismantled the Rajasthan bowling attack. The century was Gill's fifth in the IPL and one of the finest knocks of the season. Gill found the perfect partner in Sai Sudharsan, who continued his remarkable form with a blistering 58 off 32 deliveries. The duo stitched together a stunning 167-run opening stand that completely took the game away from Rajasthan. Their partnership ensured the required run rate never became a concern and laid the foundation for a comfortable chase. Earlier, Rajasthan Royals had posted a chal-

lenging 214/6 in their allotted 20 overs. Teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi once again showcased his extraordinary talent, smashing 96 runs and narrowly missing out on a century. Veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja provided crucial support with an unbeaten 45, helping Rajasthan cross the 200-run mark. However, Rajasthan's bowlers struggled to contain Gujarat's powerful batting lineup. Jofra Archer and Nandre Burger failed to make early breakthroughs as Gill and Sudharsan dominated from the outset. Gujarat raced to 69 without loss in the Powerplay and never looked back. Even after Sudharsan's unusual hit-wicket dismissal and Gill's departure shortly

after reaching his century, Jos Buttler and Washington Sundar kept the momentum intact. Rahul Tewatia then finished the chase in style with a towering six, sparking celebrations in the Gujarat camp. The victory sends Gujarat Titans into their third IPL final and offers them another opportunity to lift the coveted trophy. For Rajasthan Royals, the defeat marks the end of a spirited campaign that was illuminated by the emergence of young star Vaibhav. With two of the tournament's most consistent teams set to collide, the IPL 2026 final between Gujarat Titans and Royal Challengers Bengaluru promises to be a thrilling showdown for the championship.



40 Lakh Homes Go Solar

New Delhi: India has achieved a major clean energy milestone with over 40 lakh households connected to rooftop solar systems under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri described the achievement as a significant step toward making India a solar power leader. Launched in 2024, the scheme enables residential consumers to install rooftop solar panels with government support, helping families reduce electricity bills and become energy self-reliant. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said the initiative is driving a new energy revolution while promoting sustainable development. The government has spent over ₹14,500 crore under the scheme in FY26. It estimates that installing rooftop solar systems in one crore homes could generate 1,000 billion units of clean electricity and cut carbon emissions by 720 million tonnes over 25 years. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Rajasthan are leading the implementation of the scheme. The initiative forms a key part of India's broader push toward renewable energy and energy security.

Trump Nears Iran Deal

Washington: Donald Trump said he is preparing to make a final decision on a potential agreement with Iran, outlining conditions that include a permanent ban on nuclear weapons and the reopening of the strategically important Strait of Hormuz. Trump stated that Iran must never acquire a nuclear weapon and said unrestricted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz should resume immediately. He also indicated that the U.S. naval blockade could be lifted if the agreement moves forward. The proposed deal remains under review, with Iranian officials saying no final agreement has been reached yet. The outcome is being closely watched worldwide, as any development involving the Strait of Hormuz could significantly impact global oil supplies, energy markets and countries like India that rely heavily on Gulf crude imports.

Colgate Raises Toothpaste Prices

New Delhi: Colgate-Palmolive India has increased toothpaste prices by 4-5 per cent across several popular products, citing higher raw material and packaging costs. The price revisions took effect in May and affect key variants such as Colgate Dental Cream and Max Fresh. According to industry sources, the price of the Colgate Dental Cream 200g pack has been raised by ₹5, while the 100g pack is costlier by ₹3. Premium products have seen steeper increases, with some variants witnessing hikes of up to ₹17. The latest price revision comes as FMCG companies continue to face inflationary pressures from rising commodity, packaging and logistics costs. Toothpaste remains the largest revenue-generating segment for Colgate-Palmolive India, contributing nearly 80 per cent of the company's overall revenue.



KTR Pays Tribute

Sircilla, May 29: K. T. Rama Rao paid tributes to BRS councillor Kasarla Padma, who passed away after suffering a massive heart stroke while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Karimnagar. Padma had been facing health issues for the past 10 days and was receiving medical care when her condition worsened. She is survived by two sons and two daughters. KTR visited her residence in Sircilla on Friday and offered condolences to the bereaved family members. Padma joined the BRS in 2020 in the presence of KTR. Though she lost her first municipal election, she later won the recent municipal polls and was elected as councillor of the 27th ward in Sircilla Municipality.



₹1,500-Crore Land Scam Busted

Hyderabad, May 29: Cyberabad Police have uncovered a massive land scam involving forged government documents and arrested three accused for allegedly attempting to sell 10 acres of government land worth nearly ₹1,500 crore in Gandipet. The arrested persons were identified as Nimmala Rajesh Goud, Nimmala Venugopal and Nimmala Sai Kiran. Former YSRCP MLA Bolla Brahma Naidu has also been named in the case and is currently absconding. Police said the accused allegedly created fake Government Orders (G.Os) claiming that the government had regularised and allotted the land in Survey No.18 to private individuals. The forged documents were circulated through WhatsApp and social media platforms. The investigation revealed that despite the dismissal of their land claims by the High Court in 2025, the accused allegedly conspired to sell the government land at ₹3.5 crore per acre. Authorities seized bank documents, MoUs, mobile phones and a laptop during searches. Police said nearly ₹4 crore had already changed hands as part of the proposed transaction. Efforts are underway to arrest the remaining accused, while further investigation continues.

RBI Balance Sheet ₹92 Lakh Crore

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recorded a sharp 20.6 per cent increase in its balance sheet during the financial year 2025-26, with total assets rising to ₹91.97 lakh crore as of March 31, 2026. The growth was driven by a significant rise in domestic investments, gold holdings and foreign investments, according to the RBI's Annual Report released on Friday. In absolute terms, the central bank's balance sheet expanded by ₹15.72 lakh crore, up from ₹76.25 lakh crore in FY25. The latest increase is substantially higher than the 8.2 per cent growth recorded in the previous financial year, taking the RBI's balance sheet size to 26.4 per cent of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The report highlights a major shift in the composition of the RBI's assets. Domestic investments registered a remarkable growth of 44.9 per cent during FY26, while gold holdings surged by 63.8 per cent.



Foreign investments also recorded a healthy increase of 7.9 per cent. As a result, domestic assets accounted for 29.1 per cent of the RBI's total assets, compared to 25.7 per cent a year earlier. Foreign currency assets, gold holdings and loans to financial institutions outside India constituted the remaining 70.9 per cent. On the liabilities side, all major components witnessed growth. Revaluation accounts increased by 63.4 per cent, notes issued rose 11.8 per cent, deposits expanded 11.6 per cent, while other liabilities grew by 21.1 per cent. The report also reflects the steady expansion of the central bank's financial strength over recent years. The RBI's balance sheet stood at ₹63.45 lakh crore in FY23, increased to ₹70.47

lakh crore in FY24, rose further to ₹76.25 lakh crore in FY25, and has now reached ₹91.97 lakh crore in FY26. As part of its risk management framework, the RBI transferred ₹1.09 lakh crore to the Contingency Fund during FY26 under the Economic Capital Framework. No allocation was made to the Asset Development Fund during the year. The central bank also announced a record surplus transfer of approximately ₹2.87 lakh crore to the Central Government for FY26. The transfer is expected to provide significant fiscal support to the government at a time when global economic uncertainties and geopolitical tensions continue to pose challenges. The robust expansion in the RBI's balance sheet underscores the central bank's strengthened financial position, growing reserves and increased capacity to support economic stability amid evolving domestic and global conditions.

Siddaramaiah Govt Dissolved

Bengaluru: Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has accepted the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and dissolved the Council of Ministers headed by him. The decision was taken under Article 164(1) of the Constitution. In his resignation letter, Siddaramaiah stated that he was stepping down following directions from the Congress high command. He submitted his resignation on May 28, bringing an end to his tenure as Karnataka's longest-serving Chief Minister. The Governor has asked Siddaramaiah to continue as caretaker Chief Minister until alternative arrangements are made and a new leader is chosen. He also directed that no major executive decisions be taken during the interim period. Siddaramaiah said he had always maintained that he would resign whenever instructed by the party leadership. Despite the change in leadership, he emphasized that the Congress government continues to enjoy majority support in the Assembly and is expected to form the next government under a new Chief Minister.



Sensex Sinks Over 1,000

Mumbai: Indian stock markets ended sharply lower on Friday, with the benchmark Sensex plunging 1,092 points and the Nifty falling 359 points amid uncertainty over a possible US-Iran agreement and heavy selling in the final hour of trade. The Sensex closed at 74,775.74, down 1.44 per cent, while the Nifty settled at 23,547.75, losing 1.50 per cent. Both indices erased early gains as investors turned cautious and booking intensified across sectors. Heavyweights such as Reliance Industries and ITC weighed on the market.



Sini Shetty

Digital Detox: Karan

Filmmaker Karan Johar has clarified that his decision to unfollow several Bollywood celebrities on Instagram was part of a personal "digital detox" and not linked to any fallout with friends or colleagues. The move sparked speculation after fans noticed that stars such as Shah Rukh Khan, Kareena and Alia Bhatt were no longer on his following list.

Sandeep Vanga Turns Producer

Sandeep Reddy Vanga, known for blockbuster films like Arjun Reddy, Kabir Singh and Animal, has entered film production with a new project titled Romanchakam. The film is being presented under Bhadrakali Pictures by Vanga, while production responsibilities are being handled by Pranay Reddy Vanga. Directed by Venugopal Reddy, the movie stars Sumanth Prabhakar and Ananthika Sanilkumar in lead roles. The makers unveiled the title poster on Friday, revealing the tagline "Love, Comedy, and Suspense." The film is being promoted as a youthful entertainer blending romance, humour and thrills. Meanwhile, Vanga is also busy directing Spirit, starring Prabhakar in the lead role. More details about Romanchakam are expected to be announced soon.



₹400-Crore Song Rights Row Rocks Varun's Film

A major legal battle has erupted over the use of the iconic song Chunnari Chunnari from Biwi No.1 in director David Dhawan's upcoming comedy Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, starring Varun Dhawan. Producer Vashu Bhagnani has filed a ₹400-crore lawsuit in the Bombay High Court against Tips Industries and David Dhawan, alleging unauthorized use of songs and visuals from Biwi No.1. Bhagnani claims that while audio rights were sold to Tips decades ago, the visual rights remained with his production house. He argues that he was neither informed nor consulted before the songs were reused in the new film. According to Bhagnani, the issue is more about ethics than money. He said a simple conversation could have avoided the controversy and questioned why the same songs from his film were being used in David Dhawan's son Varun Dhawan's movie without his consent. The dispute led to the postponement of the film's trailer launch, although the makers later proceeded with promotional activities. Producer Ramesh Taurani of Tips maintained that the matter had been addressed legally and would not affect the film's release.



Sanatan Dharma Is Life: Arjun



Actor Arjun Sarja has entered the debate surrounding Sanatan Dharma, stating that it is "a way of life" rather than a religion. Speaking at the pre-release event of his film Blast in Chennai, Arjun said Sanatan Dharma teaches values such as honesty, compassion and respect for parents. Responding indirectly to remarks made by Udhayanidhi Stalin, who has repeatedly criticized Sanatan Dharma, Arjun argued that its principles are deeply rooted in family and social values. He questioned whether those seeking its eradication could abandon their responsibilities toward their parents. The actor emphasized that Sanatan Dharma should be understood as a philosophy of life and expressed hope that people would view it beyond political controversies. His comments have added a fresh voice to the ongoing debate in Tamil Nadu over the concept and relevance of Sanatan Dharma.

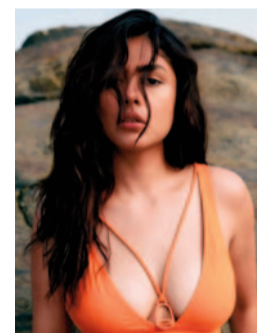
Hema Malini's Singing Debut

Veteran actress and MP Hema Malini is set to make her singing debut with a live stage performance at "The Dream Girl's Diamond Jubilee Concert", a special charity event in support of CINTAA. The grand musical evening will be held in Mumbai on July 10, celebrating Hema Malini's remarkable six-decade career in cinema. For the first time, she will perform songs from her films and share personal memories from her journey in the industry. A surprise song is also planned for the concert finale. The event will feature a 15-piece live orchestra and performances by noted artists including Suresh Wadkar, Anu Malik, Shabbir Kumar, Padmini Kolhapure, Anup Jalota, Kavita Krishnamurthy and Sudesh Bhosale. Speaking at the launch event, Padmini Kolhapure recalled her experiences working with Hema Malini in films such as Dream Girl and Ek Paheli. As part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, a book on Hema Malini's life, co-authored by her and RJ Anirudh Chawla, will also be released.



Mrunal Hints at Big Reveal

Actress Mrunal Thakur has sparked excitement among fans after teasing a "very special" upcoming project, saying an official announcement will be made soon. Sharing a video from a dubbing studio on social media, the actress revealed that she is currently dubbing for a new venture and expressed her excitement about the project. "Dubbing for something very, very special! Can't wait for you all to witness the magic we have created. My heart is overwhelmed and grateful. Announcement soon," she wrote. Mrunal is currently awaiting the release of Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, a comedy entertainer directed by veteran filmmaker David Dhawan. The film is scheduled for release in June.



Messi Leads Argentina Squad

Lionel Messi will lead defending champions Argentina at the 2026 FIFA World Cup after being named in coach Lionel Scaloni's 26-member squad. The three-time world champions are aiming to retain the title they won at the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Messi, set to play in his sixth World Cup, headlines a strong attack featuring Lautaro Martinez and Julian Alvarez. Scaloni also included emerging talents such as Valentin Barco, Nico Paz, and Jose Manuel Lopez. However, several Qatar 2022 winners, including Angel Di Maria, Paulo Dybala and Angel Correa, missed out. There are concerns over Messi's fitness after he experienced discomfort while playing for Inter Miami CF, though initial reports suggest the issue is not serious. Argentina will begin its World Cup campaign against Algeria on June 16, followed by Group J matches against Austria and Jordan. Before the tournament, the team will play warm-up friendlies against Honduras and Iceland.

BCCI Bans Smart Glasses in IPL

The Board of Control for Cricket in India has prohibited the use and possession of smart glasses within the Players and Match Officials Area (PMOA) during the Indian Premier League, citing anti-corruption concerns. The directive was issued by the BCCI's Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) after reports that some players and support staff were being marketed advanced smart eyewear capable of live streaming, messaging, and audio-video communication through Wi-Fi or mobile networks. Under IPL anti-corruption regulations, these devices are classified as both communication and recording equipment and are therefore banned inside restricted areas. All players and support staff have been instructed to deposit smart glasses, along with mobile phones and smartwatches, with the Security Liaison Officer before entering the PMOA on match days. The BCCI warned that failure to surrender such devices will be treated as a violation of PMOA protocols and could attract disciplinary action and penalties under IPL 2026 regulations. The PMOA includes dressing rooms, dugouts and other secured zones where access is strictly restricted to players, match officials and authorized personnel. The move is aimed at strengthening the league's integrity and preventing any unauthorized communication during matches.



Peddi My Best Role - Jagapathi Babu

Veteran actor Jagapathi Babu has described his character Appalasoori in the upcoming film Peddi as the most memorable role of his career. Speaking about the character, Jagapathi Babu credited director Buchi Babu Sana and National Award-winning makeup artist Rasheed for creating the distinctive look. He said he knew the role was special the moment he first appeared in the costume. "Emotionally, in terms of performance and get-up, this is the role I like the most. Among the many films I have done after Legend, there are six roles I remember, and Appalasoori in Peddi is number one," he said. The film stars Ram Charan in the title role of Peddi, a rugged rural athlete skilled in cricket, wrestling and sprinting. The recently released trailer has generated significant buzz, showcasing intense sports action and a powerful village backdrop. The cast also includes Janhvi Kapoor, Shiva Rajkumar, Divyendu Sharma and Boman Irani in key roles. Peddi is scheduled for a theatrical release on June 4, 2026, and is one of the most anticipated Telugu releases of the year.

