

# TRICOLOUR ESTATE

THE NEWS THAT MATTERS

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## Sensex Tanks 1,600 Points on Iran Tensions



## Google Picks 20 Indian AI Startups

**Google PICKS 20 INDIAN AI STARTUPS**  
FOR ACCELERATOR INDIA 2026 COHORT

20 AI-first startups. Multiple sectors. One mission - Building the future with AI.

<b>LEGAL TECH</b> Adalat AI AI-powered legal and court automation platform.	<b>HEALTHCARE</b> aikenist FlexifyMe Healthcare AI solutions.	<b>CLIMATE TECH</b> aurassure fitsol Climate monitoring and sustainability technologies.	<b>FASHION TECH</b> ayna AI-powered fashion catalogue creation.	<b>FINTECH</b> BINOCS DODO PAYMENTS OnFinanceAI AI solutions for finance and compliance.
<b>DEVELOPER &amp; AI INFRASTRUCTURE</b> CraftitAI, H2Loop AI, NodeOps, Pipeshift, TartanHQ AI infrastructure and developer platforms.		<b>MANUFACTURING AI</b> JIDOKA AI-based manufacturing inspection systems.	<b>ENTERPRISE WEARABLES</b> proxgy AI-enabled wearable enterprise technology.	
<b>CREATIVE AI</b> soundverse AI AI music creation platform.	<b>VOICE AI</b> SuperBryn Voice AI reliability solutions.	<b>CYBERSECURITY</b> ZERON AI-powered cybersecurity platform.	<b>PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS</b> Nearly 2,500 Applications Received 20 AI-First Startups Selected Access to Google's AI Technology, Mentorship & Global Network Building next-gen AI products for real-world impact	

New Delhi, July 8

Global technology giant Google has selected 20 AI-first Indian startups for the Google for Startups Accelerator: India 2026 programme, marking the 10th anniversary of its accelerator initiatives in the country. The selected startups emerged from nearly 2,500 applications, reflecting the rapid growth of India's artificial intelligence ecosystem. The new cohort showcases a shift from conventional language model (LLM) applications to ad-

Mumbai, July 8: Indian equity markets witnessed a massive selloff on Wednesday, with the Sensex plunging over 1,600 points and the Nifty dropping more than 500 points, after renewed geopolitical tensions in the Middle East rattled global investors. The sharp decline came after US President Donald Trump declared that the interim ceasefire agreement with Iran was "over", sparking fears of fresh conflict and pushing crude oil prices higher. The selloff intensified during the second half of the trading session, with 45 of the 50 Nifty stocks trading in the red. The correction wiped out nearly ₹4 lakh crore in investor wealth as the total market capitalisation of BSE-listed compa-

panies slipped below ₹476 lakh crore. Higher crude oil prices and uncertainty over global energy supplies triggered a risk-off sentiment across markets, prompting investors to reduce exposure to equities. The Sensex had opened 364 points lower at 77,816.45, while the Nifty began the day down 139 points at 24,259.55 before losses deepened. Among sectoral indices, Nifty Oil & Gas led the decline, followed by Media, PSU Bank, Realty, Cement, Metal, Auto, and FMCG, all of which traded significantly lower. The sharp correction reflects growing investor concerns over escalating geopolitical risks and their possible impact on global markets and energy prices.

## Trump Ends Iran Ceasefire

Ankara, July 8: Donald Trump has declared that the US ceasefire with Iran is "over," accusing Tehran of violating the agreement and rejecting further negotiations. The statement came after the US launched strikes on more than 80 Iranian military targets, including air defence systems, missile sites, radar installations and naval assets, following alleged Iranian attacks on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. The US military said the operation was aimed at protecting international shipping and maintaining freedom of navigation. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's busiest oil shipping routes.

vanced agentic and multimodal AI systems capable of solving complex real-world problems. The startups are developing AI-driven solutions across sectors such as healthcare, climate technology, finance, legal services, manufacturing, cybersecurity, enterprise software, and developer tools. As part of the accelerator, Google will provide startups with access to its advanced AI technology stack, expert technical mentorship, product development support, and go-to-market guidance to help them scale globally. Google India Vice President and Country Manager Preeti Lobana said India's startup ecosystem is entering a new phase powered by intelligent AI systems that can address high-impact challenges across industries. Google said the accelerator aims to nurture India's next generation of AI innovators and strengthen the country's position as a global hub for artificial intelligence-driven entrepreneurship.

## DRDO Successfully Tests Pinaka LRGR

New Delhi, July 8: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Wednesday successfully flight-tested the Pinaka Long-Range Rocket (LRGR) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha, marking another milestone in India's indigenous defence capabilities. The rocket was tested at a user-defined minimum range of 60 km and accurately hit its designated target while executing all planned in-flight manoeuvres. According to the Ministry of Defence, the rocket followed the predicted trajectory with pinpoint precision, while range instruments tracked its

complete flight path. The Pinaka LRGR has been developed by the Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) in collaboration with the High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), with support from the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) and Research Centre Imarat (RCI). The trial was coordinated by the Integrated Test Range (ITR) and the Proof & Experimental Establishment (PXE). The rocket was launched using the existing Pinaka launcher, demonstrating its ability to fire different Pinaka variants from the same platform. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh con-

gratulated the DRDO, the Indian Army and industry partners, calling the successful trial a major achievement in India's indigenous long-range guided rocket programme. Defence Secretary and DRDO Chairman Rajesh Kumar Singh monitored the trial and commended the teams involved. The latest test follows the successful maiden flight of the Pinaka LRGR (120 km) conducted in December last year. The Pinaka system, developed by DRDO, is a key component of the Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL), significantly enhancing the Indian Army's long-range precision strike capability.



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TRICOLOUR ESTATE THE NEWS THAT MATTERS

EDITORIAL India's Voice, Global South

India's emergence as a leading voice of the Global South marks one of the most significant shifts in contemporary international relations. Representing the aspirations of developing nations across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific, India has increasingly positioned itself as a bridge between advanced economies and the developing world.



Collective Action Key to Drug-Free India

Telangana EAGLE Force calls for public participation under Nasha Mukt Bharat campaign

Hyderabad, July 8 (PIB): Telangana EAGLE Force Inspector P. Srinivasa Rao on Tuesday stressed that a drug-free India can only be achieved through the collective efforts of law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, communities and citizens.

He urged citizens to remain vigilant and actively support anti-drug initiatives. He said the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan is built on three pillars-strict enforcement against drug traffickers, public awareness, and de-addiction and rehabilitation of victims.

Shruti Patil, Additional Director General, PIB & CBC, said the Central Bureau of Communication is committed to creating awareness about the Government of India's flagship programmes. She noted that awareness, prevention and informed choices are the most effective tools to combat substance abuse while ensuring dignity and support for those recovering from addiction.

Prof. Limbadri, CEO of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Educational Institutions, described drug addiction, along with cyber fraud, as one of the biggest challenges facing the country's youth. He appealed to students to stay away from addictive substances, develop strong values and spread awareness among their peers.

Trump Ends Iran Ceasefire

Ankara, July 8: US President Donald Trump declared that the ceasefire with Iran was "over," accusing Tehran of violating the agreement and dismissing further negotiations as "a waste of time."

came shortly after the United States launched a fresh wave of military strikes on more than 80 targets across Iran. According to US Central Command (CENTCOM), the operation targeted Iranian air defence systems, command centres, coastal radar installations, anti-ship missile sites and over 60 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) boats near the Strait of Hormuz.

Hormuz, accusing Tehran of violating the ceasefire and threatening international shipping. CENTCOM stated that the operation was intended to degrade Iran's capability to disrupt global maritime trade and warned that US forces remain prepared to respond to any further violations.



India Urges Restraint in West Asia

New Delhi, July 8: India has expressed deep concern over the escalating tensions in West Asia, urging all parties to exercise restraint and return to dialogue after fresh attacks on commercial shipping and renewed military action in the region.



renewed conflict sent global oil markets sharply higher. Brent crude surged more than 6 per cent to nearly \$80 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) climbed over 6 per cent to around \$75 per barrel, raising concerns over global energy supplies.

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# India's Credit Card Market Triples in 10 Years

New Delhi, July 8: India's credit card market has expanded more than three-fold over the past decade, driven by rising participation from younger consumers and increasing adoption in semi-urban and rural areas, according to a TransUnion CIBIL report released on Wednesday. The report said the number of credit card holders increased 3.6 times, from 1.4 crore in March 2016 to 5.2 crore in March 2026, while the number of active credit cards rose five-

fold, from 2.1 crore to 10.7 crore during the same period. Outstanding credit card balances recorded even faster growth, rising 8.3 times from Rs 0.4 lakh crore to Rs 3.1 lakh crore over the last decade. The report highlighted a significant shift in customer demographics. As of March 2026, 50 per cent of first-time credit card hold-

ers were 30 years or younger, compared to 43 per cent in March 2022. Additionally, 46 per cent of new cardholders came from semi-urban and rural regions, up from 42 per cent four years ago. Interestingly, 25 per cent of new-to-credit-card (NTCC) customers already had three or more active credit products, indi-

cating that credit cards are increasingly becoming part of an existing credit portfolio rather than serving as the first credit product. Despite rapid growth, India's credit card penetration remains relatively low. Only 25 per cent of credit-active consumers own a credit card, compared with 70 per cent in the UK, 62 per cent in Colombia, and

98 per cent in Hong Kong, highlighting substantial scope for future expansion. According to the report, younger consumers are entering the credit ecosystem much earlier. Among Gen Z consumers in 2024, only 30 per cent had no prior credit history at the time of receiving their first credit card, compared to 56 per cent of

millennials in 2018. Many Gen Z consumers already held consumer durable loans or small-ticket personal loans before obtaining their first credit card. Bhavesh Jain, Managing Director and CEO of TransUnion CIBIL, said Indian consumers are increasingly using credit cards alongside personal loans and consumer durable financing, reflecting a deeper and more formal consumer credit ecosystem that supports everyday spending needs.

## Dada Enters ICC Hall of Fame



Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was inducted into the prestigious ICC Hall of Fame on his 54th birthday, becoming the 12th Indian cricketer overall and the 10th Indian men's cricketer to receive cricket's highest career honour. Expressing his gratitude, Ganguly thanked the International Cricket Council (ICC), ICC Chairman Jay Shah and the BCCI for the recognition. "Thank you ICC and Chairman Jay Shah for inducting me into the Hall of Fame. It's a huge honour. Amazing to be part of some great names," Ganguly posted on X. Widely regarded as one of India's greatest ODI captains, Ganguly scored 11,363 runs in 311 One-Day Internationals, including 22 centuries, besides claiming 132 wickets. In Test cricket, he amassed 7,212 runs in 113 matches. Known as the "God of the Off-side," Ganguly transformed Indian cricket after taking over the captaincy in 2000 during the match-fixing crisis. Under his leadership, India won the 2002 NatWest Trophy, shared the 2002 ICC Champions Trophy, reached the 2003 ICC World Cup final, secured a historic Test series victory in Pakistan (2004), and scripted the unforgettable Eden Gardens Test triumph over Australia in 2001. Following his retirement, Ganguly served as BCCI President, guiding Indian cricket through the COVID-19 pandemic. He currently

serves as the President of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB), Director of Cricket at Delhi Capitals, and Head Coach of Pretoria Capitals in SA20. The ICC is expected to make the formal announcement during its annual conference in Edinburgh on July 11.



## Final 8 Confirmed World Cup Quarterfinal Line-up Ready

The 2026 FIFA World Cup has reached the quarterfinal stage, with eight teams remaining in the race for the title. Defending champions Argentina, led by Lionel Messi, survived a tough Round of 16 challenge to book their place, while Norway emerged as one of the tournament's biggest surprise packages with impressive knockout performances. The quarterfinals begin after the tournament's first rest day on July 8, with four matches scheduled over the next three days.

### Quarterfinal Teams:

France, Morocco, Spain, Belgium, Norway, England, Argentina, Switzerland

*'The winners of these four encounters will advance to the semifinals as the race for football's biggest prize enters its decisive phase.'*

## Egypt Demands Probe Into World Cup Referee

Egypt has formally lodged a complaint with FIFA, demanding an investigation into the refereeing decisions during its dramatic 3-2 Round of 16 defeat to defending champions Argentina in the FIFA World Cup 2026. The Egyptian Football Federation (EFA), led by President Hany Aburida, urged FIFA to investigate French referee Francois Letexier and the entire officiating team, including Video Assistant Referee (VAR) officials, alleging "serious refereeing mistakes" and "double standards" that influenced the outcome of the match. The controversy began when a goal by Mostafa Ziko, which would have given Egypt a 1-0 lead, was disallowed following a VAR review for an earlier foul on Argentina defender Lisandro Martinez. Ziko later scored again to put Egypt 2-0 ahead before Argentina staged a dramatic comeback through Cristian Romero, Lionel Messi, and a late

winner by Enzo Fernandez. Egypt also claimed it was denied a clear penalty in stoppage time after Alexis Mac Allister allegedly fouled Hamdy Fathy inside the penalty area. According to the EFA, VAR officials failed to review the incident despite repeated appeals. In its complaint, the federation requested FIFA to investigate the entire refereeing crew and exclude them from the remainder of the tournament if wrongdoing is established. Egypt head coach Hossam Hassan also expressed his anger after the match, accusing the officials of denying his side fair treatment. "We have been cheated unfairly. There was no respect or fair play," Hassan said, adding that the refereeing decisions appeared to favour the defending world champions. The controversial defeat ended Egypt's impressive World Cup campaign, while Argentina progressed to the quarterfinals, where they will face Switzerland.





Esha Gupta

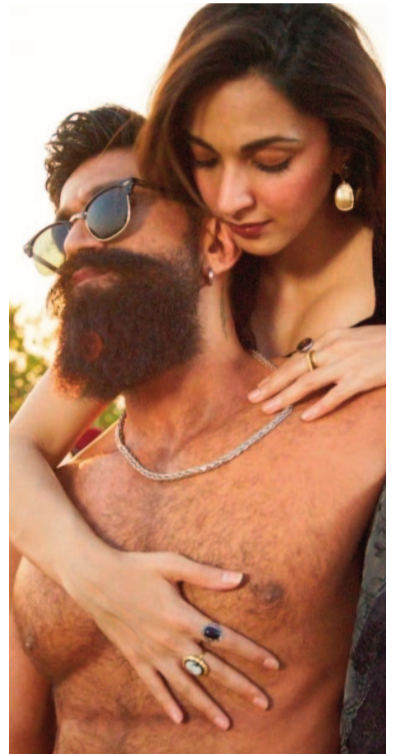


## Tabaahi Turns Up the Heat in 'Toxic'

*Yash-Kiara Chemistry Steals the Show*

The makers of "Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups" have released the much-awaited first single "Tabaahi", offering audiences a glimpse of the sizzling chemistry between Yash and Kiara Advani in the upcoming action drama. Set against stunning international locations, the romantic track showcases an intense blend of passion, mystery and glamour. The song also introduces key characters played by Nayanthara, who portrays Yash's trusted aide, and Tara Sutaria, who appears as his mistress, adding further intrigue to the narrative. The music video opens with a quote by the 13th-century Persian poet Rumi: "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there," setting the tone for the film's dark and unconventional love story. Composed by Vishal Mishra, Tabaahi has been released in mul-

multiple Indian languages. The film has already generated significant attention through its teasers. While the first teaser highlighted the film's dark action backdrop, the second introduced Yash in a fresh clean-shaven avatar. The latest teaser, however, sparked debate for its bold presentation of female characters and sensual visuals. Originally slated for release earlier this year, "Toxic" has now been officially scheduled to hit theatres worldwide on August 26. The makers said the postponement was necessary to align the film's global distribution plans and international partnerships. Directed by Geetu Mohandas, the film is jointly produced by KVN Productions and Monster Mind Creations. Shot simultaneously in Kannada and English, the film will also be released in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam.



## Rajesh Sharma Hospitalised After Insect Bite



Hyderabad, July 9: Veteran Bollywood actor Rajesh Sharma has been hospitalised after reportedly suffering a severe insect bite while shooting for Prabhas' upcoming film "Fauzi" at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad. According to reports, the actor was bitten by an insect in a densely vegetated area after completing his shoot and interacting with local technicians. Initially believing it to be a minor bite, Sharma ignored the discomfort and continued with his travel plans. However, within six hours, he reportedly developed severe pain in his right leg. During his return flight to Kolkata, his condition worsened, with high fever and increasing discomfort. The actor was admitted to Manipal Hospital, Dhakuria, Kolkata, where doctors are closely monitoring his condition. Reports indicate that the infection spread rapidly, prompting immediate medical attention. Medical experts are keeping Sharma under observation, and his health is said to be stable. No official statement has

yet been issued by the actor or the film's production team regarding his recovery or the impact on the shooting schedule. Rajesh Sharma is currently part of "Fauzi," starring Prabhas, one of the most anticipated upcoming Indian films.

## 'Dada' First Look Out

The makers of "Dada - The Sourav Ganguly Story" unveiled the film's first-look poster on Sourav Ganguly's 54th birthday, while also announcing that the much-awaited biopic will hit theatres worldwide on May 14, 2027. The poster features Rajkumar Rao recreating Ganguly's iconic jersey-waving celebration from the Lord's balcony after India's memorable NatWest Trophy victory over England in 2002. The moment remains one of the most celebrated images in Indian cricket, symbolising Ganguly's fearless leadership and the rise of a new era in Indian cricket. The biographical film traces Ganguly's remarkable journey from a talented youngster to one of India's most influential cricket captains, highlighting his determination, resilience and leadership that transformed Indian cricket. The film is directed by Vikramaditya Motwane and produced by Luv Ranjan and Ankur Garg. It is presented by Gulshan Kumar, Bhushan Kumar, T-Series, and DBL, and is backed by Luv Films. The biopic has already generated significant excitement among cricket fans, with Rajkumar Rao's striking resemblance to Ganguly in the first-look poster receiving widespread appreciation on social media.



## Preity Mukhundan Missed Role in 'Raaka'

Director Atlee Kumar has revealed that actress Preity Mukhundan was his first choice for a key role in Allu Arjun's upcoming sci-fi action film "Raaka", but scheduling conflicts prevented her from joining the project. Speaking at the pre-release event of "Idhayam Murali" (Hrudayam Murali), Atlee praised Preity's acting and disclosed that he had personally approached her for an important character in the film. However, the actress was unable to accept the offer as she was already committed to another project. The role was subsequently offered to actress Femina George. Details about the character remain under wraps. "Raaka" stars Allu Arjun in the lead, with Deepika Padukone playing a pivotal role. The film also features Atharvaa, Fahadh Faasil, and several other prominent actors. Music for the film is being composed by Sai Abhyankar, while Sun Pictures is producing the ambitious project.

## 'OG 2' Shoot From September: Thaman

Music composer S. Thaman has confirmed that the shooting of "OG 2", starring Pawan Kalyan, will commence in September, officially setting the stage for the next chapter in the expanding OG Universe. The confirmation comes shortly after Pawan Kalyan Creative Works announced plans to expand the franchise, sharing visuals of a creative discussion between director Sujeeth and Pawan Kalyan. Following the success of "They Call Him OG", which showcased Pawan Kalyan in a stylish gangster role, the sequel is expected to delve into the untold origin story of Ojas Gambheera while expanding the franchise into a larger interconnected cinematic universe. According to reports, director Sujeeth

is designing an ambitious narrative featuring layered storytelling, symbolic visuals and a mysterious outsider character, taking the story into the backdrop of an international underworld. With Thaman confirming the September shooting schedule, pre-production work is progressing at a brisk pace ahead of principal photography. Meanwhile, Pawan Kalyan continues to balance his political responsibilities with his film commitments. While "Hari Hara Veera Mallu" received a mixed response, expectations remain high for "Ustaad Bhagat Singh", and the announcement of "OG 2" has further heightened excitement among fans eager to see him reprise one of his most acclaimed recent roles.

