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Challenge to Minister Ponguleti.. Nothing will move until he gives an explanation: Yeleti Maheshwar Reddy

Hyderabad: August 20
BJP Legislature Party Leader Yeleti Maheshwar Reddy has accused Telangana Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy of exposing massive corruption. He said that he has all the evidence regarding the minister's corruption. He demanded that a CBI inquiry be conducted on this and a House Committee be formed. Are you ready for a discussion on corruption? Yeleti Maheshwar Reddy challenged Minister Srinivasa Reddy yesterday (Wednesday). He asked him to come to the Assembly Media Point if he accepts his challenge. Yeleti Maheshwar Reddy reached the Assem-



bly Media Point on Thursday to this effect.Yeleti once again demanded that the minister accept his challenge and come for a discussion. He said that he would be here until 2 pm and set a deadline for Srinivasa Reddy to come. On this occasion, he alleged that irregularities had been committed in Bhubharathi and 22A. He stated that land transfers had been made to Phoenix and Raghava Construction companies. Maheshwar Reddy was furious that government and public lands had been snatched. He said that he would not move until Ponguleti came and gave an explanation. Will CM Revanth Reddy give an explanation on this? Or will Ponguleti give an explanation to Srinivasa Reddy? He asked directly. Maheshwar Reddy made it clear that he would provide the evidence he had with anyone who came to the assembly media point.

It is shameful for Minister Ponguleti to apologize: MP Laxman

New Delhi, August 20:
BJP MP Laxman demanded the resignation of Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy. Speaking to the media today (Thursday), he said that Minister Ponguleti should tell anyone who said that lands were put on the prohibited list. He criticized that there is no public ad-

ministration in Telangana. There is a rule of extortion. He accused people of looting people's lands by engaging in land deals. He said that CM Revanth Reddy's house has been included in the prohibited list. He was angry that the lands that people have earned with their hard work



have been put on the prohibited list. He commented

Daughter's comments.. Minister Konda Surekha appears before the disciplinary committee

Hyderabad, August 20:
Telangana Endowments Minister Konda Surekha has clarified that the comments made by her daughter Sushmita Patel are completely her personal ones. She appeared before the TPCC Disciplinary Committee in Hyderabad on Thursday. On this occasion, Minister Konda Surekha gave an explanation on the comments made by her daughter. She clarified that it is not appropriate for someone else to be politically responsible for her personal opinions, just because she is her daughter.She said that holding her respon-



sible for Sushmita Patel's comments was against the spirit of natural justice. She expressed confidence that she had complete respect for the leadership of the Congress party and the party's disciplinary code.

She appealed to the committee to find that she was not involved in this matter, considering the democratic values ??and the actual circumstances. In this context, Minister Konda Surekha requested the disciplinary

committee to withdraw the notice issued to her.

Minister Konda Surekha's fans celebrated her birthday in Geesukonda, Warangal district on Wednesday. Her daughter Sushmita Patel attended the event as the chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, Sushmita announced that she will contest the upcoming elections from Parakala. She revealed that even if the party high command does not give her a ticket, she will contest as an independent. On this occasion, she made sensational comments against CM

Revanth Reddy.

Sushmita's comments went viral in the media and social media. In this context, the party high command has become serious about Sushmita Patel's comments. Party affairs in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan has asked the PCC to give a report on this issue. Disciplinary Committee Chairman and MP Mallu Ravi has also responded. He said that they will seek an explanation from Minister Konda Surekha on this. In this context, Konda Surekha appeared before the disciplinary committee on Thursday and gave an explanation.

'If not given ticket, I will contest as an independent Sushmita Patel's sensational statement



Warangal:August 20:
Minister Konda Surekha's daughter Sushmita Patel has made a sensational announcement that she will contest as an independent from Parakala if Congress

does not give her a ticket. Sushmita Patel's comments during Minister Konda Surekha's birthday celebrations in Parakala constituency have led to a heated debate in Telangana poli-

tics. Speaking on the politics of Parakala constituency, Sushmita Patel said that Revanth Reddy's style of behavior has changed after becoming the Chief Minister. 'Ponguleti Chief Minister.. Revanth Reddy Chief Minister? I don't understand who the CM really isSushmita commented. Sushmita Patel said that her father Konda Murali also helped Revanth Reddy become the Chief Minister. She

said that Konda Murali had helped Revanth Reddy when he took over as the TPCC president. In return, Konda Murali was promised the post of MLC, but the promise was not fulfilled, she alleged.

'Will you swear that you did not give a guarantee?'

Sushmita Patel challenged Revanth Reddy, saying that he did not promise to give MLC post to Konda Murali, can he

take oath on Maisamma here? She commented that currently there is a competition between Acha Congress and Pachha Congress in the Congress party.Challenge on Parakala ticketSushmita Patel questioned how they would announce a ticket for Revuri Prakash Reddy. She challenged him to resign and contest the elections now if he dared.

KTR backs polytechnic students' agitation, seeks withdrawal of GO 97



Hyderabad:August 20:
BRS working president KT

Rama Rao on Thursday extended his party's support to the statewide agitation by polytechnic students against GO MS No 97 and demanded that the Congress government withdraw the order immediately. He also criticised the alleged police action against students during peaceful

protests at some places, urging the government not to violate their rights.Geographic ReferenceIn a statement, Rama Rao said the decision had left the future of thousands of polytechnic students uncertain. "Do not play with the lives of polytechnic students," he said,

insisting that the government reconsider the decision and withdraw GO 97.He said BRS student wing leaders and party leaders had already participated in several protests and extended solidarity to the students. The party would continue to support their agitation in every possible manner,

Supreme Court sets up panel to examine police excesses during Delhi student protests

New Delhi: August 20:
The Supreme Court has formed a five-member high-powered committee headed by former top court judge Justice R Subhash Reddy to examine allegations of police excesses against student protesters in Delhi recently and violence against police personnel.A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said the committee would also comprise former Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Ravi Shankar Jha, former Delhi High Court Judge Justice Shalinder Kaur, former CBI director Rishi Kumar Shukla and retired Meghalaya DGP L R Bishnoi. The committee has been asked to examine use of excessive force and violence against protesters by police, including the deployment of pellet guns, as well as the alleged use of force and violence by protesters against police officials and other security personnel. "This HPEC (High-Powered Enquiry Committee) has been constituted bearing in mind a wide variety of considerations, including the individual expertise and experience of each of its members, as well as the diversity of the committee, among other



factors."We are confident that the recommendations of the HPEC will be of invaluable assistance to this Court, and the committee will be able to undertake a comprehensive assessment of all such issues as merit due contemplation," the bench said in an order dated August 18 and uploaded on Thursday. The top court clarified that as a matter of abundant caution, the enquiry undertaken by the HPEC shall not be a one-time exercise.It asked the committee to undertake a continuous and periodic assessment of the issues and shall submit its interim findings periodically.The apex court recommended that the HPEC should address certain issues on a priority basis, foremost amongst which is the matter relating to the alleged incidents of targeted violence, harassment and molestation of female protesters.

The HPEC may also examine issues about granting interim compensation to those injured on either side, whether police personnel or protesters, it said. The top court also asked the HPEC to submit a report on damage caused to public property resulting from the protesters' actions during the demonstrations.This includes the destruction of and injury to government installations, vehicles and other assets belonging to the State and to private citizens alike. The injuries sustained by the police forces while discharging their duties, as well as the consequent mental and emotional trauma borne by their families, merit due recognition and consideration on a par with the grievances raised by the petitioners. The apex court granted liberty to parties to approach the HPEC and submit such relevant material, documentary evi-

dence, and suggestions as they may deem fit.Liberty is also granted to complainants, representations and material to be provided anonymously so that the identity of the complainants and witnesses is protected, it added.The top court also appointed advocates Ashima Mandla, Daksh Kadian and Astha Singh as nodal officers for better communication between parties.

The bench directed the police, paramilitary forces and other investigating agencies to preserve all CCTV footage, drone footage, body-worn camera recordings, videography, wireless communication records and PCR call logs pertaining to the student protests, furnish the entire record to the HPEC and extend their full cooperation."It is further clarified that the constitution of the HPEC by us shall in no way deter or debar the police authorities or other security forces from taking administrative or disciplinary action against such of their officers as may be found to be in contravention of the rules governing their conduct," the bench said.Regarding logistics and modalities governing the functionin.

Land survey completed in a meticulous manner

Sircilla, August 20:
Collector Garima Agrawal has ordered that the land resurvey in the district be completed in a systematic and transparent manner. On Wednesday, the Collector, along with Additional Collector Gaddam Nagesh and Survey and Land Records officials, conducted a review on the land resurvey process and other issues at the Rajanna Sircilla District Collectorate. The tehsildars were fully informed about the land resurvey process and various issues. As part of the land resurvey conducted in the district, the survey conducted in Srinivasapuram of Gambhiraopet Mandal, Lachchapet of Konaraopet Mandal, Chandragiri of Vemulavada Mandal, and

Ananthapalli of Chandurthi Mandal has been completed, the officials informed the Collector. It was informed that the survey has been started in ten more villages. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector ordered that the records related to the villages that have already been surveyed be handed over to the Tahsildars of the respective Mandals. He suggested that the resurvey process in the remaining villages should be expedited as per the plan. Land details should be collected accurately at the field level, targets should be set on a daily basis and resurvey should be done with complete transparency. Before conducting the survey in the villages, he ordered that the



information on the survey number of the lands should be first conveyed to the people in the respective villages through the GPOs, AEOs and Panchayat Secretaries. He suggested that the Tahsildars should examine the resurvey of village boundaries and other works at the field level. He also said that the details of the lands of the government

departments should be handed over to the officials of the relevant departments. He clarified that the rest of the process should be completed after reviewing the complete details related to the survey at the field level and in the records. RDOs Sridhar Babu, KSB Kumari, AD Survey and Land Records Srinivas,

Chandrababu Naidu calls for southern states' cooperation, proposes regional bullet train



Chennai: August 20:
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday outlined a roadmap for the comprehensive development of the southern states at the 31st Southern Zonal Council meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, proposing among others, a regional bullet train corridor.He also called for greater cooperation and coordination between the

Centre and the states.Addressing the meeting attended by the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, besides the LG of Puducherry, Naidu said the southern states should resolve the inter-state issues through trust and mutual cooperation."The development of the southern states can be achieved only through cooperation and coordination," he said.The

CM proposed a bullet train corridor connecting Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu via Kuppam, alongside a transit network linking Amaravati, Bengaluru and Chennai.

Naidu suggested creating a common logistics network, dry ports in the southern states, and full integration of the southern power grid with the national grid to strengthen regional infrastructure and energy security.He also proposed setting up a joint consortium with universities and skilling institutions in the southern states and a mutual aid force to share resources during disasters.

The chief minister sought the establishment of a common spiritual tourism circuit connecting Tirupati with northern sites like Kashi,

Ayodhya and the Char Dham.According to him, the southern states contribute 31 per cent of the country's GDP and could achieve a USD 10 trillion economy by 2047 through strategic cooperation.The text of his speech was released in Amaravati by the Andhra government . On Andhra Pradesh's pending bifurcation-related issues, he said institutions listed under Schedules 9 and 10 of the bifurcation Act have not been divided even after 12 years and urged the Centre to take speedy action to resolve them.He thanked the Centre for Polavaram projects, the South Coast Railway Zone and Amaravati.Naidu sought the resolution of the state's resource deficit and issues related to Section 56 of the bifurcation Act.

EDITORIAL

Three-Language Policy:
What About English?

Language is not merely a subject in an Indian classroom; it is deeply connected to identity, opportunity and social mobility. The Supreme Court's latest intervention in the CBSE's three-language policy has therefore raised an important question: in promoting Indian languages, is the education system inadvertently creating uncertainty over the place of English? The Court has urged the Centre, CBSE and NCERT to revisit and streamline the policy, while questioning the practical readiness of schools. It has also raised a significant constitutional and social question over whether English can simply be classified as a "non-indigenous" language, given its deep roots in Indian society. There is nothing inherently wrong with encouraging students to learn three languages. In fact, multilingualism can be a tremendous advantage. India's linguistic diversity is a strength that education should preserve rather than weaken. A child should have the opportunity to learn the mother tongue, understand another Indian language and acquire a language that expands access to the wider world. The problem lies in implementation without adequate preparation. The Supreme Court has specifically raised concerns about the availability of qualified teachers, textbooks and other learning resources. It has even asked CBSE to consider a one-time reprieve for the current Class VI batch.

English deserves particular attention. It is not simply a foreign language for millions of Indians. It is widely used in higher education, science, technology, medicine, law, business and international communication. For students from rural and economically weaker backgrounds, proficiency in English can significantly expand educational and employment opportunities. Weakening access to English in the name of promoting Indian languages could unintentionally deepen inequality. At the same time, India's regional languages must not become victims of an English-dominated education system. The answer is not to choose between English and Indian languages. India needs both. The government should therefore focus on flexibility rather than uniformity. Students should have meaningful choices, schools should have the infrastructure to teach the languages they offer, and no child should be forced into a language combination simply because the system lacks teachers or learning material. Most importantly, language policy should serve the childâ€”not ideology. The objective of education is to expand a student's horizons, not narrow them. India can proudly promote its linguistic heritage while retaining English as a powerful bridge to knowledge and opportunity. The three-language formula should produce multilingual Indians, not another educational burden. If implemented with choice, preparation and flexibility, it can become an asset. If imposed without adequate infrastructure or sensitivity to India's diversity, it could become yet another source of inequality in education.

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Anirudh And Kavya’s Destination Wedding Date Locked?



Sensational music director Anirudh Ravichander and Sunrisers Hyderabad owner Kavya Maran are once again making headlines. According to several reports in the Tamil media, they are all set to get married in Greece on November 10. The speculation gained fresh momentum after Anirudh’s uncle, veteran actor Y.G. Mahendran, publicly spoke about the relationship and indirectly stated that the marriage will happen soon. Interestingly, wedding rumors involving the duo have been circulating for more than a year. While Anirudh had previously dismissed similar reports, the latest reports have once again gained traction. Kavya Maran is one of the most recognizable faces in the IPL, owns Sunrisers Hyderabad, and is the daughter of Sun TV owner Kalanithi Maran, while Anirudh remains one of the busiest and most successful music composers in Indian cinema. As of now, fans are eagerly waiting for an official announcement. Until then, the reported destination wedding plans remain a major talking point on social media. Anirudh is high on the success of his new film DC, which had great music.

New Age Trivikram, Start Working with Telugu Stars!

Venky Atluri has recently earned the tag of the “New-Age Trivikram Srinivas” for his large-scale commercial entertainers. His last three films have proved his mettle. Be it Sir (Vaathi), Lucky Baskhar or the latest Vishwanath And Sons, the filmmaker has cemented his position among Tollywood’s bankable directors. Besides delivering content-backed films, Venky has also churned out successful box-office entertainers. Now, all eyes are on Venky Atluri’s next. There is growing demand for him in Tollywood. After directing Dhanush, Dulquer Salmaan and Suriya, Telugu fans are eagerly waiting to see Venky team up with Telugu stars. When asked about his next project, Venky quipped, “Nothing is finalised. Yet to start working on the script.” Let’s hope things fall into place soon and Venky collaborates with a top Tollywood star and producer Naga Vamsi is best at getting the things done. If Venky joins hands with a prominent Telugu star, there is no doubt that the combination could work wonders at the box office.



How A Podcast Led To Ameer Log

A grounded story, real locations and natural performances are the main highlights of Ameer Log, the upcoming Telugu film directed by Ramana Reddy Soma. Produced by Madhavi Reddy Soma under Awwal Number Productions, the film is set to release on August 21. MC Hari, Manoj, Sashidhar and Vedha Jalandharr play key roles. Interestingly, the title Ameer Log came before the story. Director Ramana Reddy heard the phrase in a podcast featuring actor Manoj Bajpayee and became curious about its meaning. He then started building a story around the title, which eventually became a tale about three young men from a Hyderabad basti. The director wanted to show the real life of a Hyderabad basti without making it look artificial. So, instead of creating sets, the team shot in an actual basti. He also used sync sound to keep the performances natural and realistic. Ramana Reddy had earlier made a short film, which taught him the importance of proper preparation. For Ameer Log, he made sure to have a bound script before starting the feature film. Spirit Media also came on board after watching the film and appreciating its content, especially the second half. The director also thanked Rana Daggubati for his support and promotion. With its realistic setting and simple storytelling, Ameer Log is now gearing up for its August 21 release.



Irumudi Team Shouldn’t Spoil The Goodwill With Unnecessary Words

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja is facing social media backlash over remarks he made about child actor Nakshathra at the pre release event of Irumudi held recently.

Nakshathra, who plays Ravi Teja’s daughter in the film, asked him to give her a nickname during the event. Ravi Teja responded with the nickname “Muduru M**a”. The comment drew criticism from a section of netizens, who felt such words were inappropriate while addressing a young girl. The clip soon went viral on social media.

At the same time, some people defended Ravi Teja, arguing that the remark was made in a light hearted and playful situation without any bad intention. However, the criticism continues, particularly because the comment was directed at a child during a public event.

Ravi Teja is known for using such casual and spontaneous words in conversations, often as part of his natural flow. But this particular instance appeared to come out more out of excitement than anything else, which



makes it stand out and has unfortunately created a bigger negative impression.

Ravi may not have intended to offend anyone, but the comment has created the wrong impression and even attracted attention from national media. At the same event, actor Ajay Ghosh also faced criticism for apparently going overboard in the name of enthusiasm.

The senior actor has been associated with this kind of

casual language on several occasions, often seemingly as an accidental part of his spontaneous nature. But this time, the words appeared to come out in a moment of heightened excitement, and that has unfortunately caused more damage than usual.

Irumudi revolves around Lord Ayyappa devotees and combines devotional and spiritual elements with social and commercial aspects. The film has generated good inter-

est among audiences so far and is carrying positive goodwill. It certainly does not need such controversies distracting from that buzz.

Ultimately, Ravi Teja and the entire Irumudi team need to be a little more careful with their words and actions during promotional events. With the film already enjoying positive attention, protecting that goodwill should be more important than creating unnecessary controversy.

Huma Qureshi Owns The Cover, Effortlessly



Huma Qureshi is proving she is a true fashion powerhouse with her latest magazine cover, and it’s impossible to look away. The actress, all set to impress fans with her upcoming film Toxic, brought serious glam to the shoot with multiple striking looks. She switched between four bold outfits, a black and white feathered dress, a rich maroon pantsuit, a flowing white gown with dramatic sleeves, and an elegant black gown covered in crystal embellishments. Each look showed off a different side of her style, from edgy to classic elegance. Huma completed her looks with statement earrings and soft, glowing makeup, letting her confidence shine through every frame. With Toxic creating buzz, this cover comes at the perfect time, proving Huma is ready to own the spotlight both on screen and in fashion.

Rakul Preet Singh Drips In Sequins, Sass

Rakul Preet Singh is proving age is just a number with her latest stunning photoshoot. The actress, gearing up for her much-awaited role in Ramayana, dropped a set of pictures that instantly caught fans’ attention. She wore a shimmering black sequined gown with a sheer crystal-studded neckline and a bold cutout back with lace-up detailing. She kept it simple with a sleek bun, ear cuffs, and dewy makeup, letting the gown steal the show. Nearing her 40s, Rakul continues to impress with her fitness and style. With almost two decades in the industry, she has built a strong name in Tollywood and is now steadily making her mark in Bollywood too, with Ramayana as one of her biggest upcoming projects.



Hyderabad sailors make history at International Cadet Class World Championships



Lake Garda, Italy: In an unprecedented achievement, an eight-member national team, all hailing from Hyderabad and Telangana, returned victorious from the International Cadet Class World Under-17 Championships at Lake Garda, Italy. The Indian contingent secured a total of 16 medals across individual races, capped by an overall Silver in the Silver Fleet.

Competing against 65 boats from 11 top sailing nations, including the UK, Australia, the Netherlands, and Germany, the young Indian squad delivered the country's best-ever overseas international performance in the class.

Three-time sub-junior National Champion Ravikumar

Banneoulu (15) and crew Badrinath Nirudu secured an impressive 8th overall finish, claiming a spectacular single-race victory along the way.

Vinod Dandu (16) and crew Mani Nilkondla (14) finished 11th overall after a fiercely competitive 11-race regatta.

Silver Fleet Glory: The female duo of Chandralekha Tattari (16) and Rishwita Sunchankota (14) earned an overall Silver Medal in the Silver Fleet out of 52 boats, missing out on Gold by just a single penalty point despite facing gear failures in their opening two races.

The squad was completed by promising sailors Kounik Vardhan (Hanamkonda) and Hanumanth Vadhtya (Nalgonda), who finished 20th

out of 52 in the Silver Fleet.

The podium at Lake Garda was frequently decorated with the Indian Tricolour throughout the prize-giving ceremony, marking a historic turnaround for India following earlier appearances at Plymouth (2024) and Lake Lipno, Czech Republic.

Grassroots Talent Turning into Global Champions

The young sailors represent local community institutions, showcasing the strength of Telangana's grassroots sports development: Udbhav School (Rasoolpura, Secunderabad); Ravikumar Banneoulu, Chandralekha Tattari, and Mani Nilkondla; Vinod Dandu Nallakunta Gov School, Badrinath Bansilapet Gov

School; Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Telangana Praja Welfare Residential Schools (MIPT): Rishwita Sunchankota (Kamareddy), Hanumanth Vadhtya (Nalgonda), and Kounik Vardhan (Hanamkonda).

Reviving a Legacy

The double-handed International Cadet Class, one of only two junior dinghy classes sailed globally alongside the Optimist, requires immense coordination between skipper and crew to manage three sails, including the complex spinnaker.

Reintroduced to India just two years ago after a 21-year hiatus by Suheim Sheikh, President of the Telangana Sailing Association and Yacht Club of Hyderabad, the programme's rigorous training has yielded world-class results in record time.

"I think we have mastered the Cadet Class to a point where we can consistently win podiums for India on the world stage," said Suheim Sheikh, President of the Cadet Class Association of India.

"Our sights are now set on the next World Championships in Ribnitz-Damgarten, Germany. With seasoned sailors like Ravi and Vinod returning with valuable experience, we expect to deploy a larger fleet and challenge for top honours."

I was a huge fan of Harbhajan, says Ashwin



"Under Dinesh Karthik's captaincy, I played Under-19 cricket for the first time. Back then, I used to bat a bit, and didn't bowl as much. So, whenever I bowled, I used to bowl with Bhajju Pa's bowling action because I was genuinely a fan," former India all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin said. In a chat with JioStar, Ashwin recalled how he was a huge fan of former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

"When Bhajju Pa came onto the scene, every day I used to copy his action while playing gully cricket. And actually, his dismissal of Ricky Ponting, and the dismissal of Matthew Hayden while bowling from over the stumps, during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, I watched all those matches very closely," Ashwin recalled.

"But I never thought I'd become an off-spinner. In my mind, it was always batting. But when he used to bowl, there was something about him, his character, his ability to stand up to everyone and take the fight. So, I really liked that generation. I was genuinely a fan of him, and from there, I never imagined I would come this far," he said.

On how constructive criticism served as fuel for him to

get better: Ashwin said: "After my first Australia tour, Sanjay Manjrekar wrote a long article. When I was returning, I read the whole thing, and after reading it, I got really angry. I actually felt bad. Anger was just a reaction, but I felt really bad. But after that, I slept on the flight and let it go."

"Back then, I didn't talk to Sanjay much. Then, after coming back home, I worked really hard for the next four years. I wasn't a gifted athlete. I worked very hard, and in 2015, he wrote another article saying that I was bowling so well now and that he wanted me to keep performing like that," he said. "Then I asked for his number and messaged him that I had felt bad back then, but his article came to me like a guru and changed my life. Because there was substance in what he said. So, if I ever get criticised, I just think about whether there's something to learn from it. If I feel there's something to learn, I take it," Ashwin said.

On James Anderson's remark after Virat Kohli's double hundred during England's tour of India in 2016, Ashwin said: "Jimmy Anderson is a great bowler and bowled really well throughout his career, with un-

believable skills! They batted first and made 450-odd in the first innings in Mumbai. After that, we were 330 for six at one point before Virat smashed a magnificent double hundred. He completely took control and helped us overhaul their score, and we got to 630-odd."

"We were about to inflict an innings defeat on them, and that very day, Anderson came for the press conference and said, 'This is India, let him come to England.' Man, how hard is it for you to give someone credit? So, I felt it was below the line. We have a lot of respect for him, but he shouldn't have said that," he recalled. For his part, JioStar expert Harbhajan Singh reckoned that sledging has reduced considerably since the advent of the IPL.

"After the arrival of the IPL, the sledging and banter have reduced a bit because earlier, it used to happen a lot. But the IPL brought everyone closer as you share the dressing room with those players, you meet them regularly, play alongside them, and sit and chat together. But I feel that in sport, a little bit of banter, a bit of exchange, should be there, as long as it doesn't cross the line," he said.

Serena and Venus Williams return to doubles and lose close match in Cincinnati

Serena and Venus Williams played their first doubles match together since the 2022 U.S. Open and lost a thriller, 2-6, 6-1 (10-8) to Marta Kostyuk and Peyton Stearns on Monday night at the Cincinnati Open. The sisters nearly recovered from a 6-0 deficit in the match tiebreaker before a double-fault by Venus Williams ended their first doubles appearance in a non-Grand Slam event since the Italian Open in 2016. "I thought it was fun," Serena said. "I thought it was special. We kicked off a little rust in the middle of the match and just, you know (were) starting to feel it. I didn't come out here to win this tournament. Winning is obviously great. But in this position just, you know, having fun. It was really cool to be able to do this again." Serena had been off the tour since 2022 before returning this summer at age 44. The sisters planned to play together at Wimbledon but had to withdraw after Serena injured her knee while losing her singles match. They entered Cincinnati as a wild card. "Eventually we would find our way to each other," the 46-year-old Venus said about the decision to play doubles again. "It's our first time playing together in forever. It was great for us to get out there and do it." Kostyuk



and Stearns, both 24, are playing in their first tournament together. Kostyuk is from Ukraine. Stearns grew up in the Cincinnati suburb of Mason, where the tournament is played every year. "I kind of expected it but it stung a little bit that this is my hometown," Stearns said about the pro-Williams sisters crowd. "I won't hold it against anyone. The crowd was going for them but we used it to our advantage and flipped the script." After dropping the first set, the Williams sisters rolled in the second to force a match tiebreak. Kostyuk and Stearns went ahead 6-0, but

consecutive double-faults by Kostyuk helped the Williamses get within 8-7. It was 9-8 after Serena powerfully put away an overhead before Venus double-faulted.

"The crowd got the show," Kostyuk said. "They probably couldn't ask for anything better. At the end a tiebreak is a lottery. You never know which way it's going to go."

Venus and Serena have won 14 Grand Slam doubles titles and 22 total. Serena won one with Alexandra Stevenson in 2002 at Leipzig. All of Venus' doubles titles have been with her sister. They also have won three

Olympic gold medals together. Serena has won 23 singles Grand Slam titles. Venus has won seven.

In other results Monday, defending Cincinnati champion Iga Swiatek rallied from a set down to win her eighth consecutive match, beating Maria Sakkari, 4-6, 6-1, 6-1.

No. 2 seed Elena Rybakina beat Magdalena Frech, 6-4, 7-6. Third-ranked Jessica Pegula beat fellow American Emma Navarro, 7-5, 6-2.

World No. 3 and top seed Alexander Zverev won his ATP-tour leading 46th match this season, outlasting Terence Atmane, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (6).

Ajaraie scores hat-trick as NorthEast United beat Shillong Lajong 5-2 in Durand Cup

Shillong: Alaaeddine Ajaraie orchestrated a breathtaking second-half comeback with a hat-trick as NorthEast United FC defeated Shillong Lajong 5-2 in a thrilling Durand Cup quarterfinal to reach the semifinals. After trailing 1-2 at the break in torrential rain, the Highlanders turned the match on its head with four second-half goals to book a semifinal berth for the fourth successive year. NorthEast United will face Mohun Bagan Super Giant in

the second semifinal on Thursday. The match began under difficult conditions as heavy rain made the pitch challenging. NorthEast adapted more quickly and created the first meaningful chance in the seventh minute when Eneko Satrustegui headed narrowly wide from an Antonio Moyano corner. The Highlanders made their early dominance count in the 11th minute through a moment of individual brilliance from Ajaraie.



Mumbai: Vignesh Vermula won the title in the Open section, while Saranya Devi clinched the Girls title as host nation India made a strong start in the Blitz category on the opening day of the Asian Junior Chess Championship 2026 at the ITC Maratha Sheraton in Mumbai. The championship was formally inaugurated by Jayraj Pathak (IAS), former BMC Commissioner, and the hosts started on a bright note by bagging the top spots in the Open and Girls Blitz Championship, respectively.

The biggest surprise of the

tournament came from Vignesh Vermula, who started the event as the 23rd seed but produced a remarkable performance to emerge as the Asian Junior Open Blitz Champion 2026.

Displaying exceptional speed, tactical alertness and consistency throughout the competition, Vignesh finished tied on points with compatriots Sharnartha Viresh and Nandish V. S., but secured the title on superior tie-break scores. It was a day for the underdog in the girls' section as well, with Saranya, seeded 9th, impressed with

her quick thinking and tactical precision to win the title. The top seed, Shohradova Lala of Turkmenistan, claimed the silver medal, while India's Sannidhi Bhat finished third.

Viresh claimed the silver medal in the Open section, while Nandish completed an all-India podium by securing the bronze medal.

India's dominance was further underlined by the performances of Akshay Borganokar and Madhavendra Pratap Sharma, who finished fourth and fifth respectively.