

BPCL conducts nationwide fuel quality checks, finds no violations across retail outlet network

Mumbai: Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has intensified fuel quality surveillance across its nationwide Retail Outlet (RO) network, with an extensive inspection and testing exercise finding no cases of adulteration, contamination, critical irregularities or compliance lapses during the reporting period., according to a press statement issued here on Tuesday.

The Fortune Global 500 company and Maharatna PSU said the quality assurance exercise was conducted to ensure adherence to prescribed fuel specifications and strengthen consumer confidence in



fuel quality. BPCL Field Officers carried out 932 surprise inspections across Retail Outlets under all State Offices between July 3 and July 13, 2026. In addition, the Quality Control Cell conducted 111 inspection

tions, with fuel samples collected from 17 Retail Outlets for detailed quality assessment.

The company's Quality Assurance Department also undertook 50 surprise sampling and on-site test-

ing exercises through its mobile laboratory network as part of the surveillance drive."Maintaining consistent fuel quality standards across the supply chain is essential for consumer confidence and efficient ve-

hicle performance," BPCL said, adding that regular surveillance and scientific testing help safeguard fuel integrity.

The company follows a multi-layer quality assurance framework involving field inspections, surprise checks, laboratory testing, mobile laboratory surveillance and continuous monitoring to verify compliance at various stages of the fuel distribution chain.BPCL said the latest exercise reaffirmed the effectiveness of its quality monitoring systems and reflected its continued focus on proactive quality assurance across its Retail Outlet network.

Man arrested for alleged murder of minor girl in Mumbai copied from TV show Crime Patrol

Mumbai: A man has been arrested for allegedly murdering a minor girl in Mumbai's Samata Nagar area, police said on Tuesday. Investigators have alleged that the accused had carefully planned the crime and lured the victim to an isolated location before attacking her. A case has been registered under charges of murder and relevant provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and further investigation is underway.

The victim's body was recovered on July 9 from the forested area of Damu Nagar, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Samata Nagar Police Station. The discovery of the body triggered a police investi-

gation, with forensic teams and crime branch officials examining the scene to gather evidence and identify the person responsible.



According to the police, the accused and the victim had known each other for approximately two years. During the course of the investigation, officers traced their interactions and questioned several individuals connected to the case before identifying and arresting the suspect.

Police alleged that the

accused contacted the girl on the day of the incident and asked her to meet him in the hilly area of Damu Nagar. He reportedly told her that it would be their final meeting and claimed that he wished to give her a last gift before they parted ways.

Investigators alleged that after reaching the isolated location, the accused asked the girl to close her eyes so that he could present the gift. Police claim that he then allegedly attacked her with a knife, inflicting multiple stab wounds. The victim succumbed to her injuries at the scene.Deputy Commissioner of Police Gajanan Rajmane said preliminary findings suggest that the crime was premeditated rather than spontaneous.

Youth electrocuted after climbing goods train at Nagpur Railway Station

Nagpur : A youth was electrocuted after coming in contact with a live overhead electric (OHE) wire while climbing atop a stationary goods train at Nagpur Railway Station early on Tuesday morning, railway officials said.

The incident occurred around 5.30 am in the railway yard area, where the unidentified youth reportedly climbed onto a coal-laden goods train and came dangerously close to

the 25 kV overhead power line.He suffered a severe electric shock and died on the spot after falling from the wagon.

The Government Railway Police (GRP) rushed to the spot and sent the body to Mayo Hospital for post-mortem examination.

A case of accidental death has been registered, and efforts are underway to establish the identity of the deceased.

Railway officials said

the incident briefly affected overhead equipment (OHE) operations before technical staff restored the system and normal train movement resumed.

Preliminary investigation suggests the deceased may have been a homeless or mentally disturbed person, though the exact circumstances are being verified by the GRP.The identity of the youth could not be ascertained till filling of this report.

Uddhav Thackeray calls meeting of Nashik corporators amid ‘Operation Tiger’ buzz

Mumbai: Amid growing speculation that the “Operation Tiger” strategy could be attempted in the Nashik Municipal Corporation, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray has called a meeting of the party's Nashik corporators at his residence Matoshree on Wednesday. The move is being seen as an effort to prevent a possible split within the party's civic body wing.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) currently has 15 corporators in the Nashik Municipal Corporation. However, political circles have been witnessing intense speculation that a significant section of these representatives may be considering switching allegiance to the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena.

Sources in political circles have claimed that around 10 to 12 Shiv Sena



(UBT) corporators from Nashik are allegedly in contact with the Shinde faction and could make a move at any time. If such a shift takes place, it could substantially

change the political balance within the municipal corporation.

The reported developments have created concern within the Uddhav Thackeray-led faction, prompting the party leadership to initiate direct communication with its elected representatives. The meeting at Matoshree is expected to focus on understanding the concerns of corporators and

strengthening internal coordination.

The latest political tension comes against the backdrop of a recent split within the Shiv Sena (UBT) parliamentary wing. In that episode, six out of the party's nine Lok Sabha MPs reportedly formed a separate group before aligning themselves with the Shiv Sena faction led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Fire is in your own house, but chasing flames elsewhere: Shinde’s brutal jibe at Uddhav Thackeray



Mumbai: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde launched a blistering political offensive today, accusing the Shiv Sena (UBT) faction of abandoning its core principles and fostering anarchy in the state.Shinde launched a sharp critique against Uddhav Thackeray, particularly targeting the UBT faction's recent alignment with the ongoing protest led by activist Sonam Wangechuk and their revival of the ‘Ram Raksha’ agitation.Dismissing the opposition's recent political maneuvers as hypocritical, the Deputy Chief Minister remarked that those who once penalised citizens for reciting the Hanuman Chalisa now find sudden political convenience in the Ram Raksha.“The Thackeray faction's political state is like someone attempting to put out a forest fire while their own house is burning,” Shinde remarked, questioning the credibility

of a party that he claims has compromised its Hindutva ideology by aligning with the Congress.The Deputy Chief Minister further dismissed concerns regarding the stability of the ruling Mahayuti coalition, asserting that the alliance is built on shared ideological foundations rather than political opportunism.He pointedly noted that the recent shift of several UBT Members of Parliament to his faction reflects the democratic reality that “majority rule and vision” remain paramount in the state's governance. Amidst the heated political rhetoric, Shinde maintained a firm administrative stance. He directed the Thane Municipal Commissioner to initiate immediate, large-scale action against all illegal banners and mandated a comprehensive structural audit of all commercial hoardings across the city to prevent any potential loss of life.

Fadnavis launches counter-offensive: Defends agri-policies and demands probe into 26/11 claims

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday called for a high-level and impartial investigation into the allegations made by former Union Home Secretary R V S Mani regarding the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, describing the claims as “deeply disturbing.” The Chief Minister said that matters related to national security must be examined thoroughly and demanded that the truth behind the allegations be brought before the public.

Addressing a press conference after a lengthy meeting of the Maharashtra Cabinet, Fadnavis said the claims related to an alleged ISI-Congress conspiracy behind the Mumbai terror attacks raised serious concerns and required an independent inquiry. He emphasised that issues involving terrorism and national security should not be viewed through a political lens and must be investigated based on facts and evidence.

The Chief Minister's remarks came while announcing a series of major policy decisions approved by the state Cabinet. The meeting focused on a broad development roadmap covering agriculture, urban infrastructure, transport, sports facilities and administrative reforms.

Among the most signif-

icant decisions was the expansion of the ‘Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Shetkari Karjамukti Yojana-2026’, a farmer loan relief scheme aimed at providing greater support to the agricultural community. The government said the revised scheme would benefit around 56 lakh farmers by removing earlier eligibility restrictions and introducing additional incentives for regular loan repayment.

Under the expanded framework, the government has decided to eliminate certain barriers that had limited access to the scheme. Officials said the changes were aimed at ensuring that more farmers facing financial challenges could receive assistance while encouraging responsible repayment practices among beneficiaries.

Fadnavis said the farmer-focused measures reflected the government's commitment to strengthening Maharashtra's rural economy. He added that improving the financial condition of farmers remained one of the state government's top priorities.The Chief Minister also addressed the controversy surrounding the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) and rejected opposition allegations that the government was planning to privatise MSRTC land. He clarified that the transport

corporation would continue to retain ownership of all its assets.

According to Fadnavis, only surplus land and unused properties of MSRTC would be developed through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. He said the objective of the move was to generate additional revenue, modernise facilities and improve the long-term financial stability of the state's public transport system.

The Cabinet also approved a new “Monetization Policy” aimed at improving the financial resources of local self-government bodies. The policy will allow municipal corporations and councils to make better use of their existing assets and create additional revenue streams for development projects.

Along with this, the government cleared the implementation of the Centre's Urban Challenge Fund, which is designed to accelerate infrastructure development in cities. Officials said the initiative would support projects aimed at improving urban facilities, connectivity and quality of life.The Cabinet also approved several region-specific development initiatives. One of the key decisions was the establishment of an international-level agricultural market in Dahanu, Palghar district.

Childhood NCDs emerging as new health challenge in rural , tribal regions

Nagpur : Childhood non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are emerging as a major public health concern across western and central India, with experts highlighting growing challenges in both rural and urban regions. While children in villages and tribal areas often struggle due to limited access to diagnosis and specialised treatment, urban children are increasingly facing lifestyle-related health problems.

Health experts said that diseases such as childhood obesity, diabetes and mental health disorders are being reported more frequently among children in cities due to changing lifestyles. Factors including reduced physical activity, excessive screen time, unhealthy food habits and sedentary routines are contributing to the rising burden of these conditions.At the same time, healthcare professionals pointed out that many childhood NCD cases in rural and tribal communities remain undetected for long periods. Limited healthcare infrastructure, lack of screening facilities and shortage of specialised medical services often result in delayed diagnosis, with several cases coming to light only after serious complications appear.

The growing concern

over childhood NCDs was highlighted during a two-day media capacity-building workshop held at AIIMS Nagpur, which concluded on Tuesday. More than 30 media professionals from across western India participated in the programme aimed at improving awareness and strengthening reporting on childhood health challenges.

The workshop was jointly organised by UNICEF India, the Press Information Bureau (Western Zone), and AIIMS Nagpur. The programme focused on improving understanding among journalists regarding the causes, prevention, diagnosis and management of childhood non-communicable diseases.

According to an official statement, participants interacted with healthcare experts who provided detailed information about the identification, treatment and long-term care required for children affected by NCDs. The sessions also focused on the importance of accurate reporting in creating awareness among families and communities.

The workshop highlighted the increasing prevalence of NCDs among children between the ages of 5 and 9 years as well as adolescents aged 10 to 19 years. Experts stressed that

early identification, preventive healthcare measures and continuous monitoring are essential to reduce the long-term impact of these diseases.

Doctors explained that unlike infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases often develop gradually and may remain unnoticed during the early stages. However, health conditions that begin during childhood can continue into adulthood if timely intervention and lifestyle changes are not adopted.

“Childhood non-communicable diseases have a long incubation period and often begin during childhood. Therefore, early diagnosis, sustained care and robust public health systems are crucial,” said Dr Prashant Joshi, Executive Director of AIIMS Nagpur.

Dr Joshi said AIIMS Nagpur is working towards developing healthcare models that can be expanded across the country to improve access to specialised medical services. He added that strengthening public awareness and early detection systems would play a key role in managing childhood NCDs.He also highlighted the importance of media organisations in educating parents and communities about early warning signs.

Gang of thugs attacks family visiting Bhavli Dam, molests woman, chases their vehicle

Nashik: A shocking incident of alleged harassment and violence has emerged from the popular Bhavli Dam and waterfall area in Nashik, where a family visiting the tourist spot was reportedly attacked by a group of men. According to police, the accused allegedly harassed a woman from the family, assaulted her relatives when they objected, and later chased their vehicle for several kilometres while attacking it. Nine suspects have been detained in connection with the case.

The incident took place on Sunday when the Bhagwat family from Nashik visited Bhavli Waterfall for a family outing. The area, which attracts a large number of visitors during the monsoon season, became the site of a violent confrontation after members of the family allegedly faced harassment by a group present there.

According to the complaint filed with the police, the family was preparing to leave the tourist spot when

two individuals allegedly harassed a woman member of the family. When she objected to their behaviour, the situation escalated, leading to an argument between the two sides.The woman's family members reportedly confronted the accused and protested against the alleged misconduct. Police said that following the confrontation, the accused group allegedly became aggressive and attacked the family members.

Fearing further violence, the Bhagwat family reportedly entered their car and attempted to leave the area. However, according to the complaint, the accused did not stop there and allegedly followed the family vehicle, continuing the assault during the chase.The attackers allegedly pursued the family for several kilometres, using wooden sticks and iron rods to strike the vehicle. During the chase, the miscreants reportedly damaged the car by smashing its windows and causing other damage to the vehicle. Family members stated

that they managed to escape the situation by immediately speeding away after the attack began. They alleged that the attackers continued following them for around 10 to 20 kilometres, repeatedly attempting to stop the vehicle and assault them.

Speaking about the incident, Poonam Bhagwat described the sequence of events and said that eight members of the family had gone to visit Bhavli Dam. She alleged that while they were leaving, two people harassed her, following which she confronted them and her husband also objected to their behaviour.

She said the accused allegedly abused them and moved towards the family aggressively. According to her, when the family resisted, the accused initially moved away from the spot.

However, she alleged that another group of people standing near a parked tempo soon approached them and questioned why they had confronted the earlier accused.

Govt unveils massive reform package to empower farmers, revitalise urban infrastructure

Mumbai: The Maharashtra Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, has approved a comprehensive package of eight key decisions aimed at accelerating the state's economic development while addressing the needs of farmers, urban bodies and regional infrastructure. The latest policy measures focus on agricultural relief, modern infrastructure creation, public transport development and improved governance mechanisms. The state government described the decisions as part of a broader development strategy aimed at creating a stronger and more resilient Maharashtra. Officials said the package places farmers at the centre of policymaking while simultaneously promoting large-scale infrastructure projects to support long-term economic growth.“This is a transformative step for our state. By placing our farmers at the centre of policy and

modernising our urban and rural infrastructure, we are laying the foundation for a more prosperous and resilient Maharashtra,” government officials said after the Cabinet meeting.One of the most significant decisions announced by the Cabinet relates to the ‘Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Shetkari Karjамukti Yojana-2026’, a farmer loan waiver and relief scheme. The government has approved major changes aimed at expanding the benefits available to agricultural communities across Maharashtra.Under the revised scheme, the previous ₹50,000 limit has been removed for nearly 13 lakh farmers, allowing eligible beneficiaries to receive greater financial support. The government has also removed the regular loan repayment condition for the 2026-27 period, a move expected to provide relief to farmers facing financial difficulties.Officials said the revised provisions would

create an incentive-based support system benefiting more than 23 lakh farmers across the state. The decision is expected to provide additional assistance to ag-



ricultural households and strengthen the rural economy by improving farmers' financial stability.In another major step towards strengthening agricultural trade infrastructure, the Cabinet approved the establishment of an international-standard agricultural market in Dahanu, Palghar district. The proposed facility is expected to provide modern trading infrastructure and improve market access for farmers and agricultural producers.

To facilitate the devel-

opment of this world-class market, the government approved the transfer of 558.43 hectares of dairy project land to the Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board. The facility is expected to enhance agricultural supply chains, promote organised trade and create new opportunities for farmers in the region.The Cabinet also approved measures aimed at improving the financial independence and infrastructure capabilities of local governing bodies. A new “Monetisation Policy” will be introduced for municipal corporations and councils, allowing civic bodies to generate revenue by effectively utilising their existing assets.Along with the monetisation framework, the government has approved the implementation of the “Urban Challenge Fund”, which is designed to accelerate the development of high-quality urban infrastructure. The initiative is expected to support projects

related to urban improvement, public facilities and modern city planning.In a move aimed at transforming public transport infrastructure, the Cabinet authorised the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) to develop surplus land and bus station properties through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.The government believes that this initiative will help convert underutilised MSRTC assets into commercially productive spaces while improving passenger facilities. Modernised bus stations developed through PPP partnerships are expected to emerge as integrated transport and commercial hubs across the state.The Cabinet also approved a major sports infrastructure upgrade in Beed district. A modernisation project worth ₹24.95 crore has been sanctioned for the Beed District Sports Complex, which will include a synthetic athletic track .

Electric Bus Catches Fire Inside Local Depot

Thane: A public air-conditioned electric bus was completely destroyed by a fire that started in its battery area. No one was hurt in the accident, which happened late in the evening at the Turbhe transport yard. Firefighters arrived quickly and spent about an hour putting out the flames. The bus was already parked at the station because it had broken down earlier in the day. Officers confirmed that a technical problem in the back of the bus caused the battery to catch fire suddenly, but they kept the flames from spreading to other vehicles nearby.

An unexpected and dramatic incident unfolded late in the evening at the bustling Turbhe transport yard in Thane, where a public air-conditioned electric bus was completely



consumed by a fierce blaze. The fire, which reportedly originated deep within the vehicle’s sophisticated battery compartment, quickly esca-

lated into a massive inferno that illuminated the night sky over the local depot.

Despite the intensity of the flames and the rapid destruction of the state-of-the-art transit vehicle, officials confirmed that no passengers or depot workers were injured during the incident, preventing what could have been a major tragedy. Emergency response teams were dispatched immediately upon receiving the distress call, navigating through the depot to reach the burning wreckage as thick plumes of dark smoke filled the air. Firefighters battled the stubborn blaze for approximately one hour before finally bringing the situation under control and extinguishing the final remnants of the fire.

City Water Levels Remain Safe Even Without New Rain

Mumbai: The water stored in the seven main lakes that supply the city stayed steady at nearly half of their total capacity. Even though there was no new rain in the area and the water level dropped slightly, local officials say there is still plenty of water for the city.

The latest reports show the lakes hold over seven lakh million litres of usable water. Two of the smaller lakes, Vihar and Tulsi, are already completely full and overflowing from the heavy rains that fell earlier in the month. The largest lake, Bhatsa, is currently under half full, but the overall water stock is in a safe position for now.

The city’s vital water reservoirs have managed to maintain a remarkably stable and reassuring level of storage, hovering at nearly half of their total collective capacity despite a temporary pause in rainfall.

This steady volume ensures that the immediate daily water needs of the metropolitan population continue to be met without any immediate threat of shortage or rationing. Local administrative bodies and water department officials have closely monitored the situation, reassuring citizens that the current reserves are entirely sufficient to sustain the city’s vast network for the foreseeable future. Even as dry spells occasionally sweep through the catchment areas, the strategic management of these reservoirs helps cushion the supply against sudden fluctuations in weather patterns.

According to the most recent data released by municipal authorities, the seven primary lakes that feed the city currently hold an impressive collective volume of over seven lakh million litres of usable water. This substantial reserve represents a solid cushion that keeps municipal planners optimistic about meeting seasonal demands without resorting to emergency measures. The overall stability of this massive water stock is a testament to the heavy downpours experienced earlier in the season, which acted as a critical recharging phase for the region’s primary water sources.

Hurried to Hospital After Wind Blows Metal Sheet Onto Pedestrian

Vasai: A woman had to get 22 stitches on her head after a metal sheet flew off a building and hit her during a massive storm. The scary event was caught on a local security camera during a period of heavy rain and strong winds.

The security footage shows the metal sheet suddenly getting ripped away from the building by powerful winds, striking a female pedestrian below. The entire event was captured on a nearby security camera, documenting the sudden and hazardous conditions brought on by the intense rainfall and strong gales affecting the area. The dramatic footage shows the metal sheet break-

part of the fall. She was taken to the hospital for her head wound and is now recovering safely.

A frightening incident occurred in Vasai during a severe storm when a heavy metal sheet was ripped away from a building by powerful winds, striking a female pedestrian below. The entire event was captured on a nearby security camera, documenting the sudden and hazardous conditions brought on by the intense rainfall and strong gales affecting the area. The dramatic footage shows the metal sheet break-

ing loose from the structure and crashing directly onto the sidewalk where the woman was walking, highlighting the unpredictable dangers caused by the extreme weather.

The victim, identified as Deepa Amit Dhinoja, sustained a significant head wound from the impact and required 22 stitches upon arrival at the hospital. Fortunately, local officials noted that she was spared from much more severe injuries because a nearby shop roof partially broke the momentum of the falling debris before it hit her.

Huge Fight Over Parking Spot Leaves Young Man and Mother

Mira-Bhayandar: A 21-year-old man and his mother were badly beaten by four people after an argument about where to park a scooter. The police have started an investigation and filed a case against the attackers under the new laws.

The trouble started at the Patel Complex when Mohammad Shafat Shahbaz Usmani rode his scooter home.

A neighbor named Sultan Nasir Khan stopped him and claimed the parking space belonged to his building.

The argument quickly turned violent when Sultan and his friends pushed the young man to the ground,

kicking and punching him while shouting threats to scare the neighborhood.

The victims had to go to the hospital to treat their injuries.

A violent altercation erupted at the Patel Complex in Mira-Bhayandar, leaving a 21-year-old man and his mother severely injured after a dispute regarding a scooter parking space turned physical.

The confrontation escalated rapidly when the young man, identified as Mohammad Shafat Shahbaz Usmani, was returning home on his two-wheeler and was intercepted by a neighbor, Sultan Nasir Khan, who claimed the specific parking

slot belonged exclusively to his building.

The verbal argument quickly deteriorated into physical violence as Sultan, accompanied by three of his friends, reportedly assaulted Usmani, throwing him to the ground before repeatedly kicking and punching him.

The attackers also shouted threats during the incident, causing panic and alarm throughout the immediate neighborhood. The young man’s mother, who attempted to intervene and protect her son from the assault, was also targeted and beaten by the group during the chaos.

Following the attack, both victims required immediate medical attention and had to be transported to a local hospital to receive treatment for the various injuries sustained during the encounter.

Editorial

Crushing the Hidden Threat Within!

A shocking and grim plot hatched from across the border to undermine the country's internal security has recently been exposed, putting Indian security agencies on high alert. Preliminary evidence reveals that Shahzad Bhati alias Bhatti a notorious criminal and international gangster based in Pakistan had orchestrated a systematic scheme to ensnare Indian youths via social media. These youths were often misguided, financially disadvantaged, and despite being educated ideologically naive. To nip these subversive activities in the bud, the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) launched a massive operation on Friday, July 10, conducting simultaneous raids at 102 sensitive and highly sensitive locations across Maharashtra. Acting on precise and reliable intelligence from central and state agencies, authorities detained over 111 suspected "Bhatti sympathizers" for questioning during these raids.

An examination of the background and connections behind this operation reveals that this is not merely the crime of a single gang; rather, the mastermind behind it is a vast, cross-border terrorist network. The organization's modus operandi involves using secure, anonymous digital platforms to incite religious sentiments, lure individuals with promises of financial gain, and weave a network of "sleepers" at the local level. History bears witness that, following the 1990s, Pakistan employed this very strategy to cultivate a network of local youths in Jammu and Kashmir; these individuals later operated as sleeper cells, providing local shelter and logistical support to foreign terrorists for horrific acts such as the Pahalgam attack. Today, Shahzad Bhatti appears to be replicating that same dangerous modus operandi in other Indian states particularly in geographically sensitive regions like Punjab and Jharkhand. The primary objective is to sow widespread terror in society using low-intensity weapons and explosives, while simultaneously gauging the alertness of Indian security agencies. Bhatti's gang is strongly suspected to be behind a series of incidents, ranging from the firing at police personnel in Punjab during May and June to the massive bomb blast at the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) office in Jharkhand on June 17. Just two days prior to the operation in Maharashtra, the Special Cell of the Delhi Police had busted two major modules linked to Pakistan's intelligence agency (ISI) across Delhi and Punjab, arresting six terrorists. Digital data seized from them revealed plans to trigger a series of explosions using petrol bombs at crowded locations across the country, including Delhi.

A critical analysis of this entire affair reveals a stark social and educational paradox. Education typically fosters wisdom and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong; however, this principle does not apply to terrorism fueled by the intoxicating opium of religious fanaticism. When highly educated young professionals such as doctors and engineers engage in such subversive, anti-national activities, they become akin to venomous snakes harbored within one's own fold, posing a grave threat to society and the nation. Shahzad Bhatti, the mastermind behind this conspiracy, is a hardened criminal originally from Pakistan, with hundreds of cases ranging from murder and dacoity to robbery registered against him in Lahore. Furthermore, a heinous crime like rape was also recorded against him in 2015. To evade the clutches of the Pakistani police, he fled to Dubai, where he initially started a scrap business before amassing illicit wealth worth crores under the guise of trading in milk and agricultural products. The very criminal who was once 'Most Wanted' in Pakistan in 2013 now enjoys official protection from the ISI and has become a favored asset of the Pakistani establishment.

Shahzad Bhatti has utilized the codename '333' to build his network on social media. In numerology, the number 333 symbolizes the union of mind, body, and soul, as well as creation. Posing as a guide and a guardian angel, he has been attracting youths from a specific religion through Asia's largest digital network. According to information obtained by the Delhi Police in June, the arrested terrorists confessed to establishing a new terror group named 'Tehreek-e-Taliban Hindustan' (TTH). The sinister motive behind this is to spread a violent network across India, mirroring the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan; Bhatti has focused his efforts on states ranging from Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh to Maharashtra, Bihar, and Jharkhand. Social media chats reveal that these youths are being lured not only with the prospect of creating anarchy in India but also with promises of settlement abroad and substantial financial rewards.

However, these international traitors and their backers must realize that the India of today has changed. The world witnessed, through the surgical strikes, that India's current defense policy involves entering enemy territory to strike back. In the past, the country was plagued by over 18 terrorist organizations operating under Islamic banners ranging from Al-Qaeda to the more recent 'The Resistance Front' (TRF). These groups left the entire nation, including Jammu and Kashmir, bloodied over the last three decades; yet, the stringent 'zero-tolerance' policies implemented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have broken the backbone of these organizations and sent their ringleaders to their graves. In July 2016, at Kokernag in Anantnag district, the Army eliminated Burhan Wani the 'poster boy' who held the Kashmir Valley to ransom marking the beginning of a successful, historic campaign to rid the region of terrorism.

Today, the Kashmir Valley breathes freely, while the rabble that once pelted stones at soldiers for money remains cowering in their holes.

The most significant lesson from this entire affair is that Shahzad Bhatti, operating from across the border, is merely an external adversary whom the Indian Army can easily neutralize; However, a far greater threat is posed by internal traitors who while living in this very country and subsisting on its produce betray the land itself, becoming blind devotees of criminals like Bhatti and operating sleeper cells. Extinguishing these internal embers in time is the foremost priority for the Home Ministry and the nation today. Such elements, which compromise national security, must be crushed without delay and with utmost severity within the framework of the law, denying them any legal or political cover. The ultimate, stark reality of this strategic action is that the battle for border security cannot be fully won until the local accomplices who abet such traitors are completely eradicated.

APEDA Facilitates Commercial Export of Amrapali Mangoes from Jharkhand to Dubai

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, has facilitated the commercial export of 2 metric tonnes (MT) of Amrapali mangoes from the Aspirational District of Gumla and Aspirational Block of Deoghar in Jharkhand to Dubai on July 3, 2026. The consignment was exported by M/s Fair Exports (India) Pvt. Ltd. for retail distribution across Lulu stores in Dubai, marking another milestone in promoting exports from tribal and women-led farmer collectives.

The export consignment comprised premium-quality Amrapali mangoes sourced from three women-led Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) promoted by Palash – Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society (JSLPS). One metric tonne was sourced from APEDA-registered MVM Baghima Palkot Producer Company Limited and Raidih Agri Producer Company Limited in Gumla district, while the remaining one metric tonne was sourced from Mohanpur Ajeevika Mahila Kisan Producer Society in Deoghar district. The orchards have been developed by tribal women farmers under the Birsra Harit Gram Yojana, implemented in convergence with MGNREGA and supported by the Government of Jharkhand.



The consignment was ceremonially flagged off in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner and Deputy Development Commissioner of the respective districts, along with representatives of APEDA, JSLPS and other line departments. The flag-off symbolised the successful collaboration among APEDA, the Government of Jharkhand, district administrations, women-led FPCs, exporters and development partners in connecting rural producers with international markets.



The export has delivered significant economic benefits to the participating farmers, with members of the women-led FPCs realising nearly 180 per cent higher returns than prevailing local market prices. The initiative demonstrates the potential of export market access in enhancing farmers' incomes while encouraging greater participation of women producers in export-oriented agriculture. Each of the participating FPCs has more than 1,500 shareholders and collectively represents over 50,000 mem-

ber farmers, extending the benefits of the initiative to a large farming community. The export reflects APEDA's sustained efforts to develop export-ready farmer collectives through capacity building, quality enhancement and market facilitation. In May 2026, APEDA organised a dedicated capacity-building programme in the Palkot area of Gumla district to sensitise members and Board of Directors of eight Farmer Producer Companies on international quality standards, post-harvest handling practices and

export procedures, enabling them to meet the requirements of premium overseas markets. Representatives from the district offices of Agriculture, Horticulture, JSLPS, District Industries Centre (DIC) and other line departments also participated in the programme.

Further strengthening its outreach among women entrepreneurs, APEDA's Regional Office, Kolkata, organised an Export-Oriented Capacity Development Programme for Women Entrepreneurs and Self-Help Groups on September 19, 2025, at Baswariya village in Devipur block of Deoghar district. Around 105 participants, including women entrepreneurs, Self-Help Groups, Farmer Producer Organisations, and officials from the Department of Horticulture, Agriculture Department, NABARD and APEDA, participated in the programme. The session focused on creating awareness about APEDA's mandate, Financial Assistance Scheme, export opportunities, key export procedures and institutional support available for women entrepreneurs to participate in global agricultural trade. The initiative highlights the growing export potential of Jharkhand's horticulture sector and reflects APEDA's continued efforts to strengthen women-led farmer collectives through capacity building, market linkages and export facilitation.

Mizoram's Natural History Museum notified as India's 21st Designated Repository

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has designated the Natural History Museum (NHM), Mizoram University, Aizawl, as a Designated Repository under Section 39 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. Based on the recommendation of the National Biodiversity Authority and after due examination of the proposal, the Central Government notified the institution as a Designated Repository on 19 June 2026. With this notification, NHM becomes India's 21st Designated Repository, further strengthening the country's biodiversity conservation and scientific infrastructure.

Designated Repositories constitute an important component of India's biodiversity governance framework by preserving authenticated biological specimens accessed under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

The NHM will maintain voucher specimens of select flora, including pteridophytes and macrofungi, and fauna such as reptiles, amphibians, fishes, moths, beetles and butterflies. It will also serve as the designated depository for type specimens of newly discovered species from the region. These authenticated collections will strengthen species identification, traceability and scientific research while safeguarding India's biological resources for long-term conservation. They will also support future ecological res-



toration in the event of habitat loss, natural disasters or species decline.

Established in 2022 under the aegis of Mizoram University, a Central University established by an Act of Parliament, the NHM is uniquely positioned because of its location within the Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot and its specialised taxonomic expertise. Mizoram and the wider North-eastern Region harbour more than 7,500 species of flowering plants and over 2,000 faunal species. The mu-

seum's expertise in pteridophytes, macrofungi, moths, beetles and other lesser-studied taxa fills an important gap in India's network of Designated Repositories and strengthens the scientific documentation of the region's rich biodiversity.

The repository will also support the documentation and conservation of endemic species unique to the region, including the recently described amphibian *Leptobrachella tamdil*, discovered in the forests of Mizoram,

underscoring the Northeast's global importance as a centre of biodiversity and species discovery.

Even before its designation, the NHM had demonstrated its scientific preparedness by collecting and preserving more than 500 specimens, including herbarium sheets and wet-preserved collections. Its multidisciplinary scientific team comprises experts from Mizoram University across seven specialised taxonomic groups, ranging from macrofungi and pteridophytes to fishes, moths and butterflies.

The designation further strengthens India's national network of Designated Repositories by enabling the preservation of biological specimens closer to their source, improving scientific documentation, reducing logistical challenges and facilitating collaboration with the Mizoram State Biodiversity Board and regional research institutions.

Complementing the existing repositories of the Botanical Survey of India, Zoological Survey of India and other notified institutions, the designation advances National Biodiversity Target 4 of India's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2024-2030) by strengthening ex situ conservation and the conservation of genetic diversity, in line with Target 4 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Kamarajar Port Becomes India's Second Major Port

Kamarajar Port Limited (KPL) has achieved a significant milestone in India's maritime infrastructure development with the successful completion of its Capital Dredging Phase VI project, transforming the port into a deep-water facility capable of handling fully laden Capesize vessels. The project has increased the operational draft of the port to 18 metres, enabling it to accommodate ships carrying cargo of up to 1,70,000 Deadweight Tonnage (DWT). This development places Kamarajar Port among the country's most advanced maritime gateways and marks a major boost to India's port infrastructure.

With the enhanced draft capability, Kamarajar Port has become the second Major Port in India, after Visakhapatnam Port, to offer an operational draft of 18 metres. The achievement significantly strengthens the country's ability to handle large bulk cargo vessels and reinforces India's efforts to modernise its maritime sector in line with global standards.

The completion of the Capital Dredging Phase VI project is expected to enhance the port's competitiveness by enabling it to receive some of the world's largest bulk carriers. Capesize vessels, which are among the biggest cargo ships operating internationally, require deeper ports due to their large carrying capacity. By becoming Cape Compliant,

Kamarajar Port joins an exclusive group of international ports equipped to handle such vessels efficiently.

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal hailed the achievement as another important milestone in India's maritime growth story. He said the country is witnessing a historic transformation in the maritime sector under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with a strong emphasis on developing world-class port infrastructure and improving logistics capabilities.

The Minister noted that the government's long-term strategies, including the Maritime India Vision 2030 and the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, are driving comprehensive reforms across the sector. These initiatives aim to modernise ports, strengthen coastal infrastructure, improve multimodal connectivity, promote sustainable shipping practices and establish India as a leading maritime nation in the global economy.

According to Sonowal, the emergence of Kamarajar Port as India's second major port with an 18-metre operational draft reflects the government's commitment to creating future-ready infrastructure that can support increasing trade volumes and contribute to sustained economic growth. He stated that strengthening maritime infrastructure is critical for enhancing India's global com-

petitiveness and facilitating efficient international trade.

The Capital Dredging Phase VI project was undertaken as part of the Government of India's vision to make Kamarajar Port fully Cape Compliant. The project involved extensive dredging operations across multiple sections of the port to improve navigational depth and accommodate larger

vessels with greater safety and efficiency. Under the project, the outer approach channel was deepened from 20 metres to 23 metres, while the inner entrance channel was increased from 19 metres to 22 metres. In addition, dredging work was carried out alongside berths to facilitate the handling of ships requiring an 18-metre draft. The harbour basin and associated navigational areas were also upgraded to support seamless vessel movement.



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The entire Capital Dredging Phase VI project was completed at an investment of approximately ₹440

crore. The investment represents one of the major infrastructure upgrades undertaken at Kamarajar Port in recent years and is expected to generate long-term operational and economic benefits for the port as well as the wider logistics sector.

Expressing satisfaction over the successful completion of the project, Sonowal said the transformation of

another step towards India's ambition of becoming a global maritime powerhouse and emphasised that modern port infrastructure is essential for supporting the country's expanding industrial and trade activities.

Industry experts believe that the increased draft will allow shipping companies to deploy larger vessels on trade routes connected to Kamarajar Port. The ability to handle bigger ships is expected to generate substantial savings in transportation costs through economies of scale, enabling exporters and importers to move larger cargo volumes in a single voyage.

The enhanced draft capability is expected to significantly improve operational efficiency at Kamarajar Port by enabling faster movement of cargo and reducing vessel turnaround time. With the ability to receive fully laden Capesize vessels directly at its berths, the port can handle larger cargo consignments in a single voyage, eliminating the need for ships to partially unload cargo at other ports before arriving. This will simplify supply chain operations, improve scheduling efficiency for shipping lines and reduce delays associated with cargo transshipment.

The increase in cargo-handling capacity is also expected to generate substantial cost savings for exporters, importers and shipping companies. Larger vessels benefit from econo-

mies of scale, allowing more cargo to be transported at lower per-unit freight costs. These savings are likely to make Indian exports more competitive in international markets while reducing logistics expenses for industries dependent on imported raw materials.

Trade and industry across southern India are expected to benefit considerably from the upgraded infrastructure. Sectors dealing with bulk commodities such as coal, iron ore, limestone, petroleum products, fertilisers and other industrial raw materials will gain access to more efficient shipping services and improved port connectivity. The enhanced capabilities are expected to support growing industrial demand and facilitate smoother movement of cargo through the region. The project is also expected to stimulate economic activity by attracting fresh investments in port-based industries, warehousing facilities, logistics parks and multimodal transport infrastructure. Improved maritime connectivity often encourages industries to establish manufacturing and processing units near ports, creating employment opportunities and strengthening regional economic development. Officials believe that the successful completion of the Capital Dredging Phase VI project will further enhance Kamarajar Port's competitiveness against both domestic and international ports.

Nitin Nabin returns to Bankipur campaign trail as BJP faces high-stakes bypoll

Patna: The Bankipur Assembly bypoll has emerged as a high-stakes contest for the BJP, with the party treating it as a battle of prestige. The constituency has long been associated with BJP National President Nitin Nabin and his father, late Navin Kishore Prasad Sinha, making the election politically significant for the party.

The contest has become even more closely watched with the entry of Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor, who is contesting an election for the first time after years of crafting campaign strategies for others.

The BJP has held the Bankipur seat continuously since 1995. The constituency fell vacant after Nitin Nabin was elected to the Rajya Sabha, necessitating a by-election.

With the stakes rising, Nitin Nabin has personally taken charge of the BJP's campaign.

Arriving in Patna late on Monday evening, Nitin Nabin held a meeting



at his official residence with Bankipur Assembly constituency's mandal presidents, Shakti Kendra heads, deputy heads, booth presidents and party workers to review the party's election strategy.Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary also attended the meeting.The discussions focused on

the party's public outreach campaign, booth-level strengthening and election strategy. Nitin Nabin urged party workers to further strengthen the organisation at every polling booth and work with complete dedication to secure a historic victory for NDA candidate Neeraj Kumar Sinha.

On Tuesday, Nitin Nabin formally inaugurated the NDA's election office for the Bankipur Assembly bypoll.

Later, addressing a press conference, he appealed to the people of Bankipur to vote for BJP candidate Neeraj Kumar Sinha.

Appealing to voters, Nitin Nabin said, "Just as you have blessed and supported me over the years, I request you to extend the same blessings to my younger brother, Neeraj Kumar Sinha. I am fully confident that the people will ensure his victory."

He added, "Bankipur has been my constituency. I am accountable to its people and party workers, which is why I have come here. For nearly 20 years, I have worked shoulder to shoulder with party workers and the people of this constituency. The BJP has given an opportunity to a grassroots worker, and I am confident that the people will support him."

Bihar approves homestay scheme to boost tourism and create rural livelihoods

Patna: Bihar government has approved the Chief Minister Homestay Promotion Scheme, a initiative aimed at promoting tourism by allowing visitors to stay with local families instead of hotels while generating employment and self-employment opportunities for residents.

Sources at the tourism department said here on Tuesday that under the scheme, domestic and international tourists will be able to experience Bihar's rich culture, traditional cuisine, and hospitality through homestay accommodation near major tourist destinations. The proposal was approved by the state cabinet.

The sources informed that the government has identified 34 tourist destinations across 16 districts for

the scheme. These include prominent religious, historical, and eco-tourism sites such as Mahabodhi Temple and Vishnupad Temple in Gaya, the Nalanda Mahavihara ruins, Rajgir attractions including the Ropeway, Zoo Safari and Nature Safari, Vaishali Peace Pagoda, Mundeshwari Temple in Kaimur, Kesaria Stupa, and Valmiki Tiger Reserve. They also include Barabar Caves, Kakolat Waterfall, Mandar Hill, Garibnath Dham, Bhimbandh Wildlife Sanctuary, Punaura Dham, Lachhuar Jain Temple, and Dev Sun Temple.

According to the source, to qualify, a homestay must be located within five kilometres of a notified tourist destination. A maximum of eight rooms will be approved under a single home-

stay unit.

The state government will provide financial assistance of Rs 2.5 lakh per room, with support capped at Rs 10 lakh per homestay. Women entrepreneurs and youth aged 18 to 25 years will receive an additional Rs 25,000 per room, up to Rs 1 lakh. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) will also be eligible for an additional incentive of up to Rs 1 lakh.

The Tourism Department has set a target of registering 1,000 homestay rooms over the next five years. Applications for the scheme are expected to open shortly.According to the source, the initiative aims to make tourism more immersive by connecting visitors with the daily lives, traditions and hospitality of local communities.

Barpali railway station gets modern makeover with western Odisha's cultural imprint

Bhubaneswar: Barpali Railway Station in Odisha's Bargarh district has undergone a major transformation under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, emerging as a modern, accessible and passenger-centric facility while showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Western Odisha.

Redeveloped at an estimated cost of Rs 22 crore, the upgraded station is expected to significantly enhance passenger convenience, improve regional connectivity and contribute to the socio-economic development of the area.

East Coast Railway (ECOR) sources said the station has been comprehensively upgraded with an expanded station building featuring a new entrance portico, a spacious circulating area and improved passenger access.

A 12-metre-wide Foot Over Bridge (FOB), equipped with ramps, has been constructed to ensure safe, seamless and barrier-free movement for passengers, particularly senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

Passenger amenities have also been substantially

improved with the widening of approach roads, installation of additional platform shelters, resurfacing of platforms and development of modern waiting halls, providing a safer and more comfortable travel experience.

One of the most distinctive features of the redeveloped station is its celebration of the region's cultural legacy.

The architectural façade and interior aesthetics of the station draw inspiration from Barpali's internationally acclaimed Ikat handloom tradition, renowned for its intricate weaving patterns and vibrant colours.

Artistic motifs depicting the celebrated Dalkhai folk dance and other traditional art forms of Western Odisha have also been incorporated into the station's design, giving it a distinctive local character and creating a memorable sense of place for visitors.

The redevelopment reflects Indian Railways' commitment to transforming railway stations into vibrant public spaces that not only offer modern passenger facilities but also showcase the culture, heritage and aspira-

tions of the regions they serve, ECoR sources said.

The upgraded station is expected to act as a catalyst for regional growth by improving connectivity for agriculture, trade, commerce, tourism and local industries.

ECoR said the enhanced railway infrastructure would create greater opportunities for farmers, handloom weavers, artisans, traders and small entrepreneurs, thereby supporting sustainable economic development across Western Odisha.

The transformation of Barpali Railway Station marks another milestone in Indian Railways' efforts to modernise railway infrastructure while preserving the country's rich cultural heritage and providing passengers with a safer, smarter and more convenient travel experience.

Barpali Railway Station is among 75 redeveloped stations across Indian Railways scheduled to be dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 17, 2026, marking another significant step in the nationwide implementation of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

LoP accuses CM Sukhu of misleading people over Himcare scheme

Shimla: Leader of Opposition and former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Tuesday accused Chief Minister Thakur Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu of misleading the public over the Himcare health insurance scheme, claiming that an RTI response had contradicted the Chief Minister's allegations regarding alleged irregularities in the programme.

Thakur alleged that the Chief Minister had been making "false and misleading" statements about the BJP government's flagship Himcare scheme in an attempt to tarnish its image.

Referring to information obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, the Leader of Opposition said the official reply covering the period from 2019 to 2022 stated that no case of hysterecomy involving a male patient had been recorded in any government hospital in Himachal Pradesh during the period.

He claimed the RTI response exposed what he described as "baseless allegations" made by the Chief Minister regarding the

scheme and asserted that the government's own official records did not support such claims.

Thakur alleged that the Congress government was attempting to discredit the Himcare scheme because of its popularity among the people.



He claimed the present government had failed to introduce any comparable welfare programme during its three-and-a-half years in office and was therefore targeting schemes launched by the previous BJP government.

The former Chief Minister further alleged that branding earlier welfare initiatives as scams without producing evidence was inappropriate and said constitutional functionaries should exercise restraint while making public statements.

He also alleged that repeated allegations against the implementation of the

scheme indirectly questioned the integrity and professional conduct of doctors, surgeons and paramedical staff working in government hospitals, who had been providing healthcare services to the public.

Thakur urged the state government to focus on governance, development works and improving public services instead of criticising programmes launched by the previous government. He said if the present government was unable to introduce new welfare initiatives, it should at least allow existing schemes benefiting the poor to function without political interference.

Maintaining that the people of Himachal Pradesh were aware of the facts, the BJP leader claimed the government's campaign against the Himcare scheme would not succeed and alleged that the truth had been brought out through the RTI response.

The Himcare scheme, launched by the previous BJP government, provides cashless health insurance coverage to eligible families in the state.

Farmer bodies warn of statewide stir over Bidadi land row

Bengaluru: Escalating its opposition to the proposed (GBIT) project at Bidadi, a coalition of Karnataka farmer organisations on Tuesday warned the state government of a statewide agitation if it resorts to forcible land acquisition, accusing it of betraying assurances given to protesting farmers.The Samyukta Horata-Karnataka, a joint platform of farmer, Dalit, labour, student, youth and women's organisations, alleged that the government was attempting to push ahead with a joint land measurement and survey (JMC) under heavy police deployment despite sustained resistance from landowners.The organisations said farmers have been protesting the township project for over 18 months and have repeatedly declared that they will neither sell their land nor permit its acquisition.They alleged that while officials had promised to facilitate a meeting between the affected farmers and Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, the government instead chose to proceed with the survey, calling the move a "breach of trust" and an "assault on democratic rights."Demanding immedi-

ate intervention by the Chief Minister, the organisations urged the government to abandon the township proposal, arguing that it would destroy fertile, irrigated agricultural land that sustains multi-crop cultivation and the livelihoods of hundreds of farming families."If the government attempts forced acquisition, this will not remain a struggle of Bidadi farmers alone. Farmers across Karnataka will launch a united statewide movement," the organisations warned.Referring to Monday's confrontation between farmers and officials during survey-related activities, the organisations blamed the government's approach for triggering tensions, while appealing to farmers to maintain peace and continue their resistance through democratic means.The statement was jointly issued by Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and Hasiru Sene President HR Basavarajappa, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha President Badagalapura Nagendra, presidium member Chukki Nanjundaswamy, Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha General Secretary T Yashwant.

BRS left Telangana under Rs 8.21 lakh crore debt burden, says Bhatti Vikramarka

Hyderabad: Telangana Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Tuesday alleged that the previous BRS government had pushed the state into a severe financial crisis by raising loans of Rs 8.21 lakh crore, while asserting that the Congress government was implementing welfare schemes despite the heavy debt burden.

Addressing a public meeting at Julekal village in Vaddepalli mandal of Alamapur Assembly constituency, Bhatti claimed that the Congress government had paid Rs 2.08 lakh crore towards

principal and interest on loans in the last two-and-a-half years. He alleged that the previous government had "looted the state" without benefiting the people, leaving Telangana financially weak.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the Congress government had continued welfare schemes such as Shaadi Mubarak and Kalyana Lakshmi, besides ensuring timely payment of salaries, free electricity for farmers and free bus travel for women, for which about Rs 12,000 crore had been provided to the RTC.He also highlighted the construction of 4.5 lakh

Indiramma houses worth Rs 22,500 crore, establishment of 100 integrated residential schools, introduction of breakfast in government schools and the proposed launch of the Indira Insurance Scheme providing Rs 5 lakh insurance cover to families from November.

Criticising the BRS, Bhatti questioned which welfare schemes the party would discontinue if it returned to power, including free power, free bus travel, interest-free loans to women and the proposed insurance scheme.On irrigation, he reiterated the Congress government's commitment to

completing the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme and announced that pending land acquisition for works from Narlapur to Uddandapur would be expedited.

He also directed officials to complete land acquisition for 573 acres required for the Mallammakunta reservoir under the Tummila project, which is expected to provide irrigation to around 87,500 acres.

Bhatti assured farmers that the government would ensure fair compensation for land acquisition without causing injustice to any landowner.

Shivakumar accuses BJP-JD(S) of politicising farmers' issue

Bengaluru: The controversy over the proposed Bidadi township project has intensified into a political showdown in Karnataka, with Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday accusing the BJP and JD(S) of exploiting the issue for political gains and misleading farmers.

Shivakumar alleged that the opposition parties were attempting to portray a development initiative as an anti-farmer move despite the government's commitment to safeguarding the interests of landowners affected by the project.

"The BJP and JD(S) are politicising the issue. They are trying to create confusion among farmers for political reasons," Shivakumar said, asserting that the government would ensure justice for farmers while taking forward the township project.

The Bidadi township proposal, planned as a major urban expansion project in the Bengaluru region, has become a fresh flashpoint between the ruling Congress and the opposition alliance of BJP and JD(S).

The opposition has stepped up its attack on the government, alleging that

the land acquisition process threatens farmers' livelihoods and demanding that their concerns be addressed before proceeding further.

The issue gained political momentum after JD(S) supremo and former PM HD Deve Gowda extended support to protesting farmers and warned of launching a satyagraha at Vidhana Soudha if their demands were ignored. His intervention has turned the farmers' agitation into a larger political confrontation between the Congress government and the BJP-JD(S) combine.

Countering the opposi-

tion campaign, Shivakumar said the project was aimed at planned urban development and creating new economic opportunities around Bengaluru. He questioned the intentions of those opposing the township plan, alleging that they were using farmers' concerns as a political weapon.

The Chief Minister maintained that the government was ready for discussions and would not take any decision that harmed farmers' interests. He also accused the opposition of opposing development projects merely for political reasons.

Manipur body seeks central probe into arson attack on Meitei homes by Kuki miscreants

Imphal: Uripok Apunba Lup (UAL), a prominent civil society organisation in Manipur, has submitted a memorandum to the Union Home Secretary, demanding an impartial inquiry into the alleged arson incident at Leimakhong in Imphal West district. The organisation has also sought compensation and rehabilitation for the affected families, along with strict legal action against those responsible for the incident.The memorandum was submitted in the wake of an alleged attack that, according to the organisation, took place on July 11, when six houses belonging to members of the Meitei community were reportedly set on fire at Leimakhong. UAL claimed that the houses were allegedly torched by suspected Kuki militants inside a highly secured military cantonment area, raising serious concerns over security arrangements in the region.

Describing the incident

as a grave security lapse, the organisation alleged that the attack occurred in broad daylight despite the deployment of Army personnel and Central security forces in and around the cantonment area. According to the memorandum, the alleged incident has raised questions regarding the effectiveness of security measures in protecting civilians living in sensitive areas.

UAL stated that the alleged arson exposed significant shortcomings in preventive security arrangements. It claimed that there was a failure to anticipate the attack and insufficient intervention by security agencies to prevent damage to civilian property. The organisation argued that stronger preventive measures could have averted the incident.According to the memorandum, the alleged attack has further intensified the sense of insecurity among displaced residents who have already been affected by the ethnic violence

that erupted in Manipur on May 3, 2023. The organisation said many Meitei families from the area continue to remain displaced and have been unable to return to their homes due to persistent security concerns.UAL alleged that residents of the affected villages have been living in relief camps since the outbreak of the ethnic conflict, as they fear for their safety if they return to their original homes. The organisation maintained that the latest incident has further complicated efforts to restore normalcy and facilitate the return of displaced families.

The memorandum also alleged that local villagers who attempted to extinguish the fire were obstructed during their efforts and that some individuals sustained injuries while trying to save the burning houses. According to the organisation, these developments aggravated the losses suffered by the affected families.

Centre extends support for Warangal, Adilabad airports, says Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad : Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Tuesday announced that the Central Government has assured full cooperation for the development of the proposed airports at Warangal and Adilabad, expressing confidence that both projects would be completed and inaugurated by June 2, 2028. The announcement marks a significant step towards strengthening aviation infrastructure in Telangana and improving regional connectivity across the state.

Speaking to reporters in New Delhi after meeting Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, the Chief Minister said the discussions primarily focused on accelerating the construction of the two airports and ensuring that all statutory approvals and clearances required from the

Centre are granted without unnecessary delay.

Revanth Reddy said the meeting was held in a positive atmosphere, with both the Central and State governments sharing a common objective of enhancing infrastructure development in Telangana. According to him, the Union Civil Aviation Ministry has extended its support for the proposed projects, which are expected to play a crucial role in boosting economic activity and improving air connectivity in northern Telangana.

The Chief Minister expressed optimism that, with coordinated efforts from both governments, the airports at Warangal and Adilabad would be completed within the planned timeline. He said the State Government is working with a clear target of inaugurating both facilities by June 2, 2028,

coinciding with the completion of four years of the present state administration.



Highlighting Telangana's growing contribution to the national economy, Revanth Reddy pointed out that although the state accounts for only about 2.5 per cent of India's population, it contributes nearly 5 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He said this significant economic contribution underscores the need for world-class infrastructure, including mod-

ern airports capable of supporting future industrial and commercial expansion.

According to the Chief Minister, expanding aviation infrastructure is essential to sustain Telangana's rapid economic growth and attract greater domestic and international investment. Improved air connectivity, he noted, would facilitate business travel, strengthen trade, promote tourism and enhance the state's overall competitiveness.

Revanth Reddy said the proposed airport at Warangal would not merely serve as a transportation hub but would also showcase the region's rich historical and cultural heritage. He revealed that the airport's architectural design would draw inspiration from the glorious legacy of the Kakatiya dynasty, reflecting the distinctive historical traditions

and architectural excellence associated with the historic kingdom.

By incorporating elements inspired by Kakatiya architecture, the government aims to create an airport that serves as a cultural landmark while promoting Telangana's historical identity. The initiative is expected to enhance the visitor experience and strengthen Warangal's position as an important heritage tourism destination.

The proposed airport at Adilabad is also expected to play a significant role in improving regional development by providing better connectivity to northern Telangana. Enhanced air access is likely to support industrial growth, encourage investment, improve logistics and create new employment opportunities for local communities.

First glimpse of ‘Bhojpuri Bawal’ released, to premiere from August 2

Mumbai: The makers of “Bhojpuri Bawaal” have unveiled the first promo of the upcoming reality series, featuring Bhojpuri cinema heavyweights Pawan Singh, Dinesh Lal Yadav, Amrapali Dubey, Kajal Raghwani and Tej Pratap Yadav.

In the released promo, all the actors are seen talking at a dinner table. It starts with a light discussion, but within a short time the conversation turns into debate and bickering.

During this, the actors are seen openly discussing the rumours, controversies and people’s perceptions spread about them. At the end of the promo, Nirahua says, “This Bhojpuri Bawal... will go above Bigg Boss.” According to the makers,



the series will not be based on tasks and eliminations like traditional reality shows, but will closely explore the personal lives, families, rela-

tionships, friendships, competition and pressures of stardom of leading stars of the Bhojpuri film industry. Pawan Singh said that

over the years, people have heard many stories about him, some true and many fabricated. He said that this show will give viewers an opportu-

nity to discover his true identity.

Dinesh Lal Yadav “Nirahua” said the show’s greatest strengths are its spontaneity and authenticity. He added that all the actors express themselves openly, which is what makes it unique.

Amrapali Dubey said that the audience has been watching her on screen for years, but the world behind the camera is different and this show will introduce them to that world.

Kajal Raghwani said that the show is not based on artificial drama, but on real relationships, conversations and personalities.

“Bhojpuri Bawal” will stream from August 2 exclusively on JioHotstar and Colors.

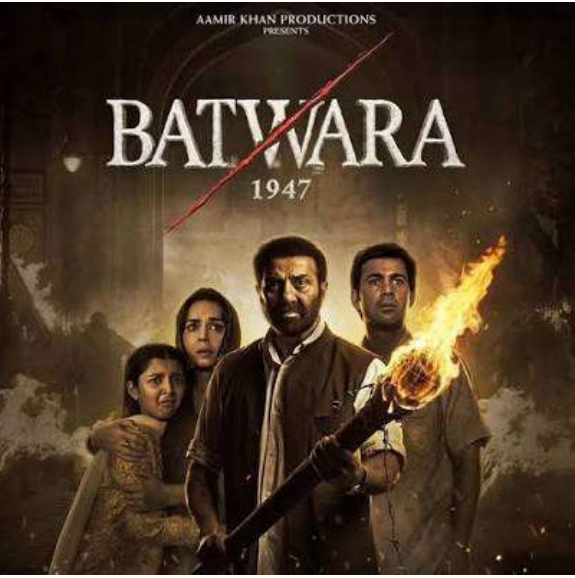
New poster of “Batwara 1947” unveiled ahead of Independence day release

Mumbai: The makers of “Batwara 1947”, starring Sunny Deol, have released a new poster from the historical drama, revealing the first look of the character Krishna and adding fresh momentum to the film’s promotional campaign.

Sharing the poster on X, the makers wrote, “When the world chose sides, HE chose dharma.”

“Batwara 1947” is a historical drama set against the backdrop of India’s Partition. The film brings to life the story of the 1940s, a period when the country’s partition impacted the lives of millions. Amidst the tragedy of fear, displacement, and separation, the film highlights courage, humanity, and moral values.

Along with Sunny Deol, Shabana Azmi, Preity Zinta, Karan Deol, Ali Fazal, Abhi-



manyu Singh, Khushi Hazare and Kanika Kapoor will be seen in lead roles in the film.

Produced under the banner of Aamir Khan Produc-

tions, the film is directed by Rajkumar Santoshi. The music is composed by A.R. Rahman, with lyrics by Javed Akhtar.

Ranveer Singh to commence filming for ‘Pralay’ next month

Mumbai: Ranveer Singh is preparing to begin principal photography for the zombie thriller “Pralay” next month, before temporarily stepping away from work to embrace fatherhood once again.

Directed by Jai Mehta, the film has been co-written by the filmmaker and screenwriter Vishal Kapoor, best known for his work on “Lootere”. Production is expected to resume with a second schedule sometime in 2027, according to Variety India.

Singh and Deepika Padukone, who tied the knot in 2018 in Italy, welcomed their daughter Dua in September 2024. The couple has largely kept their daughter away from the public eye, sharing only occasional glimpses of their journey as parents while maintaining a degree of privacy in their family life. They announced their second pregnancy with a joint post on Instagram in April. It featured a picture of their daughter, Dua, holding a positive pregnancy test kit. Padukone is currently in the third trimester of her pregnancy.

While details surrounding “Pralay” remain tightly guarded, including its supporting cast and production



roadmap, the film has already generated considerable industry buzz. It also marks Singh’s next major cinematic outing following the re-sounding box-office triumph of “Dhurandhar”, which dominated theatres after its release in December 2025. Its sequel, “Dhurandhar: The Revenge”, continued the franchise’s momentum upon

its release earlier this year. Padukone, meanwhile, has a busy slate of her own. She recently completed a schedule for Siddharth Anand’s “King,” in which she reunites with her “Jawan” co-star Shah Rukh Khan. She will also be seen in Atlee’s ambitious sci-fi action film “Raaka,” headlined by “Pushpa” actor Allu Arjun.

Tiger Shroff and Taha Shah Badussha bring competitive spirit to ‘Playing for Humanity’ charity football match

Mumbai: Actors Tiger Shroff and Taha Shah Badussha showcased their sporting prowess as they participated in the ‘Playing for Humanity’ charity football match, lending their support to a cause that blended athletic competition with social responsibility. Shroff and Badussha, known for their fitness and

active lifestyle, were seen on the field in full enthusiasm in their respective team jerseys. Before the match, both were seen chatting with fellow players and discussing strategies. Shroff, in the red jersey, was seen drinking water and discussing with the team members during halftime, while Badussha, in the yellow jersey,

was also seen enjoying the game with enthusiasm on the field. A highlight of this match was the friendly bond between the actors. The two stars were seen chatting, joking, and encouraging each other on the field. Their sparkling chemistry was well-received by fans. Several celebrities and sports enthusiasts participated in

the charity match, organised as part of the “Playing for Humanity” initiative. The event aimed to promote social causes through sports and send a positive message to the public. Known for their incredible fitness and athletic abilities, showcased their incredible stamina and passion for the game on the field. The presence of both

stars added a new energy to this special match. Fans also appreciated both the actors for taking time out from their busy schedules to be a part of such an initiative, which, along with entertainment, also gave the message of doing something good for society.



Naila Grrewal calls working with Atlee on Raaka a “masterclass” in filmmaking

Mumbai: Eleven years into her Bollywood journey, Naila Grrewal is stepping into unfamiliar territory with her South film debut in Atlee’s upcoming Pan-Indian project Raaka.

Grrewal told The Hollywood Reporter India that landing a part in Raaka came down to manifestation and being upfront about her admiration for Atlee’s work from their first meeting. “He was extremely gracious to take that conversation forward and be open to the idea of collaborating with someone who has only worked in the Hindi film industry,” she said.

Discussing Atlee’s craft, Grrewal said “I felt that there was a creative language in his cinema that I would love to be a part of.

There was a sense of manifestation and he is the kind of filmmaker I aspire to

work with. It feels like a masterclass to understand the amount of dedication and persistence that is needed to make something this mammoth come to life.” Raaka marks the first collaboration between director Atlee and Allu Arjun, and brings the filmmaker’s eighteen-year vision to the screen, with Arjun and Deepika Padukone playing lead roles. Grrewal previously appeared alongside Padukone in a supporting role in Intiaz Ali’s Tamasha in 2015, making their reunion in Raaka feel like a full circle moment for her.

She said that watching Padukone now, she notices how attuned the actor is to her characters rather than simply her stardom, adding that being part of these stories alongside performers like Padukone and Arjun feels fascinating. On working with Arjun, Grrewal said his

focus and hunger to get a scene right, despite the level of success he has already achieved, has been inspiring to witness as a newer actor. Grrewal said “It’s going to be something that really pushes the envelope in terms of all aspects of filmmaking and all aspects of character portrayal. When you’re able to break away from the regular norms of playing something natural into something completely different, it’s going to be really out of the ordinary.”

Power-packed teaser from Sriimurali’s ‘Paraak’ released

Mumbai: The makers of Kannada actor Sriimurali’s upcoming action thriller “Paraak” have officially released the film’s teaser, giving audiences their first glimpse of what promises to be a high-octane cinematic experience. Packed with intense action, striking visuals and a gripping atmosphere, the teaser has generated considerable excitement among movie enthusiasts and fans of the actor. The film presents Sriimurali in an entirely fresh and dynamic avatar, hinting at a story driven by suspense, emotion and large-scale action. Following the success of his previous film “Bagheera,” Sriimurali has undergone a noticeable transformation

for “Paraak.” The teaser showcases the actor sporting a rugged look with an impressive physical transformation that complements the demanding action-oriented role. His commanding screen presence, stylish appearance and energetic performance have become one of the major talking points following the teaser’s release. The action-packed preview offers only brief glimpses of the film’s storyline but successfully establishes an atmosphere filled with mystery, danger and adrenaline-fuelled sequences.

From explosive confrontations to dramatic visuals, the teaser indicates that “Paraak” aims to deliver a com-

plete commercial entertainer while maintaining an engaging narrative. Within hours of its release, the teaser began receiving positive reactions across social media platforms. Fans praised Sriimurali’s new look, his intense expressions and the film’s high production values. Many viewers also appreciated the slick editing, visually rich frames and the scale at which the action sequences have been mounted, raising expectations for the film’s theatrical release.

Director Halesh Kogundi shared his excitement about the project, revealing that he has been deeply passionate about action films since childhood. According to him, action

cinema is much more than elaborate fight scenes and visual spectacle; it is an effective medium for telling emotionally engaging stories through compelling characters and meaningful conflicts. Explaining his creative vision, Halesh Kogundi said that “Paraak” is fundamentally an action-suspense thriller where action serves the narrative rather than overpowering it.

He emphasised that the film focuses equally on character development, emotional depth and suspense, ensuring that audiences remain invested in the journey of its protagonists while enjoying the thrilling action.

Shagun Sharma to play lead role in Colors’ new fiction show after Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi and Khatron Ke Khiladi 15

Mumbai: Actor Shagun Sharma is set to achieve another significant milestone in her television career, with reports confirming that she has been signed as the female lead for Colors TV’s upcoming untitled fiction show. After impressing audiences with her performances in television dramas and attracting widespread attention through her participation in “Khatron Ke Khiladi 15,” the actress is now preparing to return to the world of daily soaps in a prominent lead role.

According to sources associated with the project, the new show is currently in the pre-production stage and is expected to begin filming in Mumbai in the coming weeks. While the makers have not yet officially announced the title, storyline or complete cast, Shagun Sharma has reportedly been finalised as the show’s leading lady, marking another important chapter in her acting journey.

The development comes at a time when Shagun is enjoying growing popularity across television as well as social media platforms. Her recent appearances and professional commitments have kept her in the spotlight, with fans eagerly following updates about her upcoming projects. The latest casting news is expected to further strengthen her position among the industry’s promising young television actors.

Shagun has recently been making headlines for her participation in “Khatron Ke Khiladi 15,” the popular stunt-based reality show that challenges contestants to perform physically demanding and often dangerous tasks.

Her willingness to take on difficult challenges has earned her appreciation from viewers and showcased a different side of her personality beyond scripted television roles.

The actress drew considerable public attention after photographs from the sets of

to push her limits in pursuit of excellence.

Further adding to the excitement, the makers of “Khatron Ke Khiladi 15” recently released a fresh promotional video featuring glimpses of the contestants taking on adrenaline-filled stunts. Shagun’s appearance



Alia Bhatt joins Sohum Shah’s Tumbbad 2 cast; reunites with Pen Studios after Gangubai Kathiawadi and RRR

Mumbai: Actor Alia Bhatt has officially come on board “Tumbbad 2,” the much-anticipated sequel to the critically acclaimed 2018 fantasy horror film “Tumbbad.” The announcement has generated significant excitement among cinema lovers, with the makers confirming that Alia will share screen space with Sohum Shah and Nawazuddin Siddiqui in the upcoming film. Scheduled for a theatrical release on December 3, 2027, the sequel aims to expand the dark and mysterious universe that captivated audiences with its unique blend of folklore, mythology and horror. Directed by Adesh Prasad, “Tumbbad 2” is being produced under the banner of Sohum Shah Films in association with Pen Studios. The sequel promises to build upon the rich mythology established in the original film while introducing new characters, fresh conflicts and unex-

plored mysteries. With an acclaimed cast and an experienced production team, expectations surrounding the project have risen considerably. Expressing her excitement about joining the film, Alia Bhatt revealed that “Tumbbad” has remained one of the most memorable cinematic experiences she has had as a viewer. She said the original film left a lasting impression on her because of its originality and the immersive world created by the filmmakers, making the opportunity to become part of its sequel especially meaningful. Alia noted that very few films manage to create an entirely original cinematic universe that continues to resonate with audiences years after their release. According to her, “Tumbbad” achieved exactly that by blending folklore, fantasy and horror in a way that felt fresh and deeply engaging. She said

its enduring popularity and growing fan base made joining the sequel an exciting creative opportunity. Sharing



her thoughts on the project, Alia said, “Tumbbad has stayed with me ever since I first watched it. Very few films create a world that feels this original and immersive, and even fewer continue to grow in people’s imagination years after they’ve released. That’s what makes this opportunity so exciting.” She further added that becoming part of such a celebrated cinematic universe is incredibly special for her. Alia expressed her enthusiasm about collaborating with Sohum Shah and Nawazuddin Siddiqui, two performers she has admired for many years. She also shared that she is eager to explore a character that belongs to a story filled with mystery, emotional depth and unforgettable storytelling. “To now become a part of

that world is incredibly special. I’m looking forward to working with Sohum and Nawaz, two artists I’ve admired for a long time, and to exploring a character that belongs to a story as rich, mysterious and unforgettable as Tumbbad. I can’t wait for audiences to experience what we’re creating together,” she said. Actor-producer Sohum Shah, who returns to headline and expand the “Tumbbad” franchise, warmly welcomed Alia Bhatt to the cast. He described her addition to the film as a significant development and expressed confidence that her performance would bring a fresh dimension to the sequel. To Sohum, Alia is among the finest performers of her generation and possesses the versatility needed for a film of this scale. Speaking about the collaboration, Sohum said, “Having Alia Bhatt come on board for Tumbbad 2 is truly delightful for all of us.

in the promo generated significant interest among fans, who are eagerly awaiting the premiere of the new season to watch her journey unfold.

The promotional campaign has further increased anticipation surrounding the reality show, with audiences expressing curiosity about how Shagun will perform against fellow contestants in a series of challenging physical and mental tasks. Her energetic screen presence in the promotional material has received positive reactions from television viewers.

Speculation regarding Shagun’s next acting assignment had already begun after she was recently spotted by paparazzi in Mumbai.

BSE Sensex		Nifty 50		Nifty 500		Nifty Next 50		Nifty 100		Nifty Bank		Nifty Midcap 100	
Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change
77,054.94	-0.72%	24,052.05	-0.66%	23,199.45	-0.63%	71,851.60	-0.36%	25,088.65	-0.6%	57,462.30	-1.15%	62,766.40	-0.44%
Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open
77,616.40	77,272.34	24,211.00	24,068.00	23,347.05	23,235.25	72,111.40	71,757.25	25,240.80	25,096.30	58,131.45	57,832.55	63,040.95	62,854.20
High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
77,402.79	77,001.48	24,157.10	24,023.70	23,287.45	23,167.85	71,938.55	71,449.15	25,173.45	25,052.60	57,840.05	57,286.90	62,993.80	62,602.30

Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
Bharti Airtel	1,936.50	1.82
Apollo Hospital	8,900.50	1.34
Sun Pharma	1,942.60	1.10
Dr Reddys Labs	1,246.20	0.95
TCS	2,200.60	0.88

Top Losers

Company	Current	%Loss
HCL Tech	1,166.70	-4.46
Shriram Finance	1,013.90	-3.26
HDFC Life	555.20	-3.17
TMPV	333.35	-2.60
Interglobe Avi	5,108.00	-2.32

Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Aug 05	141,008.00	699.00 0.50
Silver Sep 04	220,320.00	2,602.00 1.20
Crudeoil Jul 20	7,761.00	401.00 5.45
Naturalgas Jul 28	278.40	0.00 0.00

Xebia launches AI-ready data platform Xebia Axis

Bengaluru: Xebia, a global AI-first digital transformation and engineering company, on Tuesday launched Xebia Axis: Agentic Data Foundation, a platform aimed at helping enterprises modernise their data infrastructure and accelerate artificial intelligence (AI) adoption.

The company said the solution combines proprietary AI agents with data engineering expertise to assess, migrate, monitor and manage enterprise data platforms up to three times faster than conventional approaches, while ensuring governance, security and data quality.

Designed to address challenges posed by fragmented data environments and legacy systems, Xebia Axis provides an end-to-end data foundation to help organisations move AI projects from pilot stage to enterprise-scale deployment.

The platform comprises six integrated modules covering data readiness assessment, platform deployment, knowledge management, migration, observability and operations. Xebia said enterprises can obtain a data readiness assessment and migration blueprint within two to four weeks, reducing the time required for large-scale data modernisation.

Stock Markets end in red led by surge in crude oil prices, weak global cues

Mumbai : Indian equity benchmarks witnessed a sharp decline on Tuesday as investors reacted to a surge in global crude oil prices and weak international market cues triggered by escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

Rising concerns over higher energy costs, inflationary pressures and increased market uncertainty led to broad-based selling across several sectors, dragging both benchmark indices into negative territory.

The BSE Sensex closed 561.46 points, or 0.72 per cent, lower at 77,054.94, while the NSE Nifty 50 settled 158.95 points, or 0.66 per cent, lower at 24,052.05. The decline reflected cautious investor sentiment as market participants assessed the potential impact of rising oil prices on the domestic economy and corporate earnings.

Broader markets also ended in the red, although the losses were relatively contained compared with the benchmark indices. The Nifty Midcap 100 Index declined around 0.4 per cent, while the Nifty Smallcap 100 Index fell 1 per cent, indicating profit booking across mid-sized and smaller companies amid heightened market volatility.

Analysts said the sharp increase in international crude oil prices emerged as the principal trigger behind Tuesday's sell-off. Brent crude prices climbed significantly after geopolitical tensions intensified, raising fears of supply disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important oil transit routes. Higher crude prices are generally viewed as negative for India because the country imports a large portion of its crude oil requirements.

The rise in energy prices has increased concerns that imported inflation could accelerate if crude remains elevated for an extended period. Higher fuel costs have the potential to raise transportation and manufacturing expenses, putting pressure on corporate profitability while complicating the Reserve Bank of India's efforts to maintain price stability.

Sector-wise, real estate, public sector banking and automobile stocks witnessed the steepest declines during the trading session.

The Nifty Realty, Nifty PSU Bank and Nifty Auto indices each fell by more than 1 per cent, reflecting investor concerns over sectors that are particularly sensitive to rising interest rates, input costs and slowing economic momentum.



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MRF ranked among World's top three, India's most valuable, strongest tyre Brand

Chennai: MRF Tyres, India's largest tyre manufacturer, has been ranked as India's Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brand, also featured as the 3rd Strongest Tyre Brand in the World and among the Top 50 most valuable brands in India across all industries - from Automobiles, Hospitality, Banking, Foods, Oil and Gas categories - in the Brand Finance India 100- 2026 report.

The report, unveiled at Mumbai on Monday under the theme "Powering India's Global Ascent," recognises the country's most influential and valuable brands, with the combined value of the Top 100 crossing USD 236.5 billion this year.

A company statement here today said the recognition caps a defining year for the brand. In Brand Finance's dedicated global Tyres

2025-26 report, MRF was named amongst the Top 3 strongest tyre brand in the world, with a Brand Strength In-



dex score of 87.7 out of 100. In India, MRF continues to stand unmatched as the country's Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brand, a position built on decades of consumer trust, product performance and engineering excellence. "This recognition belongs to every Indian who has trusted MRF. To be named as India's Most Valuable and Strongest Tyre Brand in India,

amongst India's Top 50 brands across all sectors, and among the world's Top 3 Strongest tyre brands, is both an honour and a responsibility. It reaffirms our commitment to safety, innovation and the everyday journeys of millions of families and businesses across the country," K. M. Mammen, Chairman and Managing Director MRF Tyres Chennai, said. Brand Finance's methodology, grounded in international standards (ISO 10668 and ISO 20671), evaluates brands on both financial brand value and brand strength - assessing consumer trust, familiarity, reputation, marketing investment and business performance. MRF's strong showing was attributed to its expansive distribution network, deep OEM relationships, Brand Reputation built over the years with World class Products, Involvement with Cricket and motorsport pedigree, and consistently high recall and loyalty among consumers.

Brent crude climbs above USD 86 for the first time since June

New Delhi: Global crude oil prices witnessed a sharp rally on Tuesday, with Brent crude rising above \$86 per barrel for the first time since June 12, as renewed geopolitical tensions in West Asia reignited concerns over the security of oil supplies from the Persian Gulf. The increase reflects growing fears that disruptions in one of the world's most critical energy corridors could tighten global crude supplies and push fuel prices even higher in the coming weeks. The latest surge came after Brent crude had already recorded a strong rally during the previous trading session. The international benchmark climbed nearly 10 per cent on Monday before extending

its gains by as much as 3.6 per cent on Tuesday, highlighting the heightened volatility in global energy markets. Investors have reacted swiftly to the changing geopolitical landscape, with traders pricing in the possibility of prolonged disruptions to oil exports from the region. Market participants noted that the renewed uncertainty has reversed the decline witnessed in oil prices after diplomatic efforts had earlier raised hopes of easing tensions. Following the commencement of peace negotiations, crude prices had gradually surrendered the gains accumulated during the conflict and returned to relatively stable levels. However, the latest develop-

ments have once again shifted market sentiment towards concerns over supply security. A major factor driving the latest rally is the renewed blockade involving Iranian shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most strategically important maritime trade routes.

The narrow waterway serves as the primary transit route for a substantial portion of global crude oil exports, making any disruption in the region capable of significantly affecting international energy markets. Industry estimates indicate that during the temporary pause between two phases of the US naval blockade, Iran managed to export at least 57

million barrels of crude oil. These exports had provided some relief to global supply, helping stabilise oil prices after earlier disruptions. However, the reimposition of restrictions has renewed fears that Iranian exports could once again decline sharply, reducing the availability of crude in international markets. The Strait of Hormuz remains a critical chokepoint for the global energy industry, with millions of barrels of crude and petroleum products passing through it every day. Any reduction in shipping traffic through the strait has the potential to disrupt supply chains, increase freight costs and create upward pressure on global oil prices.

Renault launches Duster Adventure edition

Chennai: Renault India, the wholly owned subsidiary of Renault Group, today launched the Renault Duster Adventure Edition, a special edition of its iconic SUV, with prices starting at Rs 12.99 lakh (ex-show-room).

Inspired by one of the themes most closely associated with the Duster nameplate in India, the Adventure Edition celebrates the spirit that helped make Duster a defining SUV for a generation of Indian customers.

The special edition was unveiled on Bastille Day by Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India, and Stéphane Deblaise, CEO,

Renault Group India. The occasion brought together Renault's French heritage and one of its most recognisable products in India, celebrating a vehicle conceived through French engineering excellence and embraced by Indian customers for the experiences it has come to represent. Speaking at the launch, Stéphane Deblaise said "iconic vehicles are remembered not simply for what they do, but for the place they earn in people's lives. Duster belongs to that rare category. Over the years, it became part of countless journeys and lasting memories for customers across India."

TestingXperts opens Hyderabad delivery centre, plans 2,500-seat tech campus

Hyderabad: Global quality engineering and software testing firm TestingXperts on Monday inaugurated a new 300-seat delivery centre in Hyderabad as part of its plan to establish a 2,500-seat technology campus in the city.

In a release, the company said the new facility would serve as a global hub for AI-led Quality Engineering, AI Assurance, Digital Engineering and Enterprise Technology services, catering to clients across North America, Europe, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific

region.

TestingXperts said the Hyderabad centre marks the first phase of its long-term expansion strategy and will strengthen its delivery capabilities amid growing demand for AI-driven software quality, enterprise modernisation and digital transformation.

Founder and CEO Manish Gupta said Hyderabad would play a central role in the company's next phase of global growth owing to its strong technology ecosystem and skilled talent pool.

He said the company

plans to build expertise in artificial intelligence, agentic AI, AI assurance, intelligent automation, specialised test automation, performance engineering, cybersecurity testing, data engineering and enterprise quality engineering.

TestingXperts also plans to establish Centres of Excellence for enterprise platforms, including SAP, Salesforce,

ServiceNow, Workday, Oracle and Microsoft technologies, to support clients undertaking digital transformation programmes.

Google's AI bet on Bengaluru

Bengaluru: As the global competition to lead the artificial intelligence (AI) revolution gathers pace, Bengaluru is increasingly being recognised as one of the world's most important centres for AI innovation. With India's vast population, linguistic diversity, rapidly expanding digital economy and thriving technology ecosystem, global technology companies are viewing the country as an ideal environment to develop, test and refine AI solutions capable of addressing complex real-world challenges on a global scale.

At Google I/O Connect India 2026, the technology giant outlined its long-term vision for India's role in shaping the future of artificial intelligence. Rather than positioning India merely as one of the world's largest consumer markets for AI products, Google presented the country as a strategic innovation hub where advanced AI technologies can be built, improved and deployed before expanding to international markets.

The event highlighted Google's growing confidence in India's ability to drive the next phase of AI development through collaboration among technology companies, startups, developers, academic institutions and policymakers. Company executives emphasised that India's unique characteristics provide an ideal environment for building AI systems capable of solving diverse and large-scale societal challenges.

Google India Vice President and Country Manager

Preeti Lobana said the company's AI strategy is firmly centred on creating solutions "with India, for India, and potentially for the world." She stressed that India is not simply a destination for deploying existing technologies but a country where future AI innovations can



originate and evolve before reaching global audiences.

Summing up Google's approach, Lobana remarked, "If you can solve for India, you can solve for the world." The statement reflects the company's belief that technologies capable of addressing India's extraordinary diversity and scale are likely to perform successfully in many other regions facing similar developmental and societal challenges.

Google executives explained that India's complexity should be viewed as a competitive advantage rather than an obstacle. The country's hundreds of languages and dialects, varied cultural traditions, different economic conditions, urban-rural divide and rapidly expanding internet user base provide an unmatched testing environment for artificial intelligence systems designed to operate across diverse populations.

Unlike many developed markets with relatively uniform user behaviour, India presents AI developers with highly varied usage patterns, infrastructure constraints

and linguistic diversity. Successfully designing AI systems that work effectively under such conditions can significantly improve their adaptability and scalability for international deployment.

During the event, Google showcased several practical applications demonstrating how its AI technologies are already being integrated into everyday services across India. The company highlighted the growing adoption of its AI models, including Gemini and Gemma, in sectors ranging from transportation and customer service to healthcare and education.

One of the examples presented was Redbus, which is leveraging Google's Gemini platform to enhance customer interactions, particularly for users who prefer communicating in Indian languages rather than English.

By enabling multilingual conversations and improving contextual understanding, the AI-powered system aims to make digital services more accessible to millions of users across the country.

Google also highlighted the work of AISteth, which is using MedGemma, Google's healthcare-focused AI model, to develop intelligent medical tools capable of assisting frontline healthcare workers.

Such technologies are expected to support healthcare delivery in rural and underserved regions by enabling quicker assessments, improving diagnostic assistance and expanding access to quality medical support.