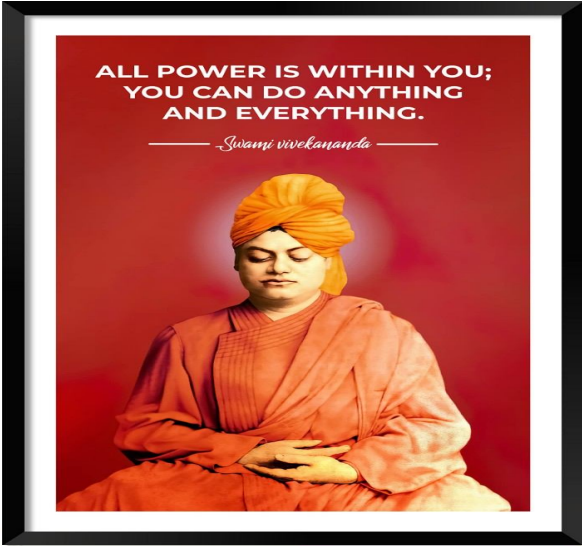
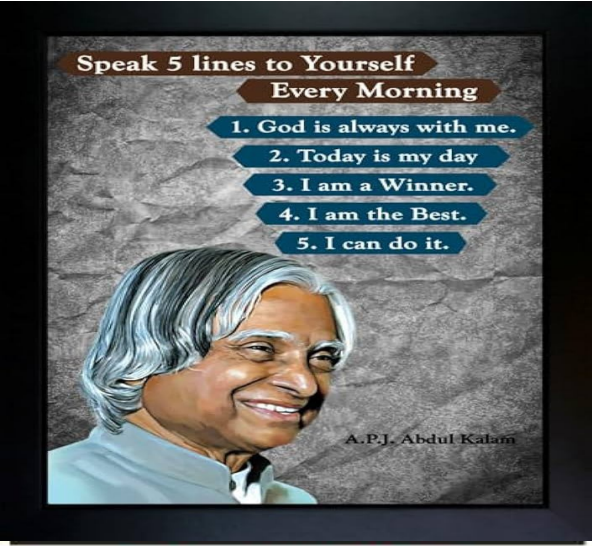




Opposition Walks Out of Rajya Sabha



Hyderabad: Building on Cyberabad Municipal Corporation's (CMC) ongoing food safety inspections and coordination with online food delivery platforms, the CMC Commissioner G Srijana held a follow-up meeting with the Zomato legal team to strengthen compliance at the platform level. The discussions focused on delisting and cancellation of Food Business Operators repeatedly violating hygiene norms.

290 Encroachments Cleared in Cyberabad to Ensure Public Space for Citizens



Hyderabad: Continuing its weekly walk free initiative, the Cyberabad Municipal Corporation's (CMC) here on Friday carried out encroachment removal drive across identified stretches in all three zones, helping reclaim roads, footpaths and public spaces for pedestrians. In all, 290 encroachments were removed across 14.1 km. As many as 84 encroachments were cleared in Serilingampally zone covering Narsingi, Ameen

pur, Miyapur and Serilingampally, 55 were removed in Kukatpally zone covering Madhapur, Allwyn Colony, Kukatpally and Moosapet. Along with the removal drive, the CMC teams will continue monitoring cleared stretches to prevent re-encroachment and keep reclaimed public spaces available for public use. Officials said the drive will continue across covering Chintal, Jeedimetla, Kompally, Gazularamam, Nizampet, Dundigal and Medchal. Along with the removal drive, the CMC teams will continue monitoring cleared stretches to prevent re-encroachment and keep reclaimed public spaces available for public use.

Sanjay Jaju Participates in Bonalu Celebrations at Secretariat



Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu expressed anguish over the accident involving two medics in Rajahmundry and directed the authorities to take strict action against the guilty. The officials informed the CM that they had arrested the accused, Dushyanth and Andrew William Joseph, had absconded after ramming their car into the vehicle being ridden by the medics, in an intoxicated condition. Also Read - Andhra Cabinet Approves Pedestrian Safety Policy He enquired about the health condition of the medics Priyanka and Umesh. The CM directed the accused and ensure they are strictly punished. The CM assured Priyanka's family of complete support by the government.

Priyanka suffered serious injuries in the accident that happened at Prasad Aditya Mall on Aug. 3. Priyanka suffered serious injury to her head. With her situation worsening and becoming serious, she was shifted to a private hospital in Secunderabad. The other student suffered minor injuries

Revanth Applauds Telangana Cyber Security Bureau's Top Cybercrime Rank

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has congratulated the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) for being ranked first in the country in dealing with cybercrime, during a PMO review. The achievement reflects Telangana's strong commitment to technology-driven policing, citizen-centric governance, and digital safety, he said. "Expressing confidence in Telangana Police, the Chief Minister said the force will continue to set national benchmarks in cybercrime prevention, investigation, and public service, further strengthening the safety and security of citizens in the digital ecosystem," the



Telangana CMO said in a post on X. Also Read - Telangana Govt to Promote Digitalisation in Assembly, Council as Part

of Paperless Governance Push Telangana was ranked first in the country in several cybercrime initiatives, in a nationwide review meeting held by the PMO on Thursday, a senior official said. The 'PRAGATI' review meeting was conducted to assess the implementation and performance of various states in dealing with cybercrime as well as the performance and utilisation of the digital platforms developed by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), and Ministry of Home Affairs.

Mee Seva Records 2.8 Lakh Daily Transactions

Hyderabad: Telangana IT Minister D Sridhar Babu here on Friday highlighted that citizens in Telangana completed approximately 2.8 lakh digital transactions in a single day through Mee Seva services. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the AI Transformation Conclave on Friday, Sridhar Babu stated that the state government offers about 580 Mee Seva public services



on WhatsApp. MeeSeva is an e-governance initiative by the state governments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh that provides various digital and physical

citizen-to-government (G2C) services. Also Read - Telangana Govt to Promote Digitalisation in Assembly, Council as Part of Paperless Governance Push It allows people to access certificates, pay utility bills, and request government documents through local franchise centers or online portals like the Telangana MeeSeva Portal and Andhra Pradesh MeeSeva

Portal. "So this is citizen-centric governance, which we are trying to put before our people. And in fact, it's quite a pleasure to make the world know, only in one day, we would be able to transact about 2.8 lakh transactions in a day through Mee Seva," the minister said. He noted that Telangana remains the only state to offer 580 public services to citizens through this mechanism.

No Harassment of Road Contractors over Material Permits



Hyderabad: Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has directed Mines department officials not to harass contractors over permissions required for sourcing metal and other construction materials for road projects. Sand, soil and metal are essential for road construction, the Minister said, adding that it was unfair to spare those involved in illegal mining while taking coercive action against small and genuine contractors. Also Read - Telangana Govt to Promote Digitalisation in Assembly, Council as Part of Paperless Governance Push Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, along with Mines and Geology Minister Dr G. Vivek Venkataswamy, held a review meeting at the Secretariat on Friday to discuss the problems faced by road contractors in obtaining mining-related permissions.

Representatives of the Contractors Association brought several issues faced by contractors to the Ministers' notice. The Ministers observed that imposing penalties amounting to 10 times the value of the material on small contractors executing road works was not justified. Also Read - Mee Seva Records 2.8 Lakh Daily Transactions: Sridhar Babu Komatireddy urged Minister Vivek Venkataswamy to take action against the official allegedly responsible for the circumstances that led to the suicide of contractor Srinivas Reddy. Describing the imposition of a Rs.54-crore penalty over a Rs.5-crore issue as atrocious, Komatireddy said contractors were making payments as stipulated in their

agreements. "It is not fair for the Mines department to harass small contractors," he said. Also Read - 290 Encroachments Cleared in Cyberabad to Ensure Public Space for Citizens The R&B Minister said the State government had taken up road construction works under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) with the objective of developing high-quality, model roads across Telangana. "We have launched the HAM road works with great fanfare under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. Our goal is to complete the road works by August 2028," Komatireddy said. Responding positively to the issues raised by Komatireddy, Minister Vivek directed Mines department officials to take appropriate action.

Rahul Gandhi's 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' Gets Conditional Clearance in Prayagraj



Prayagraj: Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Rai on Friday said all necessary clearances have been secured for Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's "Chhatron Ki Goonj" programme in Prayagraj after police granted permission, subject to certain conditions. The conditions include adherence to noise norms, maintenance of law and order, deployment of volunteers for crowd management and no use of provocative or derogatory remarks against any political and non-political organisation, religion, caste or community, according to the police order. Also Read - Man Who Fed Delhi Protesters Distributes Meals at R a n c h i

Demonstration "We have secured the clearance. Now there is no hurdle," Rai told PTI, adding that the party is fully prepared to make Gandhi's interaction with students on Saturday a success. The Congress has planned a motorcycle rally in Prayagraj on Friday evening to create awareness about Saturday's programme, Rai said. "If there is no mischief, we are expecting record turnout for Rahul ji's event," the UP Congress Committee chief, who has been virtually camping in Prayagraj for the past couple of days, said. Also Read - India Seeks China River Data as Tibet Mega Dam Sparks Concerns The event is scheduled to be held at KP Ground

after the Kayastha Pathshala (KP) Trust on Thursday night restored permission a day after withdrawing it. Acting president of the KP Trust Jitendra Nath Chaudhary had told PTI that the organisers were allowed to hold the programme after consultations with legal experts, subject to conditions that teaching and academic activities at the college are not disrupted and the requisite permission be obtained from the district magistrate. Also Read - Prashant Kishor Meets Sunetra Pawar, Parth To Discuss Strengthening NCP The police have also granted permission for the event, scheduled from 4 pm to 9 pm on Saturday at KP Ground on MG Road in the Georgetown

other prasadam distribution points including Vaikuntham Queue Complexes I and II, the Narayanagiri sheds, and other key queue routes to improve crowd management and the experience of devotees.

Rs 18 Crore Donations 'Stolen' Annually From Mumbai's Siddhivinayak Temple, Alleges Raj Thackeray

Mumbai: Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray has claimed that donations of Rs 18 crore were being siphoned off every year at the famous Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai.

He also alleged that Rs 1,400 crore had been stolen at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Even temples are not safe these days, Thackeray said and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi speak on this issue. The MNS chief was speaking at a programme organised by his party's student wing on Saturday. Frustrated youths visit temples, but even temples are not safe



from corruption, he said. Some employees who stole money from the

donation box at the Siddhivinayak Temple were caught due to the

alleged. Sada Sarvankar, the chairman of the

altness of the trustees, Thackeray said, reading out a letter written by eight trustees to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

The temple's weekly earnings from donations were less than Rs 50 lakh before this theft was caught, and afterwards the collection rose to Rs 1.5 crore, he said. "Every year, Rs 18 crore was being stolen," Thackeray

Siddhivinayak Temple Trust and a leader of the Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde, said that nine employees were arrested in this connection.

"We have filed cases wherever required," he told reporters. The rise in donations was due to the efforts taken by the trust, Sarvankar said, adding that the temple's income has increased from Rs 114 crore two years ago to Rs 182 crore. Notably, police have arrested multiple accused in the case of alleged theft of donations at the Ram Temple, and the investigation is underway.

Centre Notifies Act, Paves Way For Political Reservation For Tribals In Goa Assembly



Panaji: The Union government on Thursday notified the Act that grants political reservation for the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community in the 40-member Goa legislative Assembly. This operationalisation of the Act passed earlier by Parliament means four seats for tribal candidates will be reserved in the Goa Assembly for the first time. The Union Ministry of Law and Justice issued a notification stating that "in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of section 1 of the Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in A s s e m b l y Constituencies of the State of Goa Act, 2025(21 of 2025), the Central Government hereby appoints August 06, 2026, as the date on which the provisions of the said

Act shall come into force." Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant recently met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, urging him to expedite the process of reservation for the ST community in the Assembly, which will go to polls early next year. He welcomed the move to enforce the law. Sawant wrote on X, "A promise kept. I warmly welcome the coming into force of the ST Representation Act from today. With the Act now in force, Goa moves decisively towards reserving Assembly seats for our ST communities; long-overdue justice for our tribal brothers and sisters." "Deep gratitude to Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi ji, and Honourable HM Shri Amit Shah ji. Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas,"

the CM further added. Tribal leader and BJP MLA Govind Gaude called it a big victory of the social justice movement. "It is a big victory of the social justice movement. It is a victory of the revolution. The strength in the revolution is reflected here. It can make impossible things possible," remarked Gaude, who was part of a pressure group that had urged the Goa government to expedite the process of political reservation for tribals ahead of the 2027 polls. The process of reservation should start now, taking into consideration population data of Assembly constituencies, and then it is for the Election Commission to implement the P e o p l e ' s Representation Act, he said.

Punjab Schools Have Overtaken Kerala In NITI Aayog Ranking: Education Minister Bains

Chandigarh: Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains on Thursday said the state has overtaken Kerala to land the top rank in the NITI Aayog School Education Quality Index 2026. While 8,000 schools had no boundary walls and 4 lakh children sat on the floor in 2022, Punjab has 882 NEET qualifiers from government schools and has become the first state in the country to introduce Artificial Intelligence as a core subject from classes 1 to 12, Bains said.

"This is the revolution the AAP government promised," he said. Participating in a discussion on an education-related resolution moved by MLA Jaswant Singh Gajjanmajra in the Punjab Assembly here, Bains recalled the state of affairs when he assumed office in July 2022. Citing an initial infrastructure survey, Bains said that over 8,000 schools lacked boundary walls, 3,200 had no functional toilets and nearly 4 lakh children were sitting on the floor four years ago. Textbooks would reach schools only in October-November, wasting precious months of the academic session, he said. "Today, for the first time, textbooks reach district headquarters by February 15 and are fully distributed by March 31," he added.



Bains said that over the years he visited over 2,000 government schools across every district of Punjab including border schools, zero-line villages, and remote areas.

He informed the House that the government's Mission Samarth has emerged as one of India's largest foundational learning programmes. Under the model, students are grouped by learning ability rather than grade to ensure every child masters reading, writing and mathematics. "When I visited schools in September-October 2022, I found class 8 students who could not write simple sentences. Some could not do basic addition and subtraction. We identified these students and taught them from class 3 syllabus level. Today, they are learning and improving,"

Bains said. The programme now covers nearly 12 lakh students and engages over 70,000 teachers annually, he said. Bains told the House that NEET-UG qualifiers from Punjab's government schools jumped from just 80 in 2021 to 882 in 2026. The results, he said, are the direct outcome of the 'Punjab Academic Coaching for Excellence' (PACE) initiative. July 2022. Citing an initial infrastructure survey, Bains said that his is the revolution the AAP government promised," he said.

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Centre To Release Over Rs 2,117 Crore Worth Of SDRF In Advance To Seven Flood-Hit States

New Delhi: The Central government has approved the advance release of its share of the State Disaster Response Fund, worth Rs 2,117.85 crore, to support seven flood-affected states during the ongoing monsoon season, an official statement said on Saturday. Of the affected states, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha and Nagaland have already received the first instalment of the Central share for the financial year 2026-27. "To ensure timely availability of funds for relief operations, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has approved the advance release of the second instalment of the Central share of SDRF to Himachal Pradesh and Odisha," the statement said. Himachal Pradesh has been sanctioned 193.95 crore, and Odisha is to get 500 crore as their

second instalments.

the urgent need for Rs 500 crore.



The advance release of first instalments has been approved for Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat and Maharashtra by relaxing documentary requirements under applicable guidelines, considering

resources for relief measures, the statement said. The assistance approved for Arunachal Pradesh amounts to Rs 44.55 crore, for Assam Rs 379.35 crore, for Gujarat Rs 500 crore, and for Maharashtra

"With this approval, a total of Rs 2,117.85 crore has been made available to the flood-affected states to strengthen their ongoing relief and response measures," the statement said. Inter-Ministerial Central

Teams (IMCT) have already been deputed to Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to assess damages. Two IMCT visits have been undertaken in Assam in view of the severity of the flood situation there, it said, adding, "On request of the Government of Nagaland, an IMCT is being constituted for the state." The statement further said the Centre has been continuously monitoring the flood situation in close coordination with the state governments since the onset of the monsoon. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government remains committed to extending all necessary assistance to states for effective relief, rescue and rehabilitation measures and will continue to monitor the situation closely," it added

Assam Flood Situation Remains Grim, Death Toll Rises To 97; 1.68 Lakh People Still Affected



Guwahati: The flood situation in Assam remained critical as the toll rose to 97 with two more fatalities and over 1.68 lakh people across 15 districts were still affected by the deluge, officials said on Friday. The two deaths were reported from Golaghat and Udalguri districts, taking the toll in this year's flood to 97 so far, the officials said. Golaghat, Sivasagar, Udalguri, Kamrup Metropolitan, Nagaon, Kamrup, Darrang, Sonitpur, Hojai, Lakhimpur, Biswanath, Jorhat, Charaideo, Karbi Anglong and Dhemaji districts were affected by the deluge.

More than 1.68 lakh people were still reeling under floodwaters, with Golaghat being the worst-affected district with around 54,000 people hit, followed by Sivasagar (49,000) and Jorhat (27,000), the officials said. The number of affected people has increased from around 1.6 lakh across 14 districts on Wednesday. Altogether 133 relief camps and relief dis-

tribution centres are currently operational in six districts, giving shelter and assistance to around 45,000 displaced people.

A crop area of 14,382.26 hectares remained submerged. Floodwaters have also damaged embankments, roads, bridges and other public infrastructure in several districts. With the restoration of the railway tracks, train services in parts of the state were made operational in a limited manner since Thursday afternoon. "Glad to share that the flood-affected railway section between Selenghat-Amguri-Simaluguri-Sivasagar Town has been restored and made operational at 4 pm today. With this, direct train services between Guwahati and Dibrugarh via Lumding and Sivasagar can now resume," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said in a social media post on Thursday. He thanked Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and the NFR authorities for restoring the vital rail link between Upper Assam and the rest of

the country. An NFR statement said its General Manager Chetan Kumar Shrivastava visited the affected sections and carried out a detailed inspection of the tracks, bridges and other infrastructure. During the inspection, it was observed that many locals, including children, along with their belongings and livestock, were taking shelter on or near the railway tracks due to the flood-related situation. "Considering the humanitarian concerns and prioritising public safety, it has been decided to initially operate only diesel locomotive-hauled trains on the restored sections. This precautionary measure has been taken to minimise the risk of electrocution and ensure the safety of flood-affected people until conditions become normal," it said. Several trains, such as Nagaland Express, Guwahati-Ledo-Guwahati Intercity Express, Lumding-Tinsukia-Lumding DEMU and Tinsukia-Jorhat Town Passenger, will run via Moranhat. The long-distance trains

SC Refuses To Interfere With Chhattigarh HC Order On Election Plea Against Ex-CM

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday declined to interfere with a Chhattisgarh High Court order refusing to dismiss, at the threshold, a petition challenging former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel's election from the Patan assembly seat in 2023. The top court, however, said that Baghel would be at liberty to raise all his pleas before the high court's election tribunal during the trial. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana disposed of Baghel's plea challenging the high court's interim order dated June 15 by which his application seeking rejection of the election petition for want of cause of action and non-compliance with statutory requirements was dismissed. It said Baghel had an arguable defence and



made it clear that dismissal of his challenge would not prejudice his right to raise all points and contentions before the election tribunal during the course of the proceedings. Appearing for Baghel, senior advocate Kapil Sibal argued that the election petition was not maintainable in law. Referring to the allegations, Sibal, assisted by lawyer Sumeer Sodhi, said that the election

campaign had ended on November 15 and that Baghel was allegedly present at a religious function on November 16, which the petitioner claimed violated Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act. Sibal said that even if the allegations were accepted, a violation of Section 126 constituted only an electoral offence and not a "corrupt practice" under

Section 123(7) of the Act. "The question is whether it amounts to a corrupt practice. Corrupt practice is dealt with under Section 123(7)," he said.

It was alleged that after the commencement of the "silence period", Baghel held a "rally/road show" in clear violation of Section 126 of the RP Act and the Model Code of Conduct.

Student On Hunger Strike Hospitalised After Health Worsens As JPSC-JSSC Forum Awaits Govt Response



Ranchi: One of the six protestors, who have been on a hunger strike as part of a demonstration against the alleged irregularities in recruitment exams conducted by Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) and Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission (JSSC), has been rushed to a hospital here after his health condition deteriorated on Friday, an official said. The student leader, identified as Rahul Kranti, who has been on fast since Tuesday night, was taken in an ambulance to the Ranchi Sadar hospital for treatment, he said. Earlier in the day, Kranti had said the protestors had appealed to the

administration for a health check-up, but no doctors reached the demonstration site till 8.30 AM. Thursday evening, Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi spoke to representatives of the protesting candidates and backed their demands for reforms in the education and recruitment system. Speaking to the JPSC-JSSC Reform Forum members over phone, Gandhi assured them that their demands would be taken up through Congress representatives. During the call, Rahul Gandhi expressed support for the students' movement

and said reforms are needed in the education system and recruitment process. He also said the Congress stands with the legitimate demands of the students. Meanwhile, JPSC-JSSC Reforms Manch representatives Ravindra Paswan and Piyush Kumar Singh told the media that their demands are clear and that the list of delegates has already been submitted to the government. However, they said no positive response has come from the government as yet. The representatives said the protest would continue peacefully. However, if talks are not initiated soon, the proposed

gherao of the state Assembly on August 10 would be held as scheduled. Piyush Kumar said, "We are in a wait and watch situation. We are still waiting for the government to strike a dialogue with us, they will decide the date and time. We have not received any official intimation regarding the same." "All parties, who want to extend moral support, are welcome. Our stand is clear from Day 1 that our platform will continue to be a students' platform. We have nothing to do with any political party. We want only moral support. We will not let our stage turn into a political akhara," he added.

PM Modi Receives Call From Israeli PM Netanyahu; Discusses Special Strategic Partnership And West Asia Developments

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday received a telephonic call from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, during which the two leaders reviewed the progress in the India-Israel Special Strategic Partnership and exchanged views on recent developments in West Asia. The details of the conversation were shared by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in a release. According to the release, the two leaders reiterated their commitment to further deepen bilateral cooperation across various sectors for mutual benefit. The release said, "The two leaders reviewed sustained progress in India-Israel Special Strategic Partnership and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the bilateral cooperation across various sectors for the mutual benefit of the two countries."



It further noted, "PM Netanyahu and PM Modi exchanged views on the recent developments in West Asia. The two leaders agreed to remain in touch." The call between the leaders comes after they had spoken to each other in March earlier this year, to discuss the current regional situation.

India and Israel have continued to expand cooperation across multiple sectors. Earlier in July, both countries con-

cluded the second round of negotiations for the proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA), reaffirming their commitment to work towards an early conclusion of a balanced, comprehensive and mutually beneficial agreement aimed at strengthening bilateral trade, investment and economic ties.

Meanwhile, in June, Israeli Ambassador to India Reuven Azar said that India-Israel relations continue to be on

an "amazing trajectory" despite the conflict in West Asia.

Speaking to ANI, Azar cited expanding cooperation in defence, infrastructure, finance and trade with India for such a trajectory despite the conflict in the region, noting that bilateral partnership had continued to strengthen over the past three years, with both countries deepening engagement across multiple sectors.

Brief Spell Of Rain Slams The Brakes On Gurugram Speed

Gurugram: Heavy rain-fall in Gurugram, Haryana, has once again exposed the flaws in the city's drainage system. Waterlogging occurred in several areas after just a brief spell of rain, causing inconvenience to the public. Traffic was particularly disrupted in the Sector 10 area, where flooded roads made commuting difficult for both pedestrians and motorists. Water accumulated on several major roads following the rain, slowing down vehicular movement. Commuters faced delays in reaching their destinations, and traffic jams were observed in various locations. According to the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), waterlogging was reported in Narsinghpur, Rajiv Chuestions regarding the preparedness of the Municipal Corporation



owk, AIT Chowk, Khandas Road and some areas of old Gurugram. "No waterlogging concerns were reported in any of the city's underpasses today, and they were open to traffic all day," said an official. The recurring issue of waterlogging after every spell of rain has raised

questions regarding the preparedness of the Municipal Corporation and other departments concerned. Locals attribute the persistent problem to a lack of proper drain cleaning and inadequate water drainage arrangements regarding the preparedness of the

Municipal Corporation gements prior to the rains. Local residents have urged the administration to find a permanent solution to the waterlogging problem. They point out that this situation arises every year during the monsoon, disrupting both life and traffic.

Bangladesh Expresses 'Outrage' Over Hasina's Media Interaction In India



Dhaka: Bangladesh on Wednesday expressed outrage over deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's media interaction in New Delhi, saying the event has hurt the sentiments of its people and could adversely affect efforts to improve bilateral ties with India. During an audio-only virtual press conference, her first public media interaction since fleeing to India on August 5, 2024, following a massive protest, Hasina declared that she is determined to return to Bangladesh in December to put the country on the "right track". Attendees were unable to see the former prime minister and heard only her voice. Reacting to the press conference, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in a statement said Bangladesh is "outraged" that the "absconding convicted" Hasina was allowed to engage in live interaction with the media in New Delhi. The ministry said it had conveyed its concerns to the Government of India in advance about the "likely ramifications" of the event for bilateral rela-

tions, but the interaction was allowed to take place. The statement said Bangladesh desires to maintain a "constructive, mutually beneficial, and forward-looking relationship with India based on sovereign equality, mutual respect, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and national dignity". On the contrary, it said, permitting Hasina to publicly interact with the media has hurt public sentiment in Bangladesh and was "detrimental to the development of harmonious bilateral relations" between the two neighbours. The MoFA expressed disappointment that its requests seeking Hasina's return under the India-Bangladesh Extradition Treaty signed in 2013 had not yet received a response. Last November, Hasina was sentenced to death in absentia by a special tribunal in Dhaka for alleged "crimes against humanity" over her government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests in 2024. Since the verdict, Dhaka has been urging New Delhi to extradite her to face the law. The statement

described Hasina's remarks from India as an "affront" to Bangladesh's sovereignty and an insult to those who lost their lives during the July Revolution. The ministry also rejected Hasina's comments on the July-August 2024 violence, alleging that they sought to deny the July Revolution. During her virtual media interaction, Hasina alleged that the protests in Bangladesh in July and August 2024 that resulted in the collapse of her government were not a peaceful student movement. She alleged that "organised groups" worked to turn the movement into a "violent political instrument". It was not simply a spontaneous student protest. There was no visible or responsible leadership. Instructions were given invisibly. It was organised and used to create a path to power outside the ballot box," Hasina alleged. Reiterating its commitment to the ideals of the July Revolution, the MoFA statement said the people of Bangladesh have rejected any attempt to return to what it described as "the dark days of fascism".

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Indian Diaspora In China Flags Visa, Social Media Concerns At Embassy's First Open House In Years



Beijing: Members of the Indian diaspora in China raised concerns over abusive anti-India content on Chinese social media, declining work visas for professionals, and restrictions on employment for spouses at the Indian Embassy's first Open House in recent years. The mission hosted the outreach initiative on Friday, bringing together a large number of Indian professionals working in various sectors in Beijing to discuss issues affecting the community. Indian Ambassador Vikram Doraiswami, accompanied by Counsellor (Consular, Education and

Community Affairs) Nitinjeet Singh and Counsellor (Visa) Ramesh Singh, interacted with members of the diaspora on a range of issues. Among the concerns raised were the increase in abusive content against Indians, including their food habits and culture, on Chinese social media platforms, a decline in the number of job visas issued by China to Indian professionals, restrictions on employment for spouses, and difficulties relating to counsellor services. Doraiswami, who assumed charge in May and has stepped up engagements with

Chinese officials as part of efforts to improve bilateral ties, said the embassy would further simplify the documentation required for Chinese nationals applying for Indian visas from next week to facilitate greater travel to India. Responding to concerns over negative and abusive content on Chinese social media, he said the Chinese government is also concerned about the rise in such content and is taking steps to address the issue. On its part, the embassy is countering misinformation by disseminating fact-based information through its social media handles,

Doraiswami said. The ambassador also said the embassy planned to organise more cultural events, building on the huge response to annual programmes such as the Vasant Mela, to showcase India's diverse culture and cuisine. The mission is also working to establish a mechanism with legal professionals to assist Indians facing work-related issues, he said. To improve consular services for the Indian diaspora, the embassy plans to hold Open House interactions periodically to address their concerns, Doraiswami said.

US Govt To Expand Vetting Of Social Media For Visa Applicants



Washington: The US government reportedly plans to expand vetting of the social media accounts of visa applicants, including foreign journalists, as part of President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt reposted an article on Thursday on X by the Daily Signal that said the State Department is expand-

ing its social media vetting to applicants for more types of visas. The Daily Signal said it had obtained an internal memo outlining the require visa applicants to change the settings on their social media accounts to "public" or "open." Asked by AFP about the report, a State Department spokesperson said, "The department is constantly reviewing and evaluating screening and vet-

ting procedures worldwide to ensure that our visa process upholds the highest standards for US national security and public safety." "Online presence vetting is about applicants demonstrating their eligibility to receive a visa under US law and ensuring that no individual poses a risk to the safety and security of the United States," the spokesperson said. The United States already

requires applicants for various categories of visas, including student visas, to make their accounts public. The Daily Signal said it would now apply to foreign media representatives and some nationals from Mexico and Canada. Since taking office last year, Trump has moved to expel millions of undocumented migrants and restricted the entry into the United States of citizens of a number of countries. "A visa is a privilege, not a right," Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said. The Trump administration finalized rules last month that impose stricter limits on how long foreign students and journalists can stay in the United States. Under a change that could be implemented as soon as September, foreigners on student visas would be admitted for the length of their academic program up to a maximum of four years. Foreign journalists would be limited to stays of just 240 days, or around eight months, but

Pakistan Hopes Agreement On Hormuz Will Pave Way For Resumption Of US-Iran Talks

Islamabad: Pakistan on Thursday expressed hope that an agreement on the Strait of Hormuz would pave the way for the resumption of technical-level talks between the US and Iran under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, as it reaffirmed support for diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the West Asia crisis.

Addressing the weekly media briefing, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Pakistan remains engaged in diplomatic efforts and supports all sincere initiatives aimed at achieving a "comprehensive, just and lasting resolution" to the conflict. "We hope that an agreement on the Strait of Hormuz will lead to the resumption of talks between the US and Iran under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)," he said. The remarks came a day after Iran said that it is in the final stage of reaching an agreement with Oman over the Strait of Hormuz. US President Donald Trump has also said that a deal to reopen the Strait is close. Andrabi expressed hope

that an agreement on the Strait will pave the way for continuing dialogue, particularly the resumption of technical-level talks between Tehran and Washington.

He also praised Oman for its "valuable and steadfast efforts towards de-escalation", particularly in its role as a "littoral state" to the State of Hormuz. At the same briefing, Andrabi also rejected India's remarks describing the "so-called" legislative elections in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) as a "farce". The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Tuesday slammed Pakistan's brutal crackdown on the protesters in PoK and said the world should see through the "flimsy veneer" of Islamabad's hypocritical lecturing on human rights. PoK has been witnessing massive protests since last month over inflated living costs, alleged administrative apathy, political



discrimination and atrocities against minorities. "This so-called local election in PoK is a complete farce. The real happening is that of public protests and wanton killings by Pakistani forces. Such hollow exercises cannot hide reality," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a regular media briefing in New Delhi. According to the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), more than 40 people were killed during the first phase of polling in PoK on July 27, and around 400 people have died in protests since early June, allegations rejected by the Pakistan

government as exaggerated.

The second phase of polling was held on August 2, while the final phase is scheduled for August 10. According to provisional results, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has emerged as the largest party after the first two phases. India maintains that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are integral and inalienable parts of it. New Delhi also asserts that Pakistan has been in "illegal and forcible occupation" of parts of these Union Territories.

Houthi Missile Attacks Kill 58 Saudi-Backed Yemeni Govt Forces



Dubai: Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis killed at least 58 government troops in missile and drone attacks on Thursday, a military source said, in one of the deadliest days of the country's civil war in four years. The attacks come as Yemen is increasingly drawn into the US-Israeli war with Iran, with the rebels stepping up attacks against both government forces and neighbouring Saudi Arabia, a key US ally and supporter of the internationally recognised Yemeni government. The evolving regional situation has prompted Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan to seek closer security ties, with the three Muslim-majority nations set to sign a joint defence agreement in Jeddah on Friday, according to Saudi sources with knowledge of the matter. Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said the rebels attacked government positions with ballistic missiles and drones in response to an alleged military buildup backed by neighbouring Saudi Arabia. The attacks killed at least 58 government troops and injured dozens, according to the military source who spoke on condition of anonymity. Medical sources had earlier spoken of 38 dead. A military official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Thursday's attacks on troop camps were the worst in Yemen since 2022. Yemen's defence ministry said in a statement that its armed forces would respond to the attacks "at the appropriate place and time". The escalation split across the border on Thursday, with Saudi officials

saying Houthi attacks wounded 11 civilians in the southern Najran region. Coalition spokesman Major General Turki al-Malki said the wounded included seven Saudis, a Yemeni, two Egyptians and a Pakistani, according to a statement carried in the official Saudi Press Agency. Saudi Arabia has led a military coalition backing Yemen's government against the Houthis since 2015. Al-Malki accused the rebels of carrying out "indiscriminate shelling against civilian objects" and said coalition forces would continue taking measures to protect civilians. - Sucked into war - The rebels have ramped up the provocations against their Saudi foes since last month, adding to the regional chaos since the US-Iran war erupted on February 28. The military official told AFP that a camp in the al-Ruwaik area of Marib province, in central Yemen, had been attacked, as well as in the Al-Abr and Al-Wadiah areas of Hadramawt, near the border with Saudi Arabia. One missile attack hit troops during their morning formation at the camp in Marib, "killing and wounding at least 45 personnel", said a military source, who declined to be named for security reasons. Saree named Al-Ruwaik, al-Thaniyah and al-Abr as being among the areas hit, warning the rebels were "prepared to confront any escalation". - Tit-for-tat - Yeme, which has been embroiled in more than a decade of war, became sucked into the Middle East war last month as the Tehran-backed Houthi rebels upended a

2022 truce with the Saudi-backed government. The rebels welcomed an Iranian plane directly in the capital Sanaa, triggering tit-for-tat attacks. They later announced a maritime blockade of Saudi ports and began hitting its tankers. Last month, the Houthis killed 16 troops in an attack on government-aligned forces south of the port city of Hodeidah, two medical officials told AFP. The Houthis have been at war with the government since 2014 in a conflict that has killed hundreds of thousands of people and triggered a major humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

The rebels control Yemen's capital Sanaa and much of the populous north, while the government holds much of the south. The fighting had largely been frozen since a UN-negotiated truce in 2022 that had held despite expiring. New York: President Donald Trump knows the world hangs on his every word. Now he wants you to pay for it. The social media posts of the world's most powerful man are going on sale Saturday when his Truth Social business begins offering sneak peeks of them to Wall Street traders willing to pay up. The move raises the prospect of big profits for Trump's company and big questions about insider trading and using public office for private gain. Similar fast speed feeds are sold by other social media firms and media providers, but Truth Social doesn't just distribute the news, it makes it, regularly rattling markets as Trump posts policy changes on everything from war to central bank leadership to tariffs. "If this was the CEO of a public company, this would be jail time," said Irene Aldridge, head of Able Alpha Trading, which doesn't plan to buy the service. "We have a President of the United States who has the front seat to all the action, who makes all the decisions, and he's disclosing this ahead of time to a select group." Trump's company says critics just aren't capitalist enough. Asked about the propriety of the new service and whether White House lawyers had vetted it, Trump's press office declined to comment, referring questions to

Vance Says Trump Administration 'Screwed Up' Communications Around Epstein Files

Washington: Vice President JD Vance says the Trump administration "absolutely" mishandled the communications surrounding the Jeffrey Epstein files. During a lengthy podcast interview with Joe Rogan released, Vance pointed largely to former Attorney General Pam Bondi, who infamously stated that an alleged "client list" of Epstein's was "sitting on my desk right now." Epstein was a convicted sex offender who was known for his

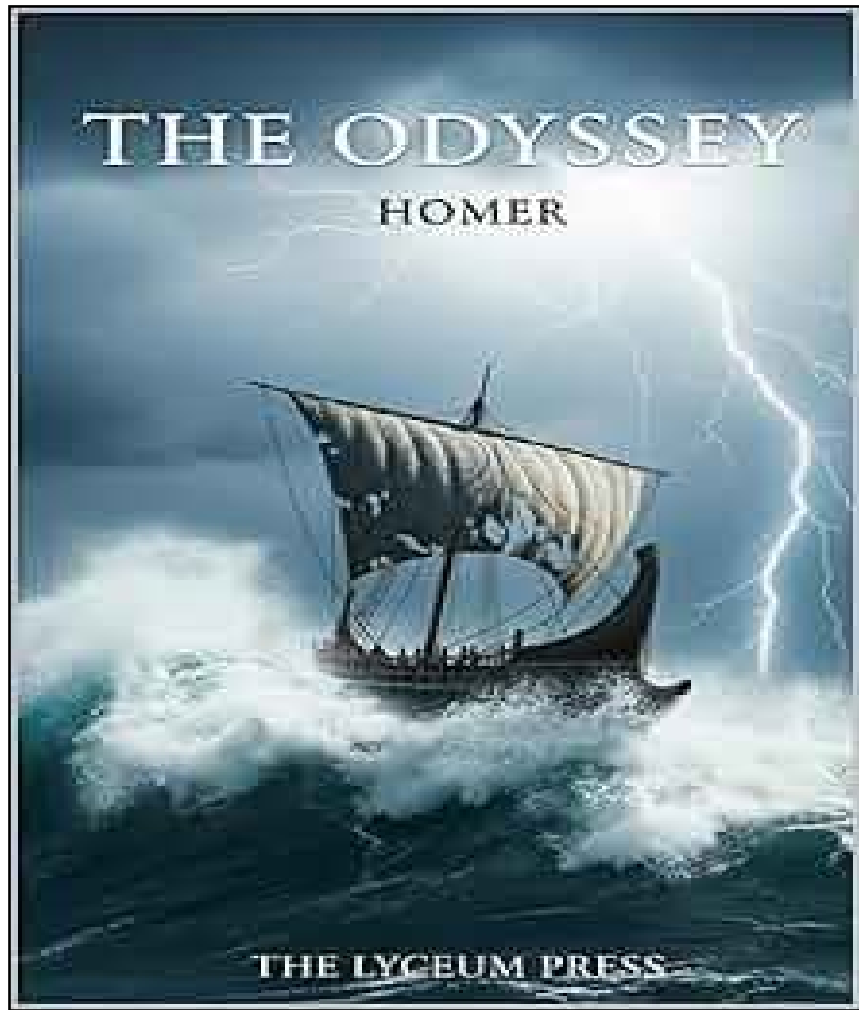


wide web of connections to the world's elite. In addition to those comments, the Justice Department under Bondi had also offered conservative commentators and influencers binders

that were called "The Epstein files: Phase 1" and "Declassified." "I know Pam. I like Pam. I don't think there was anything malicious going on," Vance told Rogan. "I think Pam was

trying to respond to the political moment. I think she overstated what we had and what we didn't have." As a result, Vance said, Bondi was "roasted" publicly for it and led people to "mistrust" the administration's transparency efforts on the Epstein files. "We absolutely screwed up the comms of the Epstein files. Like, we just did," Vance said. "But do I think the reason we screwed up the comms is because we were trying to hide

Telangana's future lies in the hands of its youth



The tale comes to us from about the 8th century BC, and the spectacle unfolding across 12,000 lines of poetry, and now the screen, includes a wooden horse in a war, pillage and plunder, wives and nymphs, monsters and heroes, and a traumatised veteran and a series of unfortunate climatic incidents at sea.

his deceptions, his hubris ('Defy the Gods' as the film's tagline has it), and a yearning for belonging, he tries to humanise a war hero with PTSD. The haunted hero originates in a very old, and grand, poem. Homer's epic, 12,000-plus lines of poetry set in 24 books, is about a man who tries to find his way back home. The Odyssey has uncertain origins (it was a piece intended to be sung, before it took the form of a written text around the Byzantine period) and in our time, the EV Rieu (prose), Robert Fitzgerald (poetry), the Daniel Mendelsohn (poetry) and the more popular Emily Wilson (poetry) translations have delivered some outstanding versions for both, the specialist reader as well as the interested but non-specialised reader. The Odyssey's massive canvas is distinct from genres like comedy, novels or plays. The epic was marked by form, function and content, where the form was verse cast in metrical lines, the function was singing, and the content made of larger-than-life events, the merger of the human and the divine, the fantastic and the nearly-impossible-human. Finally, The Odyssey is about storytelling. The principal adventures of the voyage are narrated by Odysseus to King Alcinous and the people of Phaeacia (Books 9-12). It is in this narration that Odysseus invents his self, it is the sharing of this narrative before an audience that creates the 'figure' of the man for whom one is supposed to feel sorry and admire at the same time. The Fantastic Voyage Homer's is a world of marvels: of monsters, gods, magic and, caught in the midst of all this, a man and his team of

war-weary soldiers. As in contemporary sci-fi or fantasy (and The Odyssey has been seen by critics as the originator of these genres) we have monsters like Scylla:

howling and barking horribly; her voice is puppylike, but she is dangerous;

She has twelve dangling legs and six long necks with a gruesome head on each, and in each face three rows of crowded teeth...

There are terrifying whirlpools, like Charybdis: Beneath, divine Charybdis sucks black water down. There are one-eyed monsters like Cyclops: he reached his hands towards my men, seized two, and knocked them hard against the ground like puppies, and the floor was wet with brains. He ripped them limb by limb to make his meal, then ate them like a lion on the mountains...

The Laestrygonians are 'not humanlike, but giants'. There are the 'otherworldly Sirens' who lure men in with their strange music (in the film, for some reason, they are shown from a distance), Circe who turns Odysseus' men into pigs, and Calypso whose potent lotus flowers mesmerize men (the subject of Lord Tennyson's poem), among others.

The fantastic is, of course, a world in which existing laws do not apply, whether these are moral codes or the laws of physics. And yet, even in the space of the fantastic and the marvelous, Homer's text puts in interesting observations. In the Wilson translation, for example, the men are rendered into pigs by Circe: She added potent drugs to make them totally forget their home.

They took and drank the mixture. Then she struck them, using her magic wand, and penned them in the pigsty. They were turned to pigs in body and voice and hair; their minds remained the same. Whether this inau-

gurates the trope of men as pigs is anyone's guess, but in Homer's vision, the personality of the pig is the same as that of the human male. Then there is the temptation of cohabitation with a goddess, Calypso. Odysseus refuses eternity with Calypso, opting for mortality with Penelope.

Part of the charm of the fantastic is the intersection of the human and the nonhuman and the unresolvable geography of the tale's many settings (the geography of The Odyssey is a field of study in itself). The eponymous hero himself appears only in Book V, although the scene is remarkably well set for us in the first four.

Gods flit in and out of the narrative and Athena the goddess is present in almost every book of The Odyssey, planting ideas into humans' heads, transforming their personalities and appearance and, in short, interfering with human 'free will'.

A History of the Human Even with the gods and monsters, The Odyssey is a firmly human-centred world. In his Introduction to The Oxford Critical Guide to Homer's 'Odyssey', Joel Christensen notes: "Odysseus's Ithaca is one step closer to the world of its audiences, and completes a story that helps to explain not just where the worlds of gods and mortals came from but why they are separate and why the mortal realm might just be better off this way..." This mortal realm is strictly hierarchic. Labour in the kingdoms is undertaken by faceless slaves: The slaves brought out a piece of meat for him, and a submissive house girl brought him bread.

Homer shows multiple types of slaves: those by birth (the children of Dolius, Melanthius and Melantho), by purchase (Eumaeus and Eurycleia), or as gifts (Dolius). We also 'know' slaves by their assigned tasks: Eumaeus the swineherd, Philoetius the cowherd, Melanthius the goatherd, Eurycleia the nurse, and others. When Odysseus massacres the suitors, he

also asks Telemachus to kill the slave women who he believes had entertained Penelope's suitors (but who were probably really victims of sexual assault by the men haunting the house). Telemachus also believes this:

I refuse to grant these girls a clean death, since they poured down shame on me and Mother, when they lay beside the suitors

The result is:

[the] girls, their heads all in a row, were strung up with the noose around their necks to make their death an agony. They gasped, feet twitching for a while, but not for long.

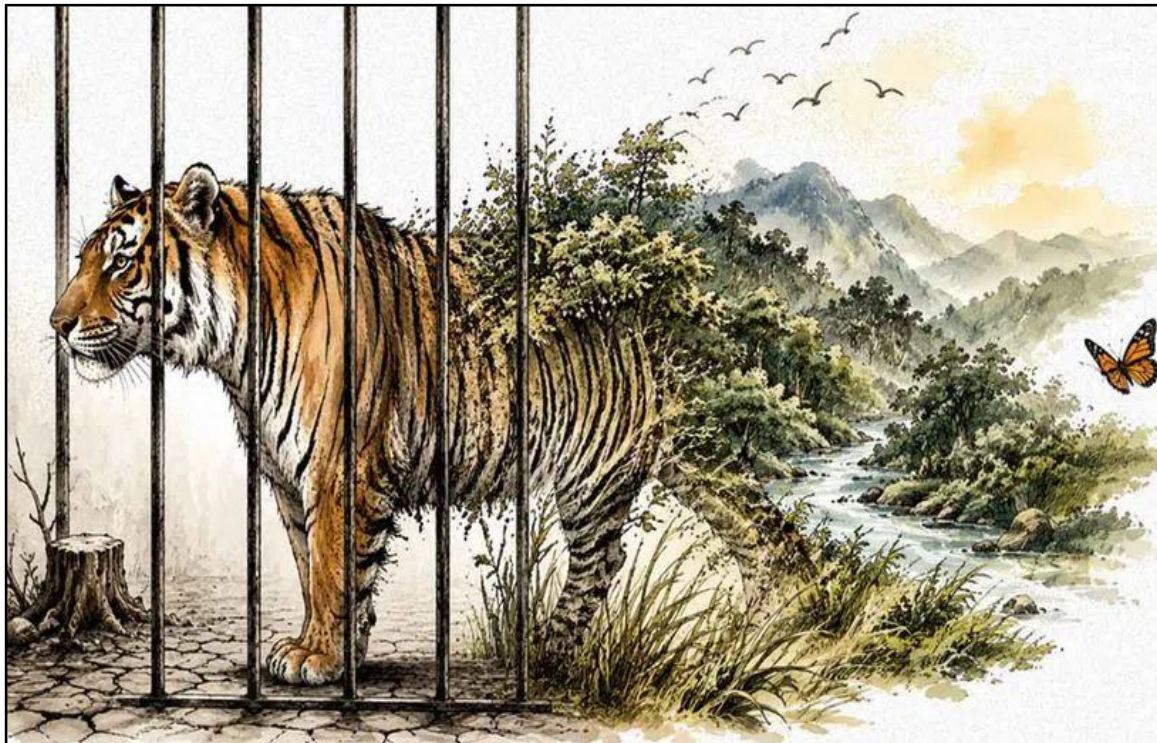
The text constructs a civilisational scale where the non-Greeks occupy the lower end, and are termed 'barbaric'. Under siege from a group of unscrupulous suitors, Penelope devises a method to keep them at bay: weaving by day, unravelling by night, until the persistent suitors discover her secret. Penelope serves, as Emily Wilson notes in her Introduction, as a double to Helen of Troy: "Much-courted Penelope resembles Helen ... and whom Paris, Prince of Troy, later stole away. Like Paris, Penelope's suitors threaten to steal away a married woman as if she were a bride. Penelope's house also echoes the besieged town of Troy..."

Conquest, colonisation, governance, and politics are central to the tale. Odysseus records how certain lands would be so much better under colonisation: Countless goats live there but people never visit it. No hunters labor through its woods to scale its hilly peaks. There are no flocks of sheep, no fields of plowland—it is all untilled, unsown and uninhabited by humans. With boats they could have turned this island into a fertile colony, with proper harvests. This is pristine nature, untouched by the human hand or device, and Odysseus mourns that this is not a 'colony'!

In the case of Odysseus, Ithaca politics has to do with the laws of hospitality. The book's theoxeny (hospitality to a god) conflates with the more mundane hospitality towards humans. Homer's text layers the theme in the form of the Trojan Horse incident: taken into the city as a surprise gift, the enemy soldiers inside it enable the seizure of the city. The Horse is hosted, so to speak, by Troy, and then the gift destroys the city from the inside.

Then, of course, the suitors living off Odysseus' wealth are guests who insult the host. The Odyssey hinges on the laws of hospitality, of welcoming the stranger-guest and of course of not overstaying the welcome. The guest is also an enemy (the root of the word host and guest is the same, hostis), as we know from the other epic, The Iliad: the

Did the Animal 'ask' for freedom?



Demands for autonomy, including cognitive autonomy in the age of AI and neurotechnologies, and freedom are common enough for us to have reached a stage of 'compassion fatigue' (Susan Moeller's apt term) for those lacking freedoms. But what of those who do not ask for freedom?

which the bulk of human freedoms revolve. The 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined the right to freedom from discrimination, inhuman treatment, slavery, unfair detainment, the right to freedom of movement, to assemble, social security, and so on. Some of these freedoms apply across species as well, as the 1965 Brambell Report stated. While this is not to equate human and animal freedom, or identity, it is worth examining some Freedom

The right to life, and the right to freedom from torture or slavery hinge on the assumption that corporeal autonomy and freedom are crucial to sentient beings. The Brambell report lists as the first three freedoms of animals as follows: Freedom from Hunger and Thirst: by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.

Freedom from Discomfort: by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease: by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment. Conditions that cause pain, discomfort or hunger, such as cages or holding cells, cause the loss of bodily freedoms. In the case of humans, these freedoms enshrined in legislation around the world may be thought of as legal freedoms, but in the case of the nonhuman, become more of a directive and difficult-to-implement set of rules.

Freedom of Spirit Philosophers and ethicists from Immanuel Kant onwards speak of ontological freedoms. They argue that what is fundamental to human ontology — being — is freedom and spirit. While the law treats freedoms in terms of rights, and mostly as injunctions to the state against restraining

humans, philosophers propose that ontological freedom is not about legal measures.

Freedom is an ontological given because it defines the very core of being, existence and awareness. Ontological freedom is defined as fullness and fulfilment. In other words, and perhaps reductively, such a freedom is directed at fulfilment of individual senses, requirements, etc. The Brambell Report implies something on these lines when it also lists two further freedoms for animals:

Freedom to Express Normal Behavior: by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.

Freedom from Fear and Distress: by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

These appear closely aligned with the idea of ontological freedom because distress and fear, when induced by contexts, prevent a sense of fulfilment or even the possibility of fulfilment.

The freedom to express normal behaviour — normal for that species — is impossible to separate, as in the case of humans, from a sense of fulfilment. It could be argued that all sentient creatures are not the same, and, therefore, not deserving of the same ontological freedoms. But, as early as 2012, the 'Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness' stated: The absence of a neo-cortex does not appear to from experiencing affective states. Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors.

Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates. If we were to take even a minimum of scientific evidence embodied in the above, we understand that we are speaking of the preliminaries to ontological freedom

even for the nonhuman life form. Imagining Animal Freedom In his The Lives of Animals, Nobel Laureate JM Coetzee, through the protagonist Elizabeth Costello, voices ideas of animal freedoms. Costello proposes that a poetic imagining of animal freedoms is perhaps more effective.

Through Rainer Maria Rilke's 'The Panther' and Ted Hughes' 'The Jaguar' and 'Second Glance at a Jaguar', she argues that, first, humans can visualise through poetic thought the state of the animal and, second, it enables us to understand that humans cannot place themselves higher than other creatures simply on the basis of sentience. Rilke's poem about a caged panther calls upon us to imagine what the loss of corporeal freedom can mean for ontological freedom. It opens with: His gaze is from the passing bars so weary. That now, within it, nothing more is held. For him there are a thousand bars to see

But then behind a thousand bars, no world. Rilke speaks of the panther's 'pacing strides' that circle 'ever smaller'. He then shifts to the state of the animal's spirit: the 'once-so-mighty will stands numbed'. There is memory of freedom though: Now and again, the pupil's curtains part

Without a sound. An image enters in, Flows through the hush of tensely coiled limbs, And vanishes within the beating heart.

Rilke draws us into the animal's consciousness, and thus into its suffering. In nearly similar fashion, Hughes' 'The Jaguar' says: 'fatigued with indolence, tiger and lion/lie still as the sun'. But the jaguar is seen enraged/through prison darkness'. There is the 'bang of blood in the brain'. He is behind bars, but 'there's no cage to him/more than to the visionary his cell'.

Hughes concludes: His stride is wildernesses of freedom: The world rolls under the long thrust of his heel. Over the cage floor the horizons come. The jaguar's mind still experiences internal states of freedom. But does this really count, asks Hughes. Hughes in 'Second

Glance at a Jaguar' makes it clear that the animal has no freedom in the cage. From the 'wildernesses of freedom' in the previous poem, Hughes comments now of the very limited space to stride: At every stride he has to turn a corner

In himself and correct it. The 'corner' is within the animal's mind and an index of curtailed spirit. What of the rest of the body? His head lies like the worn down stump of another whole jaguar... club-tail lumped along behind gracelessly.

Hughes concludes with: The head dragging forward, the body keeping up, The hind legs lagging. He coils, he flourishes. The blackjack tail as if looking for a target. Hurrying through the underworld, soundless. Although Hughes suggests that the caged jaguar is plotting escape, the overall sense we get is the jaguar is doomed to spend the rest of his life in misery. The references to the jaguar's body is only matched by the attendant pupil's curtains part

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The jaguar's mind still states of freedom. But does this really tion to the mental processes which Hughes asks us to understand through the imagination. The question of freedoms that the animal does not ask is perhaps best asked by poetry, where the law or science fails, literary knowledge comes in handy. Behind and outside 'a thousand bars', there is 'no world' for the animal.

Jos Buttler Surpasses West Indies Legend To Become Highest Run-Getter In T20 Cricket

Ace England batter Jos Buttler has scripted his name in the record books of cricket on Wednesday, surpassing the legendary West Indies batter Kieron Pollard. He became the highest run-getter in men's T20 cricket with a scintillating knock in The Hundred fixture between Manchester Super Giants and Welsh Fire at Old Trafford.

Buttler scored an unbeaten 51 off just 20 balls to help Manchester Super Giants complete a chase of 156 successfully with 31 deliveries to spare. His stay at the crease took him past Pollard in the list of highest run-getters in men's T20 cricket.

Buttler's moment of registering his name in the record books

The right-handed batter reached the landmark as he launched Marco Jansen for three successive sixes. Buttler has now scored 14,833 runs in 522 T20 matches, including nine centuries and 105 fifties. He surpassed Pollard, who has amassed 14,803 runs in 746 matches.

Buttler also added two



more sixes to his innings, smacking Lockie Ferguson for boundaries.

Tim Seifert and Buttler crush Welsh Fire. Seifert boosted the chase for Manchester Super Giants with an unbeaten knock of 62 off 36 balls, striking 10 boundaries, while opener Paul Walter chipped in with a rapid knock of 37 from 18 deliveries. Later,

Buttler capitalised on the start and helped the team complete a successful chase. Earlier in the match, Welsh Fire posted 155/4 while batting first. Matt Short was the leading run-scorer in the innings with a knock of 71 runs from 47 balls. Phil Salt chipped in with a knock of 48 runs from 37 deliveries. Gus Atkinson picked two wickets for the bowling

side. Manchester Super Giants third in points table. Manchester Super Giants are currently placed at the third position in the points table with three victories and three defeats from six matches so far. The teams will play seven matches each, and so they have only one more fixture to go in the competition.

NSE Partners With Augmont To Strengthen India's Electronic Gold Receipt Ecosystem



The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) has entered into a strategic partnership with Augmont Enterprises Limited to strengthen the Electronic Gold Receipts (EGR) ecosystem in India, as per a statement by NSE.

The partnership seeks to bolster the exchange-regulated spot gold market by enhancing EGR creation, redemption, liquidity, delivery and price discovery.

"Through this partnership, the two organisations will work towards increasing market participation, improving liq-

uidity and facilitating the adoption of EGRs among investors, jewellers and other market participants," the release added. Speaking at the bell-ringing ceremony on Wednesday, NSE Managing Director and CEO Ashish Kumar Chauhan said the exchange's Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) platform offers a SEBI-regulated marketplace where physical gold can be converted into a dematerialised security and held in the same demat account.

"This framework is open to all eligible partici-

pants, and we welcome every refiner, vault manager, jeweller, and intermediary who meets the standards to come forward," he noted. India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA) National President Prithviraj Kothari said India holds an estimated 30,000-35,000 tonnes of gold, making it one of the largest private gold reserves globally, but much of this wealth remains economically inactive. He further said that India is setting up the India International Bullion Exchange (IIBX) for the offshore

market, while SEBI has already notified the framework for Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs) for the domestic market.

"EGR (Electronic Gold Receipt) has the potential to unlock enormous value for India. If even a small fraction of the gold lying idle in our homes enters a transparent and regulated ecosystem, it can improve liquidity, strengthen formalisation, support financing, and reduce our dependence on fresh gold imports," it said.

Ketan Kothari, Director and Founder of Augmont Goldtech Private Limited, said Electronic Gold Receipts could transform India's gold financing ecosystem by enabling consumers to convert idle gold, bars and coins into EGRs and lend them to manufacturers through the Securities Lending and Borrowing (SLB) platform. By doing this, "Customer will earn an interest, manufacturer will pay an interest," he said. Further noting that the largest tokenised gold platform has an AUM of USD 3 billion, Kothari estimates EGRs will have a 100x AUM

India Ends CWG Boxing Campaign With Record-Breaking Seven Gold Medals, Narender Settles For

Glasgow: Narender clinched silver in the men's 90+kg as India ended their Commonwealth Games boxing campaign with a record-breaking seven gold medals here on Saturday. Narender was clearly the second-best boxer in the men's 90+kg final as he lost to Damar Thomas of England in a unanimous 0-5 decision. India topped the boxing medal tally with seven gold and three silver. It was the country's best-ever show in the Games. Earlier, Ankush Panghal beat Dimeji Shittu of England in the men's 80 kg final in a split 4-1 verdict to win India's seventh gold medal. The other Indian gold winners were Sachin



Siwach, Jaismine Lamboria, Preeti Pawar, Sakshi Chaudhary, Arundhati Choudhary and Priya Ghanghas, while Olympic medallist Lovlina Borgohain and Jadumani Singh also settled for a silver each. In the men's 60kg final, Sachin beat Tryagain Morning Ndevelo of Namibia in a dramatic bout. He made a remarkable comeback after he was behind his opponent

in the first two rounds. In the third and final round, Sachin forced a standing count against Ndevelo, resulting in a 3-2 split verdict win in favour of the Indian. for a silver after losing to Emma-Sue Greentree of Australia in the women's 70kg final in a split 1-4 verdict. Arundhati beat Chantelle Reid of England in the women's 70kg final in a unani-

mous 5-0 verdict. Preeti claimed the gold with a dominant 5-0 victory over Canada's Scarlett Delgado in the women's 54kg before reigning world champion Jaismine clinched the yellow metal with the same scoreline against Northern Ireland's Michaela Walsh, who was the defending champion in the women's 57kg. Sakshi then beat Ruby White of England in the women's 51kg final 5-0 to win India's third boxing gold of the day. It was a harder final bout for Priya who beat Marie-Bathoul Al-Ahmadih of Canada 4-1 in a split verdict in the women's 60kg. Jadumani a hard-fought contest 0-5 against Australia's Jye Dixon.

West Indies Face Risk Of Missing Direct ODI World Cup Qualification As Deadline Gets Near



West Indies, once considered one of the strongest teams in cricket, are now in danger of being eliminated from next year's ODI World Cup. Having failed to qualify for the 2023 World Cup, the Caribbean team is in danger of losing their chance of direct entry into the next ODI World Cup as well. The current situation is such that the Windies team has to rely on the results of other teams in addition to win-

ning matches.

According to ICC regulations, the top eight teams in the ICC ODI rankings as of September 30, 2026, will qualify directly for the 2027 ODI World Cup. Currently, Shai Hope-led West Indies are ranked 10th. The team will play only two ODIs before the cut-off date. This makes the path to direct entry even more difficult. West Indies will play a three-

match ODI series against India in September, but only the results of the two ODIs will count before the September 30 deadline. Therefore, the team will need to win both matches against India to keep their hopes of direct qualification alive. However, a win against India will not be enough. West Indies will also have to rely on the outcome of the ongoing five-match ODI series between Ireland and

Afghanistan. If Ireland wins the series 5-0 or 4-1, West Indies will move into the top eight. However, the first match of the series was abandoned due to rain. Currently, Afghanistan is ranked eighth in the ICC ODI rankings, and Ireland is ranked 12th. Ireland is already certain of playing in the qualifiers, but Afghanistan is a strong contender to qualify directly for the World Cup. Will West Indies play in the World Cup Qualifier? If the West Indies team fails to make it to the top eight, they will have to play in the ODI World Cup qualifiers to be held in February-March next year. The Caribbean team had played in the qualifiers for the 2023 World Cup. It is worth noting that they were not able to win and missed the World Cup for the first time in cricket history.

CBI Books Reliance Capital Ltd., Ex-Chairman Anil Ambani for Causing EPFO Loss of Over Rs 1,800 Cr



New Delhi: The CBI has registered an FIR against Reliance Capital Limited (RCL) and its former chairman Anil D Ambani for allegedly causing a loss of Rs 1,816.22 crore to the EPFO, officials said on Saturday.

Ambani, however, denied any wrongdoing, according to a statement issued by his spokesperson. The action follows a July 21 complaint from the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment alleging commission of offences of cheating, criminal conspiracy and causing wrongful loss to the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), the officials said. "The present complaint is being lodged on behalf of EPFO through its authorised officer pursuant to the approval of the competent authority in relation to the substantial loss suffered by the EPFO arising out of its investment in the secured Non-Convertible Debentures

issued by Reliance Capital Limited and the subsequently discovered material indicating fraudulent conduct connected with such investment," the complaint alleged.

Responding to the complaint, Ambani's spokesperson said, "The FIR registered by the CBI pertains to Reliance Capital Limited. Mr. Ambani served as a Non-Executive Director/Chairman of the Board of Reliance Capital Limited from 2005 until November 2021, when the "In addition, during an earlier period as well, Reserve Bank of India superseded the Board of Directors of the company and appointed an administrator."

"Anil Ambani denies any wrongdoing, whatsoever, and reserves all rights available to him in law," the spokesperson said. According to the complaint, which is now part of the CBI FIR, during 2013 and 2014, RCL issued secured Non-

Convertible Debentures (NCDs). Pursuant thereto, investments aggregating to Rs 2,500 crore were made by the portfolio managers on behalf of the EPFO in the aforesaid NCDs, with maturity in 2023 and 2024, the complaint alleged.

Ministry of Labour and Employment sent the complaint after it was intimated a period from December 7, 2019, to December 6, 2021.

"In addition, during an earlier period as well, various fraudulent transactions have been found which also led to ultimate failure of RCL as a consequence of siphoning off of money of RCL," the complaint alleged.

by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) that it had found documentary evidence and a transaction audit conducted by BDO India LLP showed prima facie a number of fraudulent transactions by RCL and the persons

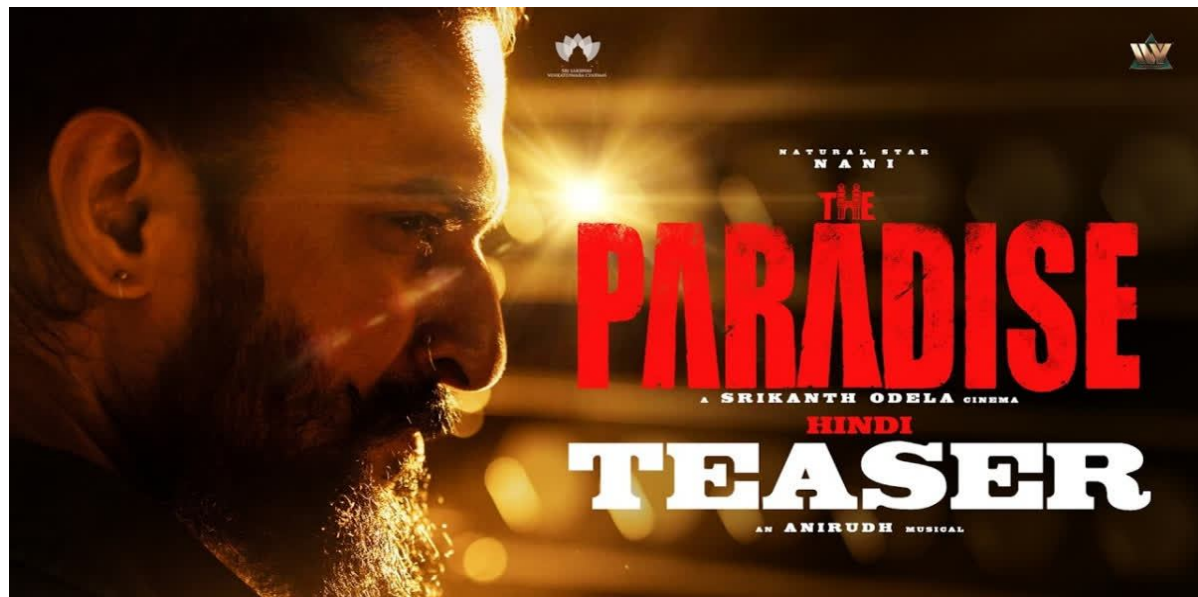
in charge of its management during the period from December 7, 2019, to December 6, 2021.

"In addition, during an earlier period as well, various fraudulent transactions have been found which also led to ultimate failure of RCL as a consequence of siphoning off of money of RCL," the complaint alleged. "In addition, during an earlier period as well,

It claimed that the ED probe prima facie indicated a series of transactions involving irregular lending, diversion of funds, impairment of security and other acts by RCL that require investigation.

"If established upon investigation, such conduct may have materially contributed to the financial deterioration of RCL, its inability to honour its obligation towards Debenture Holders, and the consequent loss of Rs 1,816.22 crore suffered by EPFO," the complaint alleged.

Nani Goes All Guns Blazing In Srikanth Odela's Action Thriller; Film's Release Date Confirmed



The makers of the upcoming film *The Paradise* finally dropped the teaser on Thursday, August 6. It offers a first look at Nani in one of his most intense roles yet. Directed by Srikanth Odela, the film also stars Mohan Babu, Raghav Juyal and Kayadu Lohar in key roles. Packed with action, violence and powerful dialogues, the teaser hints at a story about rebellion against feudal oppression. The 1-minute-42-second teaser introduces Nani as Jadal, a man who rises to fight for the oppressed. It opens with him asking, "From this moment, whose land is this? Whose country is this?"

The dialogue suggests that the film revolves around power, justice and resistance. The teaser indicates that Jadal is taking on Shikanja Maalik, played by Mohan Babu, and his son Vikram Maalik, played by Raghav Juyal. The two appear to control a place called Paradise, while Jadal leads a fight on behalf of the people suffering under their rule. As the teaser progresses, a woman questions whether the government exists for powerful feudal lords or for ordinary people. Soon after, Jadal launches a violent uprising. One of the teaser's strongest moments comes when he says,

"Our oppressed race must rise in rebellion. The very black they spat on... that's the colour of our flag. And the crowd... that's our emblem." The teaser is filled with intense action scenes and bloodshed. In the final moments, Jadal is seen sitting on a pile of bodies covered in blood. He then removes a dishti (evil eye) from himself using a garland made of blades. The teaser also confirms that *The Paradise* will release in theatres on September 24. Director Srikanth Odela shared the teaser on social media with the caption, "Welcome to the world of #TheParadise." The teaser has received

mixed reactions online. While many fans praised its visuals, action and Nani's screen presence, some felt the background music could have been stronger. Others also criticised the Hindi dubbed version of Nani's voice. The *Paradise* marks the second collaboration between Nani and Srikanth Odela after the success of *Dasara* in 2023. The film features music by Anirudh Ravichander and is produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under SLV Cinemas, with Ishan Saxena serving as co-producer. The film was originally scheduled for a March release before being postponed twice.

With English Trailer, Makers Confirm When Ranbir Kapoor and Yash Starrer Will Hit Big Screens



After releasing trailer of the much-awaited *Ramayana*: Part 1, the makers have now locked release date for Ranbir Kapoor, Sai Pallavi, and Yash starrer mythological drama. Sony Pictures Entertainment, who acquired international distribution rights for *Ramayana*, announced release date for the film via social media. The distributors confirmed that the film will arrive on Dhanteras which marks the beginning of the Diwali festivities.

Right from the word go, *Ramayana* release was locked for Diwali 2026. Sticking to the release plan, the makers are all set for worldwide release of the film on November 6. The announcement came with the release of the *Ramayana*'s English trailer. In India, *Ramayana* will enjoy solo release with no big-ticket films scheduled to arrive during November 2026. The nearest tent-pole release is Shah Rukh Khan's *King* which arrives in

December. However, internationally, *Ramayana* will lock horns with Takashi Yamazaki's *Godzilla Minus Zero* which is also scheduled to hit big screens on November 6. While *Ramayana* is India's biggest mythological epic, *Godzilla Minus Zero* is Japan's massive monster franchise. The set of audience both films are targeting could be different. However, what will make the release clash intense is that the *Ramayana* and *Godzilla*, However, what will make the release clash intense is that the *Ramayana* and *Godzilla*,

both will eye for IMAX screens and other premium platforms. Both projects are filmed for IMAX. With Sony Pictures having one of the world's largest theatrical distribution networks, *Ramayana* can undoubtedly enjoy wider releases and better screen allocation in the international circuits. Now it is to be seen what plans Toho Co., Ltd, distributor for *Godzilla* comes up with to secure IMAX and premium platforms for *Godzilla Minus Zero*, which is the 39th film in the popular creature franchise. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit Malhotra's Prime Focus Studios, *Ramayana* is mounted on a massive budget of Rs 4000 crore. Apart from Ranbir, Sai Pallavi, and Yash, the film also stars Sunny Deol as Hanuman, Arun Govil as Dasharatha, and Ravie Dubey as Lakshmana. The ensemble getting could be different. However, what will make the release clash intense is that the *Ramayana* and *Godzilla*, However, what will make the release clash intense is that the *Ramayana* and *Godzilla*,

'Gaurav Khanna Bullied Me A Lot': Shagun Sharma Shares Her Experience



Khatron Ke Khiladi is returning with its 15th season after a two-year break. Hosted by Rohit Shetty, the stunt-based reality show has already completed filming in Cape Town, South Africa. This season will feature a mix of returning contestants and new faces, with tougher stunts and unexpected twists. Ahead of the show's premiere, actor Shagun Sharma spoke about her experience on the reality show. During an interview with a newswire, she claimed that fellow contestant Gaurav Khanna bullied her during the shoot. When asked if there was anyone from the show she would not like to

meet again, Shagun said, "I think Gaurav Khanna is one person I would not want to meet." She went on to explain why she felt that way. According to Shagun, Gaurav often targeted her whenever contestants failed to complete a stunt. Sharing her experience, she said, "He was someone jinhone mujhe bahut bully kiya hai (He was someone who bullied me a lot). If five people performed a task and four of them aborted it, he would pick on me the most. He would say, 'Yeh to chod deti hai,' 'She is weak,' and 'Don't do this'."

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However, Shagun also clarified that she does not want to judge Gaurav based only on his behaviour during the reality show. She said that people often behave differently in such situations and said she was not sure if he is the same person in real life. The confirmed contestants of *Khatron Ke Khiladi 15* include Gaurav Khanna, Avinash Mishra, Farrhana Bhatt, Shagun Sharma, Avika Gor, Orhan Awatramani (Orry), Harsh Gujral, Jasmin Bhasin, Rubina Dilaik, Karan Wahi, Rithvik Dhanjani, Vishal Aditya Singh and Ruhaniika Dhawan. The upcoming season

carries the theme "Darr Ka Naya Daur" and promises more challenging stunts than previous editions. Like every season, Rohit Shetty will return as the host and guide contestants through dangerous tasks set against the backdrop of Cape Town. The contestants have already returned to India after completing the shoot in South Africa, where they frequently shared photos and videos of their time together on social media. *Khatron Ke Khiladi 15* premieres on August 1. The show will air every Saturday and Sunday at 9 pm on Colors TV and will also be available for streaming on JioHotstar.

