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WORLD CUP 2026

MORE THAN A GAME

How Football Rewrote
Tactics, Culture and
Global Identity



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World Cup 2026: More Than a Game — How Football Rewrote Tactics, Culture and Global Identity

"The FIFA World Cup is no longer just about lifting a trophy—it is where strategy meets identity, technology meets tradition, and rivalries become part of global history."

News Mania Desk: The FIFA World Cup 2026 will be remembered not merely for its champions but for re-defining what the world's biggest sporting event represents. Hosted jointly by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, the tournament marked the first-ever 48-team World Cup, featuring an unprecedented 104 matches across North America. It was a celebration of football's tactical evolution and an extraordinary display of cultural unity, proving once again why football remains the world's universal language.

The New Tactical Revolution

Modern football is evolving at breathtaking speed, and the 2026 World Cup showcased how innovation has become as important as individual brilliance.

One of the tournament's defining tactical trends was the emergence of the "Bonus Back"—full-backs no longer confined to defensive duties but actively joining attacks inside the penalty box. Teams such as Portugal and Croatia repeatedly created numerical superiority by using overlapping defenders to engineer dangerous 2-on-1 situations on the flanks.

Equally fascinating was the rise of fluid positional football. Traditional formations became increasingly flexible as players constantly exchanged roles based on possession and transitions. Argentina's dynamic 4-3-3 perfectly illustrated this evolution, with midfielders Rodrigo De Paul and Enzo Fernández shielding the defence while allowing Lionel Messi to operate freely between defensive lines, exploiting the half-spaces that modern tactical analysts consider football's most valuable territory.

Host nations also embraced sophisticated pressing systems. The United States and Canada frequently occupied central areas during build-up play before releasing attacking full-backs into wide spaces, reflecting principles popularised by Europe's elite clubs.

Football in 2026 was no longer defined by fixed positions—it be-



came a game of intelligent movement, spatial awareness, and collective decision-making.

Historic Rivalries Rekindled

Every World Cup creates unforgettable contests, but few rivalries carry the emotional weight of Argentina versus England.

Their encounters transcend football, shaped by decades of sporting history dating back to the 1966 World Cup, Diego Maradona's unforgettable "Hand of God" and "Goal of the

Cities such as New York, Toronto, Atlanta, Dallas, Los Angeles, Mexico City, and Vancouver became vibrant global meeting points where Brazilian samba blended with Argentine chants, English supporters shared streets with Japanese fans, and African drumbeats echoed alongside European anthems.

Local communities enthusiastically embraced international visitors, while restaurants, public squares, and fan zones became multicultural



Century" in 1986, and continuing competitive tensions in modern football. Every meeting between these two footballing giants becomes more than ninety minutes—it becomes a contest of memory, pride, and national identity.

The 2026 semifinal once again reminded the world that football's greatest rivalries are built not only on trophies but also on shared history and collective emotion.

A Tournament That United Continents

Perhaps the World Cup's greatest achievement lay beyond the stadiums. Despite logistical challenges, long-distance travel, and complex visa arrangements across three host nations, millions of supporters transformed North America into a living festival of cultures.

gathering spaces celebrating diversity rather than division.

For one month, national borders became secondary to the shared passion for football.

Technology Changes the Beautiful Game

Technology played an even greater role than in previous editions. Enhanced Video Assistant Referee (VAR) systems, semi-automated offside technology, advanced player tracking, AI-assisted tactical analysis, and real-time performance data transformed coaching decisions and match preparation.

Teams increasingly relied on sports science, predictive analytics, and data-driven decision-making to gain marginal advantages—illustrating how football is entering an

era where information is as valuable as talent.

Football's Growing Global Influence

The expanded tournament also reflected FIFA's ambition to make football more inclusive.

The 48-team format gave emerging football nations unprecedented opportunities to compete on the biggest stage, broadening the sport's global reach while introducing new tactical styles and football

tournament's greatest legacy may not be remembered through statistics or scorelines alone, but through the images of strangers celebrating together, children inspired by their heroes, and cities transformed into symbols of global unity.

In an increasingly divided world, the FIFA World Cup once again proved a timeless truth: football is more than a game—it is a shared human experience capable of



cultures to international audiences. For many nations, qualification itself became a historic achievement, reinforcing football's ability to inspire dreams far beyond traditional powerhouses.

More Than a Sporting Event

The FIFA World Cup 2026 demonstrated that football remains one of humanity's most powerful cultural forces.

bringing the world together.

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- FIFA World Cup 2026 Tournament Regulations and Technical Reports.
- FIFA Technical Study Group (TSG) – Tactical Analysis.
- International Football Association Board (IFAB) – Laws of the Game and VAR protocols.
- FIFA High Performance & Football Technology Reports.



It showcased tactical innovation, celebrated diversity, revived historic rivalries, embraced technological advancement, and united millions across languages, religions, and political boundaries.

Long after the final whistle, the

- Historical FIFA World Cup archives (1966, 1986, 1998, 2002, 2022).
- Football analytics studies by Opta Analyst, StatsBomb, and the CIES Football Observatory on positional play, pressing systems, and tactical evolution.

West Bengal Begins Major KMC Delimitation Ahead of Civic Polls

Ajay Chowdhury: The BJP government in West Bengal has initiated the first major delimitation exercise of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) since 1984, aiming to redraw ward boundaries ahead of the civic elections expected in November 2026. The exercise will increase the number of wards from 144 to 200, with each ward comprising approximately 16,000–18,000 voters to ensure more balanced representation.

Acting on a timeline set by Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari, KMC has directed delimitation committees to submit their recommendations by July 27. While the city's 16 boroughs will remain unchanged, ward boundaries will be reorganised to reflect significant demographic shifts over the past four



decades, particularly rapid urbanisation in Kolkata's southern and eastern areas.

The restructuring is expected to reshape the city's political landscape and will be the BJP government's first major electoral test after assuming power in West Bengal. The new civic board is expected to be constituted before the current administrator-run arrangement ends on December 7.

West Bengal to Implement NEP, PM-SHRI; CM Announces Major Education Reforms

Ajay Chowdhury: West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari announced a series of sweeping education reforms after a high-level meeting with Union officials in Kolkata. He said the state has formally joined the National Education Policy (NEP) and the PM-SHRI scheme, enabling it to receive the Centre's full education allocation for the current financial year.

The Chief Minister outlined plans to modernise 81,000 schools with component grants, gas-based cooking for mid-day meals, phased installation of solar panels, arsenic-free drinking water, hygienic toilets, fans, water purifiers and sanitary napkin vending machines in girls' schools. The initiative will begin in Birbhum, Bankura, Purulia and Jhargram. Adhikari also stressed transparent, merit-based teacher recruitment free from political interference and said the



government would amend the state's education law to allow parents to serve as School Management Committee chairpersons or vice-chairpersons. He further announced that the state would withdraw the pending OBC reservation case from the Supreme Court, paving the way for the remaining teacher appointments. From August 1, the allocation for primary school mid-day meals will increase from ₹6.78 to ₹10 per student, with ISKCON supporting meal services in several areas, including Kolkata.

Three BJP Candidates File Nominations for Rajya Sabha Bypolls in West Bengal

Ajay Chowdhury: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has filed nomination papers for all three seats - Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, Sushmita Dev, Prakash Chik Baraik in the upcoming Rajya Sabha bypolls from West Bengal. The nominations were submitted before the Returning Officer in the presence of senior party leaders, signaling the BJP's intent



to strengthen its representation in the Upper House. The bypolls were

necessitated by vacancies in the Rajya Sabha from the state. Party leaders expressed confidence in their candidates and said the elections would further enhance the BJP's voice on issues concerning West Bengal and national development. The Election Commission is expected to conduct the bypolls as per the notified schedule.

Centre Approves Key Agriculture & Rural Development Initiatives for West Bengal

Ajay Chowdhury: West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari met Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at Nabanna to discuss key agriculture and rural development initiatives for the state. During the meeting, the Centre approved 1 lakh houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), with the beneficiary list verification deadline extended to August 15.

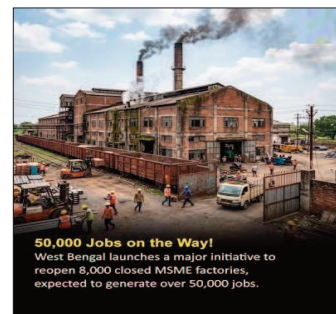


The Centre also sanctioned four new crop and soil testing laboratories to help identify suitable crop

patterns and fertile land across Bengal. Discussions were held on expanding farmer support beyond the PM-KISAN scheme, including arrangements for potato seeds from Punjab and jute seeds from Andhra Pradesh. Additionally, officials were directed to identify valid job card holders for 125 days of employment, supplementing the existing 2.56 crore job cards in the state.

West Bengal Sees Investment Surge as Tech, Manufacturing and Logistics Gain Momentum

News Mania Desk: West Bengal is witnessing a major industrial and investment push, with significant developments across the technology, manufacturing, logistics and steel sectors. Fusion CX has announced a ₹100 crore investment at the Bengal Silicon Valley IT campus, expected to generate around 9,000 jobs, while Mitsubishi is in discussions with the state government over setting up a proposed semiconductor manufacturing unit. The state is targeting investments worth ₹20,000 crore, led by Shyam Steel's ₹15,000 crore



manufacturing project and expansion plans by Amul. In the logistics sector, Flipkart has established its largest fulfilment centre in India at Haringhata, while Amazon is rapidly expanding its delivery net-

work to strengthen same-day delivery services.

Meanwhile, the state government has issued a one-month ultimatum to the management of 30 closed or ailing tea gardens to resume operations or face criminal action for unpaid wages and gratuity. In another boost for the industrial sector, the Centre has decided against disinvesting SAIL's Alloy Steel Plant in Durgapur, opting instead to integrate it with the Durgapur Steel Plant and expand its annual production capacity to 4.08 million metric tonnes by 2030.

Political Earthquake in Bengal: Madan Mitra Quits TMC, Joins Ritabrata Banerjee-Led Rebel Camp

Ajay Chowdhury: In a major political setback for the Trinamool Congress (TMC), senior leader Madan Mitra on Wednesday resigned from the party and joined the rebel camp led by Ritabrata Banerjee, signalling deepening cracks within the party ahead of upcoming elections.

While stepping down from all

party positions, Mitra said he would continue as an MLA. Launching a sharp attack on the TMC leadership, he claimed he had advised Abhishek Banerjee to step aside temporarily to allow the party to regroup, but the suggestion was rejected. "The party is sinking. It now appears to exist for one individual, though it belongs



to everyone," Mitra said, urging

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to take a broader view of the party's future.

The political development comes amid an ongoing Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigation into an alleged municipal recruitment scam. The agency has summoned Mitra's wife and two sons for questioning next week after financial

transactions involving the family surfaced during the probe. Officials clarified that the investigation is continuing and no final conclusions have been reached.

Mitra's exit is expected to reshape West Bengal's political landscape and intensify pressure on the TMC as it grapples with internal dissent and legal challenges.

Youth and Social Solidarity: Reawakening the Spirit of Collective Responsibility



Ms. Bornali Biswas –Editor in Chief

It is often said that youth are the future of a nation, but they are equally its most powerful force in the present. Their energy, creativity, and courage have the potential to shape society, challenge injustice, and drive meaningful change. Yet, concerns are growing over the apparent decline in social solidarity and civic participation among sections of today's youth.

The reasons behind this trend are complex and extend far beyond simple indifference. Many young people are navigating an increasingly competitive world marked by academic pressure, unemployment, financial insecurity, and uncertainty about the future. In such circumstances, personal survival often takes precedence over community engagement. This should not be mistaken for a lack of compassion but rather an indication of the burdens many young people carry.

Equally significant is the absence of sustained guidance and civic education. While schools and colleges prepare students for careers, they often place less emphasis on public responsibility, volunteerism, and the value of collective action. Without strong mentorship and positive role models, many young people fail to recognise that their participation can influence society in meaningful ways.

Technology and social media have also reshaped youth engagement.

These platforms offer opportunities to learn, connect, and advocate for causes, but excessive dependence on virtual interactions can weaken real-world community participation. The challenge is not technology itself, but how it is used.

Governments and institutions have introduced several youth-oriented programmes, yet a gap remains between policy and participation. Many young people are unaware of available opportunities or lack the guidance needed to access them. Better outreach, mentorship, and grassroots engagement are essential to bridge this divide.

The encouraging reality is that countless young people continue to volunteer, innovate, and stand up for social justice. Their commitment proves that the spirit of solidarity is alive—it simply needs stronger support and wider opportunities to flourish.

A society that invests in its youth through education, employment, leadership development, and civic participation builds not only a stronger generation but also a stronger nation. Young people are not spectators in the story of progress; they are its authors. By nurturing their sense of responsibility and empowering them to contribute, society can transform today's challenges into tomorrow's opportunities. The future depends not only on what young people become, but also on how effectively society helps them become active partners in nation-building.

Please contact me with your valuable comments in –editor.newsmania@gmail.com

Security Forces Intensify Operations in Manipur After Assam Rifles Ambush



Imphal: Security agencies have launched extensive search and counter-insurgency operations in Manipur's Ukhrul district following a deadly IED ambush targeting Assam Rifles personnel. Three suspects allegedly linked to the attack have been arrested as investigators work to uncover the network behind the incident. The ambush has sparked widespread condemnation from civil society organizations, tribal leaders, and community groups across the region. Amid ongoing ethnic sensitivities, local leaders have appealed for peace and restraint while cooperating with authorities to prevent further unrest. Security has been heightened in vulnerable areas, with officials emphasizing their commitment to maintaining law and order and safeguarding the fragile peace in the state.

Meghalaya Achieves 85% Voter Verification Ahead of Electoral Roll Revision



Shillong: Meghalaya has completed the verification of over 85% of its registered voters as part of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls. State election authorities confirmed that a large majority of eligible voters have already submitted their SIR forms, marking significant progress in the revision process. The comprehensive exercise, conducted under the direction of the State Election Commission, aims to ensure accurate and updated electoral rolls ahead of future elections. Officials have urged the remaining voters to complete the verification process within the stipulated deadline to avoid discrepancies and ensure their names remain on the final electoral roll.

NORTH EAST BEATS

Arunachal Pradesh to Host India's First River Kinetic Energy Project

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh has taken a major step towards clean energy by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a Norwegian company to develop India's first river kinetic energy project. Signed in July 2026, the initiative will generate electricity using the natural flow of rivers without the need for large dams, making it an environmentally sustainable solution. The project is expected to harness the state's vast hydropower potential while minimizing ecological impact. State leaders believe this pioneering venture



will boost renewable energy production, create employment opportunities, attract foreign investment, and strengthen Arunachal Pradesh's position as a clean energy hub, with the potential to become the wealthiest state in Northeast India.

Monsoon Fury Wreaks Havoc in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim

Gangtok: Relentless monsoon rains have triggered widespread devastation across Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, disrupting transport and isolating remote areas. A fresh cloudburst in Arunachal Pradesh's KurungKumey district washed away key roads and bridges, cutting off an Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) camp and hampering rescue efforts. Meanwhile, massive landslides on National Highway 10 (NH-10) have severely disrupted the crucial Gangtok–Siliguri route in Sikkim, leaving hundreds of commuters stranded and affecting the movement of essential



supplies. Authorities have deployed emergency teams, while restoration work is underway despite challenging weather conditions. Officials have urged residents and travellers to remain alert as heavy rainfall is expected to continue in the region.

Assam Announces ₹150 Crore Project to End Jorabat Flooding

Guwahati: In a major step towards tackling recurring urban flooding, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has announced a ₹150-crore flood mitigation project for Jorabat, one of Guwahati's key entry points. The decision comes after recent flash floods brought traffic to a standstill, causing severe disruption for commuters. The project will be integrated with the proposed Guwahati Ring Road initiative and aims to permanently eliminate waterlogging through improved drainage and flood-control infrastructure. The state government believes the long-term



solution will enhance connectivity, reduce monsoon-related disruptions, and strengthen Guwahati's urban resilience against extreme weather events. Work on the project is expected to begin after the necessary planning and approvals.

India, Japan Strengthen Strategic Partnership with Focus on Northeast Development

New Delhi: India and Japan have elevated their strategic partnership following delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister SanaeTakaichi. The leaders identified Northeast India as a key hub for semiconductor supply chains, clean energy investments, and enhanced security cooperation. The discussions also reaffirmed support for India's Act East Policy, positioning the Northeast as a vital gateway to Southeast Asia. Both countries pledged to deepen collaboration in infrastructure, technology, trade, and regional connectivity, aim-



ing to boost economic growth and strengthen geopolitical stability in the Indo-Pacific. The renewed partnership is expected to attract significant investment while accelerating the region's transformation into a strategic economic and industrial corridor.

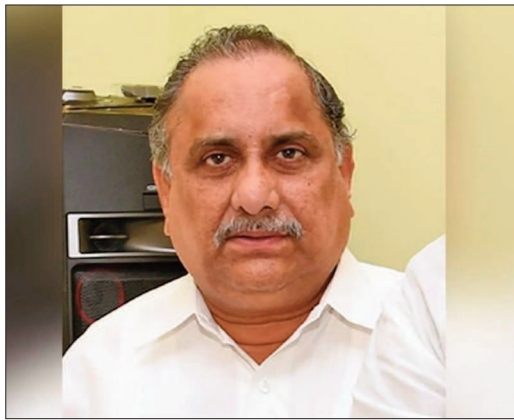
Karnataka Announces India's First Government-Driven AI University

Bengaluru: Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has announced the establishment of India's first government-driven Artificial Intelligence (AI) University, marking a major step towards advancing AI education, research, and innovation. The proposed institution aims to develop a skilled workforce in emerging technologies by offering specialized



courses, fostering industry-academia collaboration, and supporting cutting-edge research. The AI University is expected to strengthen Karnataka's position as India's technology hub while promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and global competitiveness in the rapidly evolving field of artificial intelligence. The initiative aligns with the state's vision of becoming a leader in next-generation digital technologies and AI-driven economic growth.

Mudragada Padmanabham Remains Key Face of Andhra's Kapu Reservation Movement



Veteran Andhra Pradesh politician Mudragada Padmanabham has once again returned to the political spotlight as the enduring face of the Kapu reservation movement. A four-time MLA and former TDP leader, Padmanabham spearheaded the demand for Backward Class status for the Kapu community following the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. The agitation reached its peak in January 2016, when protests at Tuni railway station turned violent, drawing national attention. More recently, he made headlines by changing his name in protest after PawanKalyan's electoral victory, underscoring his continuing influence and dissatisfaction with the political direction of the Kapu leadership.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann Silent Amid 'Satluj' Political Storm

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has come under scrutiny for maintaining silence amid the political controversy surrounding the alleged "Satluj" issue. The development has triggered intense debate within the state's political circles, with opposition parties questioning the Chief Minister's absence from Punjab for nearly 10 days during the unfolding row. According to political observers, the Aam Aadmi Party appears to be deliberately downplaying the

controversy as part of a broader strategy to keep public attention focused on the government's welfare initiatives and governance agenda rather than political confrontation. While the opposition has sought to make the issue a major political flashpoint, the AAP leadership has largely refrained from engaging publicly on the matter. The episode has reignited discussions over political communication, crisis management and governance



priorities, even as the state government continues to highlight its flagship welfare schemes and development programmes.

India Political Snippets

Sonam Wangchuk Continues Hunger Strike

Environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk's indefinite hunger strike has intensified calls for Ladakh's statehood and stronger constitutional safeguards, drawing nationwide attention to the region's governance and environmental concerns.

Kejriwal Raises E20 Fuel Concerns

AAP National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure consumers retain access to non-ethanol fuel options amid the phased nationwide rollout of E20 petrol.

Punjab Congress Battles Internal Factionalism

The Punjab Congress continues to grapple with internal divisions as AICC in-charge Bhupesh Baghel seeks to resolve disputes between rival camps led by Charanjit Singh Channi and Amrinder Singh Raja Warring.

Dialogue Push on Manipur Crisis

Kuki-Zo organisations have held discussions with leaders in Mizoram, urging the Centre to initiate meaningful dialogue aimed at resolving the prolonged ethnic conflict in Manipur.

NCP Rift Reaches Courts

The ongoing power struggle within the Nationalist Congress Party has entered a new phase, with legal battles over elections and factional alignments continuing to shape Maharashtra's political landscape.

Tamil Nadu Prepares Fiscal White Paper

Ahead of the state budget, the Tamil Nadu government is set to release a White Paper detailing the state's financial position and outlining its economic roadmap under the new administration.

By-Poll Politics Intensify

Political equations have shifted ahead of key by-elections, with BJP leader Narottam Mishra's exclusion from the Datia contest emerging as a major talking point in Madhya Pradesh.

J&K Political Allegations Surface

Political tensions have escalated in Jammu and Kashmir after allegations of financial inducements to switch party loyalties, claims that have been strongly rejected by the BJP.

India Tightens Trade Rules Amid Tariff Threats

Amid potential U.S. tariff action linked to Russian oil imports, India has strengthened domestic import regulations on goods associated with forced labour while monitoring evolving trade negotiations.

BJP Changes Bankipur Candidate Ahead of High-Stakes Bypoll

The BJP has replaced its original candidate, Abhishek Kumar, for the Bankipur Assembly by-election after his father's conviction in the fodder scam sparked political controversy. The decision has added a new dimension to the contest, which is shaping up as a triangular battle involving the BJP, the RJD and Prashant Kishor's political out-



fit. The candidate switch is expected to provide fresh ammunition to Kishor's campaign as he seeks to expand his political footprint in Bihar. With the RJD also eyeing an upset, the Bankipur by-poll has emerged as a closely watched contest that could influence the state's political narrative ahead of future elections.

On This Day – July 17: Historic Events That Shaped the World

July 17 has witnessed several landmark events that have left a lasting impact on world history, politics, economics, science, and culture. From the fall of a royal dynasty to breakthroughs in space exploration, the date marks defining moments across centuries. It is also observed annually as the World Day for International Justice, recognising the role of international law in promoting accountability for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Major Events on July 17

1776 – Adam Smith Dies

Scottish economist and philosopher Adam Smith, widely regarded as the "Father of Modern Economics," passed away. His seminal work, *The Wealth of Nations*, laid the foundations of modern free-market economic theory.

1918 – Execution of Russia's Last Tsar

Tsar Nicholas II, the last Emperor of Russia, along with Empress Alexandra and their five children, was executed by Bolshevik forces in Yekaterinburg during the Russian Revolution, marking the end of the Romanov dynasty.

1955 – Disneyland Opens

Visionary entrepreneur Walt Disney inaugurated the world's first Disneyland in Anaheim, California, creating a new era in family entertainment and theme parks.

1975 – Apollo-Soyuz Space Mission

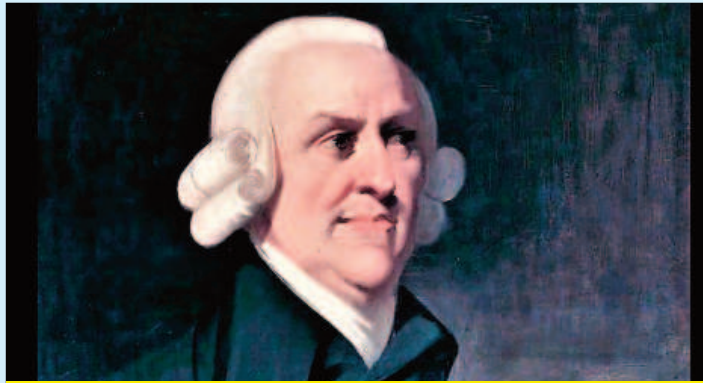
In a historic Cold War breakthrough, the United States' Apollo spacecraft docked with the Soviet Union's Soyuz spacecraft in orbit, symbolising international cooperation in space exploration despite geopolitical rivalry.

1996 – TWA Flight 800 Disaster

Trans World Airlines Flight 800 exploded shortly after takeoff from New York and crashed into the Atlantic Ocean near Long Island, killing all 230 people on board. The tragedy remains one of the deadliest aviation disasters in U.S. history.

1996 – Madras Officially Becomes Chennai

The Government of India officially renamed Madras as Chennai, reflecting the city's historical and cultural identity. The change became a significant milestone in India's broader movement to restore traditional place names.



1776 – Adam Smith Dies



1918 – Execution of Russia's Last Tsar



1955 – Disneyland Opens



1975 – Apollo-Soyuz Space Mission

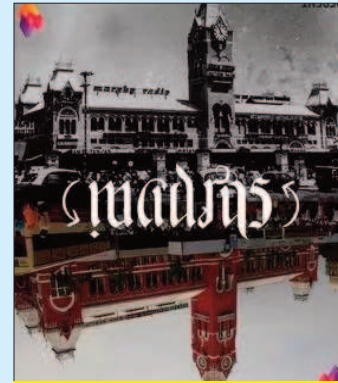
nificant milestone in India's broader movement to restore traditional place names.

Observances on July 17

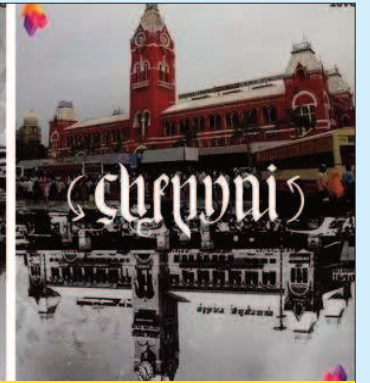
World Day for International Justice is observed globally to commemorate the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998, which established

the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**. The day highlights the importance of international law, accountability, and justice for victims of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

In **Meghalaya**, **U Tirot Sing Day** honours the Khasi freedom fighter U



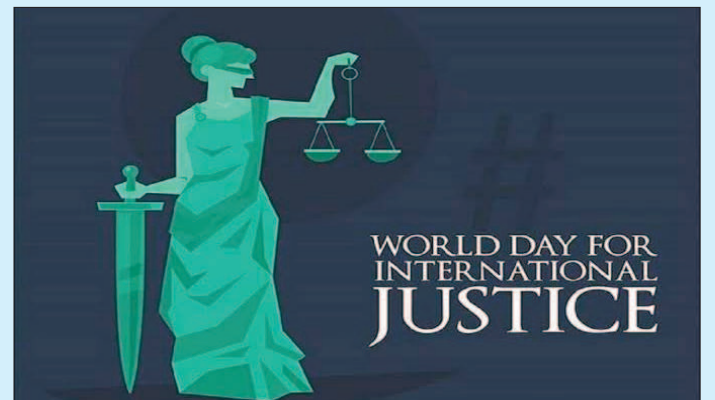
1996 – Madras Officially Becomes Chennai



1996 – TWA Flight 800 Disaster



U Tirot Sing Day



World Day for International Justice

Tirot Sing Syiem, who led a courageous resistance against British rule in the Khasi Hills during the 19th century. The day is observed as a state holiday in recognition of his sacrifice and contribution to India's freedom struggle.

From historic transformations to

global observances, **July 17 remains a day that reflects humanity's pursuit of justice, peace, resilience, and progress** is a day marked by moments of transformation, tragedy, innovation, and international cooperation—events that continue to shape the world we live in today.

80% Deficit Monsoon: A Looming Shadow of an Approaching Natural Disaster?

Binay Gupta – New Delhi

The Indian monsoon is more than a seasonal weather event—it is the backbone of the country's economy, agriculture, water security, and food supply. Nearly 55% of India's net sown area remains rain-fed, and despite rapid urbanisation, millions of livelihoods continue to depend directly on timely and adequate monsoon rainfall. Therefore, reports of an 80% rainfall deficit in several regions have triggered serious concerns among meteorologists, policymakers, farmers, and economists alike.

Understanding the Deficit

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) classifies rainfall as "deficient" when it is 20% to 59% below the Long Period Average (LPA). An 80% deficit, however, is an extreme anomaly that can occur over specific districts or short periods, signalling severe rainfall failure rather than a nationwide seasonal average.

Several districts across central, eastern, and northwestern India have periodically witnessed such deficits during prolonged dry spells, often due to delayed monsoon onset, weak monsoon currents, or atmospheric disturbances linked to El Niño and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD).

Agriculture Faces the First Blow

Agriculture is the most immediate casualty of deficient rainfall.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, nearly half of India's cultivated land still lacks assured irrigation. Crops such as paddy, pulses, soybean, cotton, maize, and groundnut depend heavily on monsoon rains during sowing.

An 80% rainfall deficit can result in:

- Delayed sowing and lower crop acreage
- Poor germination and crop failure
- Reduced groundwater recharge
- Increased dependence on expensive irrigation
- Declining farm incomes

The ripple effect extends to food inflation, rural employment, and agricultural exports.

Water Crisis Intensifies

Rainfall is India's primary source of freshwater replenishment.

A prolonged deficit affects:

- Reservoir storage
- River flows
- Groundwater levels
- Drinking water supply
- Hydroelectric generation

Data from the Central Water Commission (CWC) regularly show that reservoir storage falls significantly during poor monsoon years. Urban centres such as Bengaluru, Chennai, and Delhi have already experienced water shortages despite receiving normal annual rainfall due to uneven distribution and over-extraction of groundwater.

Economic Consequences

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has repeatedly identified deficient monsoons as one of the biggest risks to inflation.

Poor rainfall affects:

Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicate that while India's total seasonal rainfall may not decline dramatically, rainfall events are becoming more erratic.

Key emerging trends include:

- Longer dry spells
- More intense cloudbursts
- Fewer rainy days
- Greater regional disparities
- Increased frequency of extreme weather events

This means regions may witness devastating floods one week and severe drought the next.

Ecological Impact

An extended rainfall deficit also threatens ecosystems.

Reduced rainfall leads to:

- Drying wetlands
- Forest stress



Agriculture promoting climate-resilient farming.

- Atal Bhujal Yojana for groundwater management.

- Improved weather forecasting by the IMD.

- Reservoir monitoring by the Central Water Commission.

The government has also encouraged micro-irrigation, crop diversification, millets, and water-efficient farming to reduce dependence on erratic rain-

precision agriculture, groundwater conservation, and climate-smart infrastructure.

Conclusion

The spectre of an 80% monsoon deficit serves as a stark reminder of India's vulnerability to climate variability. While improved forecasting, irrigation projects, and policy interventions have strengthened resilience, the increasing unpredictability of rainfall demands a long-term strategy that integrates science, sustainable water management, and climate-adaptive agriculture. The challenge is no longer merely coping with a weak monsoon but preparing the nation for an era where weather extremes become increasingly frequent. Success will depend on coordinated action by governments, scientists, farmers, industries, and citizens to safeguard India's food, water, and economic security.

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- Food prices
- Rural demand
- FMCG sales
- Automobile purchases in rural markets
- Fertiliser consumption
- Agricultural credit repayment

Economists estimate that every major monsoon failure can shave 0.3–0.5 percentage points off India's GDP growth depending on its severity.

Climate Change Is Altering the Monsoon

Scientists increasingly believe that climate change is making the Indian monsoon more unpredictable.

Studies by the Indian Institute of

- Increased forest fires
- Wildlife migration
- Loss of biodiversity
- Soil degradation

Lower river flows also reduce water quality, affecting fisheries and aquatic ecosystems.

Government Preparedness

India has strengthened its disaster preparedness through multiple initiatives.

These include:

- PM KrishiSinchaiYojana for irrigation expansion.
- Jal Jeevan Mission for rural drinking water.
- National Mission for Sustainable

fall.

Is India Heading Towards a Natural Disaster?

An 80% rainfall deficit in isolated regions should not automatically be interpreted as a nationwide catastrophe. However, if such deficits persist across large geographical areas or continue through critical agricultural months, the consequences could include drought, water scarcity, food inflation, power shortages, and ecological stress.

Experts stress that India must shift from crisis response to climate resilience by investing in watershed management, rainwater harvesting,

Aamir Khan Rejects 'Love Jihad' Claims, Clarifies Family Never Converted

Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan has firmly dismissed recent "love jihad" allegations circulating online, calling them baseless and misleading. Addressing the controversy, the actor clarified that neither his former wives—Reena Dutta and Kiran Rao—nor his current partner converted to Islam during their relationships. Khan emphasized that faith has always remained a matter of personal choice and urged people not to



spread misinformation or hatred. His statement comes amid growing online speculation, with the actor

pushing back against the wave of social media vitriol surrounding his personal life.

Rani Mukerji to Receive Honorary Doctorate at IFFM 2026



Acclaimed Bollywood actress Rani Mukerji is set to be

honoured with an Honorary Doctorate by La Trobe University during the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2026. The prestigious recognition celebrates her outstanding contribution to Indian cinema and her impactful performances over a career spanning more than two decades. The honour will be presented as part of the festival's celebrations, acknowledging Mukerji's influence on global audiences and her role in promoting Indian cinema on the international stage. The announcement has been widely welcomed by fans and the film fraternity alike.

Centre Considers Mandatory CBFC Certification for OTT Releases

The Central Government is reportedly considering amendments to bring OTT films and web series under the mandatory certification of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The move follows the streaming of Diljit Dosanjh's *Satluj* on ZEE5 without CBFC certification, triggering fresh debate over content regulation on digital platforms. If implemented, the proposed changes would require OTT releases to obtain CBFC approval before streaming, aligning digital content with theatrical release norms. The proposal is



aimed at strengthening regulatory oversight while balancing creative

freedom in India's rapidly expanding streaming ecosystem.

July OTT Line-Up Delights Viewers with Major Hollywood Premieres



Global streaming platforms are keeping audiences entertained this July with a slate of high-profile releases. Netflix has premiered *Enola Holmes 3*, starring Millie Bobby Brown and Henry Cavill, as the young detective embarks on a new mystery set in Malta. Meanwhile, Amazon Prime Video has launched *Elle*, the much-awaited prequel to the *Legally Blonde* franchise, exploring the teenage years of Elle Woods before her journey to Harvard. Both titles have emerged among the most talked-about OTT releases of the month, drawing strong global viewership and fan enthusiasm.

GLITZ MANIA

Robert Downey Jr. Returns to MCU as Doctor Doom in 'Avengers: Doomsday'

Marvel Studios surprised fans at San Diego Comic-Con (SDCC) by announcing Robert Downey Jr.'s return to the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). In a major twist, the actor will not reprise his legendary role as Iron Man but will instead portray the iconic supervillain Doctor Doom in the upcoming film *Avengers: Doomsday*. The unexpected casting marks one of the biggest reveals in MCU history and



signals a bold new direction for the franchise. Downey's return has generated immense excitement, with fans eagerly anticipating his transformation into one of Marvel's most formidable antagonists.

Shehnaaz Gill Addresses Rumours with RaghavJuyal, Cheers His New Film

Actor Shehnaaz Gill has finally spoken about the speculation surrounding her relationship with RaghavJuyal after the duo was recently seen arriving hand-in-hand at the actor's birthday celebration. Responding to the dating rumours, Shehnaaz referred to Raghav as a "friend" and chose not to fuel further speculation. She also extended her support by giving a heartfelt shoutout to his latest film,



praising his performance and wishing the project success. While fans continue to speculate about their bond, neither Shehnaaz nor Raghav has confirmed being in a romantic relationship.

'Michael' Becomes Highest-Grossing Biopic with \$1 Billion Global Box Office



Antoine Fuqua's highly anticipated biographical drama *Michael* has made cinematic history by surpassing the \$1 billion mark at the global box office. The film, based on the life of legendary pop icon Michael Jackson, has officially become the highest-grossing biopic in Hollywood history. The mile-

stone reflects the enduring global appeal of Jackson's legacy and the film's strong reception across international markets. With its record-breaking performance, *Michael* has set a new benchmark for biographical films, cementing its place among Hollywood's biggest commercial successes.

GLITZ MANIA

Kathryn Newton's The Devil's Mouth Set for Direct OTT Release

The Devil's Mouth, starring Kathryn Newton in the lead role, is all set to premiere directly on OTT, bringing an intense survival thriller to audiences worldwide. The film follows a gripping story of survival, suspense, and psychological tension as its protagonist battles extreme circumstances. Skipping a theatrical release, the movie will debut exclusively on a streaming platform,



offering viewers the chance to watch it from home. With Kathryn Newton leading the cast, The Devil's Mouth is expected to be a must-watch for fans of edge-of-the-seat thriller dramas.

Govinda Announces Big-Screen Comeback After Seven Years

Veteran Bollywood actor Govinda has announced his return to films after a seven-year hiatus, declaring, "I will start again," while expressing confidence in his comeback. The actor said he has been written off several times during his career but has always bounced back stronger. Govinda was last seen in the 2019 film Rangeela Raja, after which he stayed away from theatrical releases. His announcement has



generated excitement among fans eager to see the popular actor return to the silver screen with a new project.

First Look of Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan's Haiwaan Unveiled



The makers of Priyadarshan's upcoming thriller Haiwaan have unveiled the much-awaited first look featuring Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan, marking their on-screen reunion after years. The intense poster hints at a gripping, suspense-filled narrative, generating significant buzz

among fans. Directed by Priyadarshan, the film promises a blend of mystery, action, and psychological drama. The makers have also confirmed that Haiwaan will hit theatres worldwide on September 11, making it one of the most anticipated Bollywood releases of the year.

Jason Statham Returns with Action Thriller Mutiny Releasing August 21

Hollywood action star Jason Statham is set to return to the big screen with Mutiny, an adrenaline-fuelled thriller releasing in Indian cinemas on August 21. The film follows Statham's character, a man falsely accused of a crime, who is forced into a dangerous battle for survival while uncovering a deadly conspiracy. Packed with intense action, suspense, and high-stakes drama, Mutiny promises to deliver the signature thrills that Statham's fans have come to expect. The film is expected to be one of the major Hollywood action releases of the season.



Kiku Sharda Reveals Writing Process Behind The Great Indian Kapil Show

Actor-comedian Kiku Sharda has opened up about how scripts for The Great Indian Kapil Show are developed, describing the creative process behind the popular comedy series. Kiku explained that the writing team works on building humorous situations, punchlines, and entertaining interactions with guests. He admitted that much of comedy is intentionally exaggerated, saying some elements may appear "silly" or "illogical" but are designed purely for laughter and audience enjoyment. His candid remarks offered fans a glimpse into the teamwork and creativity involved in making one of India's most-watched comedy shows.



'Jurassic Park' Star Sam Neill Passes Away at 78



The global entertainment industry is mourning the loss of acclaimed New Zealand actor Sam Neill, who passed away at the age of 78 in Sydney, Australia. Best known for his iconic portrayal of Dr. Alan Grant in the Jurassic Park franchise and his memorable role in Peaky Blinders, Neill reportedly died surrounded by his family. His family described his passing as "sudden and unexpected," noting that he had recently remained cancer-free after a long health battle. Tributes have poured in from fans and colleagues worldwide, celebrating a remarkable career spanning more than five decades.

Banijay Asia's Second Love Hosted by Ramya Krishnan Streams on JioHotstar

Banijay Asia's latest reality series Second Love, hosted by acclaimed actress Ramya Krishnan, has officially begun streaming on JioHotstar. The show explores the emotional journeys of individuals seeking love, companionship, and new beginnings after past relationships. Featuring heartfelt conversations, personal stories, and dramatic moments, Second Love aims to offer a fresh perspective on relationships and second chances. With Ramya Krishnan bringing her expe-



rience and strong screen presence as host, the series is expected to attract

viewers interested in real-life emotions and human connections.

TTF Kolkata 2026 Showcases Eastern India's Growing Travel Trade Potential



Buddhadeb Misra: The Travel & Tourism Fair (TTF) Kolkata 2026, India's oldest and largest travel trade show network, was inaugurated at Biswa Bangla MelaPrangan, bringing together tourism stakeholders from across India and abroad. The event was inaugurated by West Bengal Tourism Minister Shankar Ghosh, with Uttarakhand Tourism Minister Satpal Maharaj, Goa Tourism Minister Rohan A. Khaunte, and Royal Thai Consulate-General's Consul-General Khun Siriporn Tantipanyathep as Guests of Honour. Organised by Fairfest Media, the three-day exhibition features tourism boards, airlines, hospitality brands, travel technology firms and destination promoters, provid-

ing a major platform for networking and business development. Several senior diplomats, IAS officers and tourism officials from Nepal, Japan, Thailand, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu also attended the inaugural ceremony. Speaking at the event, Fairfest Media Founder & CEO Sanjiv Agarwal said Kolkata remains one of India's most important travel source markets and noted that West Bengal is being showcased as a tourism destination at TTF after a gap of several years. Timed ahead of the Durga Puja and winter travel season, TTF Kolkata 2026 aims to strengthen tourism partnerships and unlock new travel opportunities across Eastern and Northeastern India.

NABARD West Bengal Marks 45th Foundation Day, Reaffirms Rural Development Commitment



Buddhadeb Misra: NABARD's West Bengal Regional Office celebrated its 45th Foundation Day, highlighting its commitment to inclusive, sustainable and technology-driven rural development. RBI Regional Director Sudhanshu Prasad attended as Chief Guest, while SLBC West Bengal Convener Balbir Singh was the Guest of Honour. Chief General Manager P.K. Bhardwaj highlighted NABARD's achievements, including ₹1.17

lakh crore in agriculture credit and the ₹3.99 lakh crore Potential Linked Credit Plan for 2026-27. Marking the International Year of Women Farmers 2026, the event honoured women farmers and showcased SHG products. NABARD also released its Annual Performance Highlights 2025-26 and Success Stories Compendium, reaffirming its partnership with governments, banks and rural communities for inclusive growth.

55th Kolkata RathYatra to Spread Message of Peace, Unity and India's Temple Heritage

Buddhadeb Misra: ISKCON Kolkata is set to organise the 55th Annual Kolkata RathYatra with the theme "The Land of India – The Heritage of Temple Culture," carrying a global message of joy, compassion, peace and universal brotherhood. The festival seeks to promote harmony and human values at a time when the world faces increasing conflict and uncertainty. The grand procession of Lord Jagannath, Lord Baladeva and Devi Subhadra will feature beautifully decorated chariots, Hari nam Sankirtan, devotional music, cultural performances and the distribution of Mahaprasad, welcoming people of all faiths, communities and nationalities.



Highlighting the festival's message of unity, ISKCON recalled last year's emotional moment when devotees from Russia and Ukraine danced together before Lord Jagannath's chariot, symbolising peace beyond borders. Another unique attraction was the use of Sukhoi-30 fighter aircraft wheels on the Rath, replacing the earlier Boeing 747

wheels, symbolising the transformation of instruments of war into vehicles carrying a message of peace. Organisers said the historic RathYatra is not merely a religious celebration but a global appeal for peace, harmony and the welfare of humanity, showcasing India's rich temple culture and timeless spiritual heritage.

ICAR Chief Calls for Translational Research to Transform India's Inland Fisheries

Buddhadeb Misra: ICAR Director General and Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Dr. M. L. Jat has urged scientists to strengthen translational research and multidisciplinary collaboration to develop farmer-centric innovations that can transform India's inland fisheries sector. Speaking during his visit to the ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CIFRI), he emphasized the need to convert scientific discoveries into practical, field-level solutions benefiting fishers and fish farmers. Highlighting the importance of digital agriculture, Dr. Jat described data as the "new money" and stressed that data-driven research will shape the future of agriculture and fisheries. He also called for nurturing young scientists, promoting scientific excellence, and ensuring institutional accountability to foster innovation. During the visit, CIFRI-CleanMeen, an eco-friendly water-



dispersible formulation made from edible plant extracts for selective weed fish control, and the book "Fisheries Management Strategies for Danduabeel, Assam" were released. The programme also featured a plantation drive under the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, reaffirming ICAR's commitment to sustainable research, environmental conservation, and strengthening India's Blue Economy.

MDJ Launches 'Couple No 1' Season 5, Winner to Get Baku Holiday

Kolkata, July 14: Mahabir Danwar Jewellers (MDJ) unveiled "Couple No 1 – Season 5", celebrating love and companionship among married couples, with a grand prize of an international holiday to Baku, Azerbaijan. The curtain raiser at MDJ's Park Street showroom was attended by actress Richa Sharma, motivational speaker Naina More, Benchmark Group CEO Radhika Nowlakha Agarwal, and MDJ Design Head Rajshree Soni, along with MDJ directors Vijay, Arvind, Sandeep and

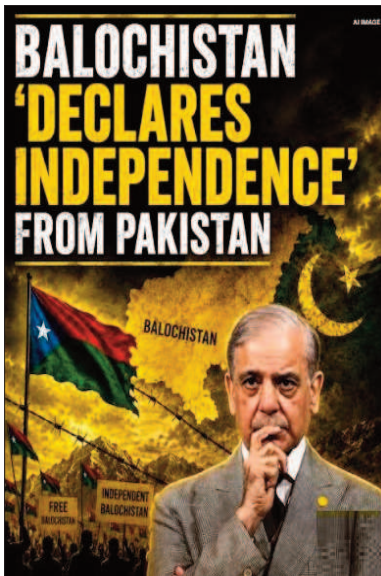


Amit Soni. Speaking at the launch, Vijay Soni and Sandeep Soni said the initiative honours inspiring love stories and lasting relationships. Guests

praised the platform for encouraging couples to celebrate trust, togetherness and shared memories while strengthening family values.

Balochistan Independence Claims Draw Global Attention Amid Regional Tensions

Claims circulating on social media that Balochistan has "declared independence" from Pakistan have renewed international attention on the long-running separatist movement in the resource-rich province. While Baloch separatist groups have repeatedly called for an independent Balochistan, there has been no internationally recognized declaration of independence or change in the province's legal status. The development is being closely watched by China due to its major investments in Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), particularly the strategic Gwadar Port in Balochistan. The region has witnessed repeated attacks by insurgent groups targeting Pakistani security forces and Chinese nationals involved in infrastructure projects. Pakistan maintains that Balochis-



tan is an integral part of the country and continues security operations against separatist outfits. Analysts say any escalation in the province could have significant implications for regional security, Chinese investments, and broader geopolitical dynamics in South Asia.

Wildfires and Extreme Weather Batter Spain and the United States



Madrid/Washington: Severe weather disasters continue to wreak havoc across parts of Europe and North America. In Spain, massive wildfires have claimed the lives of several foreign nationals, forcing evacuations as firefighters battle rapidly spreading flames fueled by extreme heat and dry conditions. Meanwhile, the United States is grappling with relentless heatwaves and wide-

spread flooding, disrupting daily life, damaging infrastructure, and prompting emergency responses in several states. Authorities in both countries have urged residents to remain vigilant as extreme weather conditions persist. The back-to-back disasters underscore the growing impact of climate change and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events worldwide.

U.S. Launches Fresh Airstrikes on Iran, Strait of Hormuz Tensions Push Oil Prices Higher

Washington/Tehran: Tensions between the United States and Iran have escalated sharply after the U.S. reimposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports and launched a fresh wave of airstrikes targeting strategic locations linked to the Strait of Hormuz. The military action has heightened fears of disruption to one of the world's busiest oil shipping routes, triggering a sharp rise in global crude oil prices. The latest escalation has intensified geopolitical uncertainty, raising concerns over energy security, global trade, and regional stability. Several countries have



called for restraint and diplomatic dialogue to prevent the conflict from widening and further impacting the global economy.

U.S. to Complete Iraq Troop Withdrawal by September, Ending 23-Year Military Presence



Washington/Baghdad: The United States and Iraq have officially announced that all U.S. military

forces will withdraw from Iraq by the end of September, bringing an end to a 23-year American mili-

tary presence that began with the 2003 Iraq War. The announcement was made jointly by the Pentagon and the office of the Iraqi Prime Minister. The withdrawal marks a significant milestone in bilateral relations, with Iraqi security forces expected to assume full responsibility for the country's security. While the move reflects Iraq's evolving security landscape, both nations have affirmed their commitment to continued cooperation in counterterrorism, intelligence sharing, military training, and broader strategic partnerships.

Warren Buffett Ends Future Donations to Gates Foundation

New York: Billionaire investor Warren Buffett has announced that he will no longer make future donations to the Gates Foundation, ending a philanthropic association that spanned nearly two decades. Buffett, one of the Foundation's largest contributors, has donated billions of dollars over the years to support global health, education, and poverty alleviation initiatives. His decision marks a significant shift in his charitable giving strategy. While reports have speculated on the reasons behind the move, no official statement has confirmed that it was linked to any specific controversy. The Gates



Warren Buffett cuts ties with Gates Foundation after Epstein disclosures

Foundation has not announced any changes to its ongoing philanthropic programmes following Buffett's decision.

Puri Gears Up for Grand RathYatra; Massive Security in Place as Lakhs of Devotees Arrive

Puri: The holy town of Puri is all set for the annual RathYatra of Lord Jagannath, with the three iconic wooden chariots—Taladwaja (Lord Balabhadra), Darpadalan (Devi Subhadra), and Nandighosh (Lord Jagannath)—fully constructed, decorated, and positioned at the Singhadwar (Lion's Gate) of the 12th-century Jagannath Temple.

The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has confirmed that all preparations for the mega festival are complete. The chariots were moved to the Grand Road after receiving the ceremonial Ag-



nyamala, signifying the deities' permission.

More than 13,000 Odisha Police personnel, along with 15 compa-

nies of Central Armed Police Forces, including the NSG, RAF,

CRPF, and BSF, have been deployed to ensure security. The Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, and 500 lifeguards are also assisting in the arrangements.

The traditional Chhera Pahanra ritual by the Gajapati Maharaja will precede the pulling of the chariots, scheduled to begin at 4:00 PM. With nearly one lakh devotees already in Puri and lakhs more expected, authorities have also made special arrangements to tackle possible heavy rain and thunderstorms forecast by the IMD, including rapid drainage systems along the Grand Road.

Up to 45% of Dementia Risk Can Be Prevented or Delayed: WHO



The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that up to 45% of dementia cases could be prevented or delayed by addressing a range of modifiable risk factors, offering fresh hope in the global

fight against the condition. According to the WHO, reducing exposure to risks such as tobacco use, air pollution, excessive alcohol consumption, physical inactivity, obesity, high blood pressure,

diabetes, hearing loss, social isolation, and depression can significantly lower the likelihood of developing dementia.

The UN health agency stressed that while age and genetics remain important risk factors, adopting a healthier lifestyle and improving environmental conditions can play a crucial role in protecting brain health. Regular physical activity, a balanced diet, mental stimulation, and maintaining strong social connections are among the key measures recommended to support cognitive well-being.

With dementia cases expected to rise as populations age, the WHO has urged governments and individuals to prioritize prevention strategies, early diagnosis, and public awareness to reduce the growing global burden of the disease.

5 Animals with the Most Fascinating Sleep Habits



Sleep in the animal kingdom is far from ordinary. To survive in the wild, many species have evolved extraordinary ways to rest while remaining alert to danger.

1. Dolphins

Dolphins sleep with one half of their brain at a time, allowing them to continue swimming, breathe at the surface, and stay vigilant for predators.

2. Giraffes

Giraffes are among the shortest sleepers in the animal kingdom, often sleeping for just 30 minutes to 2 hours a day, usually in brief naps lasting only a few minutes.

3. Sea Otters

To avoid drifting away while sleeping, sea otters often hold hands or wrap themselves in kelp, creating a natural anchor as they float on the water.

4. Alpine Swifts

These remarkable migratory birds can sleep while flying, taking short naps during long-distance journeys that keep them airborne for months.

5. Walruses

Walruses display remarkable flexibility in their sleep patterns. They can stay awake for up to 84 hours while foraging at sea and then make up for lost sleep by resting for extended periods on land. These incredible adaptations highlight how animals have evolved unique sleep strategies to balance rest with survival in some of the world's most challenging environments.

Sweet Corn Chaat this Monsoon

Sweet Corn Chaat is a quick and healthy snack that kids will love, especially during the monsoon season. Packed with vitamins, Fiber, and antioxidants, sweet corn is a nutritious option that promotes good digestion and boosts immunity. These tasty kids snack in monsoon is easy to make and bursting with flavours.

Steps to Prepare Sweet Corn Chaat:

- Boil 2 cups of sweet corn kernels



until tender.

- In a mixing bowl, combine the boiled corn with 1 finely chopped onion, 1 finely chopped tomato, and 1 finely chopped green chili.
- Add a handful of chopped coriander leaves, 1 teaspoon chaat masala, 1/2 teaspoon red chili powder, and salt to taste.
- Squeeze the juice of 1 lemon over the mixture and toss well.
- Serve immediately as a fresh, tangy, and healthy snack.

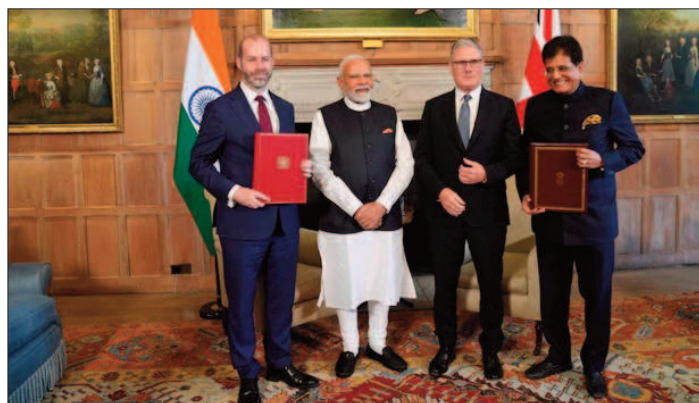
IBM's \$100 Billion Market Value Drop Raises Questions for Indian IT Investors



IBM has lost more than \$100 billion in market value in just 42 days, triggering concerns across global technology markets and prompting investors to reassess the outlook for IT stocks. The sharp sell-off reflects a broader shift in investor sentiment, with markets increasingly favouring companies investing aggressively in artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure, cloud computing, and next-generation technologies. Traditional IT services firms are facing pressure to demonstrate stronger AI-driven growth strategies. For Indian IT companies, however, the impact appears limited for now. Recent quarterly earnings from major firms have remained

relatively stable, supported by resilient client demand, digital transformation projects, and expanding AI-related service offerings. Industry analysts believe Indian IT companies are generally better positioned due to their diversified global client base and ongoing investments in AI and automation. While IBM's decline highlights changing market dynamics, experts caution that it should not be viewed as a direct indicator of the Indian IT sector's prospects. Investors are advised to focus on company fundamentals, AI adoption, deal pipelines, and long-term growth strategies rather than reacting solely to short-term global market volatility.

India-UK Free Trade Agreement Comes Into Force, First Export Shipments Flagged Off



New Delhi: The landmark India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) came into effect today, marking a new chapter in bilateral economic ties. The first export consignments under the agreement were flagged off from Hyderabad, signaling the start of duty-free trade benefits. Under the pact, 99% of Indian exports to the United Kingdom will now enjoy zero-duty access, boost-

ing sectors such as textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, gems and jewellery, and agricultural products. The agreement is expected to enhance trade, attract investment, create jobs, and strengthen the strategic economic partnership between India and the UK while improving the global competitiveness of Indian exporters.

Centre Approves ₹62,500-Crore Mobile Manufacturing Scheme to Boost Electronics Sector

The Union Cabinet has approved a ₹62,500-crore mobile phone manufacturing scheme aimed at strengthening India's position as a global electronics manufacturing hub. The initiative is expected to generate nearly 60,000 direct jobs and drive ₹39 lakh crore worth of mobile phone production over the next five years.

The scheme seeks to attract fresh investments, enhance domestic value addition, expand exports and reduce dependence on imports by encouraging the production of advanced mobile devices and components within the country. It aligns with the Centre's broader vision of promoting the 'Make in India' initiative and building a resilient electronics supply chain.



The government expects the programme to accelerate technology adoption, improve manufacturing competitiveness and attract both global and domestic companies to establish or expand production facilities in India. Officials believe the initiative will strengthen India's role in the global smartphone supply

chain while creating new employment opportunities and boosting economic growth. The approval comes as India continues to emerge as one of the world's fastest-growing electronics manufacturing destinations, supported by policy incentives, rising exports and increasing investments in the sector.

Cabinet Approves ₹25,400-Crore Highway Project to Ease Varanasi Traffic

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet has approved a ₹25,400-crore highway expansion project aimed at decongesting traffic in and around Varanasi. The ambitious infrastructure initiative will be implemented by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM). The project is expected to improve road connectivity, reduce travel time, ease traffic congestion, and support the growing transportation needs of the region. It will also enhance logistics efficiency, promote



economic development, and generate employment during construction. The approval reflects the Centre's continued focus on

strengthening India's road infrastructure and improving connectivity across key urban and economic corridors.

India's Trade Deal: A Boost for the Real Economy

India's latest trade agreement is being positioned as more than just a diplomatic milestone—it's designed to deliver tangible benefits to the country's real economy. While the period between signing and implementation is often treated as a routine administrative phase, the government has used this window to prepare businesses, streamline regulations, and ensure industries are ready to seize new opportunities. The agreement is expected to strengthen exports, attract greater investment, and improve market access for key sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and services. By reducing trade barriers and simplifying procedures, the deal aims to make Indian products more competitive in global markets while creating jobs and supporting economic growth. Industry experts believe the focus on implementation,



rather than merely signing the agreement, will be crucial in ensuring that businesses—especially MSMEs—benefit from the expanded trade opportunities. The pact is expected to reinforce India's position as a reliable global trading partner while supporting long-term, export-led economic development.

Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh Pays Tribute at Japan's Self-Defense Forces Memorial

Tokyo: Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh laid a wreath at the Self-Defense Forces Memorial Stone in Tokyo on July 13, 2026, paying homage to the brave men and women who made the supreme sacrifice in service of Japan. The solemn ceremony underscored the deep respect and shared values that underpin the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership. The tribute reflects the two nations' commitment to peace, stability, and a free and open Indo-Pacific. The visit also highlights the growing defence



and security cooperation between India and Japan, reinforcing mutual trust and strengthening bilateral ties across strategic, regional, and global issues.

India Retains World's Third-Strongest Air Power Ranking



New Delhi: India has retained its position as the world's third-strongest air power for the fifth consecutive year, ranking behind only the United States and Russia. The achievement reflects the In-

dian Air Force's continued modernisation, expanding fleet strength, and enhanced operational capabilities. Induction of advanced fighter aircraft, transport planes, helicopters, and force-multiplier platforms, coupled with a growing emphasis on indigenous defence manufacturing under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, has strengthened India's aerial combat readiness. The ranking underscores India's rising military capability and its strategic role in maintaining regional security and stability across the Indo-Pacific.

India's Defence Production Hits Record ₹1.78 Lakh Crore, Exports Reach New High

New Delhi: India's defence manufacturing sector has achieved a historic milestone, with annual defence production rising to a record ₹1.78 lakh crore. Defence exports also reached an all-time high of ₹38,424 crore, reflecting the country's growing presence in the global defence market. Meanwhile, production by the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and its successor entities has crossed ₹26,282 crore, highlighting significant progress in indigenous manufacturing. The record growth aligns with the Government's 'Aat-



manirbhar Bharat' initiative, aimed at strengthening self-reliance in defence, reducing import dependence, boosting exports, and positioning India as a major global hub for defence production and innovation.

Indian Coast Guard Reviews Maritime Security, Infrastructure at Kolkata Conference

Kolkata: The Indian Coast Guard Region (North East) organised a two-day District/Station Commanders' and Works Conference at its Regional Headquarters in Kolkata on July 9-10, 2026, under the chairmanship of the Commander, Coast Guard Region (North East). The conference reviewed operational preparedness, maritime and coastal security, surveillance, search and rescue, pollution response, logistics, personnel welfare, and inter-agency coordination. Discussions also focused on infrastructure development, maintenance projects, budget utilisation, and the adop-



tion of green building measures for improved energy efficiency. The Commander emphasised maintaining the highest standards of operational readiness, strengthening coordination, and promoting innovation to address

emerging maritime security challenges. The conference concluded with a renewed commitment to safeguarding India's maritime interests through operational excellence and robust infrastructure.

Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth Reviews Eastern Command's Operational Preparedness



New Delhi: Chief of the Army Staff General Dhiraj Seth reviewed the operational preparedness of the Eastern Command during his visit to the Trishakti Corps, Bengdubi Military Station, and Spear Corps on July 14-15, 2026. He was briefed on operational deployments, surveillance systems, evolving security dynamics, logistics, technology adoption, force modernisation, and inter-agency coordination. The Army Chief also reviewed community outreach initiatives aimed at promoting peace and development in the Northeast. Addressing commanders and troops, General Seth highlighted his "VIJAY" vision—Vigilance, Innovation, Jointness, Atmanirbharta, and Yodha First—to build a future-ready Indian Army aligned with the Viksit Bharat Vision 2047. He commended personnel for their professionalism, high morale, and dedication under challenging conditions.

India, Indonesia Deepen Strategic Ties with Defence Export Talks

New Delhi/Jakarta: India and Indonesia are strengthening their strategic partnership with fresh discussions on defence cooperation, including potential export agreements for India's BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and Astra beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile systems. The proposed deals reflect growing defence collaboration and Indonesia's interest in enhancing its military capabilities through indigenous Indian technology. The expanding partnership also aims to boost maritime security, regional stability, and defence industrial cooperation



in the Indo-Pacific. The initiative aligns with India's vision of promoting defence exports under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat programme while reinforcing strategic ties with key regional partners.

Indian Army Set to Expand Pinaka Rocket Force with 8th Regiment

New Delhi: The Indian Army is set to further strengthen its artillery capabilities with the expected induction of its 8th Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher (MBRL) regiment. The move is part of a long-term modernisation plan to eventually field up to 22 Pinaka regiments, significantly enhancing the Army's long-range precision strike capability. Developed indigenously, the Pinaka rocket system provides rapid, high-volume fire support and plays a crucial role in strengthening India's battlefield preparedness. The expan-



sion aligns with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, boosting indigenous defence manufacturing while enhancing the Army's operational readiness across diverse terrains and strategic frontiers.

ART OF THE WEEK



Spiced up Life
Artist: Saikat Kumar Basu

SHORT STORY

By Sharmista Gaine-Kolkata

From Failure to Success

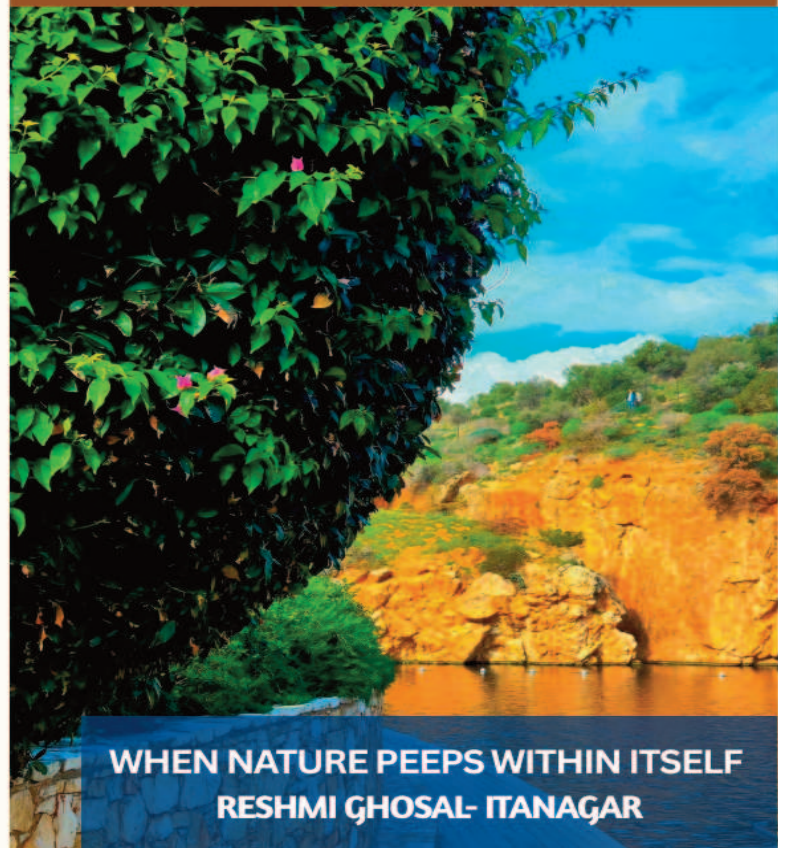
Rohan had one dream—to become a successful **entrepreneur**. Confident and ambitious, he invested all his savings into his first business. But within a year, the **business failed**. He lost money, confidence, and the support of many people who doubted his abilities.



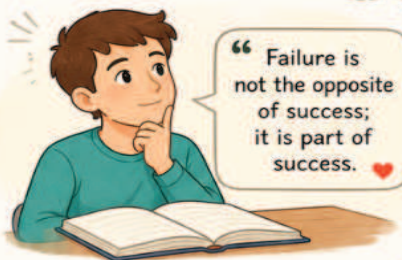
I SLEPT AND DREAMT THAT LIFE WAS JOY. I AWOKED AND SAW THAT LIFE WAS SERVICE. I ACTED AND BEHOLD, SERVICE WAS JOY.

Rabindranath Tagore

SHOT OF THE WEEK



WHEN NATURE PEEPS WITHIN ITSELF
RESHMI GHOSAL- ITANAGAR



For weeks, Rohan believed he was a failure. Then one day, he came across a simple quote: **"Failure is not the opposite of success; it is part of success."** Those words changed his perspective.

Instead of giving up, Rohan began to study his **mistakes**. He learned new skills, sought guidance from experienced mentors, and worked harder than ever before. Every setback became a **lesson**, and every lesson made him stronger.



Two years later, Rohan launched a new business with better planning and greater determination. This time, it **succeeded** beyond his expectations. When people asked him about the secret to his success, he smiled and said, **"My success was built on the foundation of my failures."**



MORAL: Failure is not a dead end—it is a **new beginning**. Learn from every setback, **stay determined**, and **success** will follow.



Spain Reach World Cup Final After Stunning France, England Face Argentina in Epic Semi-Final



Spain secured their place in the FIFA World Cup 2026 final with a commanding 2-0 victory over

France, ending the defending side's title hopes. Under coach Luis de la Fuente, Spain delivered a dis-

ciplined and dominant performance, while France manager Didier Deschamps faces intense scrutiny following the defeat. Meanwhile, football fans worldwide are eagerly awaiting the second semi-final blockbuster as England take on Argentina in Atlanta. The high-voltage clash will see Lionel Messi's Argentina battle Gareth Southgate's England for a place in the final, promising a memorable encounter between two football giants.

Tennis Round-Up: Jannik Sinner Retains Wimbledon Crown, Alcaraz Cleared for US Open Return

Italy's Jannik Sinner continued his dominance on grass by successfully defending his Wimbledon men's singles title, defeating Germany's Alexander Zverev in a thrilling and physically demanding final. The victory further strengthened Sinner's position among the leading stars of world tennis.



Meanwhile, former World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz has received medical clearance to return to competitive action after a four-month wrist injury layoff. The Spanish champion is now set to make his comeback at the US Open, where fans are eagerly awaiting his return to Grand Slam competition.

India Launches 29-Event Roadmap to Boost 2036 Olympic Bid

India's Sports Ministry has unveiled an ambitious two-year roadmap featuring 29 major international sporting events as part of efforts to strengthen the country's bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games. The initiative aims to showcase India's organisational capabilities, improve global sporting infrastructure, and build momentum for Ahmedabad's



Olympic hosting proposal. The planned events across multiple disciplines are expected to attract international athletes, enhance India's sporting ecosystem, and demonstrate readiness for one of the world's biggest sporting spectacles. The move marks a significant step in India's long-term Olympic ambitions.

Indian Paddlers Reach Historic No. 2 World Ranking in Men's Doubles

Indian table tennis stars Manav Thakkar and Manush Shah have achieved a major milestone by rising to a career-best World No. 2 ranking in men's doubles. The duo's consistent performances at international tournaments have propelled them into the elite ranks of global table tennis. Their

achievement marks a significant moment for Indian paddling, highlighting the country's growing presence in the sport. The landmark ranking is expected to boost confidence ahead of upcoming international competitions and further inspire a new generation of Indian table tennis players.



Cricket Round-Up: ICC Announces World Cup Shake-Up, India Shine in England, CSK Era Ends



The ICC has announced major changes to men's white-ball World Cup formats, introducing a "Super 7" round-robin stage for the 14-team ODI World Cup 2027, creating the possibility of more high-profile clashes, including a potential India-Pakistan double-header. Meanwhile, Team India secured a six-wicket win over England in the first ODI at Birmingham under stand-in captain Shubman Gill. Axar Patel starred with

an impressive 4/62 and an unbeaten 57-run knock. India women's vice-captain Smriti Mandhana has expressed readiness to take charge if needed after the team's T20 World Cup exit. In a major CSK development, Stephen Fleming stepped down as head coach after an 18-year association, fueling speculation about MS Dhoni's possible coaching transition.

NURSING JOBS IN GERMANY

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- German Language Requirement:**
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- Age Limit:**
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- Gender:**
Both male and female candidates are eligible
- Experience:**
Freshers can also apply

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

PHASE 1 PREPARATION	PHASE 2 DOCUMENTATION & REGISTRATION	PHASE 3 JOB PLACEMENT	PHASE 4 VISA & TRAVEL	PHASE 5 AFTER ARRIVAL
- Enroll in German language training (A1 to B2) - Duration 4-6 months - Complete B1 & B2 certification (mandatory)	- Apply for nursing registration in Germany (3-6 months process) - Apostille of documents from Ministry of External Affairs - Translation of documents into German	- Attend video interview with German hospital - Receive job offer/contract	- Apply and complete Germany visa process - Travel to Germany - Airport pickup and accommodation support	- Join integration program - Start job as per contract - Receive first salary within 30 days

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