

# HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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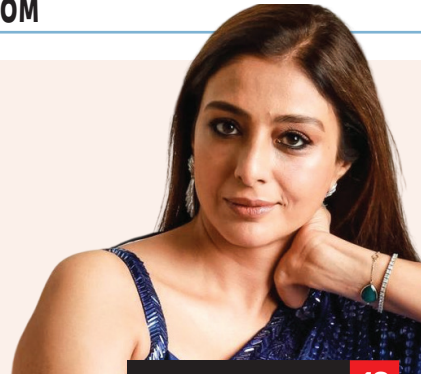
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BOX-OFFICE 12

### SHORT TAKES

#### MAOIST LEADER NARAHARI SURRENDERS

HYDERABAD, MAY 12

Senior Maoist leader and Central Committee member Pasunuri Narahari, also known by his alias "Santosh," surrendered before the Telangana Police along with his wife on Monday. A native of Somidi village in Kazipet mandal of Hanamkonda district, Narahari had reportedly been leading an underground life for nearly 45 years. He was considered one of the top leaders in the Maoist movement and played a key role in the technical wing of the Jharkhand East Regional Bureau. Police officials said Narahari's surrender marks a significant development in anti-Maoist operations in the region.

#### KCR HOLDS STRATEGY MEETING

HYDERABAD, MAY 12

Former chief minister K. Chandrababtu Naidu on Tuesday chaired a key strategy meeting of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leaders at his Erravelli farmhouse. The meeting was attended by BRS working president K. T. Rama Rao, senior leaders T. Harish Rao, P. Sabitha Indra Reddy, Talasani Srinivas Yadav and several party functionaries, including MLCs and former MPs. Retired IPS officer R. S. Praveen Kumar also participated in the discussions. The leaders discussed strengthening the party organization, accelerating membership enrollment, appointing party in-charges and preparing strategies to reinforce the BRS at the grassroots level across Telangana.

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## NO DELAYS, NO NEGLIGENCE CM WARNS COLLECTORS ON PROCUREMENT

- Complete Paddy and Maize procurement in a mission mode
- The CM warns officials over delay in Maize and Paddy procurement
- Instructs Transport Commissioner to hire tractors and other vehicles for transportation
- CM holds District Collectors responsible for a smooth procurement. Appoint one officer at IKP center and also at Rice Mill
- Set up a system to update weather forecast to farmers.. Stop paddy transportation from other states to procurement centres in Telangana
- Complete procurement by the end of May
- CM Revanth holds video conference with district Collectors on Paddy and Maize procurement

HYDERABAD, MAY 12

Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy directed District Collectors to expedite the Paddy and Maize procurement and complete the procurement operations in a mission mode across the state. The Chief Minister held a video conference with district Collectors and reviewed the status of the procurement of paddy and maize. The CM sought detailed information of the difficulties facing in the procure-

ment process in every district.

CM Revanth Reddy warned the officials that any kind of neglect would not be tolerated during the procurement. The collectors were instructed to address the difficulties facing by the farmers and also conduct field visits personally to inspect the arrangements regularly. The Chief Minister reviewed the shortage of gunny bags and Hamalis (loaders) and directed the officials to supply bags adequately. Procured food

grains should also be transported to Warehouses without any delay.

The CM also warned that action would be initiated against the contractors who failed to provide adequate vehicles mainly lorries for transportation as per the agreement. The authorities concerned were ordered to initiate criminal proceedings, if necessary, against the contractors who failed to fulfil the agreements.

The Chief Minister directed the Commissioner of the Transport



department to ensure that vehicles are readily available for the transportation of paddy. The CM stressed that the district Collectors should recognize the gravity of the situation and take appropriate measures. Every official should discharge his duties with accountability and transparency. The government would not hesitate to take action against Collectors if they neglect their responsibility in the challenging times.

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## Phase 2 of Indiramma Housing scheme to kick off on June 2: Ponguleti

HYDERABAD, MAY 12

Minister for Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has announced that the second phase of the Indiramma Housing scheme will be officially launched in Adilabad on June 2, coinciding with the formation of Telangana State. He stated that the modalities related to the programme will be discussed and finalised in the Cabinet meeting scheduled on May 21.

As part of district-wise review meetings being conducted with the elected representatives on Revenue and Housing matters, the Minister on Tuesday held a review meeting at the Housing Corporation Head Office in Hyderabad with in-charge Ministers, district Ministers, MPs, MLCs, MLAs, district collectors, Commissioners of Cyberabad and Malkajgiri Municipal Corporations, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## BANDI BHAGIRATH SEEKS ANTICIPATORY BAIL FROM HC

HYDERABAD, MAY 12

Union minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son, Bandi Bhagirath, has approached the Telangana High Court seeking anticipatory bail in connection with a POCSO case registered at the Pet Basheerabad Police Station. As the High Court is currently on summer vacation, the petition has been placed before the Vacation Bench and is scheduled for hearing on May 14. The Telangana government has constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to ensure an impartial probe into the case. Kukatpally DCP Rithiraj has been appointed as the investigating officer. Police are also preparing to record the victim's statement again as part of the investigation.

The case has triggered sharp political reactions in Telangana.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

## Cong Hit Modi's Austerity Push: NRR

HYDERABAD, MAY 12

BJP State President N Ramchander Rao strongly criticized the Congress party for allegedly misinterpreting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to people for an austerity lifestyle to face challenges in view of on-going West Asia conflict.

PM Modi while addressing a massive public meeting yesterday here suggested people to follow some measures including restricting of fuel use, gold purchase and foreign tours to face challenges in view of West-Asia conflict. Addressing a press conference at state party office here, Rao condemned the criticism from CM Revanth Reddy and Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge asserting that the Prime Minister's call for self-reliance and financial discipline was made in the interest of the nation's future.

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## Vijay Govt Eyes Majority Test

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly will witness a crucial trust vote on Wednesday as newly sworn-in Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay faces his first floor test, marking a potentially historic shift in the state's political landscape.

The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), which emerged as the single largest party with 108 seats in the 234-member House, is confident of securing a majority with support from alliance partners including the Congress, VCK, Left parties and the IUML. The party requires 118 seats to prove its majority.

Ahead of the vote, a major political development unfolded as around 30 AIADMK MLAs broke ranks with party lead-

ership and extended support to the TVK government. Senior leaders S.P. Velumani and C.Ve. Shanmugam led the rebel faction, accusing AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami of attempting a covert understanding with the DMK after the party's electoral setback. The rebel group has projected Velumani as its legislature party leader, while Palaniswami is left with a reduced support base.

Adding to the uncertainty, the Madras High Court restrained TVK MLA R. Seenivasa Sethupathi from participating in the trust vote over a disputed postal ballot in his narrow one-vote win. TVK has moved the Supreme Court seeking relief. With shifting alliances and legal challenges, today's floor test is seen as a decisive moment in TN politics.



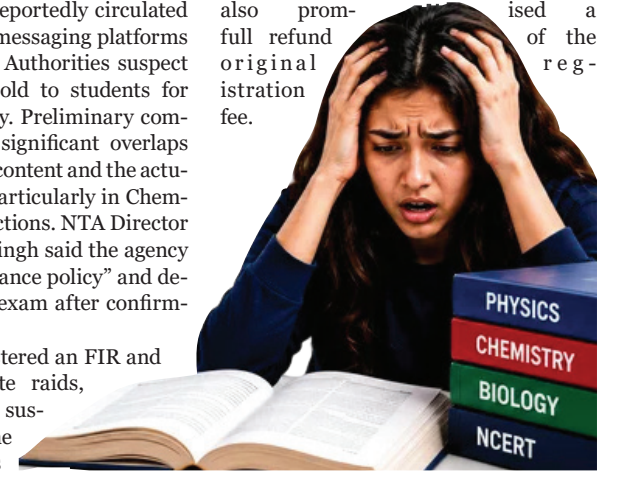
## NEET-UG 2026 Scrapped

New Delhi: The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Tuesday cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 examination, held on May 3, following allegations of a widespread question paper leak affecting the medical entrance test for over 2.4 million candidates. The Union Ministry of Education has ordered a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the matter. The controversy erupted after investigative agencies uncovered an alleged organised racket operating from coaching hubs in Rajasthan, particularly Sikar and Jaipur, where a 410-question "guess paper" was reportedly circulated through encrypted messaging platforms ahead of the exam. Authorities suspect the material was sold to students for large sums of money. Preliminary comparisons indicated significant overlaps between the leaked content and the actual question paper, particularly in Chemistry and Biology sections. NTA Director General Abhishek Singh said the agency follows a "zero-tolerance policy" and decided to cancel the exam after confirming the breach.

The CBI has registered an FIR and launched multi-state raids, detaining several suspects linked to the network. Officials

are also probing possible insider involvement in printing and distribution channels.

The cancellation has triggered widespread protests by students across major cities including Delhi, Kota, Chennai and Kolkata, with demands for accountability and action against the alleged exam mafia. The NTA has announced a fresh examination will be conducted, with revised dates to be issued within 7-10 days. Candidates will not be required to re-register, and no additional fees will be charged. Authorities have also promised a full refund of the original registration fee.



AFter the election noise comes the economic warning

# TIME TO TIGHTEN BELTS

FUEL, FOREX AND FUTURE AT RISK | CAN INDIA AFFORD BUSINESS AS USUAL?

APPEAL FOR AUSTERITY AMID WEST ASIA CRISIS SPARKS DEBATE: WILL THE RULERS LEAD BY EXAMPLE?

C SUBRAHMANYAM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for fuel conservation and economic restraint has opened up a sharp national debate at a moment of global uncertainty. With West Asia in turmoil and crude oil prices climbing dangerously, the government is urging citizens to revive pandemic era discipline to protect the economy. But the larger question now is whether austerity will remain a message only for ordinary cit-

izens or whether the political establishment itself will visibly embrace restraint. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the gathering in Secunderabad and urged Indians to revive certain COVID period habits, the speech carried far greater weight than a routine public advisory. Work from home. Virtual meetings. Reduced fuel consumption. Public transport. Carpooling. Fewer unnecessary foreign trips. Delay non-essential gold purchases. Cut avoidable imports.

This was not merely an environmental appeal or a lifestyle suggestion. It was economic signalling from the highest level of government.

The message was unmistakable. India is entering a period where global instability could directly hit household budgets, inflation, imports and the rupee. The government wants the public psychologically prepared before the economic pressure becomes impossible to ignore.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

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## Cyber security Research MoU Signed



HYDERABAD, MAY 12

International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad and Athenian Tech Private Limited have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) - powered cybersecurity research, education and industry engagement. The partnership aims to strengthen cyber resilience through joint research in digital identity protection, threat intelligence and AI-driven security solutions. Both organisations will also co-launch specialised courses in cybersecurity and facilitate workshops, training programmes and government-industry collaborations. The MoU was signed by Prof. U Deva Priyakumar, Dean (Research & Development), IIIT-H, and Dr Kanishk Gaur, CEO of Athenian Tech.

Speaking on the collaboration, Prof. Priyakumar said the partnership would help bridge the gap between academic research and real-world cybersecurity challenges, while Dr Gaur stressed the need for skilled professionals to tackle rapidly evolving cyber threats.

# Drug, Health Awareness at Hussaini Alam College

HYDERABAD, MAY 12,

As part of the Praja Palana - Pragati Pranalika 99 Days Action Plan and Educational Week Celebrations-2026, Government Degree College for Women, Hussaini Alam, Hyderabad, organized a series of health-focused programmes aimed at promoting physical, mental and social well-being among faculty and staff members. The day's activities included an awareness programme on drug addiction, AIDS and menstrual health, along with a yoga and meditation session. These programmes were conducted with the objective of encouraging healthy lifestyle practices, spreading awareness on important health concerns and inspiring participants to adopt preventive and wellness-oriented habits.

The awareness session on drug addiction, AIDS and menstrual health was organized by the Anti-Drug Committee, Health Club, Women Empowerment Cell, NSS, Red Ribbon Club and all departments. The session was addressed by Ms. Azra Naaz and Ms. Nazima Begum, Health Program Officers from an NGO. They explained the harmful effects of drug addiction and emphasized the importance of awareness, prevention and responsible decision-making.



The resource persons also highlighted the importance of menstrual hygiene and feminine health. They advised the use of cotton-based sanitary napkins for better comfort, safety and hygiene. Cotton sanitary napkins were distributed to the staff members, and information was shared on the use and benefits of V-Care Inti Wash for maintaining feminine hygiene. The session was interactive and informative, with active participation from the women staff members. The resource persons were felicitated as a token of appreciation for their valuable guidance.

On the same day, a yoga and fit-

ness session was organized by the Yoga Cell in association with NSS as part of the college's wellness initiatives. The session was guided by Dr. Poonam Nomulwar, Senior Art of Living Teacher and Wellness Coach. She led the participants through yoga asanas, pranayama and meditation techniques, explaining the benefits of each practice in improving flexibility, breathing, concentration and emotional balance.

The meditation segment helped participants experience calmness, stress relief and mental relaxation. Faculty members attended the session with enthusiasm and showed

keen interest throughout the programme. The session successfully encouraged participants to understand the importance of yoga, discipline and regular fitness practices in daily life.

Both programmes reflected the college's commitment to holistic education by integrating health awareness, wellness practices and social responsibility. Through these initiatives, Government Degree College for Women, Hussaini Alam, reinforced the importance of a healthy mind, healthy body and informed society as essential components of educational progress.

## Phase 2 of Indiramma Housing scheme to kick off on June 2: Ponguleti



FROM PAGE 1

officials of Housing, Revenue, and Forest departments belonging to the erstwhile Ranga Reddy and Hyderabad districts. Speaking on the occasion, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said that the people's government led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is implementing the prestigious Indiramma Housing Scheme with commitment to fulfil the dream of owning a house for the poor in the state. The meeting was attended by Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, Ranga Reddy district in-charge Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Hyderabad in-charge Minister Ponnamb Prabhakar, Minister Mohammed Azharuddin, Legislative Council Chief Whip P. Mahender Reddy and other elected representatives.

Speaking on the occasion, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said that due to the lack of foresight of the previous government, double bedroom houses were constructed far away from Hyderabad city, and the resulting problems are clearly visible today. To avoid repetition of such mistakes, he directed officials to identify land and prepare proposals for construction of Indiramma houses within a radius of 5 to 8 kilometres from the areas where poor people are currently residing, taking constituencies as the unit. He said field-level studies revealed that beneficiaries who were allotted 2BHK houses constructed 20 to 30 kilometres away from Hyderabad city were unwilling to reside there as it affected their livelihoods.

Keeping this issue in view, the Minister instructed officials to identify government lands, slums, Bhoodan lands, and areas where houses constructed under previous schemes are in dilapidated condition within the same constituency and prepare proposals for construction of Indiramma houses. He also directed that elected representatives should be made partners in this process. Ponguleti also instructed officials to undertake a special drive on a war footing for allotment of 2BHK houses. He directed that beneficiaries for completed houses as well as houses in various stages of construction should be identified by the end of this month and clarified that only those residing within a radius of 5 to 8 kilometres from the colonies should be selected. The Minister directed officials to ensure that beneficiaries occupy the already completed houses and instructed authorities to speed up provision of basic amenities such as drinking water, drainage, and electricity in these colonies.

He directed officials to distribute Indiramma house sanction letters by the end of this month to eligible beneficiaries having house sites within Hyderabad limits.

## BANDI BHAGIRATH SEEKS ANTICIPATORY BAIL FROM HC

FROM PAGE 1

Leaders of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi alleged that the SIT was formed to weaken the case against Bhagirath. Senior BRS leader T. Harish Rao accused the ruling Congress government and BJP of indulging in "collusive politics".

Police said Bhagirath is currently unavailable and efforts are underway to trace him. The case was registered on May 8 after the mother of a 17-year-old girl lodged a complaint alleging harassment of her daughter. On the same day, a counter-complaint was registered in Karimnagar based on Bhagirath's allegation that the girl and her parents were demanding money from him.

Based on the victim's complaint, the Pet Basheerabad police booked Bhagirath under the POC SO Act. Meanwhile, Karimnagar police also registered a "honey trap" case against the complainant side. Attention is now focused on the High Court's decision on the anticipatory bail plea and whether it will direct Bhagirath to cooperate with the SIT investigation.

**BJP & CONG PROTECTING RAPE ACCUSED: KTR** Meanwhile, BRS working president K. T. Rama Rao launched a sharp attack on both the BJP and Congress over the POC SO case involving Bhagirath. Posting on social media platform X, KTR sarcastically referred to the Centre's "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" campaign and alleged that the slogan has now turned into "Beta Bhagao, Beta Bachao". He accused both the BJP and the Congress government in Telangana of working together to protect the accused in the case involving an alleged assault on a minor girl. The remarks have further intensified the political confrontation surrounding the case, with both the BJP and Congress yet to respond formally to KTR's allegations.

### CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

# NO DELAYS, NO NEGLIGENCE

FROM PAGE 1

In the video conference, CM Revanth Reddy also reviewed the availability of warehouses and advised the collectors to make temporary arrangements in such areas based on immediate requirements. The officials were ordered to utilize Rythu Bazaars (farmers' markets) and function halls to facilitate the movement and storage of paddy. Formulation of plans to transport Paddy to the permanent warehouses was discussed in the meeting.

The Collectors of the districts with high maize production were instructed to remain vigilant during procurement operations and to take all necessary measures to ensure that farmers do not face any difficulties during procurement. The CM advised Collectors to seek police assistance if necessary to ensure the smooth and uninterrupted procurement. Specific instructions were given to the collectors to submit regular reports to the state Chief Secretary on paddy procurement and maize purchase.

### "SET UP SPECIAL MECHANISM TO MITIGATE LOSSES FROM UNSEASONAL RAINS"

CM Revanth Reddy enquired the officials about unseasonal rains and its impact on procurement. The collectors were ordered to prepare plans to find a permanent solution to rescue the farmers from losses due to unseasonal rains. The availability of adequate tarpaulins to farmers to protect their harvested crop from getting wet during unseasonal rains should be given top

priority in the action plan. Further, the Chief Minister suggested appointing a designated officer at the Mandal level to constantly alert farmers about the weather forecast predicted by the Meteorological Department. A dedicated system will also be set up specifically for disseminating weather-related information to the farming community.

To strengthen the monitoring of procurement, an officer would be assigned to each IKP (Indira Kranthi Patham) center to solve the hurdles during procurement. A responsible officer would also be appointed at every rice mill to oversee operations including hiring Hamalis to speed up loading of the procured food grains.

The CM emphasized that measures should be taken to ensure farmers receive a receipt immediately after loading to prevent irregularities committed under the guise of "talu" (chaff) or "tarugti" (weight deductions). To overcome the shortage of lorries, CM Revanth Reddy also ordered the officials to hire tractors and other vehicles available in nearby areas. The Chief Minister asserted that problems should be resolved only through the direct supervision of the Collectors who are responsible to resolve every issue.

Deputy Chief Minister Malu Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers Thummala Nageswara Rao, Uttam Kumar Reddy, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Seethakka, Jupally Krishna Rao, Adluri Laxman Kumar, and Vakiti Srihari, along with Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao, senior officials, and District Collectors from various districts participated

in the video conference.

### UTTAM KUMAR REDDY ORDERS OFFICIALS TO ACT RESPONSIBLY

State Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy emphasized that the district Collectors should act responsibly during the procurement of Paddy and Maize. The officials were instructed to bring any challenge arising within their districts to the government's attention. Uttam assured that the government would provide all necessary assistance and cooperation to resolve the challenges instantly. The minister clarified that the government is ready to extend all kinds of support required for procurement.

### RECORD BREAKING PADDY PROCUREMENT - MINISTER THUMMALA NAGESHWARA RAO

State Agriculture minister Thummala Nageswara Rao said that, under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the state government was procuring paddy on a large scale in Telangana in the country. The Minister cautioned that some farmers from neighbouring states are transporting their paddy to procurement centers in Telangana, which is leading to a new problem in certain areas. The concerned District Collectors were instructed to take precautionary measures to prevent farmers from neighbouring states from transporting paddy to procurement centres in Telangana and take all necessary steps to complete the procurement process by the end of May.

## Cong Hit Modi's Austerity..



FROM PAGE 1

"The PM has urged citizens to use public transport, solar pumps, and electric vehicles while supporting 'Vocal for Local', he said adding that these are measures for environmental protection and fuel conservation, practiced even by world leaders in London, Singapore, and Japan". He emphasized that individual financial discipline is the bedrock of a nation's economic strength.

Taking a dig at the Congress party, BJP state chief reminded Congress leaders that their own leaders had appealed for public sacrifice by Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi when they were Prime Minister.

While Jawaharlal Nehru had asked citizens to reduce rice and bread consumption and suggested fasting once a week. He also invited the RSS to the Republic Day parade in 1963 to honor their service during the China war and Lal Bahadur Shastri had called for "Monday Fasts" to tackle food shortages while Indira Gandhi had promoted "Talk Less, Work More" and implemented forced sterilizations during the Emergency, he pointed out.

He further stated that Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister had said that "Money does not grow on trees" while justifying subsidy cuts.

Rao reminded that even Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had appealed pub-

lic in 1967 that "not to buy gold" for national interest and Congress leader like P. Chidambaram asked people to stop buying gold in 2013. He questioned Congress leaders why was there no outcry then? Comparing development works between the UPA and NDA governments, he said Foreign Exchange Reserves increased from \$304 billion (2014) to \$655 billion today and India moved from the 10th largest to the 5th largest economy globally.

BJP chief noted that while petrol prices have skyrocketed in the US (59 per cent) and Canada (43 per cent) due to West Asian tensions, the Indian government has kept prices stable. He added that while neighboring countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka face fuel rationing, India remains secure due to proactive governance.

He urged the public to voluntarily follow the PM's suggestions such as prioritizing domestic tourism over foreign travel and buying Indian-made goods to further strengthen the economy.

"The BJP works with a 'Nation First' ideology, while Congress prioritizes 'Power First'. Politics should never come before the welfare of the country," Rao emphasized.

State party chief official spokesperson N V Subhash and treasurer Vasudev Rao and others were present at the press conference.

FROM PAGE 1

And the timing of the appeal has become politically explosive. Because it arrived immediately after intense election campaigns, roadshows and celebrations in Bengal and Assam. That has naturally

triggered questions across political and public circles about whether economic realities were deliberately softened during the election season. The opposition sees the appeal as an indirect admission that difficult decisions can no longer be postponed. The government sees it as responsible leadership during an international crisis. "Economic discipline becomes credible only when political power visibly practises the restraint it demands from citizens."

### THE WEST ASIA CONFLICT IS NO DISTANT WAR FOR INDIA

For India, turmoil in West Asia is never somebody else's problem. The ongoing tensions involving Iran, Israel and the United States have shaken global energy markets. Even the possibility of disruption near the Strait of Hormuz creates panic in oil trading circles because a huge portion of the world's crude supply moves through that route. The consequences for India are immediate

# TIME TO TIGHTEN BELTS

and serious. India imports nearly eighty five percent of its crude oil needs. Any sharp

rise in global prices directly affects transport, food inflation, manufacturing costs, fertilisers, cooking gas and overall economic stability. This is not just about what consumers pay at petrol stations. Oil prices influence the cost of almost every essential commodity in the country. For months, the government managed to shield consumers from the full impact through pricing strategies and controlled retail adjustments. But no government can permanently absorb global shocks without consequences. Eventually economics catches up with politics. That reality now appears to be knocking loudly on India's door.

### THE QUESTION OF SACRIFICE HAS BECOME CENTRAL

The most politically sensitive part of this entire debate is not the appeal itself. It is the question of who exact-

ly will practise restraint. If ordinary citizens are expected to reduce fuel consumption, will ministers and officials reduce massive VVIP convoys? If families are being told to postpone non essential spending, will political parties cut extravagant rallies, celebrations and chartered flights? If austerity is suddenly being projected as patriotic duty, will the political establishment publicly embrace simplicity? This is where public frustration becomes dangerous for any government. Indians are generally willing to cooperate during national crises. The pandemic itself proved that collective discipline is possible when people believe the burden is shared equally. But public trust weakens when sacrifice appears one sided. A single image of lavish political spending during a period of economic caution can destroy the moral authority behind an austerity campaign. That is the challenge before the government now.

### THE ECONOMIC LOGIC BEHIND THE APPEAL IS SOUND

Despite the political criticism, the economic reasoning behind the Prime Minister's appeal is difficult to dismiss. Fuel conservation during global energy shocks is a rational policy approach. Reduced consumption lowers import pressure. Increased use of public transport can soften demand spikes. Virtual meetings reduce fuel dependency. Avoiding unnecessary imports helps protect foreign exchange reserves. Even the appeal regarding gold purchases has strong economic logic behind it. India's enormous appetite for gold places continuous pressure on forex reserves. During periods of global uncertainty, governments naturally become cautious about heavy import spending on non essential items. But gold in India is not merely an economic commodity. It is deeply tied to weddings, social customs, family prestige and emotional security. Asking Indian families to postpone gold purchases is politically sensitive territory because it touches

cultural habits that stretch across generations. Still, the government clearly believes the situation requires behavioural change before the crisis deepens further.

### WHY THIS MOMENT MATTERS

The government is trying to prepare the public gradually instead of announcing sudden harsh measures later. But public cooperation will depend entirely on whether austerity appears fair and universal.

### INDIA'S BIGGER PROBLEM REMAINS UNRESOLVED

This controversy also exposes a deeper national vulnerability. Every global oil crisis reminds India how dependent it remains on imported energy despite years of promises around self reliance, electric mobility and renewable expansion. India has diversified oil sourcing and built strategic reserves. Those measures helped cushion earlier

shocks. But the country still remains heavily exposed to global turbulence. Short term conservation appeals may buy time. They do not eliminate structural dependence. And if tensions in West Asia continue escalating, India may eventually face more painful choices involving fuel pricing, inflation management and public spending.

### FROM PANDEMIC HABITS TO NATIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

During the COVID years, India rapidly adapted to work from home, online meetings and reduced travel. What was once emergency behaviour is now being presented as an economic necessity during geopolitical instability. But there is one major difference. Pandemic restrictions were driven by fear of disease. Economic restraint during inflationary pressure affects aspirations, consumption and daily lifestyles. People become far more sensitive when they feel financial pain while

watching visible political extravagance continue unchanged. That emotional contrast could shape the national mood in the coming months.

### WHEN ECONOMIC WARNING MEETS POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Prime Minister's appeal reflects genuine concern over global instability and India's economic exposure. The risks are real. Rising crude prices can quickly spiral into inflation, currency pressure and public hardship.

But crises are not judged only by economic management. They are judged by credibility. Citizens listen more carefully when leaders demonstrate the same discipline they expect from the public. In moments of uncertainty, symbolism matters almost as much as policy. India may be entering a difficult economic phase shaped by forces far beyond its borders. The question now is whether the coming period will produce a genuine culture of shared restraint or deepen the growing perception that austerity in India is expected mainly from those without flashing beacons and official convoys.

## GITAM Scholar Awarded Ph.D. in Chemistry

HYDERABAD

GITAM Deemed to be University has congratulated Dr. Leela Prasad Kowtharapu on the successful completion of his Ph.D. in Chemistry under the guidance of Dr. A. Ratnamala, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, School of Science.

His doctoral research, titled "Green Analytical Method Development in the Light of QbD to Assess the Quality of Liquid Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms," focused on developing sustainable and reliable green chromatographic analytical methods for pharmaceutical liquid formulations. The study advanced analytical chemistry through improved accuracy, selectivity, sensitivity, and reproducibility while integrating Quality by Design (QbD) principles to ensure robustness and reliability in pharmaceutical analysis.

The research made significant



contributions in the analysis of serotonin receptor antagonist formulations, most cell stabilizers, histamine receptor antagonists, lincosamide antibiotic injectables, and the trace-level determination of carcinogenic and genotoxic impurities in antibiotic liquid formulations, along with stability studies of physiological solutions. The work highlights an important step toward sustainable and innovative pharmaceutical analytical practices.

The GITAM community—including Prof. D.S.Rao (Pro Vice-Chancellor), D.V.V.S.R. Varma (Resident Director), Dr. M. Reza (Principal, School of Science), Dr. Gousia Begum (Head, Department of Chemistry), along with faculty members, researchers, and students—extends warmest congratulations to Dr. Leela Prasad on this remarkable academic achievement.

## Prisons must evolve into centres of reform, not merely places of punishment: Governor

HYDERABAD

Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla said that social progress requires not only punishment but also reform, and that prisons must transform from being mere centres of incarceration into institutions that foster introspection, personality development and new beginnings.

The Governor on Tuesday made these remarks after inaugurating the "Feel the Jail" experiential programme and the Jail Museum at the State Institute of Correctional Administration (SICA), Chanchalguda, in Hyderabad.

During his visit, he inspected the specially designed "Feel the Jail" cells, intended to offer visitors a firsthand understanding of prison life and the realities of incarceration.

The Governor later inaugurated the Jail Museum and toured its various sections, which depict the history and evolution of the prison system. The exhibits included displays



on prisons during the Nizam era, the contribution of prisoners to the construction of the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, model prison cells associated with noted personalities such as Dasarathi Krishnamacharyulu and Kancherla Gopanna (Bhakta Ramadasu), as well as initiatives aimed at prisoner rehabilitation, prison industries, and the achievements of the department.

The Governor also reviewed

ney towards a more humane and reform-oriented justice system.

"While the display of old chains and prison cells reminded visitors of the harsh penal systems of the past, the emphasis on skill development and prison-made products reflected a meaningful shift "from retribution to transformation," he observed.

The Governor said the true character of a progressive society is reflected in the sensitivity and responsibility with which it seeks to reform those who have erred, adding that prisoner rehabilitation is a moral responsibility of society.

The Governor congratulated Dr. Soumya Mishra and other officials of the department for conceptualising and implementing the initiative. He expressed confidence that the Jail Museum would emerge not only as a tourist attraction, but also as a significant platform for education, research and public awareness.



## Protective construction works near railway track welcomed

HYDERABAD

The Travelers Association expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Vijayawada Division officials of South Central Railway, including the Divisional Railway Manager and the Senior Divisional Engineer (Coordination), for undertaking the construction of a protective wall/fencing near the railway track opposite the Sri Umar Alisha Viswa Vignana Vidya Spiritual Peetham in

Pithapuram. According to Association and ZRUCC member Mohammed Noor, these works were taken up following requests from the public and railway passengers to prevent people from crossing the railway tracks near the RUB (Road Under Bridge) area and to improve safety. Local residents and devotees expressed happiness that the railway authorities responded promptly and initiated the works keeping public safety in mind.

**SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
Follow us on @SCRailwayIndia  
Details of the Tender Notices of S.C Railway can be seen on our website : [www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in)  
No.DEE-GS-BZA-40-2026-27  
Dt: 11.05.2026  
(Through ireps.gov.in)

Chief Project Manager, Gati Shakti, South Central Railway, Vijayawada invites e-tender on behalf of The President of India for the following works in Open tender/Single packet system of tendering:

**Tender No:** BZA-GSU-Elec-40-2026-27  
**Dt:** 07.05.2026  
**Description of the work :** BZA division -Provision of power supply arrangements for the augmentation of homing capacity of Electrical Loco Shed, Vijayawada  
**Tender value (₹):** 16553808.93  
**E.M.D. (₹):** 331100.00  
**Completion Period :** 12 Months  
**Cost of Tender form (₹):** Nil  
**Date of Closing & time :** 01.06.2026 @ 15:00hrs

1. For bid document and other details, please login to website <https://ireps.gov.in>.

2. Payment of Earnest Money Deposit should be paid only through Net Banking/Payment Gateway Facilities made available online in IREPS (OR) Bank Guarantee towards Bid Security may be Submitted in favour of PFA/Con/SC.

3. Tenderers can submit their offers online during tender Submission/Bidding period which is fifteen days period prior to closing of Tender.

4. Tenderers should watch for any corrigenda (issued online only) up to the date of commencement of the Tender Submission/Bidding period.

Divisional Electrical Engineer, Gati Shakti, Vijayawada

**Tender No. : B-SG-P-E-01-NDD-2026-27 Dt:08.05.2026**

For and on behalf of the President of India, the undersigned invites E-Tenders for the following work:

**Name of the work :** B-SG-P-E-01-NDD-2026-27; Dt: 08/05/2026 of work "Proposed signalling arrangements in connection with Yard Modification at NIDADAVOLU Jn station between Vijayawada -Vishakapattanam section on high density network routes of Vijayawada (BZA) Division".  
**Tender Value Rs. & Paisa (₹):** 8,33,33,829.20/-  
**Bid Security (₹):** 16,66,700.00/-  
**CTB (₹):** Nil  
**Completion Period:** 150 Days

1. Description : Date of closing and timing  
**Date & Time:** 03/06/2026 15:30

1. Tender conditions/other particulars such as the details of the name of work in full, the similar nature of the above works, eligibility criteria, etc. are available in the Tender documents published on the website at [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).

2. The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) before the date of tender closing to note any changes/corrigenda for any tender.

3. The Tender Notice is also displayed in the Notice Board located in the Office of Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecom), S.C. Railway Vijayawada.

4. The Railway reserves the right to cancel the tender without assigning any reason thereto.

Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer, Projects/Vijayawada

**E-Tender Notice No. N-SG-36-2026-27-Hazard-12 dated 08.05.2026**

Sr.DSTE/NED acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders for the following work:

**Tender Number and Date:** N-SG-36-2026-27-Hazard-12 dated 08.05.2026  
**Name of Work :** Reliability improvement of Signal and Telecom gazzard circuits at Adilabad, Purna and Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar in Nanded Division. Estimated Project Cost (₹): 2,76,42,957/-  
**Bid Security (₹):** 5,52,900/-  
**Completion Period of Work:** 12 Months

**Bid Closing Date (Bid Due Date):** 01.06.2026 at 15:00 hrs

**Bid Opening Date:** 01.06.2026 after 15:00hrs

**Validity of Offer:** 60 Days from Bid Closing Date

**Cost of Tender Booklet (₹) 0/-**

All bidding is in Indian Railway e-tendering portal [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Manual offers are not allowed against this tender. Further details can be seen in [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).

Sr. Divisional Signal and Telecom Engineer/Nanded

## 2008 DSC Teachers Perform Milk Abhishekam to CM Revanth Reddy's Portrait

HYDERABAD

Teachers selected under the 2008 DSC expressed gratitude by performing a milk abhishekam to the portrait of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for appointing 1,175 candidates as teachers in fulfillment of the promise made in the Assembly election manifesto.

On Tuesday, a large number of 2008 DSC teachers gathered at Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan. On the occasion, the teachers raised slogans in support of the Chief Minister. They expressed happiness that after waiting for teacher jobs for 17 years, CM Revanth Reddy finally provided them employment and supported them.

The teachers submitted a representation to CM Prajavani in-charge Dr. G. Chinna Reddy, requesting that postings currently given on the basis of the erstwhile united dis-



tricts be revised according to the new district system. They also requested resolution of service-related issues. Chinna Reddy assured them that the matter would be brought to the government's attention.

### 393 Applications Received in CM Prajavani

A total of 393 applications were received during the 221st CM Prajavani program held on

CM Prajavani in-charge and State Planning Commission Vice Chairman Dr. G. Chinna Reddy received the applications, listened to public grievances, and spoke with concerned officials over the phone to resolve several issues.

ACP Umender, NRI Advisory Council Chairman Ambassador B.M. Vinod Kumar, Vice Chairman Manda Bhim Reddy, Pravasi Prajavani Coordinator Bojja Amarendra Reddy, and officials from various departments participated in the program.

Tuesday at Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan.

Of these:

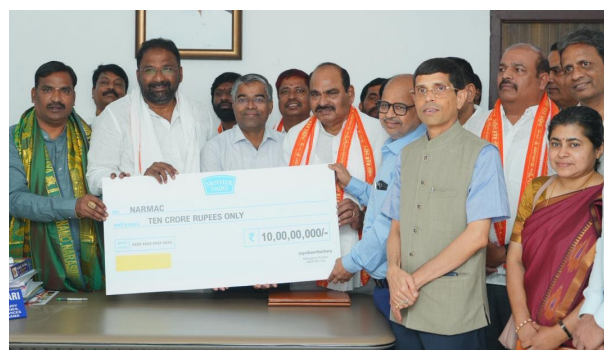
190 applications were related to the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department,

39 to the Revenue Department,

97 for Indiramma housing,

2 under Pravasi Prajavani,

and 65 related to other departments.



## NARMUL has entered into a tripartite agreement with NDDB

HYDERABAD

Nalgonda-Ranga Reddy Districts Milk Producers Mutual Cooperative Union Limited (NARMUL) has entered into a tripartite agreement with National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). Under the agreement, NDDB will take responsibility for dairy development for a period of 15 years. As part of the agreement, NDDB will initially provide ₹10 crore to clear pending

dues of dairy farmers. Officials of the Telangana State Dairy Department signed the agreement with NDDB representatives. The program was attended by Telangana Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development, Fisheries, Youth Services and Sports Vakuti Srihari, Government Whip Beerla Ilaiah, Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries Secretary Ilambarthi, Mother Dairy Chairman Madhusudan Reddy, and NDDB officials.

## Cyberabad Police impose Section 163 restrictions around inter exam centres

HYDERABAD

Cyberabad police commissioner M Ramesh has imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) around all Intermediate Public Advanced Supplementary Examination centres in the Cyberabad Commissionerate limits from May 13 to 21, 2026.

As per the order, assembly of five or more persons has been prohibited within a 200-metre radius of examination centres to maintain public order, peace and tranquility

during the conduct of examinations. The restrictions will remain in force daily between 6.30 am and 6 pm.

The police have also directed closure of photocopy (Xerox) and internet centres within a 100-metre radius of the examination venues during the examination period. Police personnel, military staff, Home Guards on duty, flying squads of the Education Department and funeral processions have been exempted from the order. Cyberabad Police warned that violators of the restrictions would face prosecution under relevant provisions of law.

### RECONDITIONING BY ROBOTIC TRANSLAMATIC TECHNIQUE

**E-Tender Notice No.:** 05/W-2/APDJ, Dated: 08-05-2026; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works; **Tender No.:** 03-AP-I-2026; **Name of Work:** Reconditioning of worn out 1 in 12 and 1 in 8 1/2 crossing body using Robotic Translamic technique under the jurisdiction of Alipurduar Division. **Tender Value:** ₹5,49,054.71/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹1,91,000/-; **Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 29-05-2026.** Complete information alongwith the tender document of above e-tender will be available in the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

DRM(W), Alipurduar Jn. NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY  
Serving Customers With A Smile

### SOUTHERN RAILWAY

For and on behalf of President of India, Principal Chief Electrical Engineer, Southern Railway, Chennai-03, invites e-tender for the following work. The tender shall be submitted online upto 15.00 hrs on 23.06.2026 through website : [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored and summarily rejected. Bidders are requested to go through the details such as per-bid conference, submission of original documents, Bid security etc. in the attached tender documents.

EMD and Tender forms cost (TFC) are to be paid online through IREPS portal ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)) and no manual payment will be accepted for this tender.

<b>Tender No. : E28III-Solar Land-RESCO-3</b>
<b>Name of work : Setting up of Land based Solar Power Plant over Southern Railway under Developer (RESCO) mode.</b>
<b>App. Cash Value Rs. : 378,07,69,625.60/-</b>
<b>Earnest Money Deposit : Rs.3,09,72,000.00/-</b>
<b>Period of completion : 240 Days.</b>

Detailed Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) and the tender documents are available in the website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) and the tenderers are advised to refer the same. Tenderers are also advised to quote their rates inclusive of GST.

Chief Electrical General Engineer,  
O/o Principal Chief Electrical Engineer, Chennai-600003  
(for and on behalf of President of India)



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# NTB conducts farmers' awareness & market linkage session in Vikarabad

HYDERABAD

The National Turmeric Board organised a Farmers' Awareness Programme and Market Linkage Session on turmeric at Siripuram village in Marpally Mandal of Vikarabad district on Tuesday. The programme brought together turmeric farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), exporters, industry stakeholders and government officials to discuss quality standards, value addition and improved market access for turmeric growers.

Addressing the gathering, Bhavani Sri, Secretary of the National Turmeric Board, stressed the importance of backward integration and aligning production practices with international market requirements. Global consumers increasingly demand complete traceability from "farm to fork", making coordinated efforts across the supply chain essential. And that better price realisation for farmers and consumer health are closely interconnected, she added.

Further, she noted that export regulations in the European



Union and the United States are revised periodically, requiring exporters and farmers to remain updated and compliant. She pointed out that export rejections caused by pesticide residues, contaminants, Sudan dye and Ethylene Oxide remain a major concern and urged the stakeholders to ensure rigorous testing and compliance before consignments reach international markets.

The Secretary also highlighted the importance of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), including judicious pesticide usage, proper cleaning and washing of turmeric rhizomes, scientific boiling and curing methods, and proper storage practices. She

said value addition could significantly improve farmers' incomes and reaffirmed the Board's commitment to promoting traceability systems and scientific post-harvest management at the grassroots level.

She further briefed farmers about benefits available through the National Turmeric Board, including subsidy support for post-harvest machinery, training programmes, research and development assistance, and interventions aimed at improving post-harvest processing and marketing.

Speaking on the occasion, Sattar, District Horticulture and Sericulture Officer, encouraged farmers to adopt

scientific cultivation methods, Good Agricultural Practices and value addition techniques to improve turmeric quality and marketability. He also emphasised the need for inter-departmental coordination for the holistic development of the turmeric sector.

Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Mahender Reddy appreciated the National Turmeric Board's efforts in reaching farmers in remote areas. He stressed the importance of stronger market linkages and better price realisation mechanisms so that turmeric growers can directly benefit from the increasing global demand for Indian turmeric.

A leading turmeric exporter participating in the session highlighted that strict adherence to international quality standards is essential for sustaining competitiveness in global markets. The exporter noted that higher curcumin content and compliance with quality standards directly contribute to better prices for farmers and encouraged growers to adopt quality-oriented cultivation practices.

# Mastering German language opens global opportunities: Vivek

HYDERABAD

Minister for Labour Employment and Mines Dr. Vivek Venkatswamy called upon nurses undergoing training under the Triple Win Programme to prepare themselves for global careers by mastering the German language and communication skills, stating that Telangana youth have immense potential to excel internationally if they adapt to new cultures and opportunities with dedication and confidence. The Minister interacted with nurses as part of the event conducted by TOMCOM at Tourism Plaza in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that working in Germany is not only a great opportunity but also a challenge, as one has to adapt to a new language, environment, and work culture. However, he said success can be achieved through dedication and hard work.

"Nurses play a vital role in giving confidence and hope to patients. Half the illness disappears with the reassurance provided by nurses," the Minister said, appreciating the service rendered by the nursing com-

munity. He stated that TOMCOM is creating international-level employment opportunities for youth and added that this is only the beginning. He said if the present batch performs well in Germany, more opportunities would open up for Telangana youth in the future.

Extending greetings on International Nurses Day, the Minister praised the nursing profession as one of the noblest services. He advised the trainees to focus particularly on learning the German language, stressing that effective communication is crucial in delivering proper healthcare and administering medicines prescribed by doctors. He also pointed out that online platforms have made learning foreign languages easier than ever before.

Recalling his own business journey, Vivek Venkatswamy said, "I started my business with just Rs. 5 lakh. When I went to Chennai seeking a bank loan, I struggled because I did not know the language. That experience made me understand the importance of communication skills and language proficiency." Referring to Tamil Nadu actor Vijay as an example, he said

that modern technology, social media, and communication skills can help individuals achieve remarkable success. He encouraged the nurses to dedicate at least one hour daily to improving their skills and to reach a stage where they can comfortably read books in German.

The Minister revealed that the State government has allocated special funds in the budget for TOMCOM initiatives. He also assured that he would discuss with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy the establishment of more nursing colleges and an increase in nursing seats across the state.

Labour, Employment and Training Commissioner Harichandana, speaking at the event, shared her own struggles while learning Hindi for the first time. She said her father used to work in rural areas and she gradually learned the language by watching Hindi films.

"You too must work hard to learn a new language. The State government, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and Minister Vivek Venkatswamy are taking special initiatives to create overseas job opportunities for youth," she said.

# Women's groups demand arrest of Bandi Sanjay's son in minor assault case

HYDERABAD

Progressive women's organizations on Tuesday demanded the immediate arrest of Bandi Sai Bhagirath, son of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, in connection with the alleged sexual assault and harassment of a minor girl.

Addressing the media at NSS on Tuesday, leaders of various women's groups accused the police of mishandling the complaint lodged by the vic-

tim. They alleged that the minor girl, who approached the police station seeking action against Bhagirath for alleged sexual harassment over the last four months, was made to wait for hours while information about her complaint was allegedly leaked to the accused.

The organizations criticized the police for allegedly failing to act promptly under the POCSO Act and instead registering cases against the victim herself. They termed the police response "biased" and accused

officials of acting under political pressure to protect influential persons.

The women leaders alleged that the FIR was registered and action initiated only after the victim's mother reportedly threatened suicide during a public meeting attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

They claimed the delay was a deliberate attempt to weaken the case.

The organizations further condemned the filing of a

"honey trap" case against the 17-year-old girl, calling it illegal and an abuse of power. They alleged that the accused intimidated the victim and falsely claimed to have paid her money.

Demanding an impartial probe, the women's groups called for the case to be tried in a fast-track court and sought immediate police protection for the victim and her family, citing the accused's political influence. National leaders of POW were present.

# Summons Issued to Kalvakuntla Kavitha in Rail Roko Case

Ordered to appear before the Secunderabad Railway Court tomorrow

HYDERABAD

Cases have been registered under the Railway Act against Kalvakuntla Kavitha, chief of the Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS), for conducting a rail roko protest at the Kamareddy district headquarters demanding 42% reservations for Backward Classes (BCs).

Summons were issued directing her to appear in court in connection with the rail roko case. The summons stated that she must appear on Wednesday at 10:30 AM before the Second Judicial Magistrate of First Class Court in Secunderabad.

On November 28, 2025, Kalvakuntla Kavitha led a rail roko protest in Kamareddy district headquarters, demanding immediate approval of the BC reservation bills passed by the Telangana Assembly and Council.



She declared that the agitation would continue until 42% reservations for BCs in education, employment, and local bodies were implemented. Police arrested Kavitha and other TRS leaders participating in the protest and shifted them to the police station.

Due to the rail roko organized by Kavitha and other TRS leaders, the Devgiri Express traveling from Nizamabad to Hyderabad was halted between Sirnappalli and Indlavai railway stations. Another goods train traveling on the Hyderabad-Nizamabad route was also stopped.

Kamareddy Railway ASI Ravindra Babu filed a complaint against Kalvakuntla Kavitha and 12 other TRS leaders involved in the rail roko. Based on the complaint, cases were registered under Sections 147 and 174(a) of the Railway Act against them. The summons issued by the Secunderabad Railways Second Judicial Magistrate of First Class Court directed them to appear for investigation in the case.

# KTR slams Centre over NEET paper leak, demands high-level investigation

HYDERABAD

BRS working president KT Rama Rao expressed strong criticism of the NEET question paper leak, labeling it a disgrace for the Central government.

In a statement here on Tuesday, he called for a thorough investigation into the incident and urged that the exam be rescheduled as soon as possible.

The BRS working president accused the NDA government of failing to ensure a secure examination process, stating that the repeated leaks have endangered the futures of nearly 23 lakh students who have diligently prepared for this year's national eligibility test across the country.

KT Rama Rao emphasised that the Central government has not learned from a similar incident in 2024 and has subjected students and their families to significant mental distress.

He noted, "Over 100 questions were leaked just a day before the exam, highlighting serious systemic failures and resulting in the exam's cancellation. This ongoing incompetence poses a serious challenge for students and their families." The BRS working president demanded that the Centre initiate a high-level investigation and impose strict penalties on those responsible.

He also called for the NEET exam to be conducted again promptly, with robust security measures in place. Furthermore, KT Rama Rao urged the Central government to accept full accountability and apologise to the students and their parents for the distress caused.

# Nurses hailed as backbone of healthcare at Niloufer Hospital

HYDERABAD

Telangana minister Ponnam Prabhakar attended the International Nurses Day celebrations at Niloufer Hospital on Tuesday and praised nurses for their tireless service and compassion towards the patients.

The programme was attended by Rajya Sabha MP Anil Kumar Yadav, Fisheries Corporation Chairman Mettu Sai Kumar, District Collector Priyanka Ala, DMHO Venkat, Niloufer Hospital Superintendent Dr. Vijay Kumar, RDO Ramakrishna, nurses, and hospital staff.

During the event, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar felicitated nurses in recognition of their dedicated services to society.

Extending greetings on International Nurses Day, he described nursing as a profession rooted in service and compassion.

The Minister said nurses play a crucial role in patient recovery, noting that while treatment contributes significantly, care and emotional support provided by nurses are equally important. He appreciated their commitment despite the demanding conditions in hospitals.

Highlighting the legacy of Niloufer Hospital, he said the institution has been serving children for decades and cur-

rently handles nearly 1,500 outpatients daily with around 2,000 inpatient beds.

Recalling the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minister said the fearless and selfless service rendered by nurses during critical times would always be remembered. He praised them for not only providing treatment support but also instilling confidence and hope among patients.

He further stated that appointment letters would be distributed to nurses later in the evening by Damodar Raja Narasimha and stressed that quality healthcare services in government hospitals are vital for the poor and underprivileged.

# Bandi Sanjay should swear in a Hanuman temple wearing wet clothes

- that he did not threaten the victims
- If you are a true devotee of Hanuman, hand over your son to the police
- Ask Bandi Sanjay where Sai Bhageerath roams around every day
- Dr. R.S. Praveen Kumar, State General Secretary, BRS

HYDERABAD

Greetings to all the people of the state on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti. Greet-

ings also to Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay. A request to all Hindu brothers attending the Ekta Yatra being held in Karimnagar today on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti.

All the genuine Hindu devotees who are walking hundreds of kilometers in the scorching heat, leaving behind their families for the welfare of society, praying for the well-being of people beyond caste and religion, and reaching Kondagattu on foot — should ask Bandi Sanjay a few questions.

Is Bandi Sanjay truly a devotee of Hanuman? If so, has he or his son Bandi Sai Bhageerath ever worn the Hanuman mala? Has he ever recited the

Hanuman Chalisa?

While all of us are undertaking this pilgrimage on foot with devotion and sincerity, why is Bandi Sanjay's son traveling around in Benz cars? Lord Hanuman burned Lanka for Sita Devi and, though she was not his biological mother, revered her as his mother and worshipped her as a goddess throughout his life.

He remained unmarried all his life and never even looked improperly at another woman — an ideal figure.

But why is Sai Bhageerath, after allegedly assaulting a minor girl, roaming free without being arrested?

Bandi Sanjay, who speaks about which god to worship

from Monday to Sunday — can he say whom his son Sai Bhageerath beats from Monday to Sunday? Against whom does he commit atrocities? Which pub does he stay in? Which hookah center does he spend time in?

Today, people should ask him to come wearing wet clothes into the Hanuman temple and state whether it is true or false that the victim girl's mother was threatened. If Bandi Sanjay is a true devotee of Hanuman, question him and demand that he immediately surrender his son to the police. Let us be proud as Hindus. Let us live as Hindus. Let us question Hindus who commit wrongdoing."

# BRS Goes Digital for Membership Drive, KCR Chairs Key Strategy Meet

HYDERABAD

A meeting of BRS party general secretaries was held on Tuesday under the chairmanship of BRS chief K. Chandrashekar Rao. The meeting continued for nearly six hours, during which several key issues were discussed and resolutions were adopted.

## Key Decisions

In light of the Election Commission of India (ECI) conducting the SIR process and voter list revisions entirely through digital systems, the meeting opined that the BRS party membership drive should also be carried out through a digitalized process keeping future requirements in view.

It was decided to appoint a membership coordinator from the state committee for every Assembly constituency.

The meeting resolved to constitute "Membership Coordination Committees" within the next two to three days at the mandal and municipal body levels to ensure smooth conduct of the membership enrollment program.

Since the membership registration process will be conducted digitally, the meeting proposed organizing training sessions for a total of

71,310 party workers — two workers for each of the 35,655 polling booths across the state. Training will be provided on the procedures and operational methods related to digital membership enrollment.

It was decided that training camps for digital membership registration would continue under the supervision of the party general secretaries.

## Details of Membership Enrollment In-Charges:

Khammam and Kothagudem districts — Takkallapalli Ravinder Rao, MLC and General Secretary Jagtial, Karimnagar, Peddapalli and Sirisilla districts — Jeevan Reddy, former minister and General Secretary

Mulugu, Jayashankar Bhupalpally and Mahabubabad districts — Satyavathi Rathod, former minister and General Secretary Jangaon, Hanumakonda and Warangal districts — Palla Rajes-

hwar Reddy, MLA and General Secretary

Medak, Sangareddy and Siddipet districts — Gyadari Balamallu, General Secretary

Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts — Gangadhar Goud, former MLC and General Secretary Mancheril and Asifabad districts — Naradasu Laxman Rao, former MLC and General Secretary

Adilabad and Nirmal districts — Ravula Sravan Kumar Reddy, General Secretary

Vikarabad and Rangareddy districts — Sabitha Indra Reddy, former minister and MLA

Mahabubnagar and Narayanpet districts — Mahmood Ali

Gadwal, Nagarkurnool and Wanaparthy districts — Mettu Srinivas, Secretary

Medchal-Malkajgiri and Yadadri districts — Pochampally Srinivas Reddy, MLC and Deputy Floor Leader

Hyderabad district — Talasani Srinivas Yadav, former minister and MLA

Nalgonda and Suryapet districts — R. S. Praveen Kumar, General Secretary.

# Human-Centered Engineering Education: Empowering Digital Transformation

(On the occasion of "IEEE Global Engineering Day" on May 13)

It has become a tradition to observe "IEEE Global Engineering Day" every year on May 13th as a platform to recognize the services of engineers who are laying a solid foundation for the simplifying life and to appreciate their modern innovations.

The world's largest organization of technical experts, the "Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)" with 3.5 lakh members spread across 160 countries, was established in 1973 and continues unabated. We celebrate this day with the aim of encouraging young people to enter engineering disciplines like electrical, electronics and computers on a large scale and make significant contributions in their respective fields.

## Amazing engineering inventions:

Engineers are laying the foundations for many revolutionary changes such as smartphones, the largest skyscrapers, space travel, state-of-



the-art airports, and drone technology photography. These platforms are used to encourage creative innovations around the world, and to unite engineering students, faculty, technocrats, experts, and researchers to make better technology possible. To appreciate the efforts of engineers to build a sustainable society, "World Engineers Day" is being observed from March 3-5, and "IEEE Women Engineers Day" is also being observed from June 23 to July 07.

## Human-centered engineering education

The way in which smart engineering is being integrated for a sustainable future through innovation and digitalization is unique. The role of engineers in achieving sustainable development is invaluable. All efforts should be continuously made to unconditionally support engineering development and to recognize them appropriately by civil society. The 17th IEEE Global Conference

"Educon" in 2026 is being organized with the theme "Human-Centered Engineering Education: Empowering Human Leadership for Sustainable Innovation, AI - Digital Transformation". It is worth noting that the development of humanity will be possible only if today's youth come forward in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering/English, and Mathematics (STEM).

Today's AI digital world is entering another world with scientific and technological research. Thanks to this, the earth has become a hamlet. Distances and borders have been erased. A smart paradise has appeared in the palm of your hand. The eyes of the youth are getting blinded by excessive technological methods. The two-edged sword of modern AI-digital technology is becoming sharper. Along with the benefits of technology, there is also misuse. Let us wish that humanity takes steps only towards sustainable development and lays the foundation for world peace with cutting-edge technology. Let us make efforts to introduce today's youth to engineering education.

- Dr. Burra Madhusudhan Reddy  
9949700037

## Changes in the pattern of Train Services

CHENNAI, MAY 12:

Western Railway has notified for Change in pattern of train services due to Commissioning of Automatic Block Signaling work in Udhna - Chalthan section of Mumbai Division in Western Railway as given below:

### I. Regulation of Train Services:

**Train No. 12656 Dr MGR Chennai Central - Ahmedabad Express** scheduled to leave Dr MGR Chennai Central at 10.10 hrs on 13th & 14th May, 2026 will be regulated/delayed for 35 mins enroute

**Train No. 16311 Shri Ganganagar - Thiruvananthapuram North Express** scheduled to leave Shri Ganganagar at 14.10 hrs on 12th May, 2026 will be regulated/delayed for 45 mins enroute

### II. Rescheduling of Train Service:

**Train No. 20920 Ekta Nagar - Dr MGR Chennai Central Superfast Express** scheduled to leave Ekta Nagar at 09.00 hrs on 13th May, 2026 will be rescheduled to leave Ekta Nagar at 11.00 hrs (Late by 2 hours) and will be regulated/delayed for 1 hour enroute in Vadodara Division.

## Buses Go Out of Control in Srisaillam Ghat Road

**Major Accident Averted**  
**A bus plunged into a valley and overturned, injuring passengers**  
**Another bus crashed into roadside railings and came to a halt**

**Dornala:** An Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) bus belonging to the Markapur depot was traveling from Srisaillam towards Dornala. While giving way to oncoming vehicles on the ghat road, the bus moved off the road margin. As there was light rain in the area and due to the speed of the vehicle, the driver reportedly lost control. The bus broke through the iron retaining wall beside the road and plunged into the valley. The nearly 30 passengers onboard screamed in panic. However, large trees in the area stopped the bus after it hit them, preventing a major tragedy and allowing everyone to breathe in relief. At the same time, an Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation Indra bus traveling behind it also lost control and crashed into the roadside protective iron barriers before stopping. The 12 passengers in that bus were also shaken by the incident

## MP CM Yadav Cuts Cavalcade Size Following PM Modi's Austerity Call

BHOPAL: (MAY 12)

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Tuesday reduced the number of vehicles in his cavalcade until further orders, responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for austerity measures, including reducing fuel consumption, an official said. In a cabinet meeting on Monday, Yadav appealed to members of the Council of Ministers to reduce petrol and diesel consumption in the national interest and batted for the use of public transport, an official said. As part of austerity measures to be in force until further orders, the Chief Minister's cavalcade will consist of only eight vehicles instead of 13 earlier.

# Vijay meets 'rebel' AIADMK leaders backing TVK ahead of crucial floor test

**The rebel leaders, CV Shanmugam and SP Velumani, who enjoy the support of 30 MLAs, on Tuesday extended their support to the TVK for tomorrow's floor test.**



Ahead of the crucial floor test in the Tamil Nadu assembly tomorrow, Chief Minister and TVK supremo Vijay met rebel AIADMK leaders CV Shanmugam and SP Velumani on Tuesday. The meeting assumes greater political significance as the faction enjoys the backing of 30 MLAs and announced that it would extend its support to the TVK in tomorrow's show of strength. After the assembly session was held for the first time today, Vijay visited

the offices of several parties, which extended their support to the TVK-led government. He was seen arriving at the office of the Indian Union of Muslim League (IUML) a few hours after the session. From there, he headed to

meet both Shanmugam and Velumani. Dressed in a black suit and white shirt, Vijay arrived at a local party office of AIADMK, where both Shanmugam and Velumani were present with several AIADMK leaders. As soon as

Vijay stepped out of his car, the leaders greeted him with flower bouquets and later felicitated him by wrapping stoles around his neck. Several leaders were seen interacting with Vijay as well.

From there, Vijay soon rushed to the Congress party office, where Congress leaders greeted him with loud cheers and joy. Vijay was seen in a very light mood, interacting with several leaders.

### THE CRISIS IN AIADMK

As uncertainties gripped Tamil Nadu's political arena right after the 2026 election, AIADMK went through one of the greatest crises in its more than five-decade-long political trajectory. It all began with Shanmugam

and Velumani advocating for backing Vijay's TVK, which produced a stunner in the state election, winning 108 of 234 seats. However, the party fell short of the majority mark by 10 seats, and encashing the opportunity, the rebel faction announced that they were ready to support Vijay with 30 MLAs. The idea was immediately disapproved of by the party's general secretary, Palaniswami, igniting a rift in the AIADMK camp. The 30 MLAs openly expressed their dissatisfaction over Palaniswami's leadership, citing major political setbacks in the last four elections (2019, 2021, 2024, and 2026). Possibilities emerged that the party might witness a split in the near future.



## Bengal downgrades Abhishek Banerjee's security cover, Mamata's unchanged

**The Z+ category security previously accorded to TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee is being scaled down. Moving forward, the parliamentarian, who is also the nephew of former chief minister Mamata Banerjee, will receive security coverage in accordance with the standard protocols laid down by the Centre for VIPs of his standing.**

VIPs of his standing. While the specific details of the new tier were not disclosed for tactical reasons, sources noted that the adjustment follows a comprehensive review of current risk factors. Despite the changes to Abhishek's security detail, Mamata will continue to be protected under the Z+ category due to her status as the ex-CM of the state. The adjustments are as per the standard administrative protocol. The reassessment of security is a continuous and evolving process. Security tiers are frequently calibrated based on intelligence inputs, environmental factors, and updated threat profiles to ensure resources are deployed where they are most critically required. The threat perception assessment resulting in the latest shake-up of security cover for high-profile political figures in West Bengal came just days after the BJP came to power for the first time in the state following a resounding mandate in the Assembly elections held last month. The saffron party secured 207 seats in the 294-member assembly, ending the TMC's 15-year rule.

In a significant realignment of high-profile security cover in West Bengal, the state home ministry and security agencies have reassessed the protection levels for several top political figures, including Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Abhishek Banerjee, following a routine threat perception assessment and is in the process of revising the same. The Z+ category security previously accorded to the parliamentarian is being scaled down. Moving forward, the TMC national general secretary, who is also the nephew of former chief minister Mamata Banerjee, will receive security coverage in accordance with the standard protocols laid down by the Centre for

photographs for identity card purposes. Restrictions have also been imposed on entry into the Assembly premises. Each MLA will be allowed to bring a maximum of two accompanying persons. Sources said special emphasis has been given to maintain discipline during this year's swearing-in ceremony. District magistrates have been instructed to arrange temporary photo identity cards for MLAs and their guests to ensure hassle-free entry at the Assembly gates.

# Bengal: Tapas Roy takes oath as Protem Speaker

KOLKATA, MAY 12

Senior BJP leader and Manikata MLA Tapas Roy on Tuesday took oath as the Protem Speaker, ahead of the swearing-in of the newly elected West Bengal legislators over the next two days.

Roy, the seniormost MLA in the current state legislature, was administered the oath by Governor R N Ravi at the Lok Bhavan here. Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari and senior officials were present. As per rules, the Protem Speaker

oversees the swearing-in of the legislators after they are elected. Meanwhile, preparations are in full swing at the Assembly premises ahead of the oath-taking ceremony of the newly-elected members of the 18th Legislative Assembly. The Assembly Secretariat has issued a detailed schedule regarding the oath-taking programme. According to the notification sent by the Principal Secretary of the Assembly, the swearing-in ceremony will be held in two phases on May 13 and May 14. The Elec-

tion of Speaker will be held on May 15. The ministers will take oath during the first session from 11 am to 1:30 pm on May 13 following which the MLAs from nine districts of North Bengal, including Cooch Behar, Alipurduar, Malda and Murshidabad, will also be sworn in. In the afternoon session, legislators from Nadia, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas will take oath. However, the MLAs from Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, Purba Medinipur and Jhargram will take oath

during the morning session on May 14. In the afternoon phase on the same day legislators from the remaining districts, including Paschim Medinipur, Bankura, Purulia and Birbhum will be sworn in. The Assembly Secretariat has also issued several important guidelines to ensure a smooth swearing-in process. All MLAs have been instructed to carry their original election certificates at the time of the ceremony. They have also been asked to bring four copies of passport-size colour

photographs for identity card purposes. Restrictions have also been imposed on entry into the Assembly premises. Each MLA will be allowed to bring a maximum of two accompanying persons. Sources said special emphasis has been given to maintain discipline during this year's swearing-in ceremony. District magistrates have been instructed to arrange temporary photo identity cards for MLAs and their guests to ensure hassle-free entry at the Assembly gates.

# India has 60 days of crude, LNG and 45 days of LPG stock: Hardeep Singh Puri

NEW DELHI, MAY 12

India has adequate crude oil and LPG stocks and no immediate supply crisis, union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Tuesday, while highlighting that the country is maintaining strong energy buffers despite global volatility in oil markets. Speaking at the CII Annual Business Summit 2026, the minister said that India currently holds around 60 days of crude oil reserves and liquefied natural gas (LNG) as well as 45 days of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), adding that these levels are sufficient to ensure stability in domestic supply.

"We have 60 days of crude, which is the max we need. We have 60 days of LNG and 45 days of LPG," Puri said, stressing that India's energy preparedness remains

strong even amid global price fluctuations and supply pressures. The minister also acknowledged financial stress in the oil marketing sector, stating that oil companies are facing losses of around Rs 1,000 crore per day. He added that under-recoveries are Rs 198,000 crore and cumulative losses incurred by these companies are estimated at nearly Rs 1 lakh crore for the current quarter. "When this crisis began, there were some concerns, but we converted the challenge into an opportunity. We have ramped up our domestic production of LPG, which used to be 36,000 metric tons per day. We have now taken it up to 54,000 metric tons per day," he said. The minister further highlighted that the LPG demand had also moderated from 90,000 metric tonnes



to around 75,000 metric tonnes, partly due to seasonal factors, and credited supply-demand management for maintaining overall stability in the system. Earlier on Monday, the Centre reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for citizens to reduce fuel consumption. Officials urged people to use public transport, carpool where possible, and adopt electric vehicles and rail

freight to ease pressure on energy demand and support conservation efforts.

Sujata Sharma, joint secretary for ministry of petroleum & natural gas, said, "I would like to convey to you that the Prime Minister has urged all citizens of the country to reduce their consumption of petrol and diesel. Wherever possible, utilise the Metro and public transportation; opt for carpooling; prioritise railways as a mode of transportation for goods; and wherever feasible, increase the usage of electric vehicles. Let us all come together and make every possible effort to conserve energy in our daily lives, so that the economic burden currently weighing upon the nation may be alleviated."

Sharma said, "Our refineries are operating at optimum

levels. There are no instances of dry-outs at any retail outlets. Nor have any dry-outs been reported at LPG distributorships. Adequate stocks of petrol and diesel are available, and LPG supplies for domestic cooking purposes are being maintained. Over the past three days, 1 crore 26 lakh LPG cylinders have been delivered to households against 1 crore 14 lakh bookings. Similarly, sales of commercial LPG have exceeded 17,000 tonnes over the last three days. Sales of Auto LPG have also surpassed 762 tonnes.."

Meanwhile, global oil prices continue to rise, with the Brent Crude Oil prices extended their rally. Brent crude futures were up 30 cents, or 0.29%, at \$104.51 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate rose 31 cents, or 0.32%, to \$98.38.

# Himanta Biswa Sarma takes oath as Assam Chief Minister for the second time

GUWAHATI, MAY 12

Himanta Biswa Sarma, who led the BJP-headed NDA to a massive win in the Assam Assembly polls, was on Tuesday sworn in as the state's Chief Minister for the second successive term in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other political heavyweights here.

The 57-year-old Sarma, clad in traditional Assamese attire, was administered the oath of office and secrecy by state Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya in a brief but glittering ceremony at the Veterinary Ground. Four other ministers representing various constituents of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which has formed the government in the state for the third consecutive time, were sworn in after the chief minister. Sarma took the oath in Assamese in the name of God in an euphoric atmosphere marked by deafening applause and constant chants of "Jai Shri



Ram" from a large gathering. Immediately after taking the oath, he went to where Modi was sitting, and the two were seen warmly shaking hands. Modi later called it a "great day for Assam" and profusely praised Sarma. "A great day for Assam! Congratulations to Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma Ji on taking oath. He has made a mark as a wonderful administrator and has done pioneering work for the state. My best wishes to him for the

tenure ahead," he said. This is the second consecutive stint as CM for Sarma, who first ascended to the post in 2021. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, and Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal attended the ceremony alongside Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National President Nitin Nabin and several chief min-

isters and deputy chief ministers of National Democratic Alliance-ruled states. US Ambassador Sergio Gor was also present at the ceremony. Among the four ministers who took the oath, Rameswar Teli and Ajanta Neog represented the BJP, while Atul Bora and Charan Boro were from the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bodoland People's Front (BPF), respectively. While Teli is a former union minister, the other three were ministers in the previous government headed by Sarma. The Chief Minister said he felt honoured to reaffirm his oath to the people of Assam as their "Mukhya Sevak". "Under the leadership of esteemed Modi ji, the NDA government in Assam will continue to work tirelessly for the welfare of the people," he said. Laying down the top priority areas of his government, he mentioned "Protecting Sanatan Dharma, Sattra culture, and various tribal faiths in Assam". Sarma also invoked Goddess Kamakhya and the 15th-16th-cen-

tury Assamese saint-scholar and socio-religious reformer, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev. "May the blessings of Maa Kamakhya and Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev illuminate the lives of everyone in Assam and open new pathways to peace, progress, and prosperity. Assam will scale new heights of development in the coming days with their blessings," he said. The NDA retained power with a landslide victory, grabbing 102 of the 126 Assembly seats in the recent polls. For the first time in the history of the state, the BJP got an absolute majority, winning 82 seats. NDA partners Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and Bodoland People's Front (BPF) got ten seats each. The Congress-led Asom Sonmilito Morcha (ASM) won only 22 seats. While the Congress bagged 19, Rajiv Dal won two, and the Trinamool Congress tasted success in only one seat. The All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), which went solo, captured two seats.

## Odisha: Environmental clearance lapse flagged in Swaminarayan temple project

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 12

The State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Odisha, has admitted before the National Green Tribunal that construction activities undertaken by the Shree Swaminarayan Temple Trust in Puri's Balukhand wildlife sanctuary area were carried out without obtaining prior Environmental Clearance (EC). The admission was made in an affidavit filed before the NGT in connection with a petition alleging illegal construction activities in the Balukhand region. The petition was filed by Sanjeeb Kumar Mohanty and Santosh Kumar Mohanty. The matter has assumed significance as it pertains to compliance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, and environmental norms governing projects located in ecologically sensitive zones and areas near protected wildlife habitats. Referring to a 2019 Office Memorandum issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), the SEIAA affidavit outlined

the procedure applicable to developmental projects situated within 10 km of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. According to the memorandum annexed to the affidavit, projects falling within notified Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) and covered under the EIA Notification, 2006, require prior clearance from the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SCNBWL). The memorandum further clarifies that where final ESZ notifications have not been issued or remain in draft stage, projects located within a 10-km radius of National Parks or Wildlife Sanctuaries must obtain prior wildlife clearance from the SCNBWL before commencement of construction. Appearing for the applicants, advocate Akhand of the Orissa High Court submitted that environmental laws enacted for the protection of forests, wildlife and ecology cannot be circumvented and that all developmental projects are required to comply strictly with statutory environmental safeguards before initiating construction work.

## Naveen Patnaik slams NEET-UG 2026 paper leak, seeks accountability

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 12

Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday strongly criticised the cancellation of the NEET-UG 2026 following reports of a question paper leak, calling it a major breach of trust in the country's examination system. In a post on X, the Leader of Opposition of the Odisha assembly and president of the Biju Janata Dal said the compromise of examination sanctity was a betrayal of lakhs of students who had prepared with dedication, sacrifice and sleepless effort. Stating that this was not the first controversy surrounding NEET, Patnaik said repeated incidents of paper leaks had deepened

cynicism, increased anxiety and endangered the future of hardworking aspirants expecting a fair evaluation process. "As a nation, we cannot gamble with the destiny of our youth- the future of India," he said, while urging authorities to restore integrity and transparency in the examination system. Patnaik demanded that accountability be fixed swiftly to rebuild students' confidence and ensure that their hard work and perseverance were not undermined by administrative lapses. The cancellation of the medical entrance examination over alleged paper leak reports has sparked concern among students and parents across the country.

EDITORIAL

SHIFTING THE BURDEN:  
THE POLITICAL GAPS AND ECONOMIC  
RISKS IN THE PM'S 7-POINT CRISIS  
STRATEGY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent seven-point call to action directed at the citizens of India lays bare the true, underlying severity of the impact that the ongoing West Asia crisis is having on the nation. However, beyond the stark economic implications of the situation itself, Mr. Modi's public message stands out as highly problematic for two other critical reasons: its specific timing and its actual content.

A central component of his message involved urging the public to shift to a work-from-home model and to consciously reduce their personal fuel consumption. Many would argue that a far more effective approach to this issue might have been for the leadership to lead by example. Instead, the Prime Minister's public appeal comes only days after he and his fellow Cabinet colleagues flew extensively across all corners of the country and organized massive roadshows to campaign for the recent elections. Furthermore, none of his pre-election speeches made even a passing mention of these brewing resource issues.

This urgent message also stands in direct contrast to the daily, official reassurances previously offered by his own government's bureaucrats, who consistently insisted to the public that there was absolutely nothing to worry about. This sudden shift makes it clear that there is, in fact, a real crisis. Additionally, the Prime Minister's public address follows weeks of various Ministers attempting to heap immense praise on him for keeping a lid on petrol and diesel prices. While the political decision not to further burden the ordinary citizen with high fuel costs is welcome, the unfortunate flip side of this policy is that it completely failed to impress upon the population the genuine, structural need to curtail their fuel consumption early on.

The administration evidently took that strategic, calculated call to freeze prices before the elections took place, and it is now actively trying to dilute the consequences of that choice. Given this trajectory, a sharp hike in domestic fuel prices will likely follow in the near future. It is also telling that the Prime Minister's speech directly coincided with a remarkably similar call to action issued to Indian corporates by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). This type of tightly coordinated, simultaneous messaging between the state and big business points to a genuinely dire economic situation behind the scenes.

Furthermore, several of the specific structural suggestions put forward by the Prime Minister might actually trigger severe secondary negative impacts that could prove far more serious than the immediate problems they are trying to fix. Meanwhile, some of his other recommendations might simply fail to be as effective as the leadership hopes. For instance, if Indian farmers suddenly stop using chemical fertilizers as he has explicitly urged, the immediate fallout will be a sharp drop in domestic crop output—occurring at a delicate time when El Niño weather patterns are already set to severely hurt agricultural yields. High-frequency economic indicators are already revealing the deep financial damage inflicted by the West Asia crisis, and a sudden agricultural shock will only exacerbate an already volatile situation.

Similarly, the suggestion for citizens to completely halt foreign travel is intended to conserve precious foreign exchange reserves; however, official Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data up to February 2026 demonstrates that Indians' spending on foreign travel in the 2025–26 fiscal year was already down by 3%. March, which marked the first full month after the Iran war broke out, is highly likely to have seen an even sharper natural decline in travel spending. The real, systemic pressure currently weighing down the Indian rupee and draining the nation's foreign exchange reserves is actually driven by foreign institutional investors rapidly pulling their capital out of Indian markets, forcing the RBI to aggressively deploy valuable US dollars to shore up the falling domestic currency.

Urging ordinary Indians to strictly "buy local" serves as another indirect way of asking the population to simply consume less overall, given that purely domestic supply chains are currently not nearly robust enough to cater to existing consumer demand. Similarly, asking citizens to buy less gold is highly likely to prove futile as an economic policy, given the deep-rooted cultural attachment to the precious metal during times of geopolitical uncertainty.

Ultimately, all of these indicators converge on a single reality: the Indian economy is headed into a very difficult and painful period over the next few months. This is a crucial warning that the Prime Minister should have transparently delivered to the nation much earlier, regardless of whether elections were on the horizon or not.

Research shows that sprayed forests supported only about 24 bird species, compared to over 150 species in unaffected areas. In the Middle East, the Gulf War stands as one of the worst environmental disasters. During the conflict, 6–8 million barrels of oil were deliberately released into the Persian Gulf.

Transboundary Ecological  
Damage of Localized Wars

Frequent regional wars between different countries cause severe environmental damage through bombings and military operations, destroying forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands. Explosions and the use of chemical weapons release toxic substances into the air, soil, and water, leading to long-term pollution. Oil spills and the burning of fuel reserves significantly increase air and marine pollution. Wildlife habitats are damaged, forcing animals to migrate or face extinction. The use of heavy machinery and landmines degrades soil quality and reduces agricultural productivity. Water resources become contaminated, making them unsafe for both humans and animals. Wars weaken environmental protection systems and lead to the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Post-war reconstruction puts additional pressure on already damaged ecosystems. Increased greenhouse gas emissions during wars further intensify climate change.

The World War I and World War II caused immense long-term environmental damage. During World War I, trench warfare alone devastated vast areas of land across Europe; it destroyed vegetation, compacted the soil, and accelerated soil erosion. The use of chemical weapons such as chlorine and mustard gas poisoned soil and water systems, rendering land unusable for many years. Historical analyses indicate that millions of hectares of forests were cleared for military purposes, leading to habitat loss and a decline in biodiversity. In World War II, environmental damage increased further due to industrialized warfare methods; bombing campaigns destroyed ecosystems across Europe and Asia. According to estimates by the United Nations Environment Programme, wars disrupt ecosystems, contaminate water resources, and deplete natural resources, with impacts lasting for generations. During World War II, more than 15 million tonnes of oil were released into the oceans from sunken ships, causing long-term marine pollution. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki generated temperatures of around 4000°C and intense radiation, instantly destroying plant and animal life and leaving behind long-term radioactive contamination. Based on research published on ScienceDirect,

a review of 193 global case studies shows that wars commonly lead to deforestation, soil degradation, and the collapse of ecosystems. Additionally, reports from the United Nations Environment Programme indicate that armed conflicts have occurred in more than two-thirds of the world's biodiversity hotspots, posing a serious threat to conservation systems.

Major regional wars across different continents have caused large-scale environmental damage. Reports from the United Nations, International Union for Conservation of Nature, and various scientific journals clearly highlight this issue. In Asia, the Vietnam War is one of the most extensively studied examples. During this war, approximately 11–20 million gallons of herbicides such as Agent Orange were sprayed, destroying millions of hectares of forests, mangroves, and biodiversity. Around 366 kilograms of toxic dioxin were released, persisting in the environment for decades. Research shows that sprayed forests supported only about 24 bird species, compared to over 150 species in unaffected areas. In the Middle East, the Gulf War stands as one of the worst environmental disasters. During the conflict, 6–8 million barrels of oil were deliberately released into the Persian Gulf. Additionally, the burning of around 700 oil wells caused massive marine and air pollution. These events severely damaged coastal ecosystems, fisheries, and air quality. In Europe, during the Balkan Wars (1990s), bombing of industrial sites led to the release of toxic chemicals into rivers such as the Danube River, contaminating water resources and agricultural lands. In Africa, internal conflicts in regions like Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo have led to deforestation, wildlife loss, and increased illegal exploitation of natural resources due to weak governance.

In recent times, the Russia-Ukraine War has extensively damaged forests, agricultural lands, and water infrastructure, increasing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Experts describe these impacts as "ecocide" (environmental destruction). Similarly, conflicts in West Asia have destroyed water resources and urban ecosystems, further intensifying environmental stress. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, more than 40% of global food insecurity is linked to wars, as

agricultural lands are either abandoned or degraded. Reports from the International Committee of the Red Cross indicate that in around 60% of conflicts, water systems are damaged, reducing access to clean water and harming aquatic ecosystems. As reports suggest, environmental recovery is often very slow or may not occur fully; some ecosystems can take decades or even centuries to regenerate. Due to America-Israel and Iran war in just the first 14 days (February 28–March 14, 2026), the conflict generated over 5 million tonnes of CO2 emissions, exceeding the annual emissions of Iceland. The total emissions during this short period were equivalent to those of 84 countries combined, highlighting an extreme climate impact. Approximately 2.4 million tonnes of CO2 resulted from the destruction of buildings and infrastructure alone, while oil facility fires and fuel combustion contributed an additional 1.8–2 million tonnes, along with toxic air pollutants. More than 300 environmentally harmful incidents, including oil spills, strikes, and pollution events, were recorded across the region. Overall, the conflict has released toxins, heavy metals, and pollutants into the air, water, and soil, with environmental and health impacts likely to persist for decades.

Several global conferences and initiatives have been undertaken to protect natural resources from the impacts of regional wars. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was among the first to recognize that armed conflicts cause severe environmental damage and laid the foundation for global action. The Earth Summit, through Agenda 21, emphasized sustainable resource management and highlighted that conflicts significantly harm ecosystems. According to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, about 40% of conflicts since 1960 have been linked to natural resources, reinforcing the need to protect ecosystems in conflict-prone regions. The United Nations Environment Programme states that more than 60% of major armed conflicts occur in biodiversity-rich areas, increasing environmental risks. The United Nations General Assembly has adopted several resolutions, including in 2016, recognizing the need to protect the environment during warfare. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, around 50–60% of conflicts

damage water infrastructure, severely affecting both the environment and human life. Although not directly focused on wars, the Paris Agreement supports conflict-affected regions by promoting sustainable resource use and climate stability. Estimates suggest that environmental recovery may take 10 to 50 years or even longer, depending on the severity of the damage.

Protecting environmental resources from regional wars requires a combination of legal, institutional, and technological measures. International laws under the United Nations should be strictly enforced to prohibit environmental destruction during armed conflicts. Countries must enter into strong agreements to safeguard critical ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, and water resources. Environmental impact assessments should be made mandatory before and after military operations. The use of harmful weapons such as chemical weapons must be completely banned and monitored by global organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross. Protecting water infrastructure is essential to ensure access to clean water and to maintain ecological balance. Immediate funding should be allocated and implemented for post-war environmental restoration programs. Satellite monitoring and modern technologies can help detect environmental damage in real time. Local communities should be actively involved in conservation and restoration efforts. Strong governance and anti-corruption measures are necessary to prevent the illegal exploitation of natural resources during conflicts. Through global cooperation and awareness, led by organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme, long-term environmental sustainability and peace can be achieved.



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WHEN THE TRICOLOUR BREATHES

The tricolour does not rise by the kindness of wind alone. It ascends upon the unseen breath of soldiers who sew their heartbeats into the wounded fabric of the nation. Every sunrise over India is carried on the tired shoulders of a sleepless warrior. While cities sleep peacefully behind illuminated windows, far beyond the last known road, a lone soldier stands awake inside the brutal scripture of snow, teaching his pulse how to outlive another freezing night. The valleys of Kashmir have memorised their footsteps. The mountains echo with the silence of their sacrifice. Even winter—that merciless sculptor of suffering—lowers its icy gaze before their endurance. They are not merely men. They are Arjuna reborn in olive green, drawing not arrows but destinies. They are Abhimanyu, walking unflinchingly into circles of fire where survival itself becomes uncertain. They are the final flame standing between innocence and the advancing darkness of war. Behind them remain unfinished dreams: a mother waiting at the doorway, a wife folding loneliness into midnight prayers, a father disguising tears as pride, children learning the shape of love through fading photographs. Yet the soldier walks away from every personal paradise to defend a greater heaven called India. What greater sacrifice has humanity ever known? Rain whips his skin. Summer scorches his bones. Winter sharpens white knives against his chest. Still he stands—unyielding as destiny. For him, the border is not land alone; it is a sacred oath written in blood and vigilance.



He feeds upon silence. He drinks exhaustion. He wears danger like a second skin. And when bullets descend like metallic storms, he does not ask whether death is approaching. He asks only—whether the flag still flies. O soldier, your courage is not mere bravery; it is civilization itself standing guard against chaos. Because of you, temples awaken with bells, mosques rise with prayer, churches glow with candles, children chase kites beneath unbroken skies, and freedom sleeps safely within the arms of the nation. When at last your body returns to the patient embrace of Earth, India does not call it death. It calls it immortality. For the soil remembers every drop of blood that chose the nation over the self. And centuries from now, when history searches for the purest definition of patriotism, it will not look toward crowns, palaces, or thrones. It will kneel in silence before the grave of an unknown soldier—and finally understand how a nation survives.

... Dr. Peruka Raju ...  
7810032847

A Mandate That Signalled Change

Every election in the political history of Tamil Nadu brings with it a new message. However, the recent Assembly elections went beyond the boundaries of an ordinary political contest and emerged as a turning point that clearly reflected the changing mindset of the people. For decades, Tamil Nadu's political stage revolved around two dominant political forces. But this time, a new voice was heard across the state. That voice took shape through the political journey of Vijay. The election results indicated that the people of Tamil Nadu did not merely vote for party symbols this time; they voted with a desire for change. In the contest held for all two hundred and thirty-four Assembly constituencies, Vijay's party managed to rise to a level that crossed the numbers required for a majority, surprising many political observers. Voters who had been waiting for an alternative for many years expressed their emotions and expectations with clarity through this mandate.

One of the most striking features of this election was the growing political awareness among the youth. A large number of young voters, who had earlier remained distant from active political participation, came forward enthusiastically to polling booths. Assurances related to employment opportunities, educational development, technological progress, and control of corruption attracted the younger generation. Vijay's direct engagement with the people through social media platforms also strengthened his political movement.

Unlike the traditional style of politics that dominated Tamil Nadu for decades, this campaign became notable for its close interaction with ordinary people. Instead of depending entirely on massive public rallies, the campaign focused on small meetings, village visits, and face-to-face interactions with students. This approach created a sense of accessibility among the people and strongly reflected the idea that political leadership should not remain distant from society.

Issues such as the problems faced by farmers in rural regions, lack of employment opportunities in urban centres, and the economic struggles



“THE REAL CHALLENGE BEGINS WITH FULFILLING THE HOPES OF THE PEOPLE. IMPLEMENTING PROMISES MADE DURING ELECTIONS, ENSURING ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY, AND DELIVERING JUSTICE TO ALL SECTIONS OF SOCIETY ARE THE FACTORS THAT WILL DETERMINE THE FUTURE.”

of middle-class families played an important role in shaping the election outcome. Sections of society that were dissatisfied with previous governments appeared to move towards a new leadership. This shift in public thinking is not merely an election result; it is also a sign of the growing political awareness within society. Leaders entering politics from the film industry is not something new in Indian democracy. However, converting popularity into votes is never easy. To transform admiration into political trust, a leader requires continuous public engagement, clarity in political direction, and a strong understanding of public issues. In this regard, Vijay's carefully planned campaign strategy worked in his favour. Along with emotional appeal, his structured political

approach also became a major reason for this success.

Another significant aspect of this election was the role played by women voters. Promises related to family economy, education, safety, and welfare programmes attracted women across different sections of society. The active participation of rural women in the voting process can be seen as a healthy sign for democracy. Along with young voters, the support extended by women also contributed to the emergence of new political equations in the state.

The election results in several other states across India also revealed that public opinion does not move in a single direction everywhere. In some states, ruling parties managed to retain their dominance, while in others, opposition forces gained strength. Certain Assemblies witnessed clear majorities, whereas some states moved towards governments formed with narrow margins. These outcomes clearly indicate that voters are increasingly evaluating elections from the perspective of regional needs and local priorities.

If one carefully observes the verdict of voters across the country, one fact becomes evident. People are no longer

satisfied with promises alone. They are equally examining transparency in governance, visible development outcomes, and the credibility of leadership. For political parties, this election has emerged as a warning signal. At a time when public expectations are rapidly increasing, the results demonstrate that old political strategies alone are no longer sufficient.

At the same time, winning an election alone cannot be considered the true measure of leadership. The real challenge begins with fulfilling the hopes of the people. Implementing promises made during elections, ensuring administrative efficiency, and delivering justice to all sections of society are the factors that will determine the future. For every leader who comes to power, maintaining the trust of the people remains the most important responsibility.

Viewed in its entirety, the political transformation witnessed in Tamil Nadu cannot be seen merely as the victory of one political party. It stands as a reminder of how powerful the people's verdict can be in a democracy. These elections demonstrated how decisive voters can express their desire for change when the need arises. In the coming years, this transformation may influence not only the politics of Tamil Nadu but also broader political equations across India.

In a democracy, the final word always belongs to the people. When they trust, leaderships rise. When they demand change, political landscapes are rewritten. These elections have once again reminded the nation of that enduring truth.



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## EESL Warns Citizens on Safe AC Usage Amid Heatwave Surge

**HYDERABAD, MAY 12** As severe heatwave conditions continue to grip several parts of India, Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), operating under the Union Ministry of Power, has issued a nationwide public advisory urging citizens to follow safe operating practices while using air conditioners. The advisory comes amid growing concerns over incidents of AC-related fires and suspected explosions reported from multiple urban centres during the ongoing summer season.



stallation practices rather than sudden technical failures. The organisation observed that in many households, air conditioners are operating continuously for 12 to 20 hours a day due to extreme temperatures. Simultaneously, high ambient heat reduces cooling efficiency, forcing compressors and refrigerant systems to work harder. This increased load, coupled with growing electricity demand, is also placing immense pressure on household wiring and local power infrastructure. EESL noted that electrical faults, overloaded circuits, loose connections, blocked airflow caused by dust accumulation, refrigerant leaks, and servicing by untrained technicians remain among the primary reasons behind AC-related accidents during summer. As part

of its safety recommendations, EESL advised consumers to maintain air-conditioner temperatures between 24°C and 26°C, stating that such settings ensure optimal comfort, reduce strain on compressors, and improve energy efficiency. The organisation highlighted studies showing that increasing the AC temperature by just one degree can lower electricity consumption by nearly six percent. Consumers have also been encouraged to use sleep mode and timer functions wherever possible and avoid operating air conditioners continuously for excessively long periods. Experts cautioned that uninterrupted usage can lead to internal heat build-up, resulting in overheating and potential equipment failure. Highlighting electrical safety as a critical

factor, EESL stressed the need for dedicated electrical circuits for air conditioners. It warned against connecting multiple heavy appliances to the same power line, as overloaded circuits are among the leading causes of electrical fires in residential areas. The advisory further recommended installation of protective devices such as Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCBs) and RCCB/ELCB systems to safeguard against short circuits and electric shock hazards. Proper earthing and the use of voltage stabilisers were also identified as essential, particularly in regions experiencing frequent voltage fluctuations. EESL cautioned consumers against relying on unauthorised technicians for installation and servicing work. The organisation

advised citizens to engage only certified professionals for installation, gas charging, repairs, and maintenance. Improper installation of indoor and outdoor units, insufficient ventilation around compressors, and the use of incompatible refrigerants can create dangerous pressure build-up within AC systems, officials warned. Special emphasis was placed on the installation of outdoor units in well-ventilated and shaded locations with sufficient airflow clearance. Enclosed balconies, congested shafts, and covered outdoor units trap heat and compromise operational safety and efficiency. The organisation also underlined the importance of regular preventive maintenance during summer months. Consumers have been advised to clean AC filters every 15 to 20 days to ensure proper airflow and prevent overheating. Annual professional servicing before the onset of summer was described as essential for identifying refrigerant leaks, loose wiring, compressor wear, and hidden faults that could lead to

breakdowns during peak usage periods. EESL additionally highlighted refrigerant safety, stating that only manufacturer-approved refrigerants should be used and gas charging must be carried out strictly according to prescribed pressure standards. Even minor refrigerant leaks, when exposed to electrical sparks, can pose serious fire and explosion hazards. The advisory urged consumers to immediately switch off air conditioners and seek professional assistance if they observe warning signs such as burning smell, smoke, unusual vibration, hissing sounds, repeated circuit breaker tripping, or reduced cooling performance. Particular caution has been advised for apartment complexes and densely populated urban areas where multiple high-load appliances operate simultaneously on shared electrical systems. Housing societies and resident welfare associations have been encouraged to conduct periodic electrical inspections and maintain adequate fire safety equipment.



## NFR Central Hospital Participates in Nationwide Drive to Improve New-born Survival

**MALIGAON, 12 MAY, 2026:**

The Central Hospital of Northeast Frontier Railway actively participated in the nationwide Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP) Day on 10th May, 2026 reaffirming its commitment towards strengthening new-born healthcare and reducing preventable neonatal deaths. As part of the programme, 15 healthcare professionals participated in a dedicated training session conducted at Central Hospital, Maligaon. The session was led by Dr. Immanuel Tuolor, Senior Divisional Medical Officer, Paediatrics Department, who served as the Lead Instructor. The event was coordinated by Dr. KMSK Krishna, Senior Divisional Medical Officer, Paediatrics Department. The nationwide initiative was organised under the leadership of the National Neonatology

Forum (NNF) in collaboration with the Government of India, Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP), Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) and Trained Nurses' Association of India (TNAI). The programme aimed at building large-scale life-saving capacity at every delivery point by ensuring the availability of at least one trained healthcare provider for every new-born. The initiative emphasised the importance of timely intervention during the critical "golden minute" after birth, when immediate resuscitation support can significantly improve new-born survival outcomes. Through its participation in the programme, Central Hospital, Maligaon reaffirmed the commitment of Northeast Frontier Railway towards quality healthcare services and continuous capacity building of medical professionals.

## Rahul Gandhi submits dissent note on CBI chief selection: Mockery of process

A high-level meeting was held at the Prime Minister's residence and attended by PM Modi, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Gandhi to discuss potential successors to outgoing CBI Director Praveen Sood, whose tenure ends on May 24.



Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Tuesday submitted a dissent note to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the selection process for the next Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) chief, alleging that the exercise was biased and reduced his constitutional role to that of a "rubber stamp". Gandhi shared his dissent note on X and wrote, "I cannot abdicate my constitutional duty by participating in a biased exercise." A high-level meeting was held at the Prime Minister's residence and attended by PM Modi, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Gandhi to discuss potential successors to CBI Director Praveen Sood, whose tenure ends on May 24. I have written to the Prime Minister recording my dissent from the CBI Director selection process. I cannot abdicate my constitutional duty by participating in a biased exercise.

**'DENIED CRUCIAL INFORMATION'**  
In his note, the Congress MP accused the Modi government of misusing the CBI to target political opponents, journalists and crit-

ics. He also alleged that he was denied access to crucial information regarding the shortlisted candidates, calling it a "mockery of the process". "It is to prevent such institutional capture that the Leader of Opposition is included in the Selection Committee. Regrettably, you have continued to deny me any meaningful role in the process," Gandhi wrote. He further claimed that despite repeated written requests, he was not provided with the self-appraisal reports or 360-degree assessment reports of the eligible candidates. The Rae Bareilly MP said he was expected to examine the appraisal records of 69 candidates for the first time during the meeting itself. "A detailed review of these records is crucial to assess each candidate's history and performance," Gandhi wrote, alleging that the process had been structured to ensure the government's preferred candidate was selected. This was not the first time the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha had recorded his dissent over the selection process. Earlier, he had written to the Prime

Minister on October 21 and May 5 last year, suggesting measures to ensure a fair and transparent procedure. However, Gandhi claimed in his latest dissent note that he did not receive any response to those suggestions.

**NEW CBI CHIEF EXPECTED SOON**  
Meanwhile, the meeting lasted over an hour, sources said, but there was no official word on the discussions. The decision on the next CBI director is likely to be announced soon, they added. The government appoints the CBI director on the recommendation of a Selection Committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of Opposition. Sources indicated that several senior IPS officers from different states are being considered for the top post. Among the names under consideration are Parag Jain, Shatruejt Kapoor, Yogesh Gupta, GP Singh and Praveer Ranjan. The development comes at a time when the premier investigating agency is handling several high-profile and politically sensitive cases.

## Children among 6 killed as temple wall collapses amid storm in Maharashtra

Devotees had gathered at the temple to seek the blessings of the deity. However, strong winds began sweeping through the area towards the evening hours, causing some of them to take shelter beside an under-construction wall.



The devotees were taking shelter from strong winds and heavy rain near an under-construction wall when it collapsed. Six devotees, including some children, were killed and more than a dozen others were injured after an under-construction wall on the premises of a temple collapsed following strong winds and heavy rain in Maharashtra's Sangli district on Tuesday. People had gathered at the temple to seek the blessings of the deity. The incident took place as strong winds began sweeping through the area towards the evening hours. To

protect themselves from the storm, some devotees took shelter beside a nearby wall that was under construction. As the intensity of the winds increased, a nearby shed made of iron sheets got uprooted and slammed directly onto the wall. "There were around 350 devotees on the temple premises. In the evening, sudden strong winds accompanied by heavy rains lashed the area, prompting devotees to take shelter along a wall and under tin sheets. The wall and the tin sheets suddenly collapsed, trapping devotees," Sangli Superintendent of Police Tushar

Doshi was quoted as saying by news agency PTI. While six people died on the spot, at least 20 others were injured. The wounded devotees were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment. A wave of grief spread across the entire area in the aftermath of the tragedy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of lives. In a post on X, he said, "Deeply pained to hear the loss of lives due to the collapse of a wall in Sangli, Maharashtra. My thoughts are with the bereaved families in this sad hour. May the injured recover at the earliest."

## Chhattisgarh Officer Named in Rs1.5 Crore LPG Diversion Scam

Other than arresting Ajay Yadav, the mastermind, the police also arrested gas agency operator Pankaj Chandrakar and Raipur resident Manish Choudhary. The Chhattisgarh Police have uncovered an LPG diversion racket valued at approximately Rs 1.5 crore, leading to the arrest of District Food Officer Ajay Yadav, who is accused of masterminding the conspiracy. Alongside Yadav, gas agency operator Pankaj Chandrakar and Raipur resident Manish Choudhary have

been taken into custody. The case involves the illegal siphoning of over 92 metric tonnes of LPG from six tanker capsules that had been seized under the Essential Commodities Act in December 2025 and were supposedly being held in secure custody. Investigators claim the conspiracy was initiated on March 23, when Yadav and Chandrakar allegedly met to plan the theft, later involving Choudhary to find buyers for the diverted gas. On March 26, the accused

allegedly assessed the tankers at the Singhoda police station, estimating the volume at over 100 metric tonnes. Subsequently, a deal was eventually struck with Thakur Petrochemicals for Rs 80 lakh. According to police reports, the illicit profit distribution was pre-planned, with Yadav allegedly slated to receive Rs 50 lakh, while his accomplices were to split the remainder. The execution of the scam relied on a court-approved custody transfer process.

## Delhi Police arrest 4 men for molesting, assaulting 2 women at Nehru Place

**NEW DELHI: (MAY 12)**  
All four men detained in connection with the alleged molestation and assault of two women outside a hotel in southeast Delhi's Nehru Place have now been formally arrested, police said on Tuesday. A group of men allegedly molested and assaulted the women, one from Assam and the other from Bihar, near a tea stall outside the hotel. Police identified the accused as Md Fahad (28), a computer operator at a private institute; Md Savej (45), a former bouncer working as a contract worker; Md Arif (33), employed at a mobile store in Noida; and Aman (21), a taxi driver. All four are residents of Jakir Nagar in Okhla.

**In a sharp swipe at China, India said 'responsible nations' should reflect on backing state sponsors of terror. The remark came as China publicly admitted to helping Pakistan during Operation Sindoor last year.**

India said "responsible nations" must reflect on their attempts to support state sponsors of terror, in a pointed message to China after Beijing publicly admitted assisting Pakistan during Operation Sindoor last year. The remarks come days after a Chinese official suggested Beijing provided on-ground technical assistance to Pakistan during the three-day hostilities. It, however, did not account for much as Islamabad scurried to Delhi for a ceasefire as the Indian military pounded air bases in Pakistan. In its weekly media briefing, the Ministry of External



Affairs (MEA) underscored that such actions by global actors undermined their credibility and global reputation. "We have seen reports that corroborate what was known earlier," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. **INDIA'S REPUTATION JAB AT CHINA**  
"It is for nations that consider themselves responsible to reflect on whether supporting attempts to protect terror-

ism infrastructure affects their reputation and standing," Jaiswal further said. Jaiswal reiterated that Operation Sindoor was a "precise, targeted and calibrated response" to the terror attack in Pahalgam, which left 25 tourists dead. "It was aimed at destroying state-sponsored terror infrastructure operating out of Pakistan," he further said. That China provided support to its all-weather friend Pakistan

during the conflict was known all along. In July last year, Lieutenant General Rahul Singh first revealed that China provided "live inputs on our deployment" to Pakistan. Not only China, but Lt General Singh also disclosed that Turkey also supplied Bayraktar drones to Pakistan. But such assistance had little impact on the conflict as India destroyed nine terror camps and struck 11 military sites deep inside Pakistan. **HOW CHINA HELPED PAKISTAN DURING SINDOOR**  
So, what help did China provide? On the day India marked the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, China's state broadcaster CCTV aired interviews with engineers from the Aviation Industry Corporation of China's (AVIC) Chengdu Aircraft Design and Research Institute. The institute works on developing military aircraft and drones for China's air force. In the interview, one of the engineers, Zhang Heng, said they worked alongside Pakistani personnel during the hostilities. "At the support base, we constantly heard fighter jets roaring into the sky and air-raid sirens blaring," Zhang was quoted as saying by the South China Morning Post. "By late morning, temperatures were nearing 50 degrees. It was physically exhausting and mentally intense," he further said. Zhang emphasised their role was to ensure that their equipment could "truly perform at its full combat potential". He was likely referring to the J-10CE fighter jet, manufactured by the Chengdu Group.

## Proposal to reserve state jobs for discharged Agniveers cleared by Punjab CM

Punjab has begun work on a new policy for Agniveers returning from military service, with the state now preparing a framework that could reshape recruitment across several key government departments. Punjab has moved to create a reservation policy for Agniveers in state government jobs after completion of their tenure under the Agnipath scheme, with Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann giving in-principle approval to the proposal during a high-level meeting in Chandigarh on Tuesday. The state government has also formed a high-powered committee of senior civil and police officers to prepare the framework and recruitment modalities for the proposed policy. According to

the Punjab government, the committee includes senior officers Vikas Partap, Bhawna Garg, Sumer Singh Gurjar and S S Srivastava. The panel has been tasked with finalising recommendations on reservation criteria and recruitment procedures for Agniveers across various departments. "The criteria regarding reservation and selection of Agniveers should be finalised at the earliest so that the services of these highly skilled and disciplined youth can be utilised in the best possible manner," Mann said during the meeting. The Chief Minister said trained Agniveers could play an important role in strengthening several government departments after completing military service.

## Dates for Foreign Secretary's Nepal visit to be finalised at mutual convenience: MEA

NEW DELHI

Highlighting the multifaceted India-Nepal partnership, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated on Tuesday that New Delhi has received an invitation for Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to visit Nepal, the dates of which will be decided as per mutual convenience of both nations. Addressing a weekly media briefing on Tuesday, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal recalled the interactions between two nations after Balen Shah assumed office as Nepal's PM. He stated that the two nations are working closely to further deepen ties.

When asked about reports in Nepali media about Misri's proposed visit to Kathmandu having been postponed over Shah's reluctance to meet foreign diplomats, Jaiswal said, "We share multifaceted partnership with Nepal. After the elections in Nepal, our Prime Minister had conveyed his congratulations and he also spoke to the Prime Minister of Nepal, conveying our steadfast commitment to building upon the strong India-Nepal friend-



ship and traditional ties that we have. Post that, we also had our External Affairs Minister, he had a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of Nepal His Excellency Mr Shisir Khanal. This happened in Mauritius. "Both sides now at various levels, are working closely to further deepen our partnership. We have received invitation from the Nepalese side for our Foreign Secretary to visit Nepal. Dates for a visit will be finalised at the mutual convenience of the two sides and we will keep you posted of these developments," he added. Last week, the Nepal gov-

ernment said that it has raised concerns with both India and China over the use of the Lipulekh Pass -- a disputed territory claimed by both Nepal and India -- for the pilgrimage of Indian tourists to Kailash Mansarovar. In a statement, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the government had once again conveyed its position and concerns to both India and China through diplomatic channels regarding the proposed pilgrimage route via Lipulekh. India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had already confirmed that the pilgrimage

would be conducted in batches through two established routes -- Lipulekh Pass and Sikkim's Nathu La Pass -- with 10 batches, each consisting of 50 pilgrims, using both routes. "Lipulekh Pass has been a long-standing route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra since 1954, and the Yatra through this route has been going on for decades. This is not a new development," the MEA stated on May 3 in response to media queries regarding claims related to border issues made by Foreign Ministry of Nepal in the context of the annual Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

"As regards territorial claims, India has consistently maintained that such claims are neither justified nor based on historical facts and evidence. Such unilateral artificial enlargement of territorial claims is untenable. India remains open to a constructive interaction with Nepal on all issues in the bilateral relationship, including on resolving agreed outstanding boundary issues through dialogue and diplomacy," the statement added.

Last month, EAM Jaishankar met Nepal's counterpart Shisir Khanal on the sidelines of the 9th Indian Ocean Conference in Maldives and discussed realising the full potential of bilateral partnership by deeper collaboration in various sectors. It was the first meeting between two ministers after Khanal assumed office as Nepal's Foreign Minister in March.

"Glad to meet FM Shisir Khanal of Nepal this afternoon. Congratulated him on his appointment. Discussed realising the full potential of the India-Nepal partnership by deeper collaboration in different sectors," EAM Jaishankar posted on X.

## US bans visas for 13 persons, cites shared commitment with India against drug trafficking

NEW YORK

Citing the shared commitment with India to fight drug trafficking, the United States has banned visas for 13 people associated with an Indian business that was already sanctioned for allegedly trafficking in the deadly drug fentanyl, State Department Spokesperson Tommy Pigott announced on Tuesday.

They "are close business associates of KS International Traders and its owner", and the company "generated revenue through the trafficking of illicit fentanyl, which President Trump designated as a Weapon of Mass Destruction", he said. "This action underscores the United States' and India's enduring and shared commitment to dismantling illicit drug entities and disrupting trafficking networks that harm Americans," Pigott said. He did not name the people covered by the visa ban.

He said the visa ban was imposed on them under a provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act that bars drug traffickers from entering the United States. In September, KS International Traders, its owner, identified as Khizar Mohammad Iqbal Shaikh.



## South African President vows to take investigation report about him for judicial review

JOHANNESBURG

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has announced his intention to take an Independent Panel report that suggests he may have violated the constitution for judicial review. Addressing the nation Monday night, following a landmark Constitutional Court ruling the previous Friday, Ramaphosa responded to the court's directive that Parliament must initiate impeachment proceedings against him.

This long-standing legal battle stems from the so-called "Phala Phala" scandal, where 580,000 US dollars in cash was discovered at his private farm in February 2020, Xinhua news agency reported.

An Independent Panel, established by Parliament, previously found evidence that the president may have breached the constitution.

While Ramaphosa maintains that he did not steal public funds or commit any crime, he has pledged full cooperation with the relevant institutions.

"On the basis of advice from my legal team and as envisaged by the Constitutional Court... I have therefore decided to pro-

ceed to take the independent panel's report on review on an expeditious basis," said Ramaphosa in the national address.

"I do so not out of disrespect for Parliament or its processes, but to affirm the need for such findings to be correct in law and in fact," he added.

The president clarified that while he had initially intended to seek a review sooner, he had deferred it after a parliamentary majority voted against his impeachment, a move the Constitutional Court has now deemed incorrect, ruling that the report must instead be referred to an impeachment committee.

Despite calls from opposition parties for his immediate resignation, Ramaphosa remains firm, arguing that the court made no direct finding of guilt against him and that resigning now would preempt a constitutionally defined process.

He concluded by pledging to continue his administration's work in fighting crime and strengthening state institutions. House Speaker Thoko Didiza has confirmed that Parliament will comply with the court's judgment.

## African leaders agree to facilitate domestic manufacturing of health products

NAIROBI

African leaders agreed on Tuesday to accelerate a continental initiative designed to bolster the domestic production of essential health commodities, including medicines and vaccines. They made the remarks on the sidelines before the opening ceremony of the Africa Forward Summit in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

During a high-level meeting to discuss the newly launched Africa Initiative for Medical Access and Manufacturing (AIM2030), Kenyan President William Ruto said that Africa must overcome infrastructure and technical capacity bottlenecks to accelerate the implementation of the AIM2030.

He added that addressing these gaps is essential for the continent to achieve self-sufficiency in vaccines and medicines, which is critical for effectively combating deadly diseases, Xinhua news agency reported.

## Pakistan's military tactics during conflict involve use of civilian areas

ISLAMABAD

India exercised significant restraint during Operation Sindoor last year, targeting high-value terror infrastructures and terrorists across Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) and Pakistan, despite being aware of military assets concealed within civilian areas. Indian forces chose not to target those locations to avoid civilian casualties, underscoring New Delhi's emphasis on adhering to the laws of armed conflict -- a standard Pakistan's military has repeatedly failed to uphold.

According to a report in 'Eurasia Review', in the context of modern conflict, the Pakistani military has developed and refined a troubling operational approach involving the deliberate positioning of lethal weapon systems within the civilian-populated areas. "This is not an act of desperation or logistical necessity. Evidence gathered over decades of observation along the Line of Control (LoC), as well as during major military operations, strongly suggests that this is a calculated, premeditated strategy -- one designed to exploit the moral restraint of the adversary while simultaneously manufacturing a propaganda narrative.

## Russia tests new Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile

MOSCOW

Russia has successfully tested the Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile, according to Russia's Commander of the Strategic Missile Forces, local media reported.

Sergey Karakayev, Commander of the Strategic Missile Forces, stated in a report to Russian President Vladimir Putin that the results of the tests of the Sarmat missile system confirmed the specified characteristics and the correctness of the decisions incorporated into it.

The missile "will significantly increase the combat capabilities of the ground-based strategic nuclear forces to guarantee the destruction of targets



and solve strategic deterrence problems", Karakayev stated in the report to the President, Russia's state-owned TASS news agency noted.

Putin congratulated the Russian military on the suc-

cessful test of the Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile.

Putin emphasised that this is "the most powerful package system in the world, equal in power to the Soviet-era Voevoda missile system in our arse-

nal". "The total yield of the delivered warhead is more than four times greater than any existing, most powerful Western equivalent," Putin stated.

Putin highlighted that "the missile can travel not only along a ballistic but also a sub-orbital trajectory, which allows for a range of over 35,000 km while simultaneously doubling its accuracy and the ability to penetrate all existing and future anti-missile defence systems". Karakayev stated that the test confirmed the missile system's flight range, throw weight, launch readiness, and the countermeasures employed.

The first successful launch of this system was carried out on April 20, 2022, from the

Plesetsk Cosmodrome in the Arkhangelsk Region. Putin also confirmed that the Sarmat system will be deployed at the end of the year.

The RS-28 Sarmat, an advanced ground-based silo-based missile system capable of carrying nuclear warheads and a heavy liquid-propellant orbital intercontinental ballistic missile, has been under development since the 2000s, the report noted.

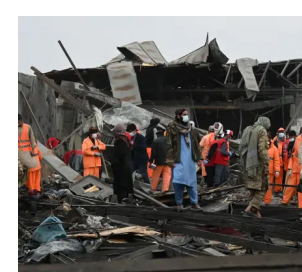
Putin stated that Moscow was forced to "consider ensuring its strategic security in the context of the new reality and the need to maintain a strategic balance of power and parity" in 2002 after Washington withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

## Over 370 Afghan civilians killed in conflict with Pakistan between January to March

KABUL

At least 372 Afghan civilians have been killed and 397 injured between January 1 and March 31 this year due to cross-border violence between the Pakistani military and Afghan forces, the United Nations revealed on Tuesday.

The Human Rights Service of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) documented over 750 civilian deaths and injuries in Afghanistan because of cross-border armed violence between Afghanistan's "de facto" security forces and Pakistani military. Most of these civilian casualties occurred as a result of airstrikes in February and March, the report noted. According to the



report, most of these civilian casualties occurred after Pakistan announced the start of Operation Ghazab il-Haq on February 26, with over half attributed to the March 16 airstrikes by Pakistani military forces impacting the Omid Drug Rehabilitation Hospital in Kabul.

"Among the total civilian casualties were 72 women, 554 men, 48 girls and 95 boys. Up

until the March 16 airstrike on the Omid Drug Rehabilitation Centre, women and children made up over half of civilian casualties recorded, however as the Omid Hospital housed only males, this breakdown changed after the incident," the UNAMA update on Cross-border civilian casualties (January-March 2026) in Afghanistan stated.

Airstrikes caused 64 per cent of the civilian casualties while cross-border firing like mortars and artillery caused 34 per cent of the casualties, the report noted. On March 16, at around 8.50 pm in Kabul city, airstrikes by Pakistani military forces impacted the Omid Drug Rehabilitation Hospital, a facility for the treatment of drug-affected individuals.

## Russian forces resume 'special military operation' in Ukraine as ceasefire ends



MOSCOW

The "special military operation" by the Russian troops is continuing following the end of the ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine, the Russian Ministry of Defence stated on Tuesday.

Moscow also accused Kyiv of committing 30,383 cases of ceasefire violations during the ceasefire in the "special operation zone". The Russian Defence Ministry noted that the ceasefire was strictly observed by all Russian troop groups, and they remained at their previously occupied positions from 00:00 on May 8 to 24:00 on May 11.

Ukraine carried out 859 attacks on Russian positions using rocket launchers, artillery, mortars and carried out 5,825 drone

attacks, Russia's state-owned Tass news agency mentioned citing details from the defence ministry. It also stated that Russian armed forces responded to the actions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces by firing back at rocket launchers, artillery, and mortar positions, including UAV launch sites. On Tuesday, Dmitry Peskov, the Russian President's press secretary, noted at a briefing that a lot of groundwork has already been laid to advance a settlement in Ukraine; however, it's too early to discuss specific dates and targets. "The wealth of work in the peace process allows us to say that completion is indeed near," the Kremlin spokesman said. "But in this context, it's impossible to talk about specifics at this point."

## Report flags reconstruction and relocation of terror facilities in Pakistan

WASHINGTON

The terror facilities in Pakistan, which had suffered a major damage during Operation Sindoor launched by the Indian military last year in the aftermath of the April 22, 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, are now undergoing large-scale clearing work, with construction materials and supplies visible across the sites, indicating rebuilding activity.

Following Operation Sindoor, terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) shifted its key operational bases from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), considering the latter as more defensible after Indian strikes left PoK increasingly vulnerable, a report said on Tuesday. The reloca-

tion is being carried out "with the direct facilitation of Pakistan's state structures", while visible JeM gatherings were held under police protection, along with involvement of the radical Islamist group Jamiat Ulema e Islam (JUI), said the US-based Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), citing media reports.

Under Operation Sindoor, the Indian Army conducted strikes on nine terror-linked sites associated with the banned groups JeM, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) across Pakistan and PoK. "Satellite imagery shows renewed construction activity at the Jamia Subhan Allah compound, located beside the N-5 National Highway in Bahawalpur. Images dated April 14, 2026, reveal heavy machinery

ERRORIST CAMP : MARKAZ SUBHANALLAH BAHAWALPI (PAK)



and multiple construction vehicles deployed across the site," the MEMRI report detailed.

"High-resolution satellite imagery obtained from the US-based space technology company Vantor shows that the mosque's damaged domes have since been

restored. The repaired domes appear noticeably darker in colour, suggesting recent cement work, compared to the lighter-toned paint seen in images captured prior to the strikes," it added.

According to the report, reconstruction efforts at JeM-linked

sites appear to extend beyond Bahawalpur. It added that satellite imagery from April 22 this year shows similar developments at the Syedna Bilal Mosque in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) -- another site associated with the group. Pakistan continues to be under observation by the Asia Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering, which assesses countries' adherence to Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards on terror financing and anti-money laundering measures.

"Even so, international media reported that social media accounts allegedly associated with JeM had hinted at fundraising campaigns conducted through digital wallets to support reconstruction work at the Subhan Allah complex," it noted.

## APSEZ to invest Rs 13,000 cr in marine business, enters Europe subsea market

NEW DELHI: (MAY 12)

A dani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd is planning to invest Rs 13,000 crore by FY31 to build its marine business as the company expands into specialised subsea and ultra-deepwater operations in Europe through a partnership between its Astro Offshore platform and Oceaneering International Inc. The company said its marine platform, Astro Offshore has entered into a contract with US-based engineering and applied technology company Oceaneering International Inc to pursue offshore and subsea opportunities in Europe, marking APSEZ's entry into specialised deepwater engineering and underwater infrastructure services in the region. As part of the expansion, Astro Offshore will add a 2021-built 97-metre DP2 multipurpose support vessel, Energy Savannah -- to be renamed Astro Atlas -- to strengthen its subsea construction and offshore execution capabilities.

## ITC Bets on 'Phygital' Farmer Ecosystem to Boost Farm Resilience

NEW DELHI: (MAY 12)

ITC Ltd is banking on its integrated 'phygital' ecosystem powered by tech-enabled solutions, ITCMAARS in its pursuit of strengthening farm resilience while improving productivity and farmer livelihoods, a senior company official said on Tuesday. ITCMAARS is enabling real-time detection of plant diseases, delivering tailored remedial guidance to Indian farmers through its 'phygital' ecosystem that has integrated, hyperlocal and customised solutions such as the 'Crop Doctor', powered by AI and ML-based capabilities, the company said.

# Sensex ends 1,456 points lower, Nifty below 23,400; TCS, Infosys fall over 3%

**Benchmark equity indices ended sharply lower on Tuesday as rising crude oil prices, a record-low rupee and escalating geopolitical tensions triggered broad-based selling across sectors, wiping out nearly Rs 9.6 lakh crore in investor wealth.**

The BSE Sensex crashed 1,456.32 points or 1.92% to close at 74,558.96, while the NSE Nifty50 slumped 454.15 points or 1.91% to settle at 23,361.70. The sharp selloff erased approximately Rs 10 lakh crore in investor wealth during the session.

Investor sentiment remained fragile after the rupee plunged to a fresh all-time low of 95.58 against the US dollar earlier in the day, intensifying concerns around inflation, India's import bill and foreign fund outflows.

Markets also remained under pressure due to fears surrounding the fragile US-Iran ceasefire and a sharp surge in crude oil prices. Brent crude prices have climbed significantly in recent sessions, raising concerns over higher fuel costs and pressure on India's current account deficit.

India imports more than 85% of its crude oil require-



ments, making domestic markets highly sensitive to global energy price shocks.

### IT stocks among worst hit

Information technology stocks emerged among the biggest drags on the market amid fears surrounding slowing global growth and weaker technology spending by overseas clients.

TCS fell 3.92%, Infosys declined 3.23%, while HCLTech dropped 4.21%. Tech Mahindra slipped 4.54% and Wipro fell 3.79%, dragging the Nifty IT index sharply lower.

Banking and financial stocks also witnessed heavy selling pressure. HDFC Bank declined 1.96%, ICICI Bank fell 2.11% and Bajaj Finance dropped 3.47%. Shriram Finance plunged over 5%, while HDFC Life and SBI Life also ended deep in the red.

Consumption-linked stocks remained under pressure following concerns around reduced discretionary spending and rising fuel costs. Titan tumbled 3.69%, Trent fell 3.21% and InterGlobe Aviation (IndiGo) declined 2.35%.

VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments Limited, said the prime minister's recent austerity appeal had impacted sentiment in sectors linked to discretionary consumption.

"The austerity call by the prime minister impacted the stock prices of sectors which are expected to be negatively affected by reduced consumption. Stocks of sectors like jewellery, travel and hotels bore the brunt of selling yesterday," he said. He added that market direction would continue to depend heavily

on crude oil prices and developments in West Asia. "It is important to understand that these sectors will bounce back smartly if crude falls sharply and the austerity package becomes irrelevant. Therefore, watch out for the West Asia geopolitical situation and crude prices," Vijayakumar said. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, said domestic equities remained under pressure due to a combination of rising crude oil prices, rupee weakness and foreign investor outflows. "Domestic equities remained under pressure, with the rupee weakening to record lows amid rising crude oil prices linked to escalating tensions in West Asia along with FII outflows. The decline was broad-based, led by IT and realty stocks," he said.

Nair added that IT stocks were also impacted by concerns around AI-led disruption and pricing pressure.

"IT stocks underperformed as concerns grew around AI-driven pricing pressure and potential disruption following recent enterprise adoption initiatives by OpenAI," he said.

He said investors are now closely tracking upcoming domestic inflation data to assess the broader economic

impact of the ongoing geopolitical crisis. "Investors are also awaiting the upcoming domestic CPI data to assess the spillover impact of the ongoing US-Iran conflict. Near-term market sentiment is likely to stay volatile due to crude and currency concerns, though any signs of geopolitical easing could support relief rallies, aided by resilient domestic fundamentals and stable institutional flows," Nair added. Despite the broader weakness, some oil-linked and metal stocks managed to outperform. ONGC surged 4.75% as higher crude prices improved sentiment around upstream energy companies. Hindalco gained 1.73%, while Tata Steel and NTPC showed relative resilience. Analysts said markets are currently witnessing a sharp risk-off phase, with investors reducing exposure to equities amid rising geopolitical uncertainty, sanctions-related concerns and fears of prolonged pressure from elevated oil prices. Market participants are now closely tracking crude oil movements, foreign institutional investor activity, developments around Russian energy sanctions and possible intervention by the Reserve Bank of India to stabilise the rupee.



## Sri Sri Hospitals Unveils Pulse Field Ablation Tech

for Treatment of Heart Rhythm Disorders

HYDERABAD, MAY 2026:

enabling:

Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals is proud to announce the launch of India's first revolutionary Pulse Field Ablation (PFA) technology integrated with the advanced CARTO™ 3 System Version 8 and CARTO ELEVATE™ Module, marking a major milestone in advanced cardiac electrophysiology and arrhythmia treatment in India. The launch event will be held on Tuesday, 12 May 2026 at Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals under the leadership of Prof. Dr. V. S. Ramchandra, Chief of Cardiology & Electrophysiology, along with Dr. Biju Govind, Senior Consultant Cardiologist, Dr. Bharani Velam, Cardiac Electrophysiologist, Dr. Prakash Nanjiah, Chief Cardiothoracic & Vascular Surgeon & proctor for minimally invasive cardiac surgery for Atrial Fibrillation, and the distinguished cardiology and electrophysiology team. The newly introduced platform combines advanced 3D electro-anatomical mapping, intracardiac and echocardiographic imaging, and next-generation Pulse Field Ablation (PFA) technology for the treatment of complex heart rhythm disorders including Atrial Fibrillation (AF), Ventricular Tachycardia (VT), atrial flutter, and other complex arrhythmias. Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals becomes the first hospital in India to introduce this revolutionary PFA technology for Atrial Fibrillation Ablation, enabling safer, faster, and more precise procedures.

- Markedly reduced procedure times
- A much safer treatment approach compared to conventional ablation procedures [no damage to surrounding critical structures such as nerves, arteries, and food pipe (esophagus)]
- Painless minimally invasive procedure
- Same-day discharge in suitable patients

The launch also establishes Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals as an Advanced Atrial Fibrillation Ablation Centre equipped with cutting-edge electrophysiology infrastructure and next-generation cardiac rhythm management systems.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. V. S. Ramchandra, Chief of Cardiology & Electrophysiology, and Chairman, Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals said:

"The introduction of India's first Pulse Field Ablation technology integrated with CARTO™ 3 System Version 8 is a transformative step in electrophysiology care. This advanced platform enables highly precise, faster, and safer treatment for complex arrhythmias with improved workflow efficiency and patient outcomes." Dr. Biju Govind, Senior Consultant Cardiologist, added:

"This revolutionary technology strengthens our ability to deliver world-class minimally invasive arrhythmia treatment with greater safety, faster recovery, and enhanced patient comfort."

Dr. Prakash Nanjappa, who recently performed the first Left Atrial Appendage (LAA) clip procedure in the Telugu States and is a proctor for minimally invasive surgical procedures for Atrial Fibrillation, said:

"Electrophysiologists across advanced countries are rapidly transitioning towards Pulse Field Ablation technology (PFA) because of its safety, precision and speed. It is highly commendable that Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals is the first in India to introduce this groundbreaking technology for the benefit of patients." The launch reinforces Sri Sri Holistic Hospitals' commitment to bringing globally advanced cardiac technologies and innovative heart rhythm treatment solutions to patients in India.

### Key Highlights of the Technology

- Revolutionary Pulse Field Ablation (PFA) technology for Atrial Fibrillation treatment
  - Advanced 3D cardiac mapping with CARTO™ 3 System Version 8
  - Integration with intracardiac echocardiographic imaging for highly precise patient-specific mapping
  - Enhanced workflow through CARTO ELEVATE™ Module and Enhanced CONFIDENSE™ mapping
  - Advanced signal identification and high-density multipolar mapping capabilities
- The PFA technology significantly advances electrophysiology care by

## DSP Mutual Fund launches DSP Nifty FMCG ETF

MUMBAI, 12TH MAY 2026:

DSP Mutual Fund today announced the launch of DSP Nifty FMCG ETF, an open-ended exchange traded fund designed to replicate/track the Nifty FMCG Index.

The DSP Nifty FMCG ETF aims to help investors participate in few of the leading FMCG companies across categories such as household products, personal care, beverages and staples etc. by tracking the Nifty FMCG Index, subject to tracking error. The Nifty FMCG Index comprises 15 FMCG companies listed on the National Stock Exchange\* These include businesses manufacturing products that are part of everyday consumption across Indian households - from packaged foods, beverages and personal care products to other daily-use essentials. The FMCG sector has historically remained closely linked to India's domestic consumption growth



and has demonstrated relatively resilient demand across market cycles. Unlike several sectors currently undergoing rapid technological disruption, demand for everyday consumption products continues to remain closely linked to household spending patterns.

The scheme will invest in the constituent companies of the Nifty FMCG Index in the same propor-

tion as the underlying index and will be managed by DSP's dedicated passive investment team. Commenting on the launch, Anil Ghelani, CFA, Head - Passive Investments & Products, DSP Mutual Fund, said, "Valuations in the FMCG space are currently below their 5-year, 10-year and 15-year averages, offering relatively better valuation comfort compared

to recent years. At the same time, FMCG businesses continue to remain closely linked to everyday consumption demand, with growth driven by categories and products that are deeply embedded in daily life. Through the DSP Nifty FMCG ETF, investors can gain diversified exposure to this segment in a simple, transparent and cost-efficient passive format."

The New Fund Offer (NFO) for DSP Nifty FMCG ETF\*\* opens on May 12, 2026, and closes on May 14, 2026. The scheme will reopen on May 22, 2026. To learn more and access the factsheet, visit: www.dspim.com

Source - NSE. Data as on April 30th, 2026. An open-ended scheme replicating / tracking Nifty FMCG Index

### About DSP Asset Managers

DSP Asset Managers has a track record of nearly three decades of investment excellence. Today, we have the honour of

managing money for over 65 lakh investors from all walks of life: hard-working salaried individuals, high-net-worth individuals, NRIs, small and mid-sized business owners, large private & public corporations, trusts and foreign institutions. We take great pride in knowing that we play a key role in the creation of wealth for all our investors and will always continue to be an organization with a purpose - it is our responsibility to make a real difference to the lives of our investors. DSP Asset Managers is backed by the 160+ year old DSP Group. Over the past one and a half centuries, the family behind the Group has been very influential in the growth and professionalization of capital markets and money management business in India. Our investors' interests will always remain at the core of our business, and we will continue to maintain a relentless focus on doing what's best for them, as they #InvestForGood.

## Samsung Galaxy M and F Series Go on Special Offers

GURUGRAM, INDIA - MAY 12, 2026

Samsung India, today, announced special pricing on the Galaxy M17 series (M17 5G and M17e 5G), Galaxy M36 5G, Galaxy M56 5G, Galaxy F70e 5G and Galaxy F36 5G smartphones, starting from May 8. Customers can take advantage of the best prices to own these devices and enjoy enhanced accessibility, creativity and productivity. Each device features advanced technologies like hi-res camera systems, durable designs, AI-powered tools and long-term software support.

The Galaxy M Series

The Galaxy M17 series—ranked the No 1-selling smartphone on Amazon in its price segment\*—comprises the Galaxy M17 5G and the M17e 5G smartphones. The Galaxy M17 5G boasts a 50MP OIS triple-camera system for crisp and stable photography, a bright and immersive Super AMOLED display for vivid visuals, and Corning Gorilla Glass Victus protection for extra durability. It also includes Circle to Search with Google for quick information retrieval and Gemini Live for real-time visual conversations. The Galaxy M17e 5G features a smooth display with up to 120Hz refresh rate, a 6000mAh battery for extended



usage, a 50MP dual camera system for quality photos, Google Circle to Search, Samsung Knox Vault for enhanced security, Auto Blocker for improved privacy, and six OS upgrades with six years of security updates for long-term reliability. The Galaxy M36 5G, also the No.1-selling smartphone on Amazon in its price segment\*, includes AI features for smarter interactions, Corning Gorilla Glass Victus+ protection for enhanced durability, Google Circle to Search, and Gemini Live for

real-time visual conversations. It is powered by the Exynos 1380 and comes with a vapour cooling chamber for efficient heat dissipation, ensuring smoother multitasking and longer lag-free gaming. The Galaxy M56 5G, yet another top seller on Amazon\*, features Corning Gorilla Glass Victus+ on the front and back for superior protection, and is just 7.2mm slim. It packs a 50MP OIS triple camera setup for high-resolution photography, a 12MP front HDR camera with Big Pixel Technology for clear selfies, an Exynos 1480 processor with LPDDR5X RAM for lag-free performance, Google Gemini integration for intelligent assistance, and Sam-

sung Knox Vault for robust data protection.

### The Galaxy F series

The Galaxy F70e 5G includes a 50MP dual camera system with Night Mode for excellent low-light performance, an 8MP front camera for sharp selfies, and a 6.7-inch HD+ display with up to 120Hz refresh rate for smooth visuals. It boasts a leather-like pattern for an aesthetic look; is

built to withstand dust ingress and water splashes for everyday durability, packs a 6000mAh battery with 25W fast charging for all-day power, and is powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 6300 processor for seamless everyday performance. Samsung offers six generations of OS upgrades, six years of security updates, and includes Samsung Knox Vault for enhanced data security.

Model	Price	Deal Price
Galaxy M17e 5G	INR 18999	INR 12499
Galaxy M17 5G	INR 20999	INR 13999
Galaxy M36 5G	INR 26999	INR 16999
Galaxy M56 5G	INR 33999	INR 21999

## Navi Insurance Boosts 'Cashless Anywhere' Motor Claims Service

NATIONAL, 12 MAY 2026

Navi General Insurance, the insurance arm of Navi, one of India's fastest-growing digital financial services destinations, today announced strategic partnerships with GoMechanic, ReadyAssist, myTVS and AIS Windshield Experts to deliver a 'Cashless Anywhere' motor insurance claims experience for customers across India. The partnerships combine Navi's digital-first claims journey with deep on-ground service capability, allowing customers to walk into any partner garage across the country and get their vehicle repaired without paying out-of-pocket. Where in-person support is required, Navi's on-ground partners are equipped to reach



customers within a few hours of claim intimation, whether it's a roadside breakdown, an on-spot vehicle survey, or getting a vehicle serviced at a partner garage.

### As part of these partnerships:

ReadyAssist will provide 24x7 roadside assistance across 19,000+ pincodes and support Navi's in-person physical claims survey requirements pan-India, enabling a Navi-authorised representative to reach customers within a

few hours of claim intimation. GoMechanic, myTVS and AIS Windshield Experts will provide access to a wide network of partner garages and windshield service centres, enabling cashless claims servicing - from own-damage repairs to windshield replacements. Navi has also been rapidly scaling its cashless garage network, which has more than doubled; from ~710 garages in January 2026 to over 1,600 today, spanning 500+ cities, with a target of 3,000+ garages by June 2026.

"Our goal is to build the best-in-class motor claims experience, anchored on three principles - cashless anywhere, physical presence within hours where needed, and speed. Technology removes friction, but strong on-ground partnerships ensure customers feel supported when it matters most" said Mr. Vaibhav Goyal, Managing Director & CEO, Navi General Insurance Limited. Motor insurance contributes approximately 32% of India's general insurance premiums and is increasingly seeing a shift toward digital-first models. As customers place greater weight on claims experience and service-network depth, Navi's partnership-led approach is designed to combine digital convenience with broad-based on-ground

capability. "With our presence across 19,000+ pincodes and a nationwide network of trained service providers, we complement Navi's digital claims journey by ensuring every policyholder has on time, reliable, in-person support - whether it's a roadside breakdown or an on-spot vehicle survey. We are excited to support Navi's customer-first vision at scale," said Mr. Vimal Singh S. V., Founder and CEO, ReadyAssist. With these partnerships, Navi continues to build a comprehensive, technology-led motor insurance ecosystem that combines digital simplicity with real-world service capability - delivering a more efficient, transparent and customer-centric claims experience for vehicle owners across India. Motor

insurance is now live and available for customers across India. About Navi: Navi Limited (formerly known as Navi Technologies Limited) is a digital-first financial services company on a mission to make finance simple for every Indian. As one of India's fastest-growing financial destinations, Navi offers an easy-to-access suite of financial services (directly and through partners) including loans, insurance, mutual funds, and UPI payments. With millions of users across the country, Navi combines in-house technology with deep consumer insight to create financial solutions that are intuitive, accessible, and reliable. Navi serves customers across their financial journeys with a single, integrated experience.



# Beyond MGNREGA

## India's Big Gamble on the New VB-G RAM G Act

### Why Did the Government Replace MGNREGA?

While MGNREGA served as a foundational safety net that reduced distress migration and stabilized rural incomes since 2005, the central government argued that the economic landscape of rural India has fundamentally evolved.

The original act was designed primarily as a demand-driven reactive safety net to counter seasonal unemployment. However, it faced growing structural criticisms over the years: the creation of low-utility assets (such as repetitive earthen roads that washed away in monsoons), systemic payment delays, and an open-ended funding architecture that made fiscal planning difficult.

The VB-G RAM G Act was brought in to align public employment directly with the national Viksit Bharat @2047 vision. The objective is to transition from a framework of basic survival to a productivity-oriented, asset-heavy, and asset-durable rural transformation. Rather than treating rural public work as a temporary fix for poverty, the new law integrates village labor directly into a structured national asset planning mechanism. The Great Rural Transition: Decoding the VB-G RAM G Act and the New Era of Indian Welfare On May 11, 2026, the Ministry of Rural Development issued a historic gazette notification that marks the end of an era and the beginning of another in India's social welfare architecture. Effective July 1, 2026, the two-decade-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, will stand officially repealed. In its place enters a newly re-engineered legislative framework: the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, widely known as the VB-G RAM G Act. Passing through Parliament in late December 2025 and receiving presidential assent shortly thereafter, this legislation shifts rural labor away from simple distress mitigation toward structural, national development. Backed by a historic, record-high initial central budget of ₹95,692.31 crore for the fiscal year 2026–27, the total initial program outlay—when combining state-level matching shares—is projected to surpass ₹1.51 lakh crore. As hundreds of millions of rural laborers prepare for the transition on July 1st, understanding the tectonic shifts in funding, opera-

tional mandates, and wage dynamics is critical. Why Did the Government Replace MGNREGA? While MGNREGA served as a foundational safety net that reduced distress migration and stabilized rural incomes since 2005, the central government argued that the economic landscape of rural India has fundamentally evolved. The original act was designed primarily as a demand-driven reactive safety net to counter seasonal unemployment. However, it faced growing structural criticisms over the years: the creation of low-utility assets (such as repetitive earthen roads that washed away in monsoons), systemic payment delays, and an open-ended funding architecture that made fiscal planning difficult. The VB-G RAM G Act was brought in to align public employment directly with the national Viksit Bharat @2047 vision. The objective is to transition from a framework of basic survival to a productivity-oriented, asset-heavy, and asset-durable rural transformation. Rather than treating rural public work as a temporary fix for poverty, the new law integrates village labor directly into a structured national asset planning mechanism. Key Differences: MGNREGA vs. VB-G RAM G Act The transition to the VB-G RAM G framework changes the core tenets of how rural employment is guaranteed, planned, and funded in India. Feature-MGNREGA (2005) VB-G RAM G Act (Implemented July 1, 2026) Statutory Work Guarantee 100 Days per rural household per year. 125 Days per rural household per year. Funding Mechanism Demand-Driven & Open-Ended (Centre funded almost 90%+ of total costs). Normative Allocations (The Centre sets state-wise annual spending ceilings). Cost-Sharing Pattern Centre paid 100% of unskilled wages, 75% of materials. State bore less than 10% total

burden. 60:40 Centre-State split for normal states; 90:10 for North-East/Himalayan states; 100% Centre for non-legislative UTs. Planning System Local, unlinked Gram Panchayat shelf of works. Integrated Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans (VGPP) synced with the national PM Gati Shakti framework. Administrative Cap Restricted to 6% of the program budget. Increased to 9% to fund advanced digital checking systems. Shaping the Rural Economy and Asset Creation The new act alters the types of projects executed at the village level. Every single project executed under the VB-G RAM G Act must originate from a Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan (VGPP). These local plans are aggregated digitally into the Viksit Bharat National Rural Infrastructure Stack, aligning village infrastructure directly with the PM Gati Shakti geospatial platform. The law explicitly categorizes permissible works into four strict thematic domains to ensure long-term value: Water Security Works: Prioritizing massive watershed management, stepwells, and continuous community reservoirs. Core Rural Infrastructure: Building foundational, resilient connectivity assets. Livelihood-Related Infrastructure: Constructing cold-storage components, individual cattle sheds, and farm ponds (with asset priority legally locked for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women-headed households). Extreme Weather Mitigation Works: Developing micro-infrastructure capable of withstanding the escalating realities of climate change. Crucially, the act retains the prohibition of private contractors; all projects must be executed directly by the laborers themselves. To maintain labor intensity, the 60:40 wage-to-material ratio is preserved: for every rupee utilized at the district level, at least 60 paise must go directly to wages.

The Ministry of Rural Development issued a historic gazette notification on May 11, 2026, that marks the end of an era and the beginning of another in India's social welfare architecture. Effective July 1, 2026, the two-decade-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, will stand officially repealed. In its place enters a newly re-engineered legislative framework: the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act,

widely known as the VB-G RAM G Act. Passing through Parliament in late December 2025 and receiving presidential assent shortly thereafter, this legislation shifts rural labor away from simple distress mitigation toward structural, national development. Backed by a historic, record-high initial central budget of ₹95,692.31 crore for the fiscal year 2026–27, the total initial program outlay—when combining state-level matching shares—is projected to surpass ₹1.51 lakh crore.

### The Double Blow: Normative Allocations and Excess Expenditure

Beyond the cost-sharing ratio, the law dismantles the purely demand-driven funding stream. Under the old system, if rural distress spiked due to a local drought, states could continually scale up projects, and the central government was legally obligated to release matching funds. The VB-G RAM G Act introduces a system of

state-wise normative allocations—effectively placing a fixed spending ceiling on the central share for each financial year. If a state experiences severe rural distress and the demand for employment breaches this centrally determined allocation, any and all excess expenditure must be borne 100% by the state government itself.

#### Impact on Daily Wage Laborers: Days, Wages, and Delivery

For the individual rural laborer, the implementation of the new act brings changes to their work volume, baseline protections, and tracking metrics.

##### 1. Guaranteed Workdays

The most direct benefit to workers is the statutory expansion of guaranteed employment from 100 days to 125 days in a financial year for every household volunteering for unskilled manual labor. This extra 25-day cushion provides a boost to household income stability during agricultural lean seasons.

##### 2. Will Wages Increase or Decrease?

The introduction of the act does not cause a decrease in baseline wages. On the contrary, average baseline wage rates have shown upward trends as part of the structural transition. However, the exact state-wise statutory wage rates under the new framework will be governed by fresh normative rules finalized in consultation with the states.

##### 3. Payment Timelines and Delay Penalties

The delivery of wages remains tied directly to the worker's bank or post office account via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). The act mandates that wages must be paid on a weekly basis, or under no circumstances later than 15 days from the closure of the muster roll. To enforce compliance, the law introduces a strict financial penalty structure for administrative delays. If a worker's wage remains unpaid past the 15-day window, they are legally entitled

to statutory delay compensation calculated at a rate of 0.05% of the total unpaid wages for every single day of delay starting from the 16th day. Furthermore, if a worker demands employment and the state machinery fails to provide a worksite within 15 days, the obligation to pay a daily unemployment allowance shifts heavily onto the state government.

##### 4. Technical Safeguards on the Ground

Worksite attendance under the VB-G RAM G framework is monitored via National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) applications utilizing advanced face-authentication mechanisms. Recognizing the connectivity challenges of rural India, the act explicitly incorporates "exception-handling rules" to ensure genuine workers are not denied employment or wages due to biometric failures or local network issues. Existing e-KYC verified MGNREGA job cards will automatically remain valid until they are progressively replaced by new Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Cards.

##### The Financial Shockwaves on State Governments

While laborers stand to gain an extra 25 days of guaranteed work, the financial architecture of the VB-G RAM G Act has triggered intense debate across

state capitals. The transition introduces fiscal shifts that place a significantly heavier financial burden on state exchequers.

##### THE SHIFT IN COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM

[OLD MGNREGA MODEL] —Open-ended central fund flow Centre bore ~90% of total fiscal weight [NEW VB-G RAM G] — 60:40 Fixed Cost-Sharing + Normative Caps States must fund 40% of all expenses

##### The 60:40 Cost-Sharing Mandate

Under MGNREGA, the central government fundamentally insulated states from the financial weight of the scheme by covering 100% of the unskilled labor wages and 75% of the material costs. Across most states, the local government's contribution remained safely below 10% of the total program expenditure.

Under the VB-G RAM G Act, the program shifts to a rigid 60:40 Centrally Sponsored Scheme cost-sharing formula for the majority of states. This means state governments must now directly source 40% of the entire project cost (covering both labor and materials) from their own budgets. For states that rely heavily on rural employment guarantees to support their local economies, this represents an immediate, multi-fold expansion of their welfare spending obligations.

##### Immediate Fiscal Pressure on Opposition-Ruled and Poorer States

Several state governments, particularly those ruled by opposition parties, have voiced strong concerns regarding this model. Poorer, highly populated, agrarian states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Odisha routinely experience massive demand for rural public works. Forcing these states to suddenly match 40% of the funding, while capping the central contribution under normative rules, strains their fiscal health. This setup risks widening regional disparities: fiscally affluent states can comfortably absorb the 40% match to claim their central share, while cash-strapped states may struggle to unlock the program's full potential, inadvertently leading to artificial suppression of work availability on the ground.

##### Conclusion: A High-Stakes Leap Forward

The rollout of the VB-G RAM G Act on July 1st, 2026, represents a bold and structural leap in India's approach to rural economics. By increasing the work guarantee to 125 days, clamping down on payment delays through strict statutory interest penalties, and anchoring village assets to the PM Gati Shakti infrastructure matrix, the act creates a blueprint for a more modern, transparent, and durable rural asset base. However, the true test of this legislative overhaul lies in its federal execution. Balancing the creation of high-value national infrastructure with the immediate survival needs of rural laborers requires coordination. As states scramble to adjust their budgets to accommodate the new 60:40 funding realities and transition their databases, the coming months will determine whether this act successfully delivers a stronger rural economy, or creates a fiscal bottleneck for India's most vulnerable states.

# A monsoon shield for every farmer

## Why protective irrigation must become the centrepiece of India's water strategy

The Indian summer monsoon has long been the fulcrum around which the country's agricultural economy pivots. Kharif is the primary crop-growing season in most of India, and rains in June, July, and August determine the success of sowing and early crop growth.

dry spells; or what is commonly termed protective irrigation. Many irrigation systems in India were originally designed with protective irrigation in mind. Canal project reports from the 1960s through the 1990s often highlighted this as a goal. Yet, over time, canal infrastructure has either underperformed due to inadequate maintenance, siltation, and outdated design,



Since 1951, the Indian summer monsoon rainfall has declined by 6 per cent. This can translate to a reduction of 20-30 per cent in some regions. Over recent decades, dry spells during the monsoon have become more frequent, prolonged, and spatially widespread. Data from the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) show that the frequency of dry spells was 27 per cent higher during 1981-2011 compared to the 1951-1980 period.

The geography of this stress is uneven but worryingly broad: Central India, including Saurashtra and Gujarat, is prone to cumulative dry spells across the season, while Marathwada, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Meghalaya, and Kerala show significant increasing trends in dry days, specifically during July and August. Similarly, in South Peninsular India, parts of Tamil Nadu and Rayalaseema (stretching across Telangana and Andhra Pradesh) face recurring dry spell pressure.

In 2023, India witnessed its driest August in over a century. A 36 per cent national rainfall deficit and more than 20 consecutive dry days across key agricultural belts laid bare the fragility of rain-fed farming systems. In 2025, monsoon rainfall in the country as a whole reached 108 per cent of the Long Period Average, an above-normal season aided by the absence of El Niño conditions. Yet, even this surplus masked sharp regional disparities, with Bihar, Assam, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh recording deficient rainfall.

If Indian agriculture needs to adapt to climate change, the first step is to become resilient against monsoon variability. To this end, there is an urgent need to fundamentally reorient India's irrigation strategy. For decades, irrigation investments have been framed in terms of increasing crop output and expanding canal irrigated areas. However, today, the more urgent function of irrigation is risk mitigation. What farmers require is not necessarily water for maximising yield, but timely access to water to prevent crop failure during

or has been repurposed to serve intensive cropping patterns that strain resources and exclude marginal areas.

Accordingly, to bring the irrigation strategy back on track, several corrective measures are needed.

First, local water governance must be strengthened. Current irrigation management regimes (rules and institutions that govern how and by whom canal water is allocated and distributed) remain top-down and fragmented. Thus, to improve local water governance, water user associations, starting as clusters of 20-25 farmers, need to be bolstered across India and irrigation regimes. Many states now have policy frameworks, outlining how farmer groups can manage their water resources locally. Unfortunately, many of these provisions exist only on paper, and are restricted to a few jurisdictions, like canal irrigated areas.

Along with water user associations, community institutions, like farmer producer groups and panchayats, must be offered autonomy support and tools to manage water allocation, particularly during scarcity. This includes transparent entitlements, conflict resolution mechanisms, and planning capacities. Without inclusive frameworks, even the best infrastructure will fail to deliver water equitably.

Second, infrastructure itself needs to shift from large-scale systems to distributed systems. Farm ponds, check dams, recharge structures, and borewell-sharing pipelines can support localised, timely water delivery. Modernisation of existing canals, including upgradation of last mile irrigation infrastructure with pressurised pipelines and drip and sprinkler systems, is essential to reduce losses and extend reach. Concurrently, policy reforms must accommodate areas outside traditional canal command zones, enabling water-sharing, supplying through hose reel and tankers and lift irrigation schemes across administrative boundaries within the same landscape.



As hundreds of millions of rural laborers prepare for the transition on July 1st, understanding the tectonic shifts in funding, opera-





Football

Dortmund sign defender Gadou from Salzburg



**BERLIN (GERMANY):** Borussia Dortmund have signed defender Joane Gadou from Austrian side Red Bull Salzburg on a contract through June 2031, the Bundesliga club announced on Tuesday. The 19-year-old French international joins Dortmund as the club continues to reshape its defense with an eye on both immediate reinforcement and long-term development. Gadou came through Paris Saint-Germain's academy before joining Salzburg in September 2024. The 1.95-metre defender played 58 times for Salzburg.

Italian Open

Darderi stuns Zverev, saves four match points to book a quarterfinal



**ROME:** Italian crowd favourite Luciano Darderi produced one of the most remarkable turnarounds of the ATP season on Tuesday, fighting back from the brink to defeat second seed Alexander Zverev and book his place in the quarter-finals of the Italian Open for the first time. Roared on by a packed home crowd at the Foro Italo, Darderi recovered from a set and a break down before saving four match points in a tense second-set tie-break to complete an unforgettable 1-6, 7-6(10), 6-0 victory in two hours and 25 minutes. The 24-year-old looked headed for a routine defeat after Zverev dominated the opening set with powerful baseline.

# Rabada, Holder rip through SRH as GT march to crushing 82-run win

AHMEDABAD

Jason Holder and Kagiso Rabada starred with the ball as Gujarat Titans (GT) dismantled Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) by 82 runs in a one-sided clash in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. After Sai Sudharsan and Washington Sundar guided GT to a competitive 168/5 with composed half-centuries, Rabada and Holder combined to rip through Hyderabad's batting line-up and bowl the visitors out for just 86 in 14.5 overs.

The chase never truly took off after Mohammed Siraj delivered a sensational opening over. The fast bowler removed Travis Head for a duck in a wicket maiden, forcing an early collapse. Rabada then took over and struck twice in his first two overs despite conceding sixes to Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan. Abhishek dragged one back onto his stumps, while Kishan edged behind to leave SRH reeling at 23/3.

Smaran Ravichandran and Heinrich Klaasen attempted to steady the innings with a few boundaries, but Rabada continued to exploit the helpful surface with pace and movement. He dismissed Smaran in the sixth over to complete an outstanding spell of 4-0-28-3 as Hyderabad slumped to 34/4 in the powerplay. Klaasen and Salil Arora briefly resisted during the middle overs, but Holder extinguished any hopes of a recovery with a superb spell. The West Indies all-rounder first removed Klaasen, who miscued a pull shot to Jos Buttler, before dismissing Nitish Kumar Reddy and Shivang Kumar in quick succession.

Holder's disciplined lengths and clever variations earned him figures of 4-0-20-3 and ensured SRH never got close to the required run rate. Prasidh Krishna then



chipped in with two wickets, including that of Pat Cummins, before Rashid Khan sealed the emphatic victory with the final wicket. Earlier, GT recovered impressively after a difficult start, with Sudharsan and Sundar producing crucial knocks under pressure. Pat Cummins and Praful Hinge kept the hosts in check during the powerplay and removed Shubman Gill and Jos Buttler cheaply as GT crawled to 34/2 after six overs.

Sudharsan once again anchored the innings with maturity and fluency. The left-hander absorbed the early pressure before shifting gears with a series of crisp drives and clean hits down the ground. He brought up his fifty with a sweep off Shivang Kumar and continued to hold the innings together. Nishant Sindhu provided useful support with a brisk cameo before Cummins struck to break the partnership. Washington

Sundar then took charge in the latter stages alongside Sudharsan. The left-hander found boundaries consistently against both pace and spin, while Sudharsan completed a composed 61 off 44 deliveries before falling to Sakib Hussain.

Sundar carried the momentum into the final overs and brought up a valuable fifty off 33 balls before being dismissed in the last over. Late contributions from Jason Holder and Rahul Tewatia pushed the Titans to 168, a total that proved far too much for SRH on a challenging surface.

**Brief scores:** Gujarat Titans 168/5 in 20 overs (Sai Sudharsan 61, Washington Sundar 50; Sakib Hussain 2-37, Praful Hinge 2-17) beat Sunrisers Hyderabad 86 all out in 14.5 overs (Pat Cummins 19, Salil Arora 16; Kagiso Rabada 3-28, Jason Holder 3-20, Prasidh Krishna 2-23) by 82 runs.

## 'We aren't kind of team that play a particular style of cricket,' says Gill after GT's dominant win over SRH

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans captain Shubman Gill said adaptability remained the cornerstone of his side's success after GT dismantled Sunrisers Hyderabad by 82 runs in a one-sided Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 contest at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. Having posted what initially appeared to be a below-par 168/5 on a difficult surface, Gujarat bowled SRH out for just 86 in 14.5 overs, with the pace attack exploiting the conditions brilliantly before the spinners finished the job.

Reflecting on the nature of the victory, Gill said the Titans had correctly assessed the conditions early in the evening and understood that anything around 170 would be highly competitive. "Definitely, like you spoke at the toss. Teams batting first have done well,

and it worked out for us pretty nicely. But I think we bowled very well. 170 on this kind of a wicket, we always knew it was going to be tricky. If we bowl well, we'll always be in the game," Gill said after the match.

The GT skipper revealed that the dressing room discussions during the innings revolved around reaching the 160-170 range rather than chasing an unrealistic total on a demanding pitch.

"Yes, sir. We spoke about, if we get anywhere close to 160-170, I think it's gonna be. It won't be easy for them, especially with our bowling attack. So that was the chat in the middle," Gill said.

Gujarat appeared in some trouble midway through their innings before crucial contributions from Sai Sudharsan and Washington Sundar lifted them to a defensible total. Gill acknowledged the importance of that

partnership while also praising his new-ball bowlers for dismantling SRH's explosive top order.

"Yeah, definitely. But also, I think the way Sai (Sudharsan) and Washi (Sundar) batted, getting us close to 170 at one point, it looked difficult to reach there. And also, the way we bowled in the Power-play, we have been bowling pretty well in the Power-play.

So, kudos to both of our bowlers," he added. GT's approach this season, according to Gill, has been rooted less in playing a fixed brand of cricket and more in reading situations correctly—something he believes separates his side from others in the competition. "Honestly, it's all about still being consistent, still trying to be as ruthless as we can. And, you know, we play the kind of cricket, we are not the kind of team that play a particular style or brand of cricket.



## Italian Open: Sorana Cirstea beats Ostapenko in straight sets to reach maiden semis

ROME

Sorana Cirstea on Tuesday secured a stunning straight-sets win over former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko to reach the semifinals of the Italian Open 2026 for the first time in her career.

The 36-year-old Romanian delivered one of her best performances this season, defeating Ostapenko 6-1, 7-6(0) in just one hour and 31 minutes. This victory highlights her impressive run in Rome. Cirstea dominated the first set, winning it 6-1 as Ostapenko struggled with her aggressive baseline play and consistency. The Latvian fought back in the second set, breaking Cirstea's serve twice to lead 4-2 and then 5-3. It looked like she might force a third set.

However, Cirstea remained calm under pressure, breaking back twice. She then delivered a perfect tiebreak, winning without losing a single point.

This win improved Cirstea's excellent 2026 season record to 25-7 and highlighted her growing skills on clay, where she now holds a 10-2 record this year. She is only the fourth player to earn at least 10 WTA-level clay-court wins this season, joining Mirra Andreeva, Marta Kostyuk, and Anastasia Potapova. Cirstea is now

just one win away from matching her career-best total of 11 wins in a single season, which she achieved in 2011.

This victory marks her fourth WTA 1000 semifinal in her career, following her previous appearances in Toronto in 2013, Miami in 2023, and Dubai in 2024. Notably, the 13-year gap between her first and latest WTA 1000 semifinal is the second longest in this tournament's history since 2009. Only Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova and Victoria Azarenka have a longer gap, reaching the semifinals 15 years apart.

Cirstea's run in Rome has also made her the third-oldest semifinalist at the Italian Open in the Open Era, following tennis legends Martina Navratilova and Billie Jean King. She is now the third-oldest semifinalist in a WTA 1000 event, behind only Serena Williams and Venus Williams.

This win also ties Cirstea's head-to-head record with Ostapenko at 4-4. After losing their first three meetings, Cirstea has won four out of their last five matchups and remains unbeaten against the Latvian in 2026. Next, Cirstea will compete against either third seed Coco Gauff or eighth seed Mirra Andreeva in the semifinals as her memorable final season in Rome continues to build momentum.

## 'Words can't describe what it feels like to wear the Protea badge again,'

NEW DELHI

Shabnim Ismail says wearing the Protea badge again feels like an "honour" after the veteran fast bowler made a stunning return to South Africa's squad for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup nearly three years after announcing her retirement from international cricket.

Emotions came flooding back for the 37-year-old pace icon and South Africa's leading wicket-taker in both the ODIs and T20Is, who was granted her recall as the Proteas prepare for another shot at lifting their maiden ICC crown after finishing as runners-up in the 2023 and 2024 Women's T20 World Cups and 2025 Women's Cricket World Cup.

"I don't think words can actually describe what it feels like to wear the Protea badge again and play for your country and millions of people are actually watching you," Ismail said. "I always say it's a huge honour for me to play for the badge. So I'm really happy to

be wearing the badge again." When Ismail announced his retirement from international cricket in 2023, it seemed the curtain was closing on one of South Africa's greatest fast-bowling careers. But chats with those close to her and the support of head coach Mandla Mashimbyi eventually persuaded her to come out of retirement.

"He was like, take your time to make the decision. I'm not forcing you to play, but I really need and want you to come back and help us win the World Cup," Ismail revealed. "I'm coming back, first of all, because I miss playing cricket. I miss playing at the highest level, and I miss obviously putting on the badge and going out there and performing," she said.

"I'm a really hard worker. I still am who I am. I never change, and I just want to go out there and obviously do my thing, and then also the most important part is to try to help win the World Cup, playing again for South Africa. I think that will be just the cherry on the top for me."

## Badminton: Satwik-Chirag survive scare to enter second round

BANGKOK

India's former World No.1 pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty began their campaign in the Thailand Open 2026 on a successful note, securing a hard-fought win in the BWF World Tour at the Nimitbutr Stadium in Bangkok, Thailand, on Tuesday.

Top seeds Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, ranked fourth in the badminton World rankings, beat Indonesia's unseeded pair of Putra Erwiansyah and Bagas Maulana 21-19, 23-21, 21-10 to enter the second round. The duo will next take on Malaysia's Goonting Bryan, Jeremy, and Haikal Muhammad in the Round of 16. Trailing 16-11 after following a sluggish start in their Round of 32 match, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, the reigning Asian Games champions, stormed back with seven straight points to seize control and edge a tight opening game.

The second game saw the momentum swing as the Indonesian pair fought back from 11-9 down to take the game into a tie-break, which they won to set up a decider.

However, the top Indian players ensured there were no further hiccups as they dominated the final game from the start and closed out the contest in an hour and four minutes. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty are eyeing their third Thailand Open title. They previously won the BWF World Tour Super 500 Series event twice - in 2019 and 2024.

However, there was heartbreak for India's other men's doubles duo, MR Arjun and Hariharan Amsakarunan, as they were knocked out in the first round, going down 21-18, 22-20 to Chinese Taipei's Lin Yu-Chieh and Chen Zhi-Ray. In women's doubles, Rutaparna Panda and Swetapar-



na Panda, India's sole women's pair in the main draw, also lost their opener 21-9, 21-11 against Chih-Chun Lin and Yang Chu-Yun of Chinese Taipei.

In the men's singles qualifying matches, Manav Choudhary gave Paris 2024 Olympic bronze medallist Lee Zhi Jia of Malaysia a close fight but lost 21-19, 21-18. Anushka Shahapurkar also exited in the women's singles qualifiers after a 21-5, 21-7 defeat to Thailand's Yataweemin Ketklieng. Mohit Jaglan and Lakshita Jaglan's mixed doubles campaign also ended in the qualifiers after a 21-11, 21-18 defeat to Tsai Fu-Cheng and Sung Yu-Hsuan of Chinese Taipei. India have sent a sizeable 27-member contingent competing at the BWF Super 500 tournament in Bangkok this year. Among other Indian players, young star Ayush Shetty will meet eighth seed Kodai Naraoka of Japan, while compatriot Tharun Manneppalle will beat another Japanese, Koki Watanabe, while Kidambi Srikanth will open against the eighth-ranked Loh Kean Yew. Seventh seed Lakshya Sen, ranked 11th in the World, will start with a clash with Jai Heng Jason Leh on Tuesday.

## ANDY MURRAY JOINS JACK DRAPER'S COACHING TEAM FOR THE GRASS-COURT SEASON

NEW DELHI

British tennis will witness a high-profile partnership during the grass-court season after Jack Draper confirmed that former world No. 1 Andy Murray will join his coaching setup ahead of Wimbledon. The announcement comes shortly after Draper ended his association with Jamie Delgado, who had been working with the British left-hander since October last year. Murray, a three-time Grand Slam champion and one of the most successful British players in history, will now support Draper through the entire grass swing. "I am very grateful for everything Jamie Delgado has done for me over these past six months. He is a world-class coach and a great man. In the interim, I will continue to be supported by the excellent team at the LTA, with the addition of Andy Murray, who will be supporting me throughout the grass court season," Draper said in a statement.

## Ashish Limaye grabs Individual Qualification spots for World Games and Asian Games

NEW DELHI

Indian equestrian rider Ashish Limaye achieved a remarkable milestone for the country at the prestigious equestrian event held in Sopot, Poland, delivering an outstanding performance across both the Concours Complet International (CCI) 3S and CCI 4L categories for eventing competitions.

Competing against some of the finest international riders, Limaye secured an impressive 4th position in the CCI 4L category aboard D'Avril du Pinier among 11 participants, earning qualification for the World Games. Additionally, riding Willy Be Dun in the CCI 3S category featuring 44 participants, he once again finished 4th, successfully qual-



ifying for the Asian Games. With this achievement, Limaye became the first Indian rider to qualify for the Asian Games in this category, marking a proud and historic moment for Indian equestrian sports, a release said on Tuesday. Limaye's

journey and continued success have been supported by Embassy International Riding School (EIRS), which has played a significant role in nurturing world-class equestrian talent from India and providing riders with international exposure and training opportunities.

Speaking about the achievement, Limaye mentioned "Representing India on an international platform and achieving qualification for both the World Games and the Asian Games is an incredibly proud moment for me. Competing in Sopot against such strong international riders was a great learning experience, and I am grateful for the unwavering support from Embassy International Riding School, my team, and everyone who has believed in this journey."

## Football: Dortmund sign defender Gadou from Salzburg

BERLIN (GERMANY)

Borussia Dortmund have signed defender Joane Gadou from Austrian side Red Bull Salzburg on a contract through June 2031, the Bundesliga club announced on Tuesday. The 19-year-old French international joins Dortmund as the club continues to reshape its defense with an eye on both immediate reinforcement and long-term development.

Gadou came through Paris Saint-Germain's academy before joining Salzburg in September 2024. The 1.95-metre defender played 58 times for Salzburg, including four Champions League qualifying matches and seven Europa League



games, reports Xinhua. "We have known Joane for a very long time and watched him already during his time at Paris Saint-Germain," Dortmund managing director for sport Lars Ricken said. "Joane will strengthen us and take on an important role with us right from the start of the new season. We are convinced of his qualities and see enormous sporting development potential in him."

Dortmund sporting director Ole Book described Gadou as a "modern and physically strong centre back." "He has good build-up play, is extremely quick, and at the same time still capable of developing further. With his abilities, Joane is an optimal addition to our defense," Book

said. The transfer comes with Dortmund facing gaps in central defense. Niklas Sule is set to retire in the summer, loanee Aaron Anselmino was recalled by Chelsea in the winter, and captain Emre Can is unavailable after suffering a cruciate ligament tear against Bayern Munich at the end of February.

Gadou has represented France's youth teams since 2022. He was a European under-17 runner-up in 2023 and captained his side at the following year's tournament. "I am hugely excited to be part of the BVB family in the future," Gadou said. "I can hardly wait to wear the black-and-yellow shirt for the first time."

## MOUNI ROY SPARKS DIVORCE RUMORS



Mouni Roy, who is making her Telugu debut with "Vishwambhara," has sparked fresh speculation about her personal life after reportedly unfollowing her husband Suraj Nambiar on Instagram. Mouni Roy and Suraj Nambiar, an investment banker and businessman, got married in 2022. Reports suggest that both of them have now unfollowed each other on Instagram, leading to rumors about trouble in their marriage. In recent years, several celebrities have deleted shared pictures and unfollowed their partners on social media before officially announcing separations. This has further fueled speculation surrounding Mouni Roy's relationship status. However, neither Mouni nor Suraj has responded to the rumors so far. Known for her glamorous social media presence and close friendship with Disha Patani, Mouni Roy has acted in several Hindi films, including Brahmāstra: Part One – Shiva, which was also dubbed in Telugu. In "Vishwambhara," she reportedly features in a special song alongside Chiranjeevi. The film is slated for release later this year.

## TABU PROVES AGE DOES NOT MATTER WITH STYLE

Actress Tabu is having a successful year in her career. Her recent film Bhooth Bungalow became a huge box office hit by crossing 200 crores worldwide. Along with this success, she is also getting ready for an exciting Telugu movie titled "Slumdog: 33 Temple Road". Recently, Tabu grabbed everyone's attention after appearing on the cover of "Harper's Bazaar India" magazine in three completely different looks. In the magazine interview, Tabu shared her thoughts about life, freedom, and staying true to herself. She explained that she never tried to follow what society expected from her. Instead, she always listened to her own heart and made choices that gave her peace and happiness. According to her, real freedom comes when a person is comfortable with their own decisions.

One of the biggest highlights of the photoshoot was Tabu's stylish appearance. In one look, she wore a denim jacket with a long black skirt that gave a bold and artistic feel. In another look, she appeared in a simple ivory gown that showed elegance and grace. She also wore a bright coral-colored dress in front of a red background, which looked powerful and eye-catching. Every picture showed her confidence and natural charm.

During the interview, Tabu also spoke about how people often label women unfairly. She said many people called her "reclusive" over the years, but she never agreed with that description. Tabu explained that just because she does not attend every party or constantly stay in the public eye does not mean she is distant from people. She believes society creates labels for women who choose a different lifestyle.

The actress also talked openly about ageing. She said people worry more about a woman's age than the woman herself. According to Tabu, ageing is a natural process and there is nothing to hide or fear about it. She believes confidence, experience, and self-understanding become stronger with time.



## No Telugu Remake For Drishyam 3 Anymore?

The iconic Drishyam franchise is once again making headlines, but this time the update has disappointed Telugu audiences. Reports suggest that there will be no Telugu remake for Drishyam 3 starring Mohanlal. Instead, the makers are planning to release the original Malayalam version in Telugu as a dubbed film. The biggest reason behind this unexpected decision is said to be Venkatesh Daggubati's packed schedule. The actor is currently busy with multiple prestigious projects and reportedly does not have enough time to remake the third installment. Trade circles believe that delaying the Telugu version further would reduce the suspense factor, as the Malayalam original is already gearing up for release on May 21. The first two Telugu versions, Drushyam and Drushyam 2, received tremendous appreciation, and many fans strongly connected with Venkatesh's character Rambabu. Social media is now filled with disappointed reactions from fans who wanted to see him return for the final chapter. Despite the disappointment, the craze surrounding Drishyam 3 remains massive, with audiences eagerly waiting to witness Georgekutty's final game on the big screen.

## After a Break, Rajamouli Calls Mahesh For Action!

It is already known that Varanasi is one of the biggest projects in the production in Indian cinema as of this moment. The kind of budget proportion and the cinematic experience that is going to be set in motion for this film is going to be beyond ordinary. In this context, the latest developments are suggesting that the shooting for the film has finally resumed again after a brief break that had come up recently. The unit was verifying the VFX footage that was delivered by the concerned teams, and Rajamouli was in action for the same. After giving a few Key inputs to the concerned departments and making necessary arrangements, it is established that the new shooting schedule has started now. The new schedule of Varanasi will feature the main actors associated with the film, including Mahesh Babu and Priyanka Chopra. This will be one of the biggest schedules of the film where significant portion of the talkie part will be completed. It has been a while since Mahesh Babu and Priyanka Chopra got on the set for this Rajamouli directorial, so this new schedule is going to play a crucial role in bringing the lead act together.

This film is principal preparing for its release next April, and this is going to be a race against time for Rajamouli, considering as usual long schedules. But he appears to be committed to complete the shooting process on time for this project this time which is going to be the point of difference.

## Ranveer's Next:

# Lord Shiva?

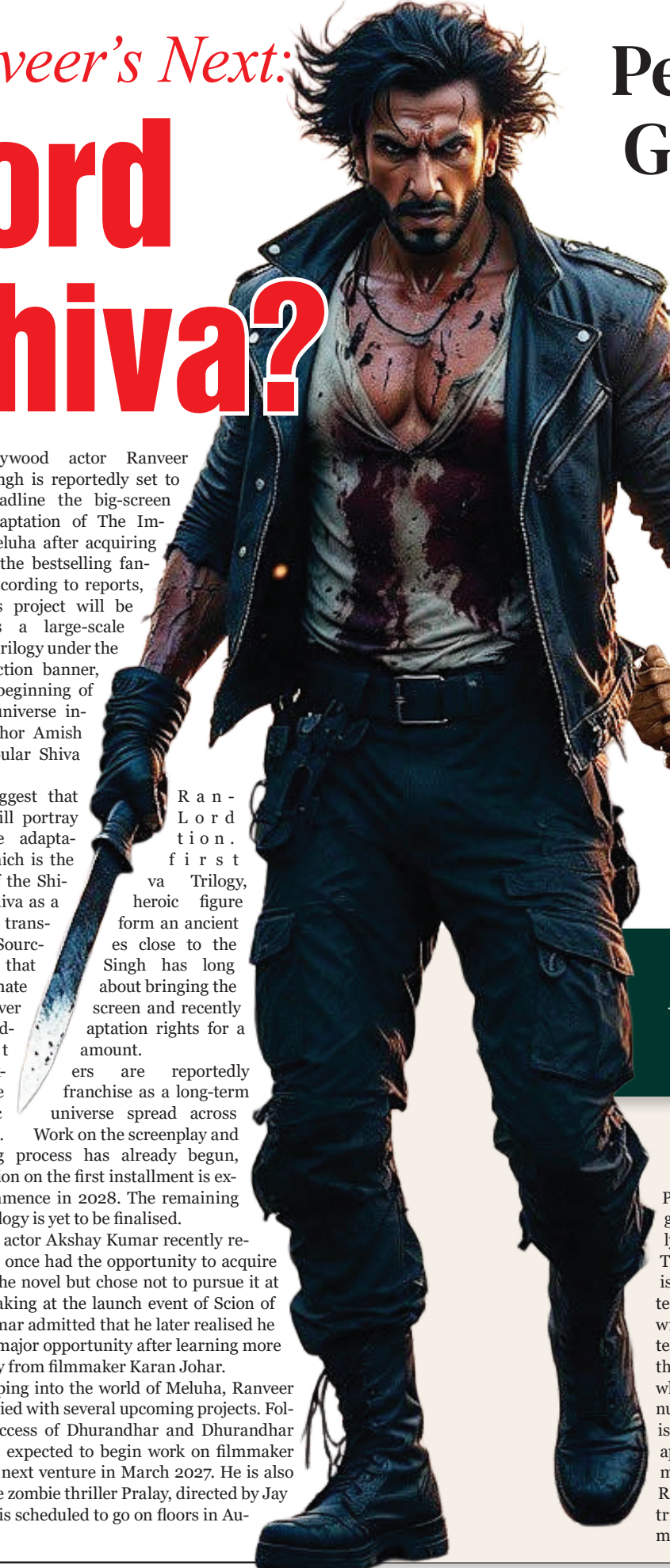
Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh is reportedly set to headline the big-screen adaptation of The Immortals of Meluha after acquiring the rights to the bestselling fantasy novel. According to reports, the ambitious project will be developed as a large-scale mythological trilogy under the actor's production banner, marking the beginning of a cinematic universe inspired by author Amish Tripathi's popular Shiva Trilogy.

Reports suggest that Ranveer Singh will portray Lord Shiva in the adaptation. The novel, which is the first installment of the Shiva Trilogy, reimagines Shiva as a heroic figure destined to transcend civilisation. Source project stated that Ranveer Singh has long been passionate about bringing the story to the silver screen and recently secured the adaptation rights for a amount.

The makers are reportedly planning the franchise as a long-term cinematic universe spread across three films. Work on the screenplay and world-building process has already begun, while production on the first installment is expected to commence in 2028. The remaining cast for the trilogy is yet to be finalised.

Meanwhile, actor Akshay Kumar recently revealed that he once had the opportunity to acquire the rights to the novel but chose not to pursue it at the time. Speaking at the launch event of Scion of Ikshvaku, Kumar admitted that he later realised he had missed a major opportunity after learning more about the story from filmmaker Karan Johar.

Before stepping into the world of Meluha, Ranveer Singh is occupied with several upcoming projects. Following the success of Dhurandhar and Dhurandhar 2, the actor is expected to begin work on filmmaker Aditya Dhar's next venture in March 2027. He is also attached to the zombie thriller Pralay, directed by Jay Mehta, which is scheduled to go on floors in August 2026.



## Peddi Showcased What Game Changer Missed

During the filming of "RRR", Ram Charan took special permission from SS Rajamouli and simultaneously took part in the shooting of "Game Changer" as well. Despite being directed by S Shankar, a pioneer in crafting socially relevant films that stunned the film audience for a long time, the film flopped at the box office. Guess what, even "Peddi" has

Going by the Chikri song, the wrestling teaser, the mega elevation shots, many felt that this is a film based on village cricket and then shifts tonality towards wrestling. However, the roles of Jagapathi Babu and Kannada star Sivaraj Kumar are not just ordinary ones, but they deal with some politics of the village. It's coming out that the village gets badly neglected by politicians based on caste, and after Peddi takes things into his hands, the narrative takes dramatic turns. Towards the end, what Peddi has done for his village is going to be a shocker of sorts. That means, Peddi under the direction of Buchi Babu Sana is more likely to give a different take to Ram Charan's very own Rangasthalam which also dealt with similar topics almost a decade ago. At the same time, while Charan's recent outing Game Changer struggled to showcase the politics perfectly, this time it won't miss the mark, they say. Well, June 4th is turning out to be more exciting than anticipated.

## Rakul Turns Yash's Sister

Beautiful actress Rakul Preet Singh is all over the social media timelines, thanks to her spicy glamour that's being thrown in the form of songs, for the upcoming film Pati Patni Aur Woh Do. However, all these glamorous acts in Bollywood are continuously landing her in films, one after the other. The latest buzz from Bollywood circles is that Rakul has joined the sets of Nitesh Tiwari's prestigious Ramayana and will be seen as Shurpanakha. In simple terms, that means Rakul will be playing the sister of Kannada superstar Yash, who is portraying Ravana in the magnum opus. Interestingly, Rakul's role is not some blink-and-miss glamorous appearance. Shurpanakha is one of the most crucial character, who desires on Rama's brother Lakshmana, and then triggers the whole lot of things in Ramayana.

