

HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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Cabinet Approves 2026-27 Kharif MSP Hike



NEW DELHI, MAY 13

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a significant hike in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for 14 Kharif crops for the 2026-27 marketing season, aiming to ensure better returns for farmers across the country.

Briefing the media after the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) meeting, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the revised MSPs would provide remunerative prices to growers and strengthen farm incomes. He noted that the government expects procurement of over 824 lakh metric tonnes of crops during the season, with an estimated payout of ₹2.6 lakh crore to farmers.

Among the major increases, sunflower seed recorded the highest MSP hike of ₹622 per quintal, followed by cotton with ₹557 per quintal and sesame with ₹500 per quintal. The MSP for Grade-A paddy has been fixed at ₹2,461 per quintal, while hybrid jowar will be procured at ₹4,023 per quintal. Bajra MSP has been set at ₹2,900 per quintal and tur at ₹8,450 per quintal.

The Cabinet also cleared a major Scheme for Promotion of Surface Coal and Lignite Gasification Projects with a financial outlay of ₹37,500 crore. The scheme is aimed at accelerating India's coal and lignite gasification programme and targets gasification of around 75 million tonnes of coal and lignite for the production of syngas and downstream products.

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Kohli's ninth IPL hundred powers RCB to the top

STADIUM 11

POOJA TO PAIR UP WITH ALLU ARJUN FOR THE THIRD TIME



BOX-OFFICE 12

Telangana Plans Mega Urban Growth Corridors Across State

ORRs for Warangal, Karimnagar, Khammam; temple; tourism corridors also planned

HYDERABAD, MAY 13

In a major push towards long-term urban development, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday unveiled an ambitious plan to develop urban growth corridors, temple and tourism circuits, and renewable energy-driven infrastructure across the state.

During a high-level review meeting held at the MCRHRDI with officials from the Municipal Administration and Roads & Buildings departments, the Chief Minister directed authorities to prepare comprehensive plans for three major urban growth corridors — Warangal-Karimnagar-Khammam, Mahabubnagar-Bhothpur-Jadcherla, and Kothagudem-Palvancha-Sujathanagar.

Revanth Reddy said the proposed Warangal-Karimnagar-Khammam corridor would become a key driver of Telangana's future economic and urban expansion. He also instructed officials to take up Outer Ring Road (ORR) projects for Warangal, Karim-



nagar and Khammam to strengthen urban connectivity and reduce traffic congestion.

Emphasising the need for visionary planning, the Chief Minister asked officials to design all infrastructure projects with a 25-year long-term perspective. He directed that towns and municipalities be connected through radial road networks to ensure seamless regional integration. Highlighting sustainable urbanisation, Revanth Reddy stressed that solid waste manage-

ment systems, wastewater treatment plants and renewable energy units must become core components of future urban planning. He also called for the adoption of advanced underground drainage systems and wider use of Electric Vehicles (EVs) to reduce operational costs and pollution levels. In a significant move towards green governance, the Chief Minister directed that only EVs should be hired for official government purposes going forward.

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Uber Plans Future City Office

HYDERABAD, May 13: Ride-hailing giant Uber Technologies is set to expand its Centre of Excellence in Hyderabad and is exploring the establishment of a corporate office in Bharat Future City, Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi informed Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy during a meeting held at the latter's Jubilee Hills residence on Wednesday.

Leading an Uber delegation, Dara Khosrowshahi briefed the Chief Minister on the company's operations and expansion plans in Telangana. He said the Hyderabad Centre of Excellence, Uber's first such facility outside the United States, currently employs around 600 engineers and is undergoing further expansion. The Uber CEO also conveyed the company's interest in establishing a corporate office in Bharat Future City and sought continued support from the Telangana government for Uber's future growth initiatives in the State. During the discussions, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy highlighted the growing parking challenges in major cities across the country and advised Uber to explore opportunities in the parking infrastructure sector.

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4 Detained in NEET Case

HYDERABAD, May 13: The probe into the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak intensified on Wednesday, with the Central Bureau of Investigation detaining four people in Maharashtra for questioning. Three suspects were taken into custody from Ahilyanagar district, while a woman from Pune was separately detained and handed over to the agency. Investigators are probing an alleged interstate network involved in circulating the leaked paper.

The developments came amid nationwide protests following the cancellation of the medical entrance exam by the National Testing Agency. Student groups including National Students' Union of India, Students' Federation of India and Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad staged demonstrations in several states, demanding accountability, transparency and strict action against those responsible for the alleged leak.

Rythu DISCOM set for full-scale launch on State Formation Day

HYDERABAD, MAY 13

The Telangana government is taking rapid steps to ensure that the Telangana Rythu Power Distribution Company (Rythu DISCOM), being established as a prestigious initiative, begins full-fledged operations from the State Formation Day. Within a short span of just two months, approval from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has been secured, Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) have been completed, and the crucial employee division process has reached its final stage.

As part of the key asset division process required for field-level operations, the focus has first been placed on the survey of

agricultural distribution transformers (DTRs). Officials stated that there are nearly 5.60 lakh agricultural transformers across the state. Plans have been prepared to deploy three survey teams per section in all 744 operation sections, resulting in a total of 2,232 teams participating in the survey every day.

For this purpose, the Rythu DISCOM has developed a special mobile application. Through this app, assistant engineers will collect photographs of the transformer structures, DTR emboss numbers, and nameplate details of agricultural DTRs under their jurisdiction, while also recording the geo-coordinates of the respective transformers.

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Ponguleti directs district collectors to gear up for 6-day extreme heatwave

HYDERABAD, MAY 13

In light of the intensifying heatwave in Telangana state, Minister for Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy advised the people to exercise extreme caution.

In light of warnings from the Meteorological department that severe heatwaves and temperatures exceeding 44 degrees Celsius are likely to be recorded in several districts across the state over the coming six days, the Minister on Wednesday directed the district collectors and the administrative machinery to remain fully alert.

The Minister emphasised that, given the prevailing conditions—scorching heat on one hand, and the likelihood of unseasonal rains accompanied by gusty winds, thunder, and lightning on the other—precautionary measures must be undertaken to prevent any loss of life or property.

It was stated that temperatures exceeding 44 degrees are likely to be recorded, particularly in the districts of Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, and Nirmal; furthermore, the intensity of the heat is expected to increase in the coming days in the districts of Jagtial, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, and Peddapalli as well.

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Governor calls for expansion of Bharat Scouts and Guides in private schools

HYDERABAD, MAY 13

The leadership of Bharat Scouts and Guides (BSG) Telangana called on Shiv Pratap Shukla, Governor of Telangana and Chief Patron of BSG, at Raj Bhavan on Wednesday and briefed him on the organisation's expansion, developmental initiatives and future plans in the State.

The delegation was led by M. Dana Kishore, Special Chief Secretary to the Governor and state Chief Commissioner

of BSG, and included E. Naveen Nicolas, director of School Education and state secretary of BSG, along with other senior state-level office-bearers.

During the meeting, the delegation informed the Governor that scouting activities were being successfully conducted across all 33 districts of Telangana.

Dana Kishore said that infrastructure for BSG was being strengthened with support from Corporate

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EDUCATION FIRST: MINISTER PONNAM URGES SARPANCHES TO STRENGTHEN GOVT SCHOOLS

HUSNABAD, MAY 13

(NSS): As part of the 99-day action plan under the "Praja Palana Pragathi Pranalika" and the ongoing Education Week celebrations, an Education Workshop for Sarpanches and Councillors was held at Vaishya Bhavan in Husnabad on Wednesday.

Telangana Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar attended the programme as the chief guest and emphasized that the State Government is giving the highest priority to education and the strengthening of government



institutions. Addressing representatives from Husnabad, Akkannapet, Koheda and Bejjanki mandals, the Minister said the workshop

was organized to create awareness among local bodies about their responsibility in improving government schools and increasing student enrolment.

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Strict Action Against Bakrid Miscreants: DGP

HYDERABAD, MAY 13:

Director General of Police, Telangana, Sri C.V. Anand, IPS, has stated that the police department is taking stringent measures to ensure peace, public order, and communal harmony during the forthcoming Bakrid festival across the State.

On Wednesday, the DGP, along with senior officials from various departments, conducted a video conference with Police Commissioners and Superintendents of Police of all districts. The conference was attended by Special Chief Secretary, Municipal Administration & Urban Development, Sri Jayesh Ranjan; Secretary, Animal Husbandry Department, Sri K. Ilambarthi; and other senior officials.

Speaking on the occasion, DGP Sri C.V. Anand said that, as per the decisions taken during the review meetings held at the level of the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister, police officers have been instructed to strictly prevent illegal transportation and trafficking of cattle during the Bakrid festival scheduled later this month.

The DGP observed that Bakrid is a sensitive festival from a law and order perspective and stressed the need for heightened vigilance in view of the prevailing circumstances to prevent any communal tension or clashes between groups. Referring to recent incidents of illegal cattle trans-

portation, he stated that the video conference was organized to ensure effective implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

DGP directed the officers to strictly enforce the provisions of the Cow Slaughter Act, 1977, the Transport of Animals Rules, 1978, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. He warned that stringent legal action would be taken against those violating the rules related to cattle transportation.

The DGP informed that 52 inter-state check posts have been established along the borders of Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh, in addition to a total of 203 check posts across the State to curb illegal cattle smuggling. He instructed officials to intensify vehicle checks in suspicious areas and maintain special surveillance over cattle fairs likely to be held across the State during the next 15 days.

DGP further directed that documents such as "Fit for Transport" and "Fit for Slaughter" certificates related to cattle transportation should be thoroughly verified at all check posts and that the checking process should continue uninterrupted until the completion of the festival.

Emphasizing the importance of maintaining law and order, the DGP warned that no individual or group should take the law into their own hands. He advised members of Qureshi associations and cow protection groups not to



resort to road blockades or create confrontation situations based on mere suspicion regarding cattle transportation. He made it clear that criminal cases would be registered against violators and rowdy/suspect sheels would also be opened wherever necessary.

The DGP instructed Police Commissioners and District SPs to hold separate coordination meetings with representatives of both groups at the field level and create awareness to avoid misunderstandings and tensions.

DGP also stressed the need for close coordination among Police, Municipal Administration, Animal Husbandry, and Revenue Departments. For effective communication and information sharing, he directed officials to form special WhatsApp groups at district and field levels.

Further, he advised officials to arrange adequate cattle shelters for seized animals and ensure proper facilities, including fodder and water. The DGP also instructed of-

ficers to maintain strict vigil on social media platforms and warned that individuals posting provocative or misleading content would be identified, summoned to police stations, and dealt with as per law.

Recalling incidents and cases reported during previous Bakrid festivals, the DGP directed all officers to ensure that no untoward incidents occur anywhere in the State this year.

Speaking on the occasion, Special Chief Secretary (MA&UD) Sri Jayesh Ranjan stated that municipal officials are on high alert in view of the Bakrid festival. He emphasized that the Cow Slaughter Act, the Transport Act, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act must be strictly enforced.

Animal Husbandry Secretary Sri K. Ilambarthi stated that veterinary doctors are being made available to issue the necessary certificates for the transportation of cattle. He added that veterinary doctors would remain accessible round the clock in areas where their services are required.

During the video conference, Special Chief Secretary, MAUD, Sri Jayesh Ranjan; Secretary, Animal Husbandry Department, Sri K. Ilambarthi; Director Sri Gopi; DGP (Law & Order) Sri Mahesh M. Bhagwat; IGP Sri Chandrasekhar Reddy, Sri Shahinawaz Qasim, and Sri Karthikeya; Intelligence DIG Sri Bhaskaran, along with other senior officers, offered valuable suggestions.

Praja Palana Outreach Focuses on Youth Awareness



HYDERABAD, MAY 13

The "Praja Palana and Pragathi Pranalika" programme was conducted with great enthusiasm and active participation at the college under the able guidance of Principal Prof. Ch. Appiia Chinnamma.

As part of the Day 3 activities, the NSS Unit organized a comprehensive Community Outreach Programme in nearby localities, focusing on key social concerns such as drug abuse, cybercrime awareness and educational opportunities.

The programme witnessed the active participation of Vice Principal Dr. Mohd. Ghouse, IQAC Coordinator Dr. K. Sreedevi, Academic Coordinator Dr. P. Latha, NSS Programme Officers Dr. M. Pranitha, Dr. K. Shobha Rani and Dr. Jesse, WEC Cell Coordinator S. Anitha, NSS volunteers and faculty members including Prof. Chennaih, Mr. Anwaruddin, Mr. Babu, Mrs. Sunitha, Shailaja and Vidyadhari.

During the outreach activity, NSS volunteers interacted with

local residents, youth, shopkeepers and school students to create awareness on the harmful effects of drug addiction. They explained how substance abuse adversely affects physical health, mental well-being, family relationships, academic performance, career prospects and overall personal development. The volunteers also emphasized the importance of healthy living, good peer influence, counselling and timely guidance.

The programme also highlighted the growing threat of cybercrimes. Volunteers educated the public on various forms of online fraud, including fake calls, phishing links, OTP scams, online financial frauds, identity theft and misuse of social media. They urged citizens, especially students and youth, to remain alert while using digital platforms and to avoid sharing personal or banking information with unknown persons.

As part of the initiative, an Admission Campaign for DOST enrolment was also carried out. NSS volunteers and

faculty members visited nearby areas and distributed pamphlets explaining the courses offered by the college, with special emphasis on AEDP courses. They briefed the public about the importance of these programmes, career scope, skill-development opportunities and employment potential. Information regarding admissions, infrastructure, student support services, scholarships and extracurricular activities was also shared to encourage students to pursue higher education.

The outreach programme received a positive response from the local community. The initiative not only strengthened the bond between the institution and society but also promoted social responsibility, public awareness and educational development.

As part of the programme, group-wise toppers were presented with medals and mementos by the dignitaries in recognition of their academic excellence. Ms. Syeda Sana Fathima, who emerged as the overall topper, was felicitated and congratulated by all.

She was also awarded a cash prize for securing the highest marks in English, instituted in the name of Smt. Satya Bai Shivadas, Retired Lecturer in English.

Cultural performances by students added colour and energy to the event. The vibrant presentations entertained the audience and created a festive atmosphere on the campus.

An informative lecture on Constitutional Law was also delivered by Mr. Babu. The session focused on the fundamental rights and duties of citizens, the importance of the Indian Constitution, equality before law and the role of constitutional values in strengthening democracy. He encouraged students to develop legal awareness and become responsible, informed citizens.

The programme concluded successfully with the active participation of students, faculty members and NSS volunteers, reflecting the institution's commitment to community service, academic excellence and social awareness.

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Uber Plans Future City Office

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He suggested the development of multi-level parking facilities to address future urban mobility needs.

The Chief Minister pointed out that several metro stations currently suffer from inadequate parking infrastructure, causing inconvenience to commuters. He proposed integrating EV charging stations with parking facilities to promote sustainable transportation solutions. Responding to the suggestions, Uber representatives stated that the company would study the proposals in detail. Explaining the vision behind Bharat Future

City, Revanth Reddy said the project, spread across 30,000 acres near Hyderabad, is being developed as a world-class integrated urban hub. He noted that the government aims to attract 500 globally reputed companies to establish operations there and said several firms have already expressed interest.

The Chief Minister added that Bharat Future City is located approximately 25 kilometres from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport and stated that over 100 companies participated in the Global Summit held there last December, with many showing willingness to

invest.

During the meeting, Dara Khosrowshahi reiterated Uber's interest in setting up its corporate office in Future City and affirmed the company's commitment to expanding in partnership with the Telangana government.

The meeting was attended by Uber Chief Business Officer Madhu Kannan, Uber India & South Asia President Prabhjeet Singh, Chief Technology Officer Praveen Nippalli Naga, and Chief Minister's Special Secretary Ajit Reddy.

Key Highlights
• Uber expanding Hyderabad

- Centre of Excellence
- Facility is Uber's first Centre of Excellence outside the US
- Around 600 engineers currently employed
- Uber keen to establish corporate office in Bharat Future City
- Telangana government invites 500 global companies to Future City
- Chief Minister suggests multi-level parking facilities and EV charging infrastructure
- State assures full support for Uber's expansion plans in Telangana

Telangana Plans Mega Urban Growth Corridors Across State

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He also instructed officials to establish renewable energy generation facilities within urban areas.

The meeting further reviewed proposals for AI-based traffic management systems, smart poles, and multi-utility towers aimed at reducing radiation exposure and improving civic infrastructure. Officials were also directed to make the use of treated water from the Sewage and Wastewater Management Board mandatory for all construction activities. The

government also proposed a Temple Corridor connecting Nalgonda and Yadagirigutta, and a Tourism Corridor linking Adilabad, Nagoba Temple, Basara and the Kadem Project to boost spiritual and tourism-based economic activity. The Chief Minister additionally instructed officials to upgrade the Alampur Jogulamba Temple ahead of the upcoming Krishna Pushkarams.

Reviewing airport infrastructure proposals, Revanth Reddy said water requirements for the proposed Waran-

gal airport should be included in planning exercises.

He also noted that the proposed Adilabad airport is being developed by the Ministry of Defence and stressed the importance of strong road connectivity to upcoming airports. The Chief Minister further directed officials to merge municipalities under the jurisdiction of Singareni Collieries Company Limited into a single administrative unit and utilise the company's CSR funds exclusively for local development works.

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Mr. Vaishnav said the initiative is expected to attract investments worth nearly ₹3 lakh crore. Under the scheme, financial incentives of up to 20 percent of the cost of plant and machinery will be provided through a transparent competitive bidding process.

In another major infrastructure push, the Cabinet approved India's first semi-high-speed rail corridor on broad gauge using indigenous technology under the Nammo Bharat train operations. The 134-km corridor, with an estimated cost of ₹20,667 crore, will connect Ahmedabad (Sabarmati) with Dholera SIR, Dholera Airport and Lothal NHMC. The project is being seen as a landmark step in the country's rail modernisation efforts.

The government also approved the modernisation and expansion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport under the Public-Private

Partnership (PPP) model. The project will be undertaken by GMR Nagpur International Airport Limited as part of the Multi-modal International Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN) initiative.

The phased development plan aims to increase the airport's capacity to handle 30 million passengers annually, positioning Nagpur as a major aviation and cargo hub in Central India. Officials said the project would significantly improve regional connectivity, cargo handling capacity and economic infrastructure in the Vidarbha region. Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed the Cabinet decisions, stating that the MSP hike would ensure fair and profitable prices for crores of farmers across the country. In social media posts, the Prime Minister said the decisions reflected the government's continued commitment to safeguarding farmers' interests and strengthening India's infrastructure and energy security.

...Guides in private schools

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Social Responsibility (CSR) funds and the Governor's Funds. He noted that around 1,200 BSG units were currently functioning across the State, with more than 30,000 students actively participating in scouting activities. Dr. Naveen Nicolas said that the state government had been extending regular financial support to BSG activities. He said that after enrolling 1,000 schools during the 2025-26 academic year, another 1,000 schools were expected to join in 2026-27. A comprehensive activity calendar was also being prepared with the objective of establishing BSG units in every school in the State.

Appreciating the progress made by BSG Telangana, Shukla advised the organisation to further expand its activities, particularly by encouraging greater participation from private schools.

The Governor said the facilities available at the State Training Centre would help nurture leadership qualities and personality development among young scouts. The BSG Telangana delegation assured him of its commitment to extending scouting activities to all parts of the State.

Ponguleti directs district collectors to gear up

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In light of these conditions, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy appealed to the public not to venture outdoors between 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM, unless absolutely necessary.

Head ised young children, the elderly, pregnant women, and those suffering from health ailments to exercise extra caution. The Minister further recommended consuming adequate amounts of water, buttermilk, and ORS solutions, and advised those working outdoors to wear head coverings for protection against the sun.

Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy directed the district administration to make all necessary

arrangements to ensure that the public does not face any difficulties due to heatwaves and the severity of the summer heat.

He instructed the district collectors to take measures to ensure the availability of drinking water, power supply, medical services, ambulances, and firefighting personnel.

Furthermore, the Minister ordered that preventive measures against heatstroke be widely publicised in villages and towns, while simultaneously raising awareness among the public.

The Minister stated that the safety of the people is the government's top priority and in view of the severity of

the Minister stated that the safety of the people is the government's top priority and in view of the severity of

EDUCATION FIRST: MINISTER PONNAM URGES SARPANCHES TO STRENGTHEN GOVT SCHOOLS

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parents to admit children into government schools.

Calling for an intensive "Badi Bata" campaign, the Minister asked local representatives to conduct door-to-door visits to ensure every child is enrolled in school.

He revealed that meetings had recently been conducted in seven mandals and five-member committees were constituted to improve infrastructure and student enrolment in government schools. Stressing the importance of preventing dropouts, he said awareness must be created among parents regarding the quality education available in government institutions.

The Minister also advised Sarpanches from Bejanki to visit the Urban Forest Park and Ellamma Cheruvu in Husnabad to observe local development initiatives.

Highlighting the role of grassroots leadership, Ponnamp Prabhakar said Sarpanches carry immense responsibility in shaping village development. Describing himself as a student leader, he reiterated

that education and agriculture remain his top priorities.

Recalling development initiatives undertaken during his tenure as Member of Parliament, he said a Satavahana University Engineering College was brought to Husnabad and added that educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping future generations. He further stated that 29 Model Schools and Kasturba Schools were established across 31 mandals during his tenure as MP.

Announcing major upcoming projects, the Minister said an Integrated Residential School with advanced technological facilities is being constructed at Thanagalapalli near Koheda at a cost of Rs. 200 crore. He also said a 250-bed hospital is under construction and a branch of Basara Triple IT will soon be established at Elkathurthi.

Reiterating that education remains the government's foremost priority, he urged Sarpanches to regularly attend Parents-Teachers Meetings, monitor school environments, encourage sports activi-

ties and ensure the availability of basic infrastructure in schools.

The Minister said government colleges provide quality education and noted that many parents are spending lakhs of rupees on private institutions such as Narayana Educational Institutions and Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions. Appealing to local representatives to strengthen government schools and encourage admissions, he said such efforts would greatly benefit poor students.

During the programme, meritorious students from Government Junior Colleges, Social Welfare Schools, Model Schools, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Residential Schools and Akkannapet Tribal Schools in the Husnabad constituency were felicitated for their outstanding academic achievements.

Municipal Chairperson Dandi Lakshmi, Vice Chairperson Chittari Padma, DEO Srinivas Reddy, RDO Rammurthy, MEOs, Sarpanches and headmasters from various mandals participated in the programme.

Rythu DISCOM set for full-scale launch on State Formation Day

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In this context, Telangana DISCOM CMDs and senior officials held a video conference as per the Government's directions. During the meeting, extensive discussions were held regarding the survey of agricultural distribution transformers that are proposed to come under the jurisdiction of the Rythu DISCOM. Officials also informed that, on a pilot basis, the survey of certain agricultural distribution transformers had already been successfully conducted in the Rajendranagar Circle. It was further stated

that the Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC) will conduct a public hearing on the issue of granting a license to the Rythu DISCOM on May 28. CMD Musharraf Faruqi stated that once the asset mapping process is completed, the Rythu DISCOM is likely to commence full-fledged operations from June 2, subject to the government's decision. The video conference was attended by Southern Power Distribution Company CMD Jitesh V. Patil, Northern Power Distribution Company CMD Varun Reddy and directors were present.

ACB surprise check exposes irregularities at Shamshabad Tahsildar office

HYDERABAD

Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau conducted a surprise inspection at the office of the Tahsildar & Executive Magistrate and Joint Sub-Registrar, Shamshabad Mandal, uncovering serious irregularities and alleged corrupt practices.

According to the ACB, the surprise check conducted from May 8 onwards revealed multiple violations and instances of suspected misconduct.

During the inspection, officials seized unaccounted cash amounting to Rs.2.60 lakh from the dashboard of a vehicle belonging to Tahsildar K. Ravinder Dutt. Another Rs.2.29 lakh in unaccounted cash was allegedly recovered from Revenue Inspector G. Krishna, who was reportedly found attempting to dispose of the money and conceal a file on the roof of a toilet. An additional Rs.10,000 in unaccounted cash was seized from licensed surveyor S. Prudhviraj.

The ACB also found that no personal cash register

was being maintained in the office and that 68 Mee Seva applications were pending beyond the stipulated processing time.

During preliminary verification, the ACB observed that Tahsildar K. Ravinder Dutt had allegedly issued certain certificates and proceedings beyond his jurisdiction and without the knowledge of higher authorities.

Officials stated that in some cases he allegedly assumed the powers of the Land Reforms Tribunal while issuing proceedings related to land matters.

The ACB noted that some of the orders and letters issued in connection with various survey numbers in Shamshabad, Tondupally and Sathamrai villages appeared to favour private parties and allegedly caused damage to government property and reputation.

The bureau concluded that the Tahsildar had performed his duties in an improper and irregular manner and acted beyond his jurisdiction.

Sports & Studies Must Go Hand In Hand For Student Development: Shivadhar Reddy



HYDERABAD

Emphasizing the importance of balancing academics with physical activity, Telangana State Security Advisor and former DGP B. Shivadhar Reddy said that sports and studies must go hand in hand for the overall development of students.

He was speaking as the chief guest during the "Sports and Well-being Day" celebrations organized as part of Education Week at the CSTD Auditorium of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University here on Wednesday.

Addressing the gathering, Shivadhar Reddy noted that sports, once considered secondary to academics, was now recognized as essential for developing discipline, leadership qualities, mental strength and physical fitness

among students. He said participation in sports also opens up professional opportunities and contributes to personality development and financial growth.

He highlighted that the Telangana government is introducing several policies and programmes to strengthen sports infrastructure and nurture young talent. Initiatives such as Young India Schools, are helping create a balanced education system that gives equal importance to academics and sports, he added.

Presiding over the programme, Vice Chancellor Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani said the Telangana government had announced themes such as innovation, inclusion, institutional excellence and outreach under Education Week, and the university had already been imple-



menting similar initiatives for the benefit of students and staff. The university has been promoting innovative academic and developmental programmes while also encouraging a healthy work environment through sports activities for employees. The campus has been equipped with playgrounds, open-air gyms, and fitness infrastructure to support physical well-being, he noted.

Prof. Chakrapani further revealed that the university is transforming into a digital university and plans to introduce online programmes soon to make education more accessible to all sections of society. He added that the institution continues to focus on outreach programmes aimed at providing educational opportunities to unreached and underprivileged communities.

Guest of Honour Prof. Pushpa Chakrapani said the university is taking major steps towards digitization while expanding educational access to unreached sections of society. She added that the institution is actively strengthening innovation, academic excellence, and outreach initiatives to compete with leading universities.

Prizes were distributed to winners of cultural events, games and sports competitions conducted as part of the celebrations. Registrar Dr. L. Vijaya Krishna Reddy, Skill Development & Vocational Training Centre Director Prof. Pallavi Kabde, Non-Teaching Association President K. Prem Kumar, General Secretary Vishwanath, along with deans, directors, faculty members, non-teaching staff, and students attended the programme.

SIT summons ignored: POC SO accused Bandi Bhagirath seeks more time

HYDERABAD

Sexual assault accused Bandi Bhagirath, son of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, has sought additional time from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to appear for questioning in the POC SO case registered against him. Bhagirath, who has reportedly been absconding since the case surfaced, sent an email to the Pet Basheerabad police informing officials that he would appear before the SIT on Friday. The SIT had earlier issued notices on May 12 directing him to attend the inquiry on Wednesday at 2 PM.

However, Bhagirath failed to appear at the scheduled time. According to officials, nearly three hours after the deadline had passed, he emailed the police seeking more time and stated that he would cooperate fully with the investigation. In the communication, he also claimed that he would appear before the SIT with "complete evidence" related to the case. The development comes amid mounting political attention and public scrutiny surrounding the case, which is being investigated under the stringent provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The notification for TG CPGET-2026 was formally released TG CHE

HYDERABAD

The notification for TG CPGET-2026 was formally released at the conference hall of the Telangana Council of Higher Education in Hyderabad. The event was presided over by Council Chairman Professor Balakista Reddy and attended by Vice Chancellors from various universities, including Professor Kumar, Professor Umesh Kumar, Professor G. N. Srinivas, and Professor Surya Dhananjay. Council Vice Chairmen Professor Purshottam and Secretary Professor



Sreeram Venkatesh were also present at the event. Speaking on the occasion, Kakatiya University Vice Chancellor Professor K. Pratap Reddy stated that Kakatiya University has been entrusted with conducting the TG CPGET-2026 examination this year. Convener Professor Rajendar Katla announced that the application process for TG CPGET-2026 will commence on May 15, and the last date for submission of applications is June 18. Registrar Professor Ramchandram and Special Officer Professor B. Venkat Ram Reddy, among others, also participated in the programme.

UPGRADATION OF NETWORK FOR MODERNISATION

Tender Notice No. : KIR-N-2026-K-7; Dated: 11-05-2026; E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **SI No.1: Brief Description of Work :** Upgradation of Network for Modernisation of PRS Network in Katihar Division. **Tender Value:** ₹3,79,23,723.23/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹7,58,500/-; **Date & time of closing of tender at 15:00 hrs. and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 02-06-2026.** For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 02-06-2026 in the website www.ireps.gov.in

DRM (S&T), Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Construction Organization, Ernakulam Jn.
Tender Notice No. 09-CE-CN-ERS-2026-OT Dated : 08.05.2026

Name of work : Conducting Final Location Survey (FLS)/Detailed field survey for the following :

- Final location survey for 3rd line between TVC-NCJ & Other New Line / Doubling / future projects including soil investigations
- Detailed field survey & preparation of drawing & documents including soil investigation for AFK-Sabari New Line
- Detailed field survey & preparation of drawing & documents including soil investigation for AMPA-TUVR doubling section under the jurisdiction of CAO/CNERS.

Tender Value : Rs. 3088.36 Lakhs

Bid Security : Rs. 61,76,700/-

Completion Period : 24 Months

Date and time of tender closing : 09.06.2026, 15.00 hrs.

Complete details and tender document will be available at <https://www.ireps.gov.in>

Chief Engineer / Construction, Ernakulam Jn.

CWC Meeting held at P&T Quarters



HYDERABAD

The Circle Working Council (CWC) meeting of R3 Union, NFPE, Telangana Circle was held at B1, P&T Quarters, Chikkadally under the leadership of Comrade Vijay Kumar.

Comrade Srinivasulu, CHQ Member, along with Federal Council Members attended the meeting as guests and addressed the

gathering on important organisational and employee issues.

Circle Secretary Comrade M. Muthesh, Divisional Secretaries, Branch Secretaries, CWC Members and active comrades from various divisions attended the meeting in large numbers and actively participated in the deliberations.

The meeting discussed

various organisational matters, service conditions and future programmes of action. Several fruitful resolutions were adopted unanimously for strengthening the organisation and safeguarding the interests of employees.

The enthusiastic participation of comrades and constructive discussions made the meeting a grand success.

Bandi Bhagirath skips SIT questioning

HYDERABAD

Sexual assault accused Bandi Sai Bhagirath has failed to appear before the SIT probing the POC SO case registered against him.

Police had directed Bhagirath to appear before the investigators at Pet Basheerabad Police Station by 2 pm on Wednesday. Notices were reportedly served through his maternal uncle, Dr. Ch. Vamsi Krishna, in Karimnagar on Tuesday. However, Bhagirath did not attend the inquiry, further intensifying the legal proceedings against him. According to officials, under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), failure to cooperate with the investigation in a POC SO case could lead to arrest warrants, cancellation of interim bail, declaration as an absconder, and issuance of a non-bailable warrant.

The case was registered on May 8 following a complaint by the family members of a 17-year-old girl from Suchitra in Quthbullapur, alleging sexual harassment. The SIT probing the case is functioning under the supervision of Kukatapally Zone DCP Rithiraj. Initially, cases were booked against Bhagirath under Sections 11 and 12 of the POC SO Act and Sections 74 and 75 of the BNS.

GITAM VDC to Organize Young

Entrepreneurs Programme for School Students

HYDERABAD

The Venture Development Centre (VDC) at GITAM Deemed to be University is set to organize the "Young Entrepreneurs Program" (YEP), a three-day in-person Startup Bootcamp designed for school students from Grades 8 to 12. The programme aims to nurture entrepreneurial thinking, creativity, leadership, and problem-solving skills among young learners through experiential and activity-based learning. Each participant is required to pay a registration fee of ₹6,000 plus GST.

YEP is a hands-on and immersive bootcamp that introduces students to the funda-

mentals of entrepreneurship by helping them identify opportunities, develop innovative ideas, and pitch solutions like startup founders. Unlike conventional classroom learning, the programme is team-based, highly interactive, and focused on practical experience.

Highlighting the importance of entrepreneurial skills in today's rapidly evolving world, the organizers noted that qualities such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, resilience, and innovation have become essential for future success. The programme is designed to equip students with these skills at an early stage and prepare them to become confident leaders and change-makers. The three-day bootcamp will feature a structured curriculum covering entrepreneurial mindset, opportunity

identification, design thinking, business models, customer understanding, startup idea development, storytelling, presentation skills, and pitching techniques.

On Day 1, students will learn to "Think Like a Founder" through sessions on entrepreneurial mindset, identifying real-world problems, design thinking, team formation, and idea brainstorming.

Day 2, titled "Build Your Idea," will focus on understanding business models, customer needs, refining startup ideas, and developing a simple startup canvas. Day 3, "Pitch with Confidence," will train participants in storytelling, presentation skills, handling questions, and presenting their startup ideas before a panel in a "Shark Tank"-style pitch session. By the end of the pro-

gramme, participants will gain a founder mindset, enhanced critical thinking abilities, teamwork and collaboration skills, confidence in public speaking, and a structured startup idea developed during the bootcamp. Students will also receive a certificate from GITAM VDC. The programme is ideal for students interested in startups, innovation, business, creative problem-solving, leadership, and communication skills. It is also expected to provide young learners with valuable exposure to university campus life and mentorship from experts associated with GITAM VDC. For further details about the YEP, interested students and parents may contact Mahesh Varier, Deputy Director, VDC, at +91 9036217587 or via e-mail at mvarier@gitam.edu.

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SHORT TAKES

Massive Modi rally reflects BJP's rising strength in: BJP chief

HYDERABAD: State BJP president N. Ramchander Rao on Monday claimed that the huge turnout for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public meeting at Secunderabad Parade Grounds reflects the growing popularity of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Telangana. Addressing the media here, Rao thanked the party workers, citizens and the media for making the meeting a grand success. He said the large crowd during a non-election period indicated that political change in Telangana was becoming inevitable. Rao said the participation of saints, women from Banjara and Lambadi communities.

AISF demands resignation of Bandi Sanjay over POCO allegations against his son

KARIMNAGAR: All India Students Federation (AISF) state president Kasireddy Manikanta Reddy on Monday demanded the resignation of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, alleging moral responsibility in connection with a sexual assault case reportedly involving his son and a minor girl. Addressing a protest organised by AISF at Telangana Chowk in Karimnagar, Manikanta Reddy alleged that despite a complaint being lodged under the POCO Act at Pet Basheerabad Police Station on May 8, authorities had failed to register a case or initiate an investigation. He further accused the Telangana government of negligence and alleged attempts to dilute the case. He also criticised Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for retaining the Home portfolio. AISF leaders demanded a judicial probe through a fast-track.

Issue look-out notice to nab Bandi Bhagirath, says TRS chief Kavitha

HYDERABAD

Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) founder Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Wednesday demanded a lookout notice against Bandi Sai Bhagirath, son of Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar, in connection with the ongoing POCO case, alleging attempts could be made to help him flee abroad.

Addressing media persons at the TRS office in Banjara Hills, Kavitha said influential people should not be shielded from the law and cited the Prajwal Ravanna episode while demanding swift police action. She reiterated her demand for the issuance of a lookout notice to ensure that Bandi Sanjay's son does not flee the country. Kavitha made it clear that she has no desire to politicize the issue involving the Union minister Bandi Sanjay's son, who is not currently active in politics, and emphasized that her sole objective was to ensure justice for the victim.

Kavitha also condemned the circulation of photographs of the



minor victim on social media and sought immediate arrest of those responsible for leaking the images. Stressing that her intention was not to politicize the issue, she said justice for the victim must remain the priority. Targeting both the Centre and the Telangana government, Kavitha accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of ignoring Telangana's key demands during his recent visit, including national project status for the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme. She also faulted Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for remaining silent on the issue and failing to review the project.

Besides, she urged the Central Government to incorporate details regarding the sub-castes and the socio-economic status of the people - in addition to the caste count - within the upcoming Census. She asserted that the Women's Reservation Bill must mandatorily include a sub-quota for the OBC women. Further, Kavitha stated that

the 'Jenda Panduga' (Flag Festival) - scheduled to commence on May 20 - serves as the very foundation for building the party organization. She announced that she would personally attend the Flag Festival celebrations in several assembly constituencies.

The TRS chief further slammed the Centre over the NEET paper leak controversy, saying repeated exam leaks were destroying students' futures despite technological advancements.

Meanwhile, Kavitha appeared before a Railway Court on Wednesday in connection with a case filed against her over a 'Rail Roko' (railway blockade) protest held in Kamareddy district. During the protest program, she demanded 42 percent reservations for the Backward Classes (BCs). She appeared in person after the Magistrate of the Secunderabad Second Judicial Magistrate of the First Class Court issued summons. During the hearing, The Magistrate announced that the next hearing for the case would be held on July 17. (NSS)

Will TG BJP leaders work collectively?

- Did Prime minister gave us indirect warning
- By saying cm revanth Reddy to join with modi
- And having a long discussion with Ap cm & Dy cm
- Telangana Bjp leader's in a tensed mood

HYDERABAD

After the prime minister Narendra Modi tour to Hyderabad, will BJP Telangana leaders work collectively or the same scene repeats as before, it has become a million dollar question for BJP cadre. As all know, Couple of days before Indian prime minister Narendra Modi arrived to Hyderabad and staged a huge public meeting at Secunderabad parade ground, where whole BJP state unit and leaders and karyakarthas from throughout the Telangana state were present.

In this meeting prime said after Bengal win for BJP, it is not at all difficult for BJP to come into power in Telangana. Before that public meeting in Hyderabad, prime minister participated in an official program, where Telangana chief minister Revanth Reddy also participated. While on stage speaking about development works, Modi said to Revanth Reddy (mere se judo) join with me. everyone present their raised their eyebrows and shocked



for a second. Exactly before attending public meeting, PM made personal visit to Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu and deputy chief minister Pavan Kalyan.

With all this TG BJP unit are in a dilemma, why Modi said to Revanth to join him. Is Modi gave us indirectly warning that, if BJP Telangana won't work seriously, I am ready to welcome anyone to form government in Telangana. That's the reason he visited ap cm and deputy CM house and discussed on this issues. This has become a thorn in toes for BJP Telangana, they are in a confusion state of mind whether we must be happy for PM meeting success or unhappy for indirect warnings from prime minister. When discussed about this issue with one of the senior leader of BJP, he said all important leader's must be on one platform and work collectively or else central party will play active role and takes their own decisions without taking views of BJP Telangana unit. National BJP is very much serious on forming government in Telangana.

Demand to Crack Down on Illegal Cow Transportation

HYDERABAD

Bhayanagar Ganesh Utsav Samiti (BGUS) representatives met C. V. Anand in Hyderabad on Wednesday and submitted a memorandum urging strict implementation of anti-cow slaughter laws in the state.

Main Demands:

Strict Action: The delegation demanded immediate invocation of the PD Act against gangs involved in illegal transportation of cows.

Inquiry into Illegal Transportation: Despite the presence of check posts at state and district borders, they sought a special investigation into how illegal transportation of cattle is continuing



across these checkpoints.

Criminal Cases: They demanded criminal cases against veterinarians allegedly issuing fake certificates for the transportation of cattle.

Protection for Cow Protectors: They also urged police to immediately stop the alleged harassment of cow protection

activists working to safeguard cattle. The delegation included BGUS President G. Raghava Reddy, General Secretary Dr. Ravinuthala Shashidhar, Advisor Koradimal, Vice President Govind Rathi, office bearers Ale Basur and Buddam Mahipal Reddy, among others.

CCMB Scientists uncover plants' "Sticky Trap" strategy to stop viral infections

HYDERABAD

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) - Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) scientists have decoded a sophisticated defense mechanism used by plants to immobilize invading viruses, revealing how "sticky" protein droplets trap viral genetic material and halt infections before they spread.

The breakthrough study, led by Dr. Mandar V. Deshmukh and published in the Journal of the American Chemical Society (JACS), explains at the

molecular level how plants deploy RNA-binding proteins to arrest viral replication.

Researchers found that plants produce special proteins during viral attacks that recognize the double-stranded RNA carried by many viruses. These proteins gather at Viral Replication Complexes and prevent viruses from multiplying by blocking the replication of their genetic material.

Using advanced techniques including Nuclear Magnetic Resonance spectroscopy, fluo-

rescence microscopy and molecular dynamics simulations, the team discovered that these proteins possess unique surface charge patterns that create "sticky patches". These electrically charged regions attract one another, forming dense gel-like droplets known as biomolecular condensates.

"These proteins act like a molecular glue. By forming dense gel-like droplets, plant cells effectively trap viral RNA and prevent it from interacting with replication machinery," explained lead author Dr.

Jaydeep Paul. The findings also reinforce a growing scientific understanding that living cells are not merely composed of static membrane-bound structures, but also dynamic membraneless compartments that behave like liquid droplets.

According to Dr. Deshmukh, understanding these biomolecular condensates could transform both agricultural and medical biotechnology. The discovery may help scientists engineer virus-resistant crops capable of withstanding devastating outbreaks.

30 LMT Paddy Procured; Rs 4,520 Crore MSP Credited to Farmers

HYDERABAD

The Civil Supplies Department is operating at full capacity to ensure a smooth and efficient Rabi 2025-26 paddy procurement season, having successfully procured 30 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) of paddy to date. Under the strategic guidance of the Commissioner of Civil Supplies, Sri M. Stephen Raveendra, IPS, the state government has prioritized the welfare of cultivators by releasing Rs 4,520 crore in Minimum Support Price (MSP) payments directly to farmers without delay.

Farmers are bringing in large quantities of both fine

and coarse grain varieties. So far, the state has purchased 9 LMT of the fine variety (Sannarakam). The coarse variety (Doddurakam) makes up the rest of the volume, with 21 LMT procured to date.

With procurement currently in its peak stage, a comprehensive network of 8,575 Paddy Purchase Centers (PPCs) is actively open and operating across all districts to handle the heavy inflow of grain. This extensive grassroots infrastructure comprises 4,350 centers run by PACS, 3,563 by IKP, and 662 operated by other supporting agencies. To ensure smooth operations and fully safeguard the arriving

produce, the department has proactively positioned 18.6 crore gunny bags and adequate tarpaulins across these centers.

To prevent any storage bottlenecks at the ground level and ensure PPCs are ready to receive new grain daily, the department is executing swift logistical operations. A fleet of about 11,500 transport vehicles—comprising lorries, tractors, and DCMs—has been deployed to shift the purchased paddy directly from the centers to the mills without delay. Furthermore, special officers have been strategically deployed to both the PPCs and the mills to closely oversee the

loading and unloading processes, ensuring maximum efficiency and accountability.

To address hamali shortages, manage the heavy paddy arrivals, and expedite purchases to protect the interests of the farmers, the Government has issued orders enhancing the handling charges (hamali rates) for paddy at PPCs and godowns. The rates have been officially increased to Rs. 17/- per quintal.

In another significant development for the state's agricultural output, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has allocated 10 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) of boiled rice for the KMS 2025-2026.

Summer Ploughing: Strengthening Soil, Increasing Farmers' Profits

Agriculture department officials have recommended "summer ploughing" as an important long-term farm management practice that provides significant benefits to farmers after harvest. By deeply ploughing the soil during the hot summer months, soil health improves, pest control becomes easier, water retention increases, input costs reduce, and crop yields are enhanced.

Key Benefits of Summer Ploughing:

Improves soil looseness, supporting better root growth

Naturally controls weeds, insect eggs, larvae, and pupae

Increases organic carbon and beneficial soil microorganisms

Enhances rainwater absorption and retention capacity

Reduces cultivation costs

Improves overall crop yield

According to agricultural scientists, summer ploughing breaks hard soil layers, im-



proved aeration. This allows nutrients to mix evenly in the soil, enabling plant roots to grow deeper and absorb nutrients more efficiently.

Due to high summer temperatures, harmful insect eggs, larvae, and pupal stages present in the soil are exposed and destroyed. Birds feeding on them further help in natural pest control, significantly reducing the need for chemical pesticides.

Fungal spores responsible for plant diseases such as dry wilt and root rot are also destroyed due to high temperatures, reducing disease incidence during the crop season.

Agricultural officials noted that crop residues and

dry stubble mix into the soil during ploughing and gradually decompose into organic matter. This increases soil organic carbon and improves soil fertility while supporting the growth of beneficial microorganisms.

Summer ploughing also creates a favorable environment for earthworms. With improved aeration, moisture retention, and organic matter availability, earthworm populations increase, making the soil more porous. Their natural tunneling allows better water and air movement, further improving soil fertility.

Water Management Benefits

Summer ploughing plays a crucial role in water conservation. Loose soil helps absorb the first rains efficiently, increasing soil moisture retention and improving crop survival during drought conditions.

Economic Benefits

This method reduces costs

related to weed control and pesticides, leading to savings for farmers. Increased productivity also results in higher income.

Recommendations for Farmers:

Conduct ploughing soon after harvest when soil retains slight moisture

Prefer deep ploughing

If possible, plough the field on a slope to improve rainwater infiltration

Incorporate crop residues into the soil to increase organic carbon

Agriculture officials emphasized that summer ploughing should be seen not just as a farming activity but as a long-term investment in soil health. They stated that adopting this practice can improve soil fertility, reduce cultivation costs, and make farming more profitable.

— **Dr. B. Gopi**, IAS
Director of Agriculture,
Department of Agriculture,
Hyderabad, Telangana

NEET leak exposes Centre, judicial probe needed: CPI

HYDERABAD

Senior CPI leader and former MLA Chada Venkat Reddy on Wednesday demanded a judicial inquiry into the alleged NEET paper leak case, stating that a mere CBI probe would not bring out the truth behind the scandal.

In a statement, Chada Venkat Reddy said the Narendra Modi-led Central Government should "hang its head in shame" over the NEET paper leak controversy, which he said had jeopardized the future of lakhs of students across the country. He alleged that the incident had exposed the Centre's claims of maintaining a robust and transparent administrative system. He further alleged that hundreds of crores of rupees had changed hands through paper leak rackets operating in Rajasthan and other regions and demanded stringent action against those responsible. The CPI leader asserted that only a judicial inquiry could uncover the larger conspiracy behind the alleged irregularities and ensure justice for students affected by the leak.

Referring to the POCO case of Bandi Bhagirath, Chada Venkat Reddy demanded speedy investigation into the POCO case registered against Bandi Sai Bhagirath, son of Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar.

He alleged that attempts were being made to dilute or sideline the case and questioned why the State Government had failed to apprehend Bhagirath despite constituting a Special Investigation Team (SIT).

TTD uses ICCC for faster, hassle-free darshan in Tirumala

TIRUMALA

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) is leveraging advanced technology and continuous digital surveillance to provide faster and more comfortable darshan for devotees visiting Tirumala Temple during the ongoing summer rush. The Integrated Command Control Center (ICCC) has emerged as the nerve center for crowd management in Tirumala, enabling officials to monitor devotee movement in real time and take immediate decisions to prevent congestion. Hundreds of CCTV cameras installed across Tirumala



are being used to continuously monitor the Vaikuntam Queue complexes, Narayanagiri sheds, Annarasadam centres, parking zones, temple surroundings and major roads.

Officials are closely tracking crowd density, queue flow and devotee movement to ensure smooth darshan operations.

TTD officials said coordinated measures are being im-

plemented to prevent devotees from waiting for long hours at any location. Queue lines are being balanced efficiently while additional staff are being deployed wherever necessary.

Facilities including drinking water, milk, Annarasadam and medical assistance are being provided promptly to devotees waiting in queues.

Particular focus is being placed on the Narayanagiri sheds and Vaikuntam Queue Complexes, where crowd levels are being digitally monitored and devotees are allowed forward in batches to ensure uninterrupted movement towards darshan.



Chief Minister Vijay has constituted a key team of senior officials

CHENNAI, MAY 13:

In Chennai, Chief Minister Vijay has constituted a key team of senior officials in the Chief Minister's Office. Emphasizing administrative experience, transparency, and good governance, the Chief Minister selected the officers for important responsibilities. Dr. P. Senthil Kumar, G. Lakshmi Priya, Dr. Annadurai, and V. Vishnu have been appointed as Secretaries to the Chief Minister. The appointments have been given to officials recognized for their experience, effective implementation of welfare schemes, and contributions to rural development.

BJP MLA urges rethink on proposed Yamuna Expressway toll hike citing West Asia conflict

NOIDA: (MAY 13)

BJP MLA from Uttar Pradesh's Jewar, Dharendra Singh, expressed concern on Wednesday over the proposed increase in toll charges on the Yamuna Expressway, saying the move could place an additional financial burden on commuters amid prevailing economic pressures.

In a representation to the chief executive officer of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA), Singh urged the authority and the state government to reconsider the proposed hike in view of inflationary pressures and larger public interest.

The Jewar MLA said the world is passing through "highly-sensitive economic and geopolitical circumstances" and noted that tensions in West Asia and fluctuations in international crude oil prices are impacting economies globally, including India.

MPSC scraps 'opting out', 'consent' options in recruitment process

MUMBAI: (MAY 13)

The Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) has abolished the 'opting out' and 'consent' (give up/accepted) options available to candidates in its recruitment process, with the decision taking effect from Wednesday.

In a statement, the commission said the 'opting out' provision had been introduced earlier as part of efforts to streamline the recruitment process. It allowed candidates included in the selection list to voluntarily withdraw from the recruitment process.

Following deliberations at a meeting of the commission, it has now been decided to discontinue both the 'opting out' and 'consent' options for all examinations conducted by the MPSC.

TN Assembly: Vijay wins trust vote with 144 in favour amid AIADMK rift, DMK walkout

CHENNAI, MAY 13

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay successfully cleared the first major test for his newly formed Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK)-led government on Wednesday after winning the confidence motion in the Legislative Assembly with 144 votes in favour. While 22 MLAs voted against the motion, five members abstained. Following the completion of the trust vote, the Assembly was adjourned sine die. The floor test witnessed dramatic scenes, including a walkout by the DMK, open divisions within the AIADMK, and heated exchanges between rival camps in the House. Ahead of the voting, Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin led all DMK MLAs out of the Assembly after sharply criticising the Vijay-led government during the debate



on the confidence motion. He accused the Chief Minister of encouraging political defections by meeting rebel AIADMK legislators earlier in the day. Questioning the political developments surrounding the trust vote, Stalin asked whether Tamil Nadu was witnessing "change or exchange" in politics. He also alleged that the TVK government lacked a stable, independent majority and was surviving through external support and defections. The situation inside the Assembly turned tense when AIADMK general secretary and former Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced that all 47 MLAs belonging to his faction would oppose the confidence motion. Palaniswami also objected to Vijay's reported meeting with rebel AIADMK leaders and questioned the legitimacy of their support for the government. However, commotion erupted after Speaker J.C.D. Prabhakar invited rebel AIADMK leader S.P. Velumani to participate in the debate on the trust motion. AIADMK members loyal to Pala-

niswami strongly protested the move, but the Speaker maintained that he had the authority to permit any member to speak in the House. Amid loud protests from the AIADMK benches, Velumani addressed the Assembly and subsequently led the rebel MLAs in voting in favour of the TVK government, further exposing the deepening split within the opposition party. Replying to the debate before the vote, Chief Minister Vijay asserted that his administration would remain firmly secular and committed to governance. "This government will function with the speed of a horse and not indulge in horse trading," Vijay said in a sharp political remark directed at the opposition. He also assured the House that all major welfare schemes implemented by previous governments would continue under the TVK administration.

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New Chief Public Relations Officer for Southern Railway

CHENNAI, MAY 13



Shri S.N. Narain assumed charge as the Chief Public Relations Officer of Southern Railway today, the 13th of May 2026. Prior to this assignment, Shri S.N. Narain was serving as Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas & Tourism, on deputation. An officer of the Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) from the 2010 batch, Shri S.N. Narain has held several important assignments in Indian Railways relating to passenger amenities, operational efficiency, digital communication and public interface. Shri S.N. Narain has served in various capacities in the Operations and Commercial wings across different Divisions of Southern Railway. Later, he proceeded on deputation to New Delhi working as Deputy Secretary in the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology and as Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas & Tourism. During his

tenure in Southern Railway, he has held the posts of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of Tiruchirappalli Division, Deputy Chief Operations Manager (Traffic Safety), Southern Railway, Divisional Commercial Manager at Chennai and Palakkad Divisions, and Divisional Operations Manager at Salem Division, among others. He has also been associated with the implementation of several important projects and policy initiatives of Indian Railways. Shri S.N. Narain holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering from PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore. He succeeds Shri M. Senthamil Selvan who has now been posted as Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, Royapuram Loco Shed.

Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu moots 'Work from Home' in administration

AMARAVATI, MAY 13

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday said "Work from Home" culture is here to stay and that he intends to implement it within the government sector as well. Backing the austerity measures suggested by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in West Asia, he appealed to people to adhere to the eight-point agenda announced by the Prime Minister. The Chief Minister said the state government would also announce its own action plan in this regard in a day or two. He was speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Bollineni Institute of Skill, Education, and Research (BISER) in Nidamarru. "Work from Home is now a reality. A situation is emerging where the entire world can function remotely from home. This



practice should be encouraged," he said. Stating that the ongoing conflict is placing a burden on the nation in various ways, he emphasised that during such critical times, citizens, along with the governments, must act responsibly. Appealing to people to adhere to the eight-point agenda announced by the Prime Minister to overcome any temporary difficulties that may arise, he said, cutting down on the consumption of petrol and diesel will result in savings of foreign exchange reserves. Chandrababu Naidu called

for curbing wasteful expenditure. He remarked that travelling in large convoys of vehicles has become a major trend for everyone. CM Naidu said public representatives should set an example by reducing the size of their convoys. Security details should also be scaled down, he said, adding that security arrangements should be sensible and purposeful. He called for adhering to the Prime Minister's suggestion to curtail foreign travel. "Our country—and our state—are home to excellent tourist destinations. Instead

of travelling abroad, people should choose to visit our own domestic tourist spots," he said, adding that every citizen should adopt the mindset 'My country, My responsibility'.

The Prime Minister has also advised reducing the purchase of gold. People should give serious thought to this as well, he said. Naidu said the government has initiated a strategic plan to produce green energy locally, thereby reducing our dependence on foreign nations. Power generation units like solar rooftops should be installed on every farm and atop every home.

The Chief Minister termed BISER an innovative initiative within the capital city of Amaravati. A college is being established across 23 acres, alongside a Skill University on two acres, to ensure excellence in both education and healthcare. By establishing a medical college and a Skill University, this institution is

poised to impart skill training to 100,000 individuals.

He noted that KIMS Hospital, which began on a modest scale, has now expanded to become an asset worth Rs 30,000 crore. Stating that Hyderabad has emerged as a medical hub for the entire nation, he said institutions like KIMS were instrumental in achieving this. The Chief Minister revealed that in the second phase, Amaravati will be built as a futuristic city. He said in addition to Amaravati, the government was developing Visakhapatnam as a global city. CM Naidu stated that on May 15, the foundation stone will be laid for a fighter jet manufacturing facility in the Rayalaseema region. He said Rayalaseema is set to transform into a major hub for both horticulture and technology. Kurnool has emerged as a 'Drone City,' while Sri City has established itself as a prominent industrial hub.

Home Minister Anitha Reviews Prison Operations

AMARAVATI, MAY 13:

Vangalapati Anitha held a review meeting with prison department officials at the Amaravati Secretariat on May 12 and discussed various issues related to prison administration in the state. The minister stated that Andhra Pradesh has a total of 106 prisons, including both functional and non-functional facilities, and directed officials to prepare a separate list of the 25 non-functional prisons. She asked officials to submit a report on the possibility of repairing unused prisons and utilizing them for other prison-related activities. In view of overcrowding in the Rajahmundry and Visakhapatnam prisons, the minister instructed officials to prepare proposals for renovating certain non-functional prisons and shifting inmates there. She also called for a comprehensive action plan to reduce overcrowding in prisons. The minister directed officials to submit proposals for establishing new district prisons in the newly formed districts



and emphasized planning for at least one district jail in every district. She sought a detailed report on the demolition of the Bhimunipatnam jail and said legal action should be initiated if necessary. Regarding the Chintapalli jail, which is currently non-functional, she instructed officials to prepare restoration proposals using

ITDA funds. The Home Minister also asked officials to submit a report on the feasibility of establishing Rehabilitation and De-addiction Centres alongside prisons and to examine land allocation issues in Visakhapatnam and Anakapalli districts. She directed officials to prepare proposals for creating a Prison Development Fund and sought a report on establishing special MAPS courts in Andhra Pradesh for NDPS cases. The minister instructed the department to formulate a system for providing psychiatric support in prisons and to conduct skill development and training programmes for inmates. She also ordered officials to collect complete

details of prisoners released on parole and ensure continuous monitoring of parolees. To curb mobile phone usage in prisons, the minister asked officials to examine the use of NLJD devices and take strict measures to prevent misuse of mobile phones by both inmates and prison staff.

The minister emphasized the need for special measures to prevent suicides in prisons and directed officials to ensure that videos from inside prisons are not leaked outside. She further instructed the department to formulate SOP-based short-term and long-term prison reforms and prepare a report on the requirement for new vehicles for the prison department.

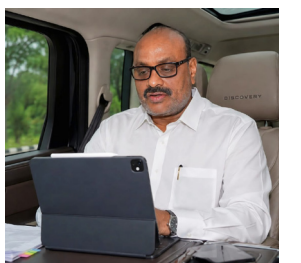
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Shrimp Feed Price Hike Put on Hold Following Minister Atchannaidu's Intervention

Minister warns feed companies against profiting from farmers' hardships. Unilateral price hikes will not be accepted. Farmers' interests are the government's top priority, says Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu

AMARAVATI, MAY 13

Kinjarapu Atchannaidu stated that the coalition government will not tolerate any decision that harms the interests of aqua farmers. Expressing concern that the sudden increase in shrimp feed prices would place a severe financial burden on thousands of aqua farmers across the state, the minister conducted a video conference on Wednesday with representatives of feed manufacturing companies, farmers' associations, and officials. During the meeting, Minister Atchannaidu strongly objected to the unilateral hike in feed prices without consulting farmers. He said the aqua sector is already facing several challenges and warned that the government would not remain silent if additional burdens are imposed on farmers at such a time. He reiterated that protecting farmers' interests is the primary objective of the coalition government. Following the minister's directions, representatives of the Shrimp Feed Manufacturers Association informed the government in writing that the implementation of the increased feed prices was being suspended with immediate effect. Although the association stated that rising raw material costs had forced it to consider revising feed prices, it said the hike was being deferred in respect of the minister's



suggestions and guidance. The minister also announced that a joint meeting involving farmers, feed manufacturers, and officials would be held on the 15th of this month. He said the government would consider all opinions and suggestions to arrive at a mutually acceptable decision that safeguards farmers while also ensuring the sustainability of the industry. Minister Atchannaidu assured that the government would fully support the aqua sector and remain committed to resolving farmers' problems. The video conference was attended by officials including the APSADA Co-Vice Chairman, the Special Chief Secretary for Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries, the Fisheries Commissioner, as well as representatives from Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA), Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), fisheries university representatives, shrimp farmers, and feed manufacturing companies.

Union Cabinet approved four transformative projects that prioritize agricultural stability

NEW DELHI, MAY 13:

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today approved four transformative projects that prioritize agricultural stability, energy security, and high-speed infrastructure. A primary highlight is the significant increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Kharif crops for the 2026-27 marketing season, which is expected to result in a massive payout of ₹2.60 lakh crore to farmers across the country. This move targets the procurement of over 824 lakh metric tonnes of produce, ensuring that agricultural communities remain financially resilient amidst shifting global market conditions. In the energy sector, the government sanctioned a ₹37,500 crore financial outlay to boost surface coal and lignite gasification projects. This strategic decision aims to leverage India's domestic coal reserves—estimated to last for two centuries—to produce gas and chemicals, thereby reducing the nation's

reliance on expensive energy imports and moving closer to the goal of "Atmanirbhar Bharat." By converting coal into cleaner syngas, India plans to meet its industrial gas requirements while utilizing its most abundant natural resource. Infrastructure saw two major approvals, starting with the ₹20,667 crore Ahmedabad-Dholera semi high-speed double line project. Notably, this will be the first railway project in India to be executed using entirely indigenous semi high-speed technology, adding 134 kilometers of advanced tracks to the network to serve the Dholera Special Investment Region. Simultaneously, the Cabinet cleared a Public-Private Partnership model for the comprehensive modernization of Nagpur International Airport. This joint venture will focus on upgrading the facility into a world-class aviation hub with ICAO-compliant infrastructure and improved runway capabilities, positioning Nagpur as a central logistics anchor for the country.

EDITORIAL

DIGITAL JUSTICE OR DIGITAL DIVIDE? THE DUAL REALITIES OF 'ONE CASE, ONE DATA'

In the latest step in a long-standing effort to digitise the judiciary, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant announced two initiatives from the Bench, called 'One Case, One Data' (OCOD), a unified judicial data platform, and 'Su-Sahayak', an AI-powered chatbot on the Supreme Court of India website. OCOD promises a unified digital trail for a dispute as it moves through various courts, linkages between court records and litigant actions (such as appeals), easier access to various documents, lower need for manual verification, reciprocal access to High Courts and other courts, and more accurate judicial statistics. It is notable considering the wide variation in software practices and records quality across India's thousands of district and subordinate courts. If the programme succeeds, standardised data could also allow administrators to determine where cases are held up and ease procedural bottlenecks, and improve data-based decision-making overall. 'Su-Sahayak' has been integrated into the Court website's front-end to help users navigate case status, cause lists, orders and judgments, e-services, and frequently asked questions. As with any major state-backed technology rollout in India, questions about interoperability, integrity of legacy records, restricting access to private information, and staff skilling remain. By aspiring to a centralised digital fingerprint for each case, OCOD also bears the risk of misuse.

While the CJI said that these new tools will improve "access to justice", their introduction risks deepening the digital divide. OCOD may require lawyers to maintain digital scanners, cloud backup options, and updated software. Metropolitan corporate firms can easily absorb these costs but independent practitioners in the district and taluka levels will lack the capital. The system may also introduce digital middlemen to help litigants who cannot navigate the e-filing portal, potentially creating a new layer of unregulated costs. While the government has launched assistants with voice-first capabilities, such as Jan Sahayak, 'Su-Sahayak' is primarily text-based and could exclude people who are not comfortable typing or navigating complex website menus. The state and the judiciary must ensure that the AI model is not biased against marginalised communities who were historically disproportionately arrested or denied bail. India's courts have generally been more comfortable with AI for assistance than for substantive reasoning. 'Su-Sahayak' follows SUVAS, to translate judgments, and SUPACE, which processes facts and legal precedents. The line must continue to hold as the judiciary adopts more powerful tools that have already tempted practitioners in other domains to abuse them.

A Nation's Broken Promise-
The NEET Catastrophe India Can No Longer Ignore

The morning of May 3, 2026, should have been one of focused, nervous determination for more than 22 lakh young medical aspirants across India. Instead, it became yet another chapter in a deepening saga of institutional betrayal. When the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced the cancellation of the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET)-UG 2026 examination, citing the need to preserve "the trust on which the national examination system rests," it committed the greatest possible irony: invoking trust at the precise moment it had been most comprehensively destroyed. Behind each of those 22 lakh registrations is a human story — a first-generation student from Bihar whose parents mortgaged everything, a young woman from rural Telangana studying by lamplight since she was fifteen. They

NTA's structural hollowness. The agency has functioned less as an institution and more as a coordination shell, outsourcing end-to-end testing operations to private vendors with no significant in-house expertise in psychometrics, test security, or digital infrastructure. The consequences were entirely predictable: porous cybersecurity, chaotic crisis communication, and a catastrophic erosion of public credibility that no press release can repair. The 2026 collapse did not arrive unannounced. Aspirant suicides in 2017, impersonation rackets in 2019, and the massive paper leak and grace marks controversies of 2024 — each crisis was met with sympathetic acknowledgement and precisely nothing of consequence. Following Supreme Court scrutiny in 2024, the High-Level Committee chaired by Dr. K. Radhakrishnan

will do it. Firstly, India must end paper-based testing without further delay. The transition to Computer-Based Testing for all urban centres must be completed within 24 months, treated not as a long-term aspiration but as an emergency infrastructure project. For remote areas where full CBT is not immediately feasible, the Computer-Assisted Secure Paper Printing model offers a credible interim solution — encrypted question papers transmitted digitally to centres and printed on-site just minutes before the examination begins, eliminating the prolonged physical custody chain that has made every past paper leak possible.

Secondly, biometric authentication must be made mandatory and non-negotiable. Aadhaar-linked fingerprint and facial recognition verification at gate entry, hall entry, and at random intervals during the examination itself will decisively dismantle the impersonation rackets that have operated freely for years. The proposed DIGI-EXAM protocol, cross-verified against school and voter records, must be operationalised immediately. Proxy-sitting networks survive only where identity verification is absent or performative.

Thirdly, the single-sitting, all-or-nothing examination model must be replaced with a two-stage framework modelled on the JEE. A preliminary qualifying round followed by a final merit examination distributes the stakes across two sittings, reduces the catastrophic consequences of one bad day, and dramatically weakens the incentive for malpractice. When a student knows the examination can be attempted again, the appeal of a leaked paper diminishes considerably.

Fourthly, the NTA must be rebuilt from the ground up rather than patched at the edges. This means hiring permanent specialists in psychometrics, cybersecurity, and examination logistics, and fundamentally reducing the agency's dangerous dependency on private vendors. A new governing board with statutory authority, insulated from ministerial interference, must replace the current structure. An agency that cannot perform its core function without outsourcing it entirely is not an institution — it is a liability dressed in official letterhead.

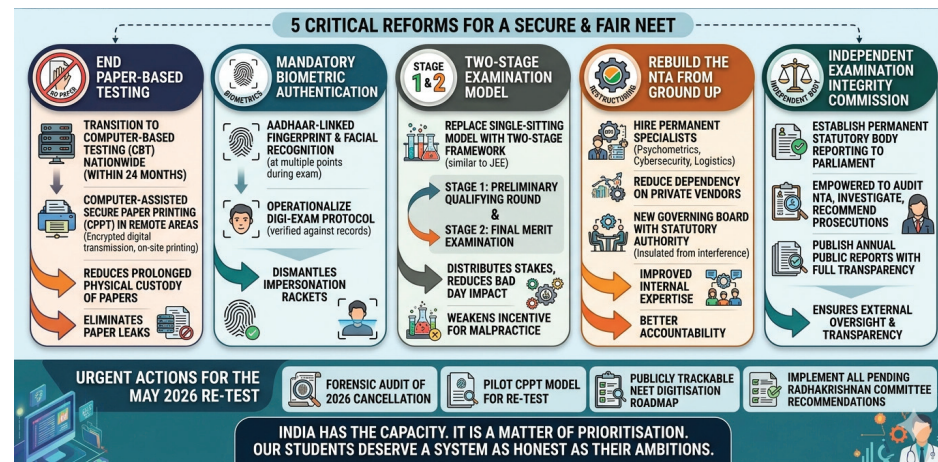
Fifthly and finally, an independent Examination Integrity Commission must be established as a permanent statutory body reporting directly to Parliament, not to the Ministry of Education. It must be empowered to audit NTA processes, investigate complaints, recommend prosecutions, and publish annual public reports with full transparency. The history of internal inquiries in this domain is a history of convenient conclusions. Only a body that sits outside the political chain of command has any credible prospect of delivering the accountability that 22 lakh aspirants have a right to demand.

Conducting a re-test is not a reform — it is a repetition. The government must immediately commission an independent forensic audit of the May 2026 cancellation, suspend and publicly register all private NTA vendor contracts, and pilot the CPPT digital transmission model for the re-test itself. A three-year NEET Digitisation Roadmap with specific, publicly trackable benchmarks must be announced within 60 days. Most importantly, every pending Radhakrishnan Committee recommendation must be reviewed by a Parliamentary Standing Committee, with named ministerial accountability and quarterly progress reporting. The era of recommendations that disappear into policy's equivalent of a black hole must end.

India oversaw a mission to Mars. It built a payments architecture used by hundreds of millions. It has demonstrated, repeatedly, the capacity for technological ambition at national scale. That it cannot securely deliver a medical entrance examination to its young people is not a capacity problem. It is a prioritisation problem — and it is one that has now cost 22 lakh students a year of their lives for the second time in three years.

Restoring the sanctity of NEET requires discarding the paper-based model, deploying existing digital infrastructure, and rebuilding the NTA as a genuine institution. Twenty-two lakh aspirants are not asking for miracles. They are asking for a system as honest as their ambitions. India owes them nothing less.

- M VENKAT REDDY,
Senior Journalist and
Corporate Communications
Professional



do not deserve this. And this is not the first time they have been let down.

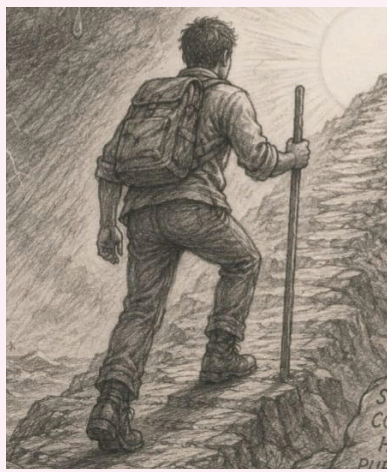
The core vulnerability is the Pen-and-Paper Testing format itself. A single examination requires thousands of printing presses, hundreds of transport contractors, and tens of thousands of individual custodians across the country. A single compromised photograph — snapped by a corrupt invigilator or a crooked contractor — is enough to destroy the integrity of the entire process for millions who played by the rules. The question is not whether this system can be corrupted; it is whether it was ever designed to resist corruption at this scale.

Compounding the problem is the

submitted 101 robust recommendations in October 2024 covering every dimension of the problem — Computer-Based Test (CBT) transition, NTA restructuring, biometric authentication, multi-stage testing, and independent oversight. Reports from May 2026 confirm that many of these critical reforms remained pending implementation when the system broke again. India did not stumble into this crisis. It walked into it, slowly, with its eyes open.

The reforms that cannot wait are both urgent and straightforward, and most of them have already been prescribed by the Radhakrishnan Committee. What is missing is not the knowledge of what to do, but the

THE NOBLE DUTY TO LIVE



Death — how gentle, how swift its flight,
A fleeting breath, a kiss of night,
But life — a storm, a roaring tide,
Where time and pain walk side by side.

To live is not a simple feat,
It's battles fought in mute defeat.
Through seas of sorrow, skies of gray,
We sail, though hope feels far away.

Tears fall like rain from broken skies,
While dreams retreat and silence cries.
Yet still we rise, with heads held high,
Like dawn that splits a weeping sky.

Though burdens weigh the heart and soul,
We press ahead, we seek the goal.
For death may come in but a breath—
But life demands we challenge death.

We find in pain a spark divine,
In struggle, strength, in grief, a sign.
A fire that burns but never dies,
A truth that sorrow purifies.

We do not walk for praise or name,
Nor chase the ghost of worldly fame.
But for a truth the brave ones see—
That life itself is duty's plea.

A sacred task, a solemn call,
To rise each time we trip or fall.
To breathe, to bear, to break and mend—
To live with grace until the end.

So let the winds of hardship blow,
Let night descend and rivers flow
Still we endure, we stand, we strive,
For we are bound by duty to live.

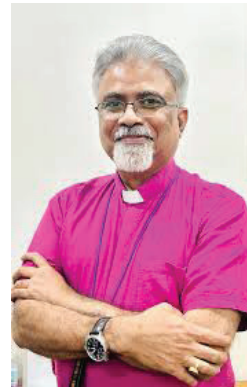
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From Allnutt to Elias: St. Stephen's
Breaks 145-Year Glass Ceiling

After 145 years of its inception, Delhi's St. Stephen's College is set to have its first woman Principal. Prof. Susan Elias will take charge as the 14th Principal of the college on 1 June 2026. Founded on 1 February 1881, St. Stephen's College stands as one of India's most prestigious liberal arts institutions. Its legacy of academic rigour, inclusivity, and national contribution owes much to a succession of visionary principals who shaped its character.

The college's story begins with Rev. Samuel Scott Allnutt (1881–1898), a Cambridge alumnus and chaplain who responded to the closure of Delhi's Government College. With just five students and a handful of teachers in rented premises in Chandni Chowk, Allnutt established an institution rooted in the motto Ad Dei Gloriam ("To the Glory of God"). He initially served as principal of both the school and the college, emphasising English education while reviving interest in Sanskrit and Oriental learning. Allnutt's tenure laid the foundational ethos of high academic standards, interfaith dialogue, and character formation. The college moved to its own buildings in Kashmere Gate in 1891, designed in the Indo-Saracenic style. "Allnutt's dedication extended beyond administration; he envisioned education as a bridge between cultures. Founder's Day on 7 December commemorates his death anniversary, underscoring his enduring spiritual and institutional imprint," informs Brother Solomon George, an advisor to the Delhi Brotherhood Society, which established the college.

The principal who hosted Gandhi
No principal embodies St. Stephen's transformative spirit more than Susil Kumar Rudra (1906–1923), the first Indian to head a major educational institution in India. In a bold move in 1906, the English principal G. Hibbert Ware stepped aside for Rudra, influenced by colleague C.F. Andrews. This "revolutionary step" defied colonial norms and signalled the college's com-



mitment to Indian leadership. Rudra, who joined the faculty in 1886, taught English, economics, and logic. His long tenure (1886–1923) coincided with India's freedom struggle. A close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and C.F. Andrews, Rudra hosted Gandhi and Kasturba at the college in 1915. Gandhi often stayed with him during his Delhi visits. Rudra's friendships with Tagore and Sarojini Naidu further enriched the campus intellectually. Under Rudra, the college framed a constitution that subtly reduced missionary control while preserving its Christian character. He promoted inter-dining, study leave for Indian teachers at Oxford and Cambridge, and equitable pay. Students revered him as "Barasahib," and his love inspired deep loyalty. Rudra's will established the annual Rudra Dinner on 12 February — a tradition now in its 101st year — and supported evening classes for the children of staff. His leadership proved that Indians could excel in premier institutions, fostering nationalist yet inclusive values.

Continuity and Expansion
Subsequent principals built on this foundation amid India's independence and Partition. Rai Bahadur Satya Nand Mukarji (1926–1945) guided the college through turbulent times, including its affiliation with the University of Delhi in 1922. The campus relocated to its present North Campus site in 1941, designed by Walter Sykes George, featuring elegant red-brick buildings and Mughal architectural motifs.

"Douglas Raja Ram (1945–1960) and Satish Chandra Sircar (1960–1972) oversaw post-independence growth, expanding infrastructure and student intake. Rev. William Shaw Rajpal (1972–1984) maintained the college's distinctive minority character while broadening access. These leaders ensured St. Stephen's remained a beacon of excellence during the nation-building years," says Dr. Anirudh Deshpande, an alumnus of St. Stephen's College and currently Head of the Department of History at Delhi University. "Raja Ram was also the man who established a school for children from economically weaker sections of society. That school was later adopted by Delhi University, which continues to run it," informs Prabhanshu Ozha, a member of the school's managing committee.

Dr. Anil Wilson (1991–2007): Modern Visionary
Shimla-born Dr. Anil Wilson led the college from 1991 to 2007 (some records note up to 2008). Known for his strong work ethic and progressive outlook, Wilson strengthened academics, infrastructure, and alumni relations. He navigated challenges with grace, emphasising holistic development. Rev. Dr. Valson Thampu and Beyond Thampu (2008–2016), an alumnus and theologian, served during a dynamic period, focusing on cultural richness, social service, and discussions on autonomy. His leadership sparked debates but highlighted the college's continuing relevance in con-

temporary India. **Enduring Impact**
These principals collectively transformed a modest missionary college into a powerhouse that has produced presidents of two nations — Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed of India and Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan — along with countless civil servants, judges, writers, and thinkers. They championed several "firsts": Indian leadership, equitable policies, phases of co-education, and a unique blend of faith with secular excellence. Traditions such as the Social Service League continue to echo Rudra's vision of service. "St. Stephen's legendary principals exemplified resilience, foresight, and humanity. In an era of rapid change, their principles of intellectual honesty, inclusivity, and moral courage remain vital," says Dr. Paul Swaroop, Bishop of Delhi and Chairman of the College. As the college approaches its sesquicentennial, their legacy inspires future generations to pursue education not merely for personal glory, but for the progress of the nation.



VIVEK SHUKLA

Uttarakhand HC expresses displeasure over delay in Lokayukta appointment

NAINITAL: (MAY 13)

The Uttarakhand High Court expressed strong displeasure on Wednesday over the state government's failure to convene a search committee meeting for the appointment of a Lokayukta. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta and Justice Subhash Upadhyay directed the government to submit a response within 24 hours. The court asked why previous orders regarding the appointment remained unfulfilled. The bench warned that the secretary concerned must appear personally before the court at 11 am on May 15 if the government fails to file its reply.

Device with low-grade explosives found inside private hospital in Pune; ATS joins probe

PUNE: (MAY 13)

A device containing low-grade explosives was found inside a private hospital in Pune city's Hadapsar area on Wednesday evening, said police. A team of the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) was immediately rushed to the spot and it took the object to a nearby ground and disposed of it, they said. Police said a bomb-like object having a clock and a timer attached to it was found by a doctor inside a washroom of Usha Kiran Hospital in Hadapsar.

33 Dead in UP Storms; CM Orders Relief, Compensation

BHADOHI/FATEHPUR (UP): (MAY 13)

At least 33 people were killed on Wednesday after a powerful storm accompanied by heavy rains caused widespread damage in five districts of Uttar Pradesh, including Bhadohi, Fatehpur and Budaun, officials said. The officials said at least 16 persons have lost their lives in Bhadohi, nine in Fatehpur, five in Budaun, two in Chandauli and one in Sonbhadra district. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to provide compensation to people affected by unseasonal rain, thunderstorms and lightning strikes.

Rajasthan Governor Slams NEET Leak, Questions Morality

KOTA: (MAY 13)

If there had been any morality, the NEET paper would not have leaked, said the Rajasthan Governor Haribhau Bagde on Wednesday, expressing concern over the loss of moral values in the country. Bagde was addressing the Ninth Convocation Ceremony of Agriculture University, Kota, at the State Institute of Agricultural Management (SIAM) Auditorium. Morality and cultural values have been the foundation of Indian civilisation, and if there had been any morality, the NEET paper would not have leaked, Bagde said.

Strengthening Capacity for a Robust Economy: CM Chandrababu Review

N. Chandrababu Naidu emphasized that strengthening institutional capacity is essential to build a stronger economy and achieve sustainable growth targets

AMARAVATI, MAY 13:

The Chief Minister suggested that improving system efficiency is key to making the state economically stronger and directed officials to take necessary steps in this direction. He said that achieving 15% growth would help realize the goals of "Swarna Andhra-2047."

He instructed officials to accelerate data collection and ensure accurate monthly statistical reporting. He also ordered a three-month training programme for employees from the state level down to the mandal level. The Chief Minister stated that Gross State Domestic



Product (GSDP) estimates should be prepared through real-time monitoring instead of traditional methods. He added that training should be provided to enable officials to understand and implement data-driven governance. During a review meeting of the Planning Department held at the Sec-

retariat on Wednesday, the Chief Minister announced that the state would soon formally launch a fully data-driven governance system. The meeting focused on GSDP capacity building, AI-based economic analysis, large-scale state surveys, training for district and mandal-level officials, and

integration of KPI auditing systems.

AI-Based Economic Analysis

The Chief Minister noted that current GSDP estimates are prepared quarterly and annually, which limits real-time understanding of the state's economic situation. He pointed out that over-reliance on historical data often delays policy decisions. He directed officials to develop a system that can track economic growth monthly at the district and mandal levels. He stressed the need for training officials to rapidly generate and interpret GSDP estimates. He proposed a capacity-building programme covering 5 zones, 28 dis-

tricts, and 175 constituencies over three months. He also instructed the conduct of state-level workshops, zonal and district-level training programmes, and the preparation of master trainers at the constituency level. He suggested that at least three officers from each constituency should receive specialized training. Officials informed the Chief Minister that AI-based economic analysis systems are being developed for agriculture, industry, and services sectors. The Chief Minister also suggested identifying previously untracked economic indicators to improve the accuracy and depth of analysis.

Centre approves Rs 2,432 crore support for Amended BharatNet rollout in Andhra Pradesh

NEW DELHI, MAY 13

In a major push to strengthen rural digital infrastructure and expand broadband connectivity across Andhra Pradesh, the Centre on Wednesday approved financial support of Rs 2,432 crore for implementation of the Amended BharatNet Programme (ABP) in the state.

The agreement was signed between Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN), the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), the Government of Andhra Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh BharatNet Infrastructure Limited (APBIL), Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Andhra Pradesh State FiberNet Lim-



ited (APSFL). According to the government, the agreement marks a significant milestone towards expeditious implementation of the programme and reflects the shared commitment of the Centre and the Andhra Pradesh government to strengthen rural digital infrastructure, improve last-mile connectivity and promote inclusive digital growth. The Union Cabinet had approved the Amended BharatNet Programme on August 4, 2023, with the objective of upgrading, consolidating and expanding the existing

BharatNet network to provide robust and future-ready broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats and villages on a demand basis. Under the programme in Andhra Pradesh, APBIL will implement the project covering a total of 13,426 Gram Panchayats. This includes upgrading 1,692 Phase-I Gram Panchayats from linear to ring topology to improve network resilience, covering 11,254 Phase-II Gram Panchayats, and bringing 480 newly created Gram Panchayats under the network. In addition, connectivity will be extended to 3,942 villages on a demand basis to further strengthen last-mile broadband access

in rural and remote regions. The Centre has approved financial support of Rs 2,432 crore for implementation of the programme in the state. The initiative is expected to facilitate more than five lakh rural home fibre connections with government support and significantly improve access to digital services such as e-governance, online education, telemedicine, digital payments and other citizen-centric services. Officials said the agreement is expected to accelerate execution of the Amended BharatNet Programme in Andhra Pradesh and further advance the vision of a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

Cabinet Approves 134 Km Rail Expansion Project in Gujarat's Ahmedabad District

The total estimated cost of the project is Rs 20,667 crore (approx.) and will be completed up to 2030-31

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today has approved Ahmedabad (Sarkhej) - Dholera Semi High-Speed Double Line project of Ministry of Railways with total cost of Rs. 20,667 crore (approx.). It will be Indian Railways 1st semi high-speed project, planned with indigenously developed technology. The project section will provide faster connectivity between Ahmedabad, Dholera SIR, upcoming Dholera Airport and Lothal National Maritime Heritage Complex (NHMC). Connecting Ahmedabad with



Dholera will cut down passenger travel time enabling comfortable daily commuting and same-day return trips. This semi high speed railway would not only bring two cities closer but also bring the people living hundreds of kilometers away, closer to each other. As India's first semi high-speed rail project, the project will serve as a reference project acting as a model for the phased expansion of semi high-speed rail across the country. The new line proposal will provide direct connectivity and improve mobility, providing enhanced efficiency and ser-

vice reliability for Indian Railways. The project is in line with the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Vision of a New India which will make people of the region "Atmanirbhar" by way of comprehensive development in the area which will enhance their employment/ self-employment opportunities. The project is planned on PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan with focus on enhancing multi-modal connectivity & logistic efficiency through integrated planning and stakeholder consultations. These projects will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people,

goods, and services. The project covering Ahmedabad district in Gujarat will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 134 Kms. The proposed projects will enhance connectivity to approx. 284 villages, which are having a population of about 5 lakhs. The Railways being environment friendly and energy efficient mode of transportation, will help both in achieving climate goals and minimizing logistics cost of the country, reduce oil import (0.48 Crore Litres) and lower CO2 emissions (2 Crore Kg) which is equivalent to plantation of 10 (Ten) Lakh trees.

Need to Expedite Kishau Dam Project, MoU Between States Should Be Finalized Soon: CM

CHANDIGARH, MAY 13

A meeting was held on Wednesday at the residence of Union Jal Shakti Minister Sh. C.R. Patil in New Delhi under his chairmanship with Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini and Rajasthan Chief Minister Sh. Bhajan Lal Sharma in attendance. Senior officials from both the states also participated in the meeting. During the meeting, Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini raised several common issues related to neighbouring states and matters concerning water resources linked to Haryana before the Union Minister. He emphasized the need to expedite the Kishau Dam Project and called for the signing of an MoU among the neigh-



bouring states at the earliest regarding the project. On this matter, Union Jal Shakti Minister Sh. C.R. Patil directed his Secretary to organize a meeting at the earliest involving officials from Himachal Pradesh, Ut-

tarakhand, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan regarding the Kishau Dam Project. He instructed that decisions related to water sharing and electricity generation from the dam should be finalized promptly. Thereaf-

ter, a meeting of the Chief Ministers should be convened soon to complete the formalities related to the MoU. Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that the dam project is highly important for all the states as it will provide a substantial quantity of water, which is essential for everyone. He said the project would benefit all the participating states. On this matter, Union Minister Sh. C.R. Patil directed officials of his department to initiate action on priority. Discussion on Bringing Water from Upper Ganga Canal for Faridabad and Palwal During the meeting, Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini also discussed the issue of bringing water from the Upper Ganga Canal in Uttar Pradesh for Faridabad and Palwal

NFR Strengthens Monsoon Safety with Advanced Weather Monitoring Systems

MALIGAON, 13 MAY, 2026:

In a significant step towards strengthening railway safety and disaster preparedness during the rainy season, the Northeast Frontier Railway has initiated the installation of Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) at vulnerable locations across its network. The initiative aims to ensure accurate and real-time weather forecasting, enabling timely preventive measures during floods, landslides and adverse weather conditions. A total of nine Automatic Weather Stations are being set up at strategically identified vulnerable locations under NFR. These locations include the Lumding - Bardapur section in Assam, the Katakhal - Sairang section connecting Mizoram and the Jiribam - Khongsang section in Manipur. These areas are particularly prone to heavy rainfall, flooding and landslides during the monsoon season, making continuous weather monitoring essential for safe train operations. So far, three Automatic Weather Stations have already been successfully installed, while the remaining six are currently under various stages of installation and are expected to be completed by the end of May 2026. The installation of these weather stations is being carried out in close coordination with the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The AWS network will provide precise and location-specific weather data, helping railway authorities to take timely and informed decisions during emergencies and adverse weather situations. This initiative is expected to significantly improve preparedness and response mechanisms, particularly in flood-prone and landslide-sensitive sections. The Automatic Weather Stations are equipped with advanced sensors capable of monitoring multiple weather parameters with high accuracy. The rain gauge sensors can record rainfall intensity up to 900 mm per hour, while temperature sensors can measure temperatures ranging from minus 40 degree Celsius to plus 75 degree Celsius. Wind monitoring sensors can record wind speeds up to 80 metres per second. In addition, the stations are equipped with humidity sensors covering a range from 0 to 100 % and pressure sensors capable of measuring atmospheric pressure up to 1200 hPa. The deployment of these advanced weather monitoring systems reflects Northeast Frontier Railway's continued commitment towards enhancing operational safety, adopting modern technology and ensuring uninterrupted rail connectivity in challenging geographical regions during the monsoon season.



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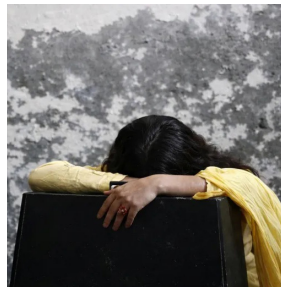
91 trafficked children rescued from textile units in Gujarat

JAIPUR, MAY 13

Exposing the dangerous nexus of child trafficking from Rajasthan for labour in other states, as many as 91 minor children, mostly from the state, were rescued from three textile units in Surat during a joint operation. The operation, based on intelligence provided by Rajasthan-based Gayatri Seva Sansthan, was conducted jointly by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, 22 police officials from Rajasthan, officials from Puna Police Station in Surat, and members of the Association for Voluntary Action and Gayatri Seva Sansthan. Both the Association for Voluntary Action and Gayatri Seva Sansthan are partners of Just Rights for Children, the country's largest child protection network with more than 250 partner organisations.

The children, aged between 7 and 14 years, had been trafficked mostly from the tribal areas of Rajasthan, while three children belonged to Uttar Pradesh, and one child each was from Bihar and Jharkhand. Among those rescued were two brothers, aged 8 and 10, from the tribal regions of Udaipur district in Rajasthan. While traffickers and employers managed to flee from the scene during the raids, legal proceedings are underway, and the rescued children are being produced before the Child Welfare Committee in Surat.

The operation was initiated after Gayatri Seva Sansthan alerted the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights regarding trafficking rackets operating in these areas, following an intensive month-long mapping exercise and investigation. During the raid on the first textile unit, the rescued children themselves led the rescue teams to other locations where more children were confined and employed. "They led us to



a building that was locked from the outside, but the children insisted that there were children inside. When we entered, we found children as young as 7 working inside the building. They were terrified, confused and looked very tired after working more than 12 hours every day," said Dr Shailendra Pandya, Director of Gayatri Seva Sansthan. He further recalled the condition in which the children were found and said that when the team entered, a young child, not more than eight years old, was standing shirtless. "He hid himself behind others and was asking if someone could lend him a shirt. Such was the plight of the children there," he said, adding that a rescue operation of this scale was only possible because all the police officials and stakeholders from both states acted promptly and urgently. According to preliminary findings, employers adopted deliberate methods to avoid suspicion. Younger children were brought to the units early in the morning and locked inside the building from the outside. The building would only be opened after 7 p.m. once the workday ended. The rescued children were housed in nearby colonies under extremely congested conditions, with nearly 12 to 15 children sharing a single small room. During interactions with officials, several children stated that their parents were aware that they had been sent for labour work. However, younger children disclosed that they had no idea about child labour and had instead been lured to Surat on the pretext of an excursion.

Brazil Foreign Minister, Uzbekistan's Deputy FM arrive in New Delhi for BRICS

NEW DELHI

Brazil Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira and Uzbekistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Aloyev Bakhtomjon Joraboevich arrived in New Delhi on Wednesday to attend the two-day BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting which starts in the capital from Thursday.

Earlier in the day, Kazakhstan's First Deputy Foreign Minister Yerzhan Ashikbayev also landed in New Delhi for the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting. External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar will chair the BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting on May 14-15, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had announced on Tuesday.

Addressing a weekly media briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that BRICS Foreign Ministers and heads of delegations

from member and partner countries will participate in the meeting and also call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "India will host the BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting on 14th and 15th May 2026. The meeting will be chaired by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar. BRICS Foreign Ministers and heads of delegations from member and partner countries will participate in the meeting.

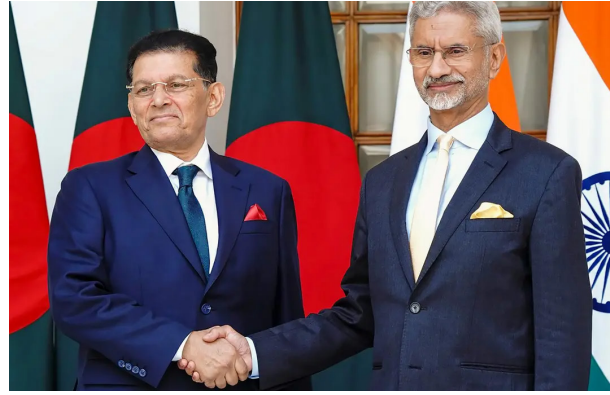
They will also call on honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. During the meeting, the Foreign Ministers of BRICS member countries will exchange views on global and regional issues of mutual interest," said Jaiswal. "On the second day, BRICS member and partner countries will participate in a session, themed BRICS at 20 Building for Resilience.

Bangladesh hopes BJP's triumph in West Bengal ushers in productive bilateral ties

DHAKA

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) sweeping victory in the 2026 West Bengal legislative assembly election could not only reshape governance in eastern India but also usher in a new and more productive phase in bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh, the local media in Dhaka reported.

According to an editorial in Bangladeshi daily 'Dhaka Tribune', India and Bangladesh have historically maintained one of South Asia's strongest and most successful partnerships, with cooperation across several sectors, including security, trade, energy, and connectivity, shaping a model of pragmatic diplomacy. However, unresolved issues at times have



periodically created friction, particularly the long-pending Teesta River water-sharing agreement. The report noted that the formation of a BJP-led government in Kolkata, aligned with the centre in New Delhi, provides a rare opportunity to address these pending concerns with enhanced coordination and

urgency. "The Teesta River rises in the Himalayas, flows through Sikkim and West Bengal, and enters Bangladesh, where its waters support millions of farmers in the country's northern districts. India and Bangladesh came close to signing a water-sharing agreement in 2011, but the accord was delayed because of

objections from West Bengal's then state government over local water requirements," the report stated.

"Since then, the Teesta issue has become a symbol of unfinished business in an otherwise flourishing partnership," it added.

Emphasising that the BJP's electoral victory in West Bengal has created a rare convergence of political authority at both the state and national levels, the report said this development, alongside renewed diplomatic focus, offers an opportunity to address long-standing issues and deepen the India and Bangladesh partnership.

"If progress is made on Teesta and other pending concerns, the result will not merely be the resolution of bilateral irritants.



India's engagement with Africa built on decades of solidarity

NEW DELHI

The Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-IV) set to be held in New Delhi from May 28-31 marks the revival of India's flagship engagement with Africa after 11 years. The summit demonstrates India's determination to elevate Africa to the centre of its global strategy, a report has detailed.

As New Delhi prepares to host leaders from the African continent, one message is becoming clear that if Africa wants to have a partner that understands its challenges, respects its sovereignty, and invests in its long-term success, few nations are better positioned than India.

"The Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit is expected to produce new initiatives in trade, health, defence, education, digital infrastructure, and critical minerals. After more than a decade since the previous summit in 2015, it signals India's determination to elevate Africa to the center of its global strategy," Rishi Suri wrote in Global Order. "For African nations, the summit offers access to a trusted partner that respects sovereignty and delivers practical solutions. For India, it represents an opportunity

to deepen ties with one of the most dynamic regions of the twenty-first century," the author further stated.

The timing of the summit could not be more significant. Africa is projected to account for one-quarter of the world's population by 2050. The African continent has reserves of critical minerals, some of the world's fastest-growing economies and an increasingly youthful and entrepreneurial population. At the same time, African nations want to develop partnership with nations who offer genuine collaboration instead of dependency, capacity building instead of coercion, and respect instead of lectures.

"India's engagement with Africa is not a recent geopolitical calculation. It is built on decades of solidarity. From the anti-colonial struggles of the twentieth century to the Non-Aligned Movement, India and African nations have often stood together in pursuit of sovereignty and development. Mahatma Gandhi refined his philosophy of nonviolent resistance in South Africa. Jawaharlal Nehru supported African liberation movements, and India consistently backed the struggle against apartheid," the Global Order report stated.

BLF claims responsibility for targeting Pakistani forces

QUETTA

The Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) has claimed responsibility for a wave of attacks against Pakistani forces across the province which resulted in the death of seven soldiers, local media reported. In a statement issued to the media, BLF spokesperson Major Gwahram Baloch said the group's fighters ambushed a Pakistani military convoy on May 10 in the Baincha area of Surab district. The convoy was attacked with rockets, light machine guns and other automatic weapons while it was travelling between military camps. The group claimed that two military vehicles sustained heavy damage.

'Ethnic groups fleeing to Myanmar from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts due to violence'

DHAKA

People belonging to non-Muslim ethnic communities have been fleeing violence and migrating from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh to Myanmar's Chin and Rakhine states, a report has stated.

The population in the CHT includes around 850,000 people who belong to 11 ethnic communities, professing Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism. The members of four families from the CHT who have relocated to different areas of Myanmar's Rakhine State and Chin State revealed to 'The Diplomat' magazine that the immigration started years ago due to various factors and during the different governments in Bangladesh.

Htwe Sein Maung, a farmer with five acres of land in Ban-



darban district in Bangladesh's CHT, lived in Lamar village, which is mostly inhabited by the Marma Buddhist community. In 2014, he decided to migrate to Myanmar with his wife and daughter and 15 other families from the same village.

Htwe Sein Maung, a farmer who relocated to Myanmar after Muslim groups hailing from other

parts of Bangladesh, who had settled near his village, threatened them and encroached upon their land.

"The encroachment apart, our paddy fields were burned and many households were barred from cultivating their land. Then, restrictions were imposed on our movement. We couldn't go to the market for fear of atrocities," Htwe Sein

Maung said, adding that the police were reluctant to lodge cases and start a probe despite repeated reminders and applications at the police station.

Subsequently, all 16 households decided to migrate to Myanmar. The Myanmar military permitted these families to reside on small plots of land in Maungdaw district, however, these areas were far off from the Rohingya Muslim villages. Currently, all the families earn their livelihood by the cultivation of vegetables and paddy while some members work as daily wagers.

Tan Nu Sein and her family of five, also belonging to the Marma community, migrated from Rangamati district in Bangladesh's CHT to Maungdaw in 2013. From 2011-2013, at least six girls from the Marma community, who resided in Motipara village in the CHT,

disappeared in a six months period while returning home from school, the Diplomat report mentioned.

Tan Nu Sein's 16-year-old niece was among those who disappeared during these six months. Later, it was reported that she was forcefully married to a Muslim man. Eventually, residents of the villages received threats from neighbouring Muslim villages who were allegedly backed by local politicians of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Some residents were physically assaulted in different incidents.

"Our movements were severely restricted. We did not want our children to be abducted or killed," The Diplomat quoted Tan Nu Sein as saying. She recalled how residents from her village migrated to Myanmar's Rakhine state in different batches.

Netanyahu's secret UAE visit signals major diplomatic shift amid Operation Roaring Lion

JERUSALEM/ABU DHABI

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu paid a secret visit to the United Arab Emirates during the ongoing Operation Roaring Lion, holding high-level talks with UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in what officials are describing as a "historic breakthrough" in bilateral relations.

The development was first disclosed through a statement issued by the Israeli Prime Minister's Office late on Wednesday night.

Shortly afterwards, the official social media account of the Israeli Prime Minister claimed that the visit had opened a new chapter in ties between the two nations amid heightened regional tensions.

While details of the discussions remain closely guarded, diplomatic observers believe the meeting could carry significant



implications for the Middle East, particularly against the backdrop of the military operation known as Operation Roaring Lion.

The timing of the visit has triggered intense speculation among regional analysts, many of whom see it as an indication of deeper security and political

coordination between Israel and key Gulf nations.

The UAE has, over the past few years, emerged as one of Israel's most important regional partners following the normalisation agreements signed under the Abraham Accords. Trade, technology cooperation, tourism and intelligence-sharing

between the two countries have steadily expanded despite periodic unrest across the region. However, Netanyahu's reported secret trip suggests that discussions may have moved beyond routine diplomatic engagement. Sources familiar with regional affairs suggest the talks may have focused on

security coordination, regional stability, economic partnerships and the evolving geopolitical landscape in West Asia.

Neither the Israeli Prime Minister's Office nor Emirati authorities have yet released photographs or an official joint statement from the meeting, further adding to the secrecy surrounding the visit.

Political commentators in Israel described the development as one of the most sensitive diplomatic moves undertaken by Netanyahu in recent months. In the UAE, officials have so far maintained silence, though regional media outlets are closely monitoring possible follow-up announcements.

The visit comes at a time when the Middle East is witnessing rapidly shifting alliances, growing security concerns and renewed diplomatic engagement among regional powers.

India and Uzbekistan discuss bilateral ties, regional and global issues of mutual interest

NEW DELHI

India and Uzbekistan held the 17th round of Foreign Office Consultations in New Delhi on Wednesday, discussing bilateral ties with focus on trade and investment, tourism, technology, innovation, energy, cooperation in education and other sectors. The two sides also discussed regional and global issues of mutual interest.

"The 17th round of India-Uzbekistan Foreign Office Consultations were held in New Delhi on 13 May 2026, co-chaired by Secretary (West) Sibi George and Mr. Bakhtomjon Aloyev, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated on X.

"Both sides reviewed the



full spectrum of bilateral relations with focus on trade and investment, tourism, technology, innovation, energy, cooperation in educational, cultural fields and other consular issues. They also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest," he added.

India and Uzbekistan share ties that go back deep in an-

cient history. India was one of the first nations to recognise the state sovereignty of Uzbekistan after the latter's independence. The protocol on establishment of diplomatic relations between two nations was signed in Tashkent in 1992, according to MEA. India and Uzbekistan signed their Strategic Partnership in 2011.

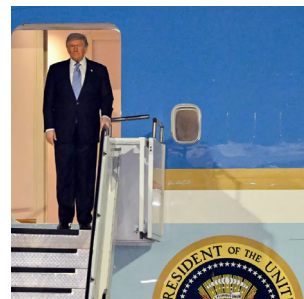
Trump arrives in Beijing for State Visit to China

BEIJING

US President Donald Trump arrived in Beijing on Wednesday evening for a State Visit to China. At the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Trump is visiting China from May 13 to 15. This is the first US presidential visit to China in almost nine years and Trump's second since November 2017.

The two leaders will have an in-depth exchange of views on major issues concerning bilateral relations and world peace and development, according to China's foreign ministry, Xinhua news agency reported.

Trump was welcomed by Chinese Vice President Han Zheng at the airport. Xi and Trump met last time in October 2025 in South Korea's Busan. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said on Monday that China is willing to work with the United States in the spirit of equality, respect, and mutual benefit to expand co-



operation, manage differences, and inject more stability and certainty into a turbulent and changing world.

Meanwhile, several US lawmakers pressed Secretary of War Pete Hegseth over Trump's trip to China, warning that allies such as Taiwan, Japan and the Philippines were closely watching whether Washington would stand firm against Beijing's growing military and economic influence. China emerged as a dominant theme during a lengthy Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defence hearing on Trump's proposed \$1.5 trillion defence budget.

Report flags Chinese military and intelligence support to Iran amid regional tensions

BEIJING/TEHRAN

Chinese components, including sensors, voltage converters and semiconductors, have been identified in Iranian drones, raising concerns over the transfer of sanctioned dual technology. China is believed to be assisting Iran with intelligence on the US military deployment in the Gulf and also supplying surveillance systems while enabling Tehran to expand its weapons capabilities, a report said on Wednesday.

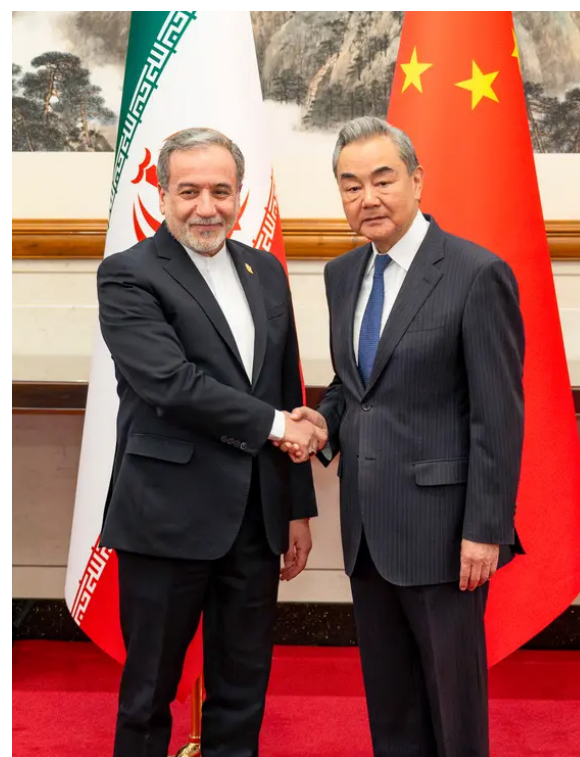
"China supplying the theoretic Islamic regime in Iran with weapons and technology is no secret, but the options before Beijing are also limited by the need for China to have a friendly posture with other Gulf countries and also to keep US President Donald Trump in good humour before his scheduled summit meeting with President Xi Jinping of

China," a report in Asia News Post detailed.

"Beijing cannot afford to sour relations with Gulf nations such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain, which have been hit by missiles launched by Iran in the course of the current war - missiles of Chinese origin or built with technology transferred from China," it added.

Citing US intelligence reports, the report said China is preparing to supply new air defence systems to Iran within the coming weeks. It added that Iran may be using the current ceasefire period to replenish certain weapons systems with the support of key foreign partners.

"Now if Beijing backs out, its foothold will weaken in Iran, which China can ill afford, as Iran is its main base to counter US influence in the Middle East. There are reports that Beijing is working out routes



for the shipments through third countries to mask the true origin of consignments of weapons," the report noted.

"Among the systems Beijing is reported to be preparing to transfer are shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile systems known as MANPADs (Man Portable Air Defence Systems), which can pose a threat to low-flying US military aircraft. Shoulder-fired and easy to operate, these launchers emit heat-seeking fire-and-forget missiles," it mentioned.

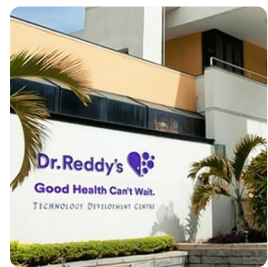
Notably, the US President has not ruled out the possibility of China supplying such missiles to Iran. "If China does that, China will have big problems," the Asian News post quoted Trump as saying while addressing reporters on questions of these missiles.

According to the report, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the army of Iran, has also been granted ac-

cess to a network of commercial ground stations run by a Beijing-based satellite services provider with operations across Asia.

The satellite captured images of air bases and other targets across the Middle Eastern countries which were struck by Iranian missile strikes, including Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, where a stationed American aircraft suffered damage.

This satellite has also reportedly tracked activities around Jordan's Muwaffaq Salti Air Base, sites near the US Fifth Fleet headquarters in Manama, Bahrain, and Erbil Airport in Iraq - locations the IRGC has claimed were targeted during its operations. "Western intelligence assessment is that no Chinese company could give Iran such satellite access without somebody in the administration giving it the go-ahead.



Dr. Reddy's Q4 dips 86% on lower sales, multiple one offs to ₹221 crore

Total revenue from operations of the Hyderabad-headquartered generic drugmaker was lower at ₹7,546.4 crore (₹8,528.4 crore), according to the results prepared as per Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) Pharma major Dr. Reddy's Laboratories reported consolidated net profit slumped to ₹221.3 crore for the March quarter compared to ₹1,586.7 crore a year earlier on the back of lower sales and multiple one offs. The company said the results include the adverse impact of a Shelf Stock Adjustment (SSA) related to lenalidomide (generic of cancer drug Revlimid) of ₹453 crore, impairment of CAR-T assets and Eftilagimod Alfa of a total of ₹227.7 crore, provisions related to VAT liability of ₹114.1 crore during the quarter. On the SSA, the company said it recorded ₹453 crore as a reduction of revenue from sale of goods in its Global Generics Segment.



Maha Cuts Ministers' Convoys, Foreign Tours Amid Fuel Crisis

MUMBAI: (MAY 13)

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday announced a series of austerity measures, including halving the number of vehicles in the convoys of his cabinet colleagues, and cancelling foreign tours of ministers and officials. The BJP-led government's move came in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to conserve fuel and foreign exchange in view of the ongoing conflict in West Asia, which has disrupted global energy supplies. India relies heavily on West Asia for crude oil and gas imports. The decisions were taken at two high-level meetings chaired by Fadnavis and attended by the chief secretary, director general of police and other senior officials.

Sensex, Nifty recover after 4-day slide even as rupee hits record low

Benchmark stock market indices ended marginally higher on Wednesday after four sessions of sharp losses, helped by gains in metal, oil & gas and consumer stocks, even as the rupee hit a fresh all-time low amid rising concerns over the prolonged US-Iran conflict and elevated crude oil prices.



The S&P BSE Sensex gained 49.74 points, or 0.07%, to close at 74,608.98, while the NSE Nifty50 rose 33.05 points, or 0.14%, to settle at 23,412.60. The rupee weakened to a record low of 95.7950 against the US dollar, extending its losing streak as importer demand and overseas debt repayments continued to pressure the currency. Concerns over the impact of

the US-Iran war and disruption in the Strait of Hormuz also weighed on sentiment. Broader markets ended higher, with the Nifty Midcap 100 index rising 0.77% and the Nifty Smallcap 100 gaining 0.31%. India VIX, the volatility index, climbed 0.75%. Among sectoral indices, Nifty Metal rose 3.18%, Nifty Consumer Durables gained 1.67%, and Nifty Oil & Gas

advanced 1.28%. Nifty FMCG added 0.30%, while Nifty Pharma and Nifty Healthcare Index rose 0.23% and 0.29%, respectively. However, Nifty IT slipped 1.13%, while Nifty Auto declined 0.97%. Nifty Realty, Nifty Private Bank and Nifty PSU Bank also ended in the red. On the Sensex pack, Asian Paints surged 4.48%, Tata Steel gained 3.63%, Bharat Electronics climbed

2.93%, and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone rose 2.79%. Bharti Airtel and Larsen and Toubro also ended higher. On the losing side, Mahindra and Mahindra fell 2.07%, Power Grid Corporation of India dropped 1.52%, Infosys declined 1.51%, Tata Consultancy Services slipped 1.21%, and Sun Pharmaceutical Industries fell 1.16%. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said domestic benchmark indices closed flat with a cautious undertone, while broader markets outperformed on dip buying and short covering in mid- and small-cap stocks. He said the sharp increase in import tariffs on precious metals was sentimentally positive for the rupee, while metal stocks outperformed due to a supply squeeze. Nair added

that inflation rose slightly in India but remained below expectations, offering some near-term comfort. However, he warned that prolonged Middle East tensions and elevated commodity prices could limit the RBI's policy flexibility if inflation pressures continue. He also said sticky US inflation continues to support the higher-for-longer interest rate narrative, strengthening the US dollar and weighing on risk assets globally. At the same time, AI-driven themes are attracting strong global inflows due to better earnings visibility and long-term growth potential.

RBI Governor says petrol, diesel price hike likely if West Asia crisis drags on

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said India may have to raise petrol and diesel prices if the West Asia crisis persists. The remarks highlight growing pressure on inflation, fuel imports and state-run oil companies absorbing higher crude costs.

a conference hosted by the Swiss National Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Switzerland.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ CRISIS HITS INDIA'S ENERGY IMPORTS

India, the world's third-largest oil consumer, has been facing increasing pressure after tensions around the Strait of Hormuz disrupted energy supplies and pushed crude oil prices sharply higher. The closure of the key shipping route has raised concerns around supply-chain disruptions, inflation and India's growing energy import bill. Higher crude oil prices are a major concern for India because the country imports most of its oil requirements. Rising oil prices increase transportation and manufacturing costs, put pressure on the rupee and affect inflation.

GOVT, OIL COMPANIES ABSORBING COSTS FOR NOW

At present, the government and state-run oil companies are absorbing a large share of



the increase in crude oil prices. Excise duties on fuel have already been reduced, while oil marketing companies continue to sell petrol and diesel below market-linked prices despite rising losses. However, prices of several fuel products have already increased.

State-run fuel retailers have raised prices of:

- commercial LPG cylinders
 - industrial diesel
 - 5-kg LPG cylinders
 - and jet fuel supplied to international airlines.
- Commercial LPG cylinder prices for 19-kg cylinders were recently increased by Rs 993. Retail petrol, diesel and do-

mestic LPG prices, however, remain unchanged for now.

PM MODI HAD URGED PEOPLE TO SAVE FUEL

The developments come days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens to voluntarily reduce petrol and diesel consumption and avoid unnecessary gold purchases to help conserve foreign exchange reserves.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri also recently acknowledged concerns over how long oil companies would be able to continue absorbing losses while keeping fuel prices unchanged. "How long will the oil companies be able to take it? Frankly, that worries me," Puri said at an industry conference.

IMF BACKS PASSING ON HIGHER OIL PRICES

The International Monetary Fund has also backed passing on higher crude oil prices to consumers while saying India still has room to manage the current energy shock.

India's fuel market remains largely controlled by state-

owned refiners, which account for nearly 90% of retail fuel outlets across the country. Petrol and diesel prices are effectively approved by the central government, although state taxes vary.

India's retail inflation rose to 3.48% in April from 3.40% in March, though it remained below expectations because the government absorbed part of the rise in crude oil prices.

However, economists remain concerned that prolonged high oil prices could:

- slow inflation further
- weaken the rupee
- and widen the current account deficit.

The RBI has projected economic growth of 6.9% for the current financial year and average inflation of 4.6%. The central bank kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.25% in April. Malhotra said the RBI is taking a more data-dependent approach and remains prepared to act if inflationary pressures become long-lasting.



Gold jumps Rs 9,206, silver surges Rs 16,743 after import duty hike

Gold futures on MCX jumped Rs 9,206, or 6%, to Rs 1,62,648 per 10 grams in early trade. Silver futures also rallied strongly, rising Rs 16,743, or 6%, to Rs 2,95,805 per kg as of 9 am.

PM MODI HAD RECENTLY URGED PEOPLE TO AVOID BUYING GOLD

The decision also comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged Indians to avoid buying gold for weddings for one year amid the ongoing economic pressure caused by the global energy crisis. The Prime Minister had said conserving foreign exchange had become important as crude oil prices remained high globally. India is one of the world's biggest gold importers, and economists often see large gold imports as a pressure point during periods of high oil prices and rupee weakness.

GLOBAL GOLD PRICES EDGE LOWER

Interestingly, global gold prices moved lower even as Indian prices surged due to the import duty hike. Spot gold fell 0.4% to \$4,695.99 per ounce, while US gold futures for June delivery gained 0.4% to \$4,705.30. Analysts said stronger-than-expected US inflation data reduced hopes of interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve, putting some pressure on international gold prices. Recent US data showed consumer inflation rose further in April, with annual inflation recording its biggest increase in three years. According to CME Group's FedWatch tool, traders are now pricing in a 30% chance of a US rate hike by December.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BUYERS

The sharp jump in domestic prices could affect:

- jewellery demand
- wedding purchases
- and investment buying in the near term.

Jewellers and traders are expected to closely watch consumer reaction over the next few days as higher duties make precious metals significantly more expensive.

Gold and silver prices in India surged sharply on Wednesday after the government raised import duties on precious metals, making purchases more expensive in the domestic market. Gold futures on MCX jumped Rs 9,206, or 6%, to Rs 1,62,648 per 10 grams in early trade. Silver futures also rallied strongly, rising Rs 16,743, or 6%, to Rs 2,95,805 per kg as of 9 am. The sharp rise came after the government increased import duty on gold and silver to 15% from 6%. The move includes 10% basic customs duty, and 5% Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC).

WHY DID GOLD AND SILVER PRICES JUMP?

The duty hike immediately increased the landed cost of imported gold and silver in India, pushing domestic futures prices sharply higher. India imports most of its gold and silver needs. Higher import duty raises the overall cost for traders, jewellers and consumers.

The government's move comes at a time when India is facing pressure from:

- elevated crude oil prices
- a weakening rupee
- and rising import bills linked to the Iran war and tensions in West Asia.

The rupee recently hit a record low of 95.75 against the US dollar, increasing concerns over the country's foreign exchange outflows. The duty hike is aimed at reducing gold and silver imports, narrowing the trade deficit, and supporting the rupee.

Air India Reduces Global Flights Amid Fuel Cost Surge

Air India has announced temporary reductions and suspensions on several international routes till August 2026 as the airline deals with prolonged airspace restrictions and record-high jet fuel prices that have hurt the commercial viability of some operations. The airline said the move is aimed at "improving network stability and reducing last-minute inconvenience to passengers." Despite the temporary adjustments, Air India said it will continue operating more than 1,200 international flights every month across

five continents. Air India said it will continue operating 33 weekly flights to North America, 47 weekly flights to Europe, 57 weekly flights to the UK, eight weekly flights to Australia, 158 weekly flights to Far East, Southeast Asia and SAARC destinations, along with seven weekly flights to Mauritius. Among the biggest changes, Air India has temporarily suspended its Delhi-Chicago service. Delhi-San Francisco flights will be reduced from 10 weekly services to seven through August, while Delhi-Toronto flights will



drop from 10 weekly services to five through July before returning to daily operations in August. Delhi-Vancouver services have also been reduced from seven weekly flights to five. The airline said Mumbai-Newark flights will increase from three weekly services

to seven weekly flights. However, Delhi-Newark and Mumbai-New York JFK services will be temporarily suspended, while Delhi-New York JFK will continue operating daily. In Europe, Delhi-Paris flights have been reduced from 14 weekly services to seven.

Delhi-Copenhagen services will drop from four weekly flights to three, while Delhi-Milan flights will reduce from five weekly services to four. Flights from Delhi to Vienna, Zurich and Rome will also be reduced from four weekly services to three.

ASIA, AUSTRALIA SERVICES CUT; SOME ROUTES SUSPENDED

Air India has also reduced frequencies on multiple routes in Australia and Asia. Delhi-Melbourne and Delhi-Sydney flights will be cut from seven weekly ser-

vices to four. Among Asian routes, Delhi-Shanghai flights have been temporarily suspended through August. Delhi-Singapore flights will reduce from 24 weekly services to 14, while Mumbai-Singapore services will be cut from 14 weekly flights to seven. Chennai-Singapore flights have also been temporarily suspended. Delhi-Bangkok flights will reduce from 28 weekly services to 21 from July, while Mumbai-Bangkok flights will drop from 13 weekly services to seven. Delhi-Kuala Lumpur services will reduce from 10 weekly

flights to five. Flights from Delhi to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi will also operate at lower frequencies in July and August. Delhi-Kathmandu flights will reduce from 42 weekly services to 28 in June and further to 21 in July and August. Delhi-Dhaka services will reduce from seven weekly flights to four, while Mumbai-Dhaka flights have been temporarily suspended through August. Mumbai-Colombo flights will reduce from seven weekly services to four, while Delhi-Colombo services will reduce from 14 weekly flights to 12.

Senior Advocate Dr. P. B. Vijaya Kumar Achieves Rare Multidisciplinary

Distinction with Ph.D. in Psychology & Parapsychology

HYDERABAD, MAY 13:

Earning multiple doctorates and post-doctoral distinctions across widely different fields is far beyond the usual academic trajectory. Only a few real-life polymaths are known to have achieved such an extraordinary combination of advanced scholarship across unrelated disciplines. One such rare academician and jurist is Dr. P. B. Vijaya Kumar, a Hyderabad-based Designated Senior Advocate, whose career stands at the remarkable intersection of law, psychology, computer engineering, management and interdisciplinary legal studies. Dr. Vijaya Kumar, who practises before the Supreme Court of India, the High Court for the

State of Telangana and the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, has now added another exceptional milestone to his distinguished academic and professional career. Andhra University, by notification dated 07-05-2026, has declared Mr. Poolla Bhas-kara Vijaya Kumar qualified for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy — Ph.D. in Psychology & Parapsychology. His thesis is titled "Psychological Analysis of Judicial Behaviour, Culture and Decision Making: A Case Study of the Decision of the Supreme Court of India in Joseph Shine v. Union of India." The thesis was submitted on 08-04-2025, and the viva-voce examination was conducted on 05-05-2026. This achievement is significant not merely as the



conferment of another doctoral degree, but because it reflects Dr. Vijaya Kumar's rare distinction as a Senior Advocate, scholar and multidisciplinary researcher whose work spans several domains of knowledge. His latest research examines the Supreme Court of India's landmark decision in Joseph Shine v. Union of India not only

as a constitutional judgment, but also as a study in judicial behaviour, judicial culture and judicial decision-making. The thesis explores how courts reason and decide important constitutional questions, especially in matters involving social values, moral reasoning, individual liberty, cultural change and constitutional morality. The work is distinctive because it brings together Dr. Vijaya Kumar's more than four decades of active legal practice and his deep academic engagement with multiple disciplines. By applying psychological analysis to judicial decision-making, he has opened a fresh and meaningful interdisciplinary path between law and psychology. His study highlights that

judicial decisions are shaped not only by statutes and precedents, but also by values, attitudes, institutional culture, social consciousness and human behaviour. Dr. Vijaya Kumar's academic profile is exceptional. He was earlier awarded a Ph.D. in Law by Osmania University and a higher doctoral degree, LL.D. in Law, by Berhampur University. He was also awarded a Ph.D. in Computer Engineering by Andhra University and later acquired a post-doctoral D.Sc. in Engineering. He was further awarded a Ph.D. by Rayalaseema University. With the present Ph.D. in Psychology & Parapsychology, he has added another rare achievement to a career marked by intellectual depth, professional distinction

and cross-disciplinary scholarship. He also authored a book "complete Justice-ala-Supreme court of India" and also contributed several articles in international and national journals. What makes Dr. Vijaya Kumar unique is not merely the number of his academic qualifications, but the extraordinary breadth of his contribution across diverse fields. As a practising Senior Advocate and scholar, he has built a rare profile at the intersection of law, psychology, computer engineering, management and interdisciplinary legal studies. His latest work stands as a pioneering contribution to the psychological study of judicial behaviour and constitutional decision-making. Dr. Vijaya Kumar's achievement is therefore a matter of distinction not only for the legal profession, but also for interdisciplinary academic research. It reflects the journey of a rare scholar-practitioner who continues to expand the boundaries of legal thought, academic inquiry and multidisciplinary scholarship.



Rupee hits lowest-ever intraday level of 95.80 against U.S. dollar

the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 98.46, up 0.29%.

The rupee touched its lowest-ever intraday level of 95.80 against the U.S. dollar, weakening for the fourth consecutive session on Wednes-

day (May 13, 2026) due to elevated crude oil prices and fear of a prolonged global trade disruption amid the West Asia crisis. According to forex analysts, in the backdrop of surging crude oil prices, the government's move to raise import duties on gold and silver may not be enough to ease the overall demand for the safe-haven greenback.



'Negative Time'

Really Does Exist, New Experiments Suggest

As Homer tells us, Odysseus made an epic journey, against the odds, from Troy to his home in Ithaca. He visited many lands, but mostly dwelt with the nymph Calypso on her island. We can imagine that his wife, Penelope, would have asked him about that particular

time. Odysseus might have replied, "It was nothing. In fact, it was less than nothing. Negative five years I dwelt with Calypso. How else could I have arrived home after only ten years? If you don't believe me, ask her." Quantum particles, it turns out, are just as wily as Odysseus,

as we have shown in an experiment published in *Physical Review Letters*. Not only can their arrival time suggest that they dwelt with other particles for a negative amount of time, but if one asks those other particles, they will corroborate the story.

Photons dwelling with atoms

- Our experiment used photons – quantum particles of light – and the against-the-odds journey they must undertake to pass straight through a cloud of rubidium atoms. These atoms have a "resonance" with the photons, meaning the energy of the photon can be transferred temporarily to the atoms as an atomic excitation. This allows the photon to "dwell" in the atomic cloud for a time before being released. For this resonance to be effective, the photon must have a well-defined energy, matching the amount of energy required to put a rubidium atom into an excited state. But, by a form of Heisenberg's famous uncertainty principle, if the energy of the photon is well defined then its timing must be uncertain: the pulse of light the photon occupies must have a long duration. This means we can't know exactly when the photon enters the cloud, but we can know on average when it enters. If a photon like this is fired into the cloud, the most likely outcome is that its energy will be transferred to the atoms, and then re-emitted as a photon travelling in a random direction. In such cases, the photon is scattered, and fails to arrive at its Ithaca.

Photon arrival times

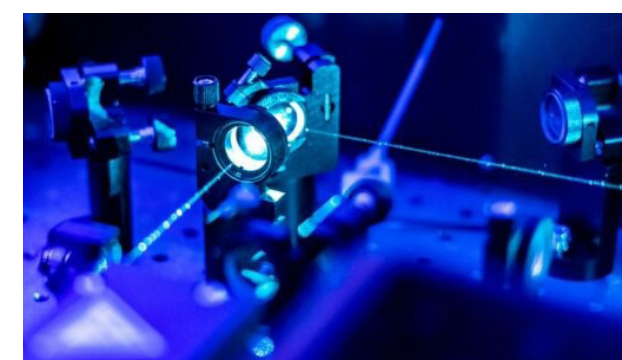
- But if the photon does make it straight through, a strange thing happens. Based on the average time when the photon enters the cloud, one can calculate the expected average time it would arrive at the far side of the cloud, assuming it travels at the speed of light (as photons usually do). What one finds is that the photon actually arrives far earlier than that. In fact, it arrives so early it appears to have spent a negative amount of time inside the cloud – to exit, on average, before it enters. This effect has been known for decades and was observed in a 1993 experiment. But physicists had mostly decided not to take this negative time seriously. That's because it can be explained by saying that only the very front of the long-duration pulse makes it straight through the atomic cloud, while the rest is scattered. This leads to a successful (non-scattered) photon arriving earlier than would be naively expected.

Asking the atoms

- However, Aephraim Steinberg, one of the authors of that 1993 paper, was not so quick to accept this dismissal of the negative time as an artefact. In his laboratory at the University of Toronto, he wanted to find out what happened if one queried the rubidium atoms in the cloud to find out how long the photon had spent dwelling among them as an excitation. After an initial experiment with inconclusive results, he asked me, as a quantum theorist, for help in working out what to expect. When we talk of querying the atoms, what this means in practice is continuously making a measurement on the atoms while the photon is passing through the cloud, to probe whether the photon's energy is currently dwelling there. But there is a subtlety here: measurements in quantum physics inevitably disturb the system being measured. If we were to make a precise measurement of whether the photon is dwelling in the atoms, at each instant of time, we would prevent the atoms from interacting with the photon. It is as if, merely by watching Calypso closely, we would stop her getting her hands on Odysseus (or vice versa). This is the well known quantum Zeno effect, which would destroy the very phenomenon we want to study.

Our experiment

- The solution is to make, instead, a very imprecise (but still very accurately calibrated) measurement. That is the price paid to keep the disturbance negligible. Specifically, we fired a weak laser beam – unrelated to the single photon pulse – through the cloud of atoms, and measured small changes in the phase of the beam's light to probe whether the atoms were excited. Any single run of the experiment gives only a very rough indication of whether the photon dwelt in the atoms, but averaging millions of runs yields an accurate dwell time. Amazingly, the result of this weak measurement of dwell time, when the photon goes straight through the cloud, exactly equals the negative time suggested by the photons' average arrival time. Prior to our work, no-one suspected that these two times, measured in entirely different ways, would be equal. Crucially, the negative value of the weakly measured dwell time cannot be explained by imagining that only the front of the photon's pulse gets through, unlike the time inferred from the arrival time. So what does this all mean? Is a time machine just around the corner? Sadly, no. Our experiment is fully explained by standard physics. But it does show that negative dwell time is not an artefact. However paradoxical it may seem, it has a directly measurable effect on the atomic cloud that the photon traverses. And it reminds us that there are still lands to discover on the odyssey that is quantum research. Howard Wiseman, Director, Centre for Quantum Dynamics, Griffith University. Astronomers around the world, as well as automated systems constantly scanning the skies, are always on the lookout for potentially-hazardous objects making their way through our Solar System. As well as looking for interesting objects in the sky, the goal is to check for any possible dangers the space rock may pose to our planet. A few days ago, astronomers from several observatories, including the Mount Lemmon Survey and the Farpoint Observatory in Escondido, observed a new object getting quite close to our neck of the woods. Preliminary calculations of its orbit show that its path takes it not quite out to Jupiter, and very close to the orbit of the Earth, making it an Apollo class near-Earth object (NEO). This orbit may get refined as we study the asteroid more, and get a better handle on its size, distance, and path. But right now it looks like we will get a really good look at its orbit, with the asteroid currently predicted to make a very close approach to the Earth and the Moon on Monday, May 18, 2026. So, how close are we talking? Is it time to crack each other's heads open, and feast on the goey bits inside? As usual, no. Whilst the asteroid is coming incredibly close in space terms, there is no suggestion that it will impact the Earth. At around 6:51 pm UTC (give or take 5 hours due to uncertainties in the data), the asteroid will make its first close approach, coming within 0.00284 astronomical units (AU) of the Moon, with one AU being the average Earth-to-Sun distance. After that encounter it will head towards the Earth, coming within 0.00064 AU of the Earth at maximum, and 0.00058 AU at minimum, at around 9:23 pm UTC. As stated above, that is pretty darn close in space terms, but it looks a lot less worrying when you put it in terms of kilometers and miles. At its closest approach to the Earth, it will still be around 90,000 kilometers (56,000 miles) from slamming into our planet, or around 24 percent of the average distance between the Earth and our Moon. In short, it will miss our planet, and we should be able to get a good look at it whilst it does so. According to the Virtual Telescope Project, it will reach magnitude 11.5, making it visible with a modest amateur telescope. Should you not have access to clear skies and a telescope, the Virtual Telescope Project will begin livestreaming observations of the asteroid at 7:45 pm UTC.



World's First Nuclear Blast Created 'Impossible' Crystal



We don't always get to pinpoint the exact moment the world changes. But when the New Mexico dawn was torn open at 5:29 am on 16 July 1945, it was, without a doubt, a pivotal moment in humanity's history. That was the United States Army's Trinity test: the detonation of a plutonium implosion device known as the Gadget – the world's very first test of a nuclear bomb. And more than 80 years later, scientists are still finding the changes it wrought. Now, in a mineral forged in the fury of the world's first deliberate nuclear blast, scientists have found a crystal that, under more normal circumstances, wouldn't be able to exist on Earth. "Extreme, transient conditions produced by nuclear detonations can generate solid-state phases inaccessible to conventional synthesis," writes a team led by geologist Luca Bindi of the University of Florence in Italy. "We report the discovery of a previously unknown calcium copper silicate type-I clathrate formed during the 1945 Trinity nuclear test; the first crystallographically confirmed clathrate identified among nuclear-explosion products." The explosion itself was about as dramatic as could be

expected for such a devastating moment. The energy release was equivalent to 21 kilotons of TNT. It vaporized the 30-meter (98-foot) test tower and surrounding copper infrastructure, including cables and instruments used to record the blast. The resulting fireball fused the tower and copper with the asphalt and desert sand that was drawn up into the mushroom cloud, turning the mixture into a glassy, never-before-seen material later named trinitite. It's within this material that scientists have found some strange structures. In 2021, Bindi and his colleagues identified an unexpected quasicrystal in the rare red form of trinitite that contains metal from the tower, cables, and recording instruments... and now this variant of the material has yielded another surprise. Right next to the quasicrystal, the researchers found a clathrate – a crystal structure that consists of atoms arranged in a cage-like lattice that can trap other atoms inside. Crystal is a term used to describe the arrangement of atoms inside certain materials, and most crystals form under stable conditions. Inorganic clathrates are special because they require very specific conditions to form,

and they are rarely found in nature. Some such conditions were briefly met during the Trinity explosion: extreme shock, temperature exceeding 1,500 degrees Celsius (around 2,730 degrees Fahrenheit), and pressures of 5 to 8 gigapascals, which then dropped off rapidly. This rapid change, followed by rapid cooling, allowed atoms in the trinitite to assemble into unusual configurations, then become locked in place, creating structures that otherwise would not be able to form. This material is basically a moment frozen in time, preserving a mineralogical snapshot of the brief temperature and pressure conditions generated during the detonation – a treasure trove for scientists. Investigations of red trinitite have already revealed a range of unusual phases – and the clathrate emerged during one such analysis. Using X-ray diffraction, the researchers probed a sample of red trinitite and identified a copper-rich droplet embedded therein. Further investigation revealed an unusual atomic configuration – a cubic type-I clathrate, in which 'cages' of silicon atoms hold single calcium atoms, with traces of copper and iron present. It represents the first

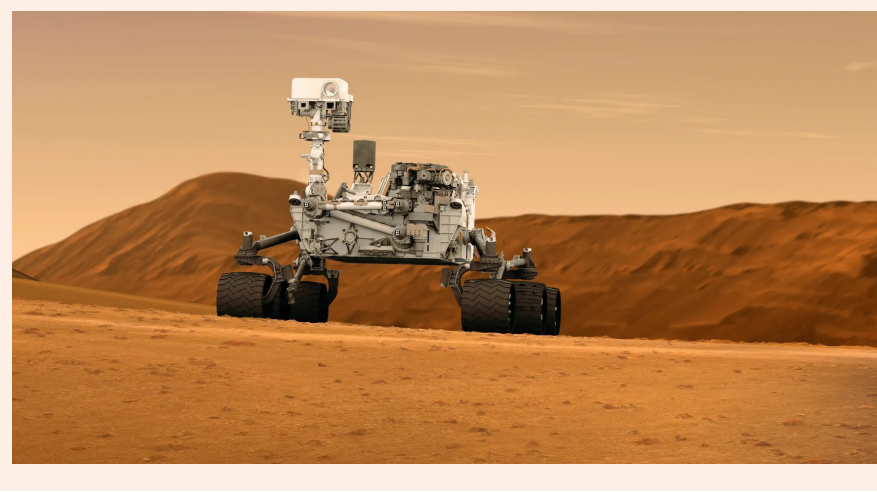
clathrate ever found in the products of a nuclear explosion. Here's where it gets odd, though. Since the same conditions that form clathrates also promote the formation of quasicrystals, and the clathrate and the quasicrystal had similar compositions, Bindi and his colleagues thought the two structures might be related. They performed mathematical modeling to determine whether the quasicrystal could have emerged from the clathrate, but the results strongly suggested that, while this pathway is possible in general, in this particular instance, the copper concentration was too high. This means that two very different crystal phases, formed from the same materials under the same extreme conditions, arose independently within the same sample. "These findings rule out a simple clathrate-based structural interpretation for the Trinity quasicrystal and emphasize the distinct nature of silicon-rich phases generated under extreme conditions," the researchers write. Research like this can help scientists better understand the effects of nuclear testing and even offer new forensic tools for investigating sites where such explosions have occurred.

NASA's Curiosity Rover Got Its Drill Stuck on a Rock

Here's How They Freed It

While it has enabled many exciting discoveries, the Curiosity Rover has also encountered its share of setbacks. The latest left NASA engineers speechless. On April 25, Curiosity drilled into a rock nicknamed "Atacama" to collect a sample. When the rover retracted the robotic arm after drilling, the entire rock unexpectedly lifted off the Martian surface—all 28.6 pounds of it. While other Curiosity drilling operations have caused cracks or breaks in the upper layers of Martian rocks during the rover's nearly 14-year mission, this is the first time one has remained stuck to the sleeve that surrounds the drill's rotating tip. As the space agency itself recounts, it was the black-and-white obstacle-detection cameras mounted on the front of the rover's chassis that captured this peculiar "accident" in a sequence of images that allowed engineers to get to work immediately to free it, moving its robotic arm and operating the drill repeatedly over several days. Engineers initially tried to remove the rock by vibrating the drill, to no avail.

On April 29, they adjusted the position of the robotic arm and tried vibration again, but only managed to knock some sand off the rock. On May 1, the team gave it another try by tilting the drill more, rotating and vibrating it, and spinning the drill bit. The team expected to have to repeat these operations several times, but instead the rock broke loose on the first attempt, shattering into a multitude of pieces when it hit the Martian soil. NASA's Curiosity rover was developed by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and landed on Mars in August 2012 with the purpose of looking for evidence that the Red Planet might have once had conditions that could support microbial life. In 2020, it conducted an experiment in the Glen Torridon region within Gale Crater, an area rich in clay minerals that strongly indicate the presence of water in the past and that it collected using onboard instruments known as Sample Analysis on Mars. This story originally appeared in WIRED Italia and has been translated from Italian.





CRICKET
Sarah Taylor joins England men's Test setup for NZ series



LONDON: Former England wicketkeeper-batter Sarah Taylor is set to become the first woman to work with the England senior men's side after being appointed fielding coach for the upcoming Test series against New Zealand. Taylor, widely recognised as one of the best wicketkeepers ever, male or female, will serve as the short-term fielding coach during the home series while regular coach Carl Hopkinson is busy with the Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League (IPL). This role is another milestone in Taylor's coaching career, which has grown through various positions in county and franchise cricket.

CRICKET
Liam Dawson ends first-class career



NEW DELHI: Liam Dawson has brought the curtain down on an accomplished First-Class career, with the Hampshire and England all-rounder announcing his retirement from red-ball cricket in a move aimed at extending his white-ball future. The 36-year-old will continue to represent Hampshire County Cricket Club in the T20 Blast and the One-Day Cup, ending a First-Class journey that saw him become one of the county's most.

Kohli's unbeaten 105 powers RCB to top spot with six-wicket win over KKR



RAIPUR

Virat Kohli produced a vintage hundred and was unbeaten on 105 off 60 balls as he steered Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to a six-wicket victory over Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and reclaimed the top spot on the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 points table at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur on Wednesday.

After Angkrish Raghuvanshi's fluent 71 and Rinku Singh's unbeaten 49 powered Kolkata Knight Riders to 192/4, Kohli brought out a glorious, unbeaten century laced with 11 fours and three sixes at a strike-rate of 175 - his ninth IPL ton and 10th overall in T20s, as RCB completed the chase with five balls to spare. With the majority of his shots coming through the leg-side, Kohli dished out a chasing masterclass to leave the Raipur crowd utterly delighted after rain delayed the start of the game by 75 minutes.

Chasing 193, RCB began cautiously as debutant Saurabh Dubey conceded just two runs in the opening over. The tempo changed in the second over when Vaibhav Arora erred in line, and Kohli cashed in by hitting four boundaries, including a flick over square leg and a rasping cut. Jacob Bethell, too, opened up against Dubey with a six and two fours before being taken out by Kartik Tyagi via a caught-and-bowled dis-

missal. Kohli, however, continued to be unfazed, pulling Tyagi for six and riding his luck when Powell dropped him at cover. Devdutt Padikkal joined in with boundaries off Tyagi and Narine, and the pair added fluently to the chase through a 92-run stand for the second wicket. The partnership blossomed as Padikkal found gaps regularly and Kohli reached his fifty in 32 balls. But Tyagi broke the stand by dismissing Padikkal for 39 with an off-cutter. Rajat Patidar struck a six but was never in his elements after being hit on the head and soon fell to Narine, even as Kohli kept finding boundaries with authority.

The equation was well under control, and Kohli's wrists produced a stunning towering six off Tyagi to bring him into the nineties. He raised his ninth IPL hundred with a single off Arora in the 19th over, acknowledging the applause with a simple raise of the bat.

Though Tim David fell cheaply, Jitesh Sharma ensured there was no late drama. With three needed off the final over, he pulled Dubey's short ball for four to seal the win in a chase marked by intent and control, and never allowing the asking rate to climb. The victory lifted them back to the top of the points table, while ending KKR's four-match unbeaten run.

Previously, on a pitch where the odd ball kept low, KKR's innings was anchored by Raghuvanshi, who hit seven fours and three sixes in his 46-ball

knock coming at a strike-rate of 154.35. He stitched partnerships of 68 and 76 not out with Cameron Green (32) and Rinku, who hit three fours and two sixes in his unconquered 29-ball vigil.

Raghuvanshi kept finding boundaries at regular intervals and ensured the scoreboard was ticking. Though Green was not at his fluent best, Rinku's finishing flourish lifted KKR past 190. RCB, meanwhile, were sloppy in the field with several misfields, and their bowling lacked bite. Though Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Josh Hazlewood, and Rasikh Salam Dar picked a wicket each, none could stem the flow of runs consistently.

Sent in to bat first, KKR lost Finn Allen early after Bhuvneshwar found his outside edge and was snapped by Jitesh Sharma in the third over. Ajinkya Rahane looked promising by hitting three boundaries and a six, but gave a top edge to Hazlewood off his own bowling for 19. Raghuvanshi then took charge, striking cleanly through the off-side and over mid-wicket. He found an able partner in Green, who contributed 32 with three fours and a six before being castled by a skiddy delivery from Rasikh in the 13th over. Raghuvanshi reached his fourth fifty of the season in the 14th over in 32 balls, becoming the youngest KKR batter to record four 50-plus scores in a single IPL edition. He continued to anchor the innings, mixing placement with power.

I was made a 'scapegoat': Lionel Messi tour organiser seeks impartial probe

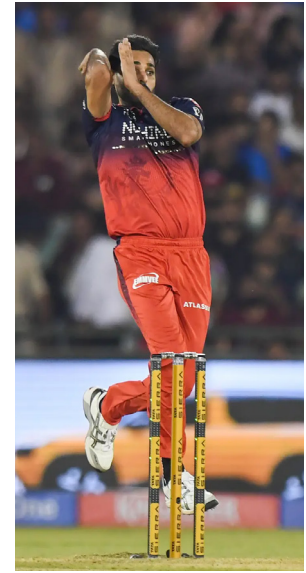
RAIPUR

Royal Challengers Bengaluru veteran pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar said confidence is a factor which helps him in executing his plans better, which in turn helps him perform better in a long Indian Premier League (IPL) season. Bhuvneshwar is the season's leading wicket-taker with 21 scalps in 11 games.

"It's very necessary when you do well in the previous matches for your confidence, and when you have confidence, I think I said it before as well, it always helps you to execute better. But of course, (bowling) is always there.

"That six with a bat, I think not just from that perspective of the match, but again when there are a few matches and situations come like this, I can feel that I've done it before and I can do it again," Bhuvneshwar said in a pre-game chat with the broadcasters.

On staying fresh for the playoffs, he explained, "I think it's very necessary how you prepare for that before the sea-



son, and then when you come into the season, the practice sessions that you want to do or you don't want to do, it depends on your feel.

"I haven't done many practice sessions since the tournament started. So I think that's one of the ways to keep myself fresh. And of course, there are physios and trainers who have their own ways of recovering

and giving their plan." Asked about his approach as a bowler, especially when batters are making big runs, Bhuvneshwar said, "Mix, I would say. It's the first experience and instinct.

And of course, there are a few things that I would say are trends from the data. You don't have to really necessarily follow that. But when you know that there's something like that and that comes into the match, you can prepare for that as well."

On the challenge of bowling to someone like Finn Allen, Bhuvneshwar remarked, "He's a very destructive batsman. Yes, again, when you have a batsman like this, it's also an opportunity to get them out. But again, the way the wicket played in the last match, it's going to be the same.

"It won't be easy for him. But of course, if it's going to be flat, it won't be easy for bowlers. And yes, there are a few plans against him, which we had. And like we know, he's a destructive batsman. We'll look to get him out initially."

Asian Weightlifting Championships: Gyaneshwari Yadav wins silver, bronze in 53kg category

DUBAI

India's Javagal Srinath and Nitin Menon are amongst the elite panel of match referees and umpires kept unchanged by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for the 2026-27 international cricket season.

The decision comes after an annual review and selection process was conducted comprehensively by the ICC's Umpire Selection Panel, which determined that the current group of elite officials would continue in their roles, reflecting satisfaction with their strong contribution over the past year.

"The decision to retain the Emirates ICC Elite Panel for the 2026-27 season reflects the consistency and high standards that have come to define officiating at the international level. Over the past year, the panels have demonstrated a strong blend of accuracy, composure, and pro-



fessionalism, which is critical to maintaining the integrity of the game. "What stands out is not just the quality of decision-making, but the ability to operate with clarity and confidence in high-pressure situations, across formats and conditions. That consistency provides assurance to players, teams, and fans alike.

"On behalf of the ICC, I would like to congratulate all members of the panels on their re-selection. Their performances over the past season have fully justified this continuity, and we look forward to seeing them build further on these standards in the year ahead," said ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta.

VRV Singh, Lakshmipathy Balaji likely to get coaching roles

NEW DELHI

Former India pacers VRV Singh and Lakshmipathy Balaji are among the names likely to get coaching positions at the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru.

The CoE has been without a full-time fast bowling coach since Troy Cooley's departure late last year, following his achieving the superannuation age. The BCCI had explored the option of hiring another foreign expert and even held advanced discussions with England's ace fast bowling coach Steffan Jones, but what happened afterwards is yet to be known, sources told IANS.

IANS understands that the Indian coaches are now shortlisted to fill the vacancies for which the BCCI brought out advertisements last year. Once the paperwork is done, Singh, who previously had a stint under Cooley,



and Balaji are likely to assume charge once the ongoing IPL season concludes on May 31.

Apart from Singh and Balaji, P. Krishnakumar, who guided Jammu and Kashmir to a historic maiden Ranji Trophy triumph this year as the side's bowling coach, is also in line to be the third fast bowling coach at the CoE. Krishnakumar has been a

key figure in J&K's rise as a bowling line-up and nurtured the likes of Auqib Nabi, Sunil Kumar, and Yudhvir Singh.

Yere Goud, the former Karnataka all-rounder who has been active in the coaching circuit, is tipped to join the CoE as a batting coach. It is also understood that Sunetra Paranjpe, Nooshin Al Khadeer, and VR Vanitha are

likely to get coaching roles at the CoE. In terms of fielding coaches, this news agency understands that Dishant Yagnik, ex-Rajasthan wicketkeeper and currently fielding coach of Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), is on the shortlist. Just like Krishnakumar, Yagnik had been integral in shaping the J&K side as Ranji Trophy winners this year.

IPL 2026: CSK suffers setback as Jamie Overton returns to UK with a thigh injury

LUCKNOW

Chennai Super Kings' hopes of making a late push for entering the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 playoffs have taken a huge hit with seam-bowling all-rounder Jamie Overton returning to England due to a right thigh injury. "Jamie Overton has a right thigh injury and will be returning to the UK for further assessment and management," CSK said in a statement through its social media accounts on Wednesday night.

Five-time champions CSK did not specify the duration of his absence or confirm if he is ruled out for the remainder of the season, but his participation in the side's remaining league games appears doubtful. CSK are still



in contention for the playoffs with 12 points in 11 games and are occupying the fifth spot in the points table.

The Ruturaj Gaikwad-led side will look to boost their playoff chances when they take on Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) at the BRSABV Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow on Friday evening.

Overton has been one of the standout performers for CSK this season, emerging as their second-highest wicket-taker with 14 scalps at an average of 17.78.

His economy rate has been 8.89, and he was adjudged Player of the Match for figures of 3-36 in the side's five-wicket win over LSG at

the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on May 11.

His ability to strike with the ball and contribute lower-order runs had been crucial in balancing the side. Overton's absence compounds CSK's injury woes in a campaign already hampered by the unavailability of Nathan Ellis, Khaleel Ahmed,

Ayush Mhatre, and Ramakrishna Ghosh, apart from MS Dhoni being on the sidelines due to a calf injury.

Overton's ability to strike with the ball and contribute lower-order runs had been crucial in balancing the side. His departure leaves a significant void in their bowling attack, and the team management will need to rely on other options to fill the gap quickly.

IPL 2026: PBKS will be back, says coach Gonsalves as they look to regain

DHARAMSHALA

Struggling to reignite their campaign after four successive defeats, last year's finalists, Punjab Kings Assistant Bowling Coach Trevor Gonsalves, emphasised that the team remains focused on the task at hand for their clash with the Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 in Dharamshala on Thursday.

With three league matches remaining, Punjab Kings are hoping to return to winning ways against the Mumbai Indians in a critical fixture on Thursday, and Gonsalves said they have worked on the weak areas to ensure no mistakes are made in the next game. Gonsalves maintained that despite a few difficult games, there has

been no change in the environment of the team and dressing room, with everybody having a positive outlook towards the remainder of the tournament.

"It is exactly as it was when we started. Nothing has changed at all in the dressing room. We are quite confident about it. Three games are a lot of games, it's not less, and we hope to do our best.

Yes, there were some ups and downs. There were some places where we needed to iron it out; we've done that, and we will be back," he said regarding the team's mindset heading into the final stretch of the season.

Addressing the team's fielding issues, Gonsalves acknowledged the impact of missed opportunities while highlighting the work

being done in training to ensure it is not repeated.

"We have dropped, yes, I agree to it. There could be a lot of reasons, including the crowd behind, the lights, and everything. But at this elite level, yes, those catches need to be taken. There is no doubt that we have been dented by them. But we are on it. You can see the practice is on till late. We are working very hard on it, and hopefully we will set it right," he noted. Further speaking about the recent losses and how the team is planning to bounce back from them, the coach said, "If you ask me personally, I would really say what has happened is not too bad, and it's not too good either. But yes, from here on, peaking would be the main key.

Golf: Indian trio ready to shine at German Masters

HAMBURG

The Amundi German Masters is set to begin at the challenging Green Eagle Golf Courses in Hamburg, Germany, with three Indian golfers eager to leave their mark on the Ladies European Tour (LET). Representing India this week are Pranavi Urs, Avani Prashanth, and Vani Kapoor, a combination of emerging talent and experienced campaigners aiming to perform strongly on one of the LET's most demanding stages.

Over the years, the tournament has grown into a significant event on the women's golfing calendar, providing Indian players another opportunity to prove themselves against a highly competitive international field.

Among the Indian contingent, Pranavi Urs will attract considerable attention because of her steady rise on



the European circuit. The golfer from Mysuru has developed into one of India's most promising talents through a series of consistent performances over the last two seasons. One of her standout achievements came at the Andalu-cia Open last year, where she secured an impressive tied-third finish. Pranavi also carries pleasant memories

from Germany after finishing tied-24th at the 2024 edition.

The Green Eagle layout, famous for its length, narrow fairways, and thick rough, is expected to reward patience and precision, qualities that suit Pranavi's calm and disciplined playing style.

Experienced professional Vani Kapoor will also be hoping to make a strong impact this week. One of the most successful players on the domestic Indian circuit, Vani has been striving to replicate that success on the international stage. She showed encouraging form during last year's German Masters when she climbed into the top 10 after the second round following an excellent score of 70. Although consistency across four rounds has sometimes been a challenge, her experience could become an important advantage on a course where strategy and smart

decision-making are essential. With a partial LET status, every good result is valuable for improving her rankings and earning more opportunities on the tour. Young star Avani Prashanth is another exciting name to watch. The Bengaluru golfer turned professional after an outstanding amateur career, which included representing India at the Asian Games and becoming the first Indian amateur golfer to win on the LET Access Series.

Avani has already generated significant excitement among Indian golf fans. Although she had to withdraw from last year's German Masters because of a dental problem after a promising opening round, she has since gained valuable experience competing in stronger international tournaments. If she begins confidently, she could emerge as a serious contender this week.

Alia's Cannes Walk Turns Awkward?

For Indian stars, walking the Cannes red carpet is usually treated like a global identity moment. Back home, a single airport appearance can bring hundreds of flashing cameras for stars like Alia Bhatt. However, things looked very different for Alia Bhatt at Cannes this time, and videos now going viral on social media are triggering an unexpected debate.

At the ongoing Cannes Festival event in France, while Alia confidently posed in a glamorous body-hugging outfit, trying to serve some international fashion moments, she faced major embarrassment on the red carpet. Several foreign photographers didn't even seem interested in taking her pictures. In some clips, photographers can actually be seen looking elsewhere while Alia continues to pose for the cameras.

That has now opened viral criticism online, with many users brutally commenting that "99% of foreign photographers probably don't even know who she is." And honestly, that contrast is what shocked Indian audiences more. Social media users are now saying this is where PR machinery and international event coordination become important. Many feel either her global team or the Cannes management should have properly introduced and positioned her for international media visibility beforehand.

To be fair, Cannes is not exactly like an Indian film award show where every celebrity gets equal attention. International photographers mainly chase globally recognisable Hollywood faces, fashion icons, or stars with massive pull in Western media. So, acting in just one Hollywood film with Gal Gadot won't make Alia a recognisable starlet, isn't it?



Pooja to Pair Up With Allu Arjun for the Third Time?

Pooja Hegde is once again making headlines after fresh reports suggest that she may reunite with Allu Arjun for an upcoming big-budget entertainer. The buzz has created excitement among fans, especially because the Allu Arjun-Pooja Hegde combination has already delivered major box-office hit like Ala Vaikunthapuramloo.

According to ongoing industry speculation, Pooja Hegde is being considered as the female lead in Allu Arjun's upcoming film with director Lokesh Kanagaraj, tentatively referred to as AA23 and will be made on a massive scale. While the makers have not officially confirmed the casting, reports claim that discussions are currently underway. If finalized, this would mark the third collaboration between the star duo after the successful films DJ: Duvvada Jagannadham and Ala Vaikunthapuramloo.

Fans are especially excited about the possibility of seeing Pooja and Allu Arjun reunite because of their strong on-screen chemistry and chartbuster songs. Industry insiders believe the pairing could add massive commercial appeal to Lokesh Kanagaraj's ambi-



MAJOR SETBACK FOR SAI PALLAVI AHEAD OF RAMAYANA?

Reports surrounding Sai Pallavi and the upcoming film Ramayana have sparked major discussion online after claims emerged that the makers may dub the actress's voice in the film, which is quite shocking to hear in the first place. According to recent reports, the decision comes after criticism over her Hindi diction in her Bollywood debut film Ek Din. The debate gained momentum on social media, where some viewers questioned whether her Tamil-accented Hindi would suit the role of Sita in the mythological epic. The makers of Ramayana, directed by Nitesh Tiwari, are said to be aiming for a more refined and neutral Hindi delivery, considering the cultural and linguistic sensitivity attached to the project. In Ek Din, Sai Pallavi's character reportedly allowed flexibility in speech patterns, but Ramayana demands a more classical style of dialogue. Despite the criticism, many fans have defended Sai Pallavi, praising her acting talent and screen presence. Supporters argue that language barriers should not overshadow performances, especially in an industry where several actors have successfully worked across languages. Sai Pallavi continues to receive appreciation for taking on challenging roles and expanding her reach beyond South Indian cinema.



Mahesh-Rajamouli Moves To Varanasi

Well, it looks like the reality of Summer is not only hitting the films that are releasing in theatres, but also the movies that are currently under production. In some posh localities of Hyderabad like Manikonda, Narsingi, and Gandpet, already, people are dependent on almost two water tankers a day for a 15-flats standalone apartment to survive. Amidst this, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Board refused to entertain even Superstar Mahesh and legendary filmmaker Rajamouli when they demanded 150 water tanks. That's a week ago. Here's the fresh update. The shooting of Superstar Mahesh and legendary filmmaker SS Rajamouli's Varanasi was supposed to happen at a specially constructed set of the temple city in Hyderabad, where the makers wanted to shoot some underwater sequences where the set gets submerged. But with 150 water tankers not given, reports are coming that the makers want to shoot the same in Uttar Pradesh, at places like Varanasi and Prayagraj, where the water issue is not so strong. As the likes of Mahesh, Priyanka Chopra, and other actors are in Hyderabad now to shoot for this underwater sequence, the makers don't want to incur huge losses by waiting for water here. Hence, they want to quickly shift the shooting to Uttar Pradesh, say reports. The makers of Varanasi will now be making some new sets in Varanasi city and Prayagraj city to facilitate their shooting. On the other hand, as the release date of Varanasi got locked for April 7th, 2027, Rajamouli is said to be hellbent on wrapping the shooting schedules on time at any cost, so that he would not miss out the release



date as promised. However, whether only Part 1 of the film will be released or the whole film will be released on this date is yet to be clarified. But then, the talk of #GlobeTrotter and #TimeTrotter hitting cinemas as two parts is not ruled out.

Peddi crosses quarter million dollars in NA



The advance bookings for Ram Charan's "Peddi" are off to a flying start in North America. With nearly 20 days still left for the premiere shows, the film has already crossed the impressive \$250K mark in pre-sales. The strong early trend indicates the massive buzz generated by the film's teaser glimpses and the two songs released so far. Trade circles believe the momentum will only grow stronger as the release date approaches, pointing towards a huge opening in the overseas market.

Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, "Peddi" features Ram Charan in the role of a sportsperson and promises a mix of sports drama, action, and social commentary. Janhvi Kapoor plays the female lead. The makers are set to release the trailer on May 18, and expectations are high that the bookings will witness another major surge once the trailer drops.

Mouni Roy Requests For 'Space And Privacy'

Rumours surrounding the personal life of actress Mouni Roy have been making rounds on social media over the past few days after netizens noticed that she and husband Suraj Nambiar had reportedly unfollowed each other on Instagram. Speculation intensified further after reports claimed actress Disha Patani had also unfollowed Suraj, fuelling rumours of trouble in the couple's marriage. Amid the growing buzz, Mouni finally addressed the speculation through her Instagram Stories on Wednesday. Requesting privacy, the actress wrote, "Humbly requesting all the media houses to not publish false narratives and give us space and privacy. Please," along with a folded hands emoji. Mouni and Suraj first met during a New Year celebration in Dubai in 2018 through mutual friends. The duo soon developed a close bond and continued their relationship despite living in different cities — with Suraj based in Dubai and Mouni in Mumbai. After keeping their relationship away from the public eye for years, the couple tied the knot in 2022 in Goa with traditional Malayali and Bengali wedding ceremonies. Prior to their marriage, Mouni had rarely spoken publicly about her relationship with Suraj.

Ibomma Is Back: Bad Times For Tollywood!

It is already known that the Telugu film industry had been struggling to bring the audience to theatres in big numbers, and this is the reason why several films have been failing badly in the recent past. To make matters far worse, the piracy issue that has been troubling the film industry for a long time is back to square one now. Incidentally, the Hyderabad Police had recently released Ravi, who had been operating this Ibomma piracy platform on internet. He was released on bail af-

ter having spent over a couple of months in jail and crucial information being extracted from him. At one point, it was established that this website would be gone for good, and there would be no further updates on the same in the future. However, the latest development are suggesting that is website which is famous for uploading new films is back in the scene. This website is not just active again, but it is also sharing new films on its platform. The fact that this closely coincide with Ravi's release from jail recently has start-

ed to grab the attention on social media now. People are speculating if his release is the reason why the platform is back on the market.

If Ravi really decided to restart this website and share privacy films on the internet after getting conditional bail, then he could be in big trouble again if the police arrests him. Moreover, it is going to be a very bad sign for the Telugu film industry to watch this platform back in the mix. We have to see what kind of action would be taken now.